LETTERS

In this section, *Informed Infrastructure* compiles infographics from trusted sources that reveal insight on infrastructure spending. We also compile some of the top infrastructure stories that shouldn't be missed. For ongoing news coverage, turn to *Informed Infrastructure* online (*www.informedinfrastructure.com*), our Twitter feed (*@IInfrastructure*) and our weekly e-newsletter.

We Need to Better Promote the Heroes of Engineering: Us

April 2023

Robert,

Just read your article in *Informed Infrastructure*. Totally agree with your opinion and recipe for guiding youngsters into engineering careers.

Here's a hidden gem you may not know about: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) Alumni Hall of Fame (*www.rpi.edu/about/alumni*).

My alma mater takes recognition of accomplished engineers and scientists very seriously, and I'm glad they do.

My best regards,

Peter J. Vanderzee
President and CEO
LifeSpan Technologies

Peter,

Thanks so much for that link—great stuff.

We have a timeline on the wall here at Valpo that has pics and brief bios of past grads.

I love that stuff.

Robert Schickel
Editor-In-Residence
Informed Infrastructure

FROM THE EDITOR

We Need to Better Promote the Heroes of Engineering: Us

BY ROBERT SCHICKEL

Throughout my career, I have been asked a lot of times, THINK ABOUT WHAT EXACTLY I DO AS A CIVIL ENGINEER. Well, I design and build, but my place has most legitimately didn't know what a civil engineer does. It seems that we, as a profession, have not assigned a job promoting our field of expertise as well as other professions.

Some of these options are not taught in high school, and, if students do drop down a level, they don't know what engineers do, they likely would want to be one. There are many resources to help educate children about engineering. A series called Goals for Engineering, for example, is an example. But even as one organization, like we had, are probably the best way to educate children about engineering, beside being the smart kid.

As children grow up, we need to promote engineering as a viable option for all human beings to thing much. Carla Dalton of ECOS Consulting says on the website Engineer Girl.org. "Even sitting you are, touch, smell and sense has the ability to tell you what kind of an engineering degree, you can touch on everything from spacecraft to textiles.

One thing is certain: there will always be a demand for engineers.

Forces in urbanes, technology and coding to civil engineers to outdoors—the sky is the limit. Dr. Ann Dowling, a professor on the role of engineers in developing new technologies for clean air quality, recycling, green materials and energy, says, "Engineers will never Run out the the breakthroughs we need to meet the climate challenge"

These messages should be spelled out in a variety of ways. Dr. Dowling, a civil aviation, have introductory engineering classes, and these classes have to be an opportunity to show students how exciting it is, and, in fact, fun. Dowling, based on a very small sampling, is that this works.

Share the Stories

Another important way to help people understand what engineers do is to tell personal stories of engineering heroes you know or—preferably more important—stories about yourself. There are numerous articles in the Engineer Girl website, for example, however, I don't believe the stories you tell about your experiences will carry the same weight.

If you designed a bridge, and there are tens of thousands of people driving over that bridge every day, then you are a hero. If you created a more efficient engine, and there are millions of people, you are a hero. If you have invented a lower joint replacement that will last longer, you are a hero.

As I tell my college students, there are thousands or possibly millions of people who will use your creations, and they will never know you are the person who made it. Your mother (and probably your kids, if you're like me), and that is what's important and should be part of the message we need to convey.

Endless Demand

There are discussions about whether there is a shortage of engineers, and that can vary by disciplines and supply and demand. Regardless, there will always be a demand for engineers. It's therefore important for us to educate folks about what we do, and how we remain the bastion of our society.

Every engineer is a potential hero, so we need to promote our profession heroes. The children you talk to and choose an engineering will be grateful. Those who choose another career will at least know what we do.

Robert Schickel is more than 45 years a reporter in the design of civil and transportation infrastructure. He is Editor-in-Residence at Valpo's Fortman Center for Civil Engineering at its alma mater, Valparaiso University. email: rschickel@v1-media.com

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