

## July/August *Informed Infrastructure*



Thank you for sending us your magazines. They always provide us a regular update of ongoing activities, issues and products important to our work.

I am a Civil Engineer (P.E.) with Eastham & Associates in Chesapeake, Ohio, just across the Ohio River from Huntington, W.Va. We provide a variety of civil engineering and surveying services in a wide geographic area.

In the current issue, I was pleased to find good information

and food for thought in several articles. The articles by Mr. Scacco and Mr. Fitzpatrick are spot on. The lack of field experience and poor communications are often prime factors in causing major frustrations for constructors. I agree that the learning institutions can and should help alleviate the lack of field experience. How many times have we heard in the field comments like “how did the engineer expect me (the contractor) to do what this drawing requires?” or “what does this mean?” I also believe our learning institutions teach well how to design, but fail to teach how to make project decisions which, as we know, must include input from several areas outside the design arena, including environmental, social and economic aspects. These usually have a significant role in whether a project goes or dies.

It seems that Millennials too often get a bad rap while, in reality, I can only imagine that their human nature is no different than ours was when we were younger, and their opportunities are so-o-o-o much better. They now have the advantages of good education, more research data, more and better tools, more case studies, have seen more successes and failures, and on and on. In short, they are much better equipped to address the issues and handle the daily grind than most of us were, and as Mr. Voelkel points out, they have the same values and goals as we did. And I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Schickel that we can rest assured that they will do the job well. Sure, they can learn from us, and we—older guys and gals (note: I am 82)—should encourage them to reach out for the mountain tops if not for the stars.

As a case in point, “climate change” and “resiliency” are not just buzzwords and will, I believe, need to be addressed in a positive way in the future. Although climate change continues to be a political football, there’s substantial evidence that the climate has been fluctuating for eons. Also, noting that ASCE gives us a “D+” for the state of our infrastructure, and there continues to be problems and even failures of our bridges, dams, roads, etc., these words take on a life of their own. Tried-and-true ASTM standards, FEMA floodplain delineations, use of standard design tables, appropriate level of maintenance, preparation for emergencies, the need for more coordination and cooperation among planning/design/construction teams and regulatory agencies as

well as many other entities will now come to bear on these same Millennials. I trust they will handle them appropriately and pass along their experiences to future generations. I wish them well.

Les Tinkham, P.E.  
Senior Project Engineer  
Eastham & Associates  
Chesapeake, Ohio

## Future Forward: Can Cross-Laminated Timber Replace Concrete and Steel?

July/August 2017, *Informed Infrastructure*

The Future Forward article “Can Cross-Laminated Timber Replace Concrete and Steel?” in the July/August 2017 issue of *Informed Infrastructure* contains significant misinformation.

This article reflects the marketing message of the CLT and wood industry, not a balanced discussion of the topics that it purports to address. At a minimum, it should be identified as advertorial content and not presented as an objective discussion of the issues. This is particularly true when an industry attempting to promote itself does so by drawing comparisons and making statements regarding competing products. I must ask, did the editorial staff of *Informed Infrastructure* make any attempt to reach out to the concrete or structural steel industries to verify the accuracy of the statements being made in the article?

John P. Cross, P.E., LEED AP  
Vice President  
American Institute of Steel Construction

**Note:** The full letter with annotations made by Mr. Cross can be found on the *Informed Infrastructure* website in the Letters section within the Articles tab.

### Editorial Response:

First, I’d like to thank Mr. Cross for his thorough and thoughtful letter regarding the Future Forward profile that ran in our July/August issue. We welcome any and all feedback as we try to publish a magazine that we hope is of maximum value to our readers.

I recommend that all our readers visit our website and read the full letter, but with limited space in print, I’ll sum up what I believe is the main problem and our solution.



The Future Forward profiles are based on interviews with people who we believe are "pushing the envelope forward" through new ideas, research and development. No one knows what will be the best final result to a solution, but if no one tries new and innovative techniques, we will never improve as an industry, and the status quo will always remain.

By giving a voice to academics, researchers and those in businesses looking to "try new things," we hope to spark thoughts and ideas in our readers that may lead them to develop new techniques and technologies that can lead to a better industry and, ideally, make the world a better place.

Innovation is never perfect and constantly ongoing, but we hope to provide a platform where such topics can be discussed, leading to further discussion and innovation. We believe in the importance of such a venue, and that our Future Forward section is a useful tool for our readers. We hope to include profiles from a wide cross-section of our industry and readers in future installments.

That said, I agree with Mr. Cross that we did not provide enough wording and description about the purpose of the section, and that we do not endorse any particular viewpoint or beliefs. The section is based on interviews and includes the opinions of those we speak with, but the thoughts and opinions are their own. We are careful to not include company specifics that would be obviously promotional or free advertising, but this is more difficult to control with thoughts and opinions.

Please read this month's Future Forward profile, which includes new language that we hope clears up any future misconception.

Todd Danielson  
Editorial Director  
*Informed Infrastructure*

## Final Thoughts: Millennials Are 'Engineering: The Next Generation'

July/August 2017, *Informed Infrastructure*



I think of myself of being Gen X but could be considered an early Millennial.

I was recently involved in our strategic planning process and got exposure to the, "How to 'deal' with Millennials?" question. The more I heard and read, I've come to the conclusion that you handle them like everyone else. How Millennials are stereotyped today isn't

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much different than how Gen Xers were only a short time ago and, from what I can tell, how Baby Boomers were before that.

Thank you for your take on Millennials; well stated. I agree 100%!!!

Jeffrey C. Collins, E.I.T.  
Transportation Engineer  
Hoyle, Tanner & Associates Inc.  
Manchester, N.H.

I consider myself a Millennial because I graduated from high school and entered university in 2000. When I read your article, I felt recognized, exactly like the way you identified our generation. They like to be promoted, but moreover this generation prefers coaching, mentoring and guidance as opposed to bossing and dictation. You have observed it very well.

Reading your article made me hopeful that this notion is shared among many of your generation who feel at ease in handing over the role to the following generation and enjoy the resting age knowing that things are in good hands even with smartphones.

We are the product of your generation. It is very much fitting, as you said, to see the potential of the Millennials. The Boomers should let them handle and bear the responsibilities by trusting their abilities and what they have invested in them as well. I really appreciate you for trusting the next generation, and being able to see their strength past their obsession of smartphones and social media!

Yohannes Weldemichael, M.Eng.  
Civil Engineering Designer  
Dallas County Public Works

I just wanted to let you know that I appreciated your article in *Informed Infrastructure*. I am a borderline/older Millennial (born in 1982), and I often think the difference between Millennials and older generations is overhyped. There are some differences, sure, but there always are between generations. Thank you for helping to discourage the idea that we need seminars to "deal" with this!

Structural engineer in Chicago