2014 Joint ASHRAE / AIA Meeting Held

Mitchell Swan of MDC Systems Presents To Group Meeting

The annual ASHRAE / AIA joint meeting was held at Marzoni’s Restaurant in Altoona on April 15, 2014. Twenty members or the organizations were present.

The guest speaker for the evening was Mr. Mitchell Swan of MDC Systems. Mr. Swan’s presentation concentrated on forensic engineering, project management, and architecture. Mr. Swan’s company figures out why things don’t go the way they were supposed to. He also discussed sustainability and Green Building Objectives — green building expectations and intent — and how LEED Commissioning impacts these areas.

The mission is to build better buildings. Mr. Swan discussed where Version 3.0 and 4.0 have merged. Also discussed was the need for coordination for LEED between owners, designers, and construction. It becomes more difficult to determine responsibility for things because everyone has had a part in the project.

There are three primary areas of risk: Certifications, Time, and Performance. Sustainability is determined by performance over time. Mr. Swan discussed the LEED Dynamic Plaque which allows a professional to collect data and enter into this system to see how a building is performing.

Mr. Swan cautioned the engineers and architects to be judicious in exactly what is promised for a building’s performance. One must make sure that the design and systems installed are capable of producing the environment and performance when the project is complete and the client is utilizing the space.
Message from the President
Tom Columbus, Jr., AIA, LEED AP

Fortunately, this year AIA Grassroots in Washington D.C. was not exceptionally cold or snowy. It was again a pleasure to serve yours’ and the public’s best interests in health, safety, and welfare within the realms of architectural design. Our visits to the Federal Legislature Members focused on three key issues: H.R. 4205, the National Design Services Act, 179D Energy Efficient Commercial Building Tax Deduction, and Federal Design-Build Laws.

H.R. 4205 would enable architecture students and recent graduates to work with non-profit community design centers for a set period of time in exchange for a one-to-one relief of educational debt. This type of program is already in use by legal and veterinary students.

Tax deduction #179D needs extended. Right now the tax deduction of $1.80/sq. ft. for buildings that reduce total power and energy costs by 50%, expired at the end of 2013. The AIA is proposing this be extended as long as possible.

The third and final item we discussed with the Federal Legislature members was the reformation of procurement laws that block good design. Large and expansive design-build competitions drain resources on competing firms. The AIA proposed limiting these competitions to no more than five best qualified firms.

In April I was able to again serve yours’ and the public’s best interests on a State level by attending Architect’s Day in Harrisburg. Here we visited State Legislators to promote the AIA’s position on ArcCon HB 2124, Senate Bill 804, and House Bill 1838.

HB 2124 addresses the PlanCon process, which for all intents and purposes, stopped. HB 2124 identifies a streamlined process that gets school construction moving again.

Senate Bill 804 requires registered architects in PA to have mandatory continuing education requirements. It is modeled after our own AIA requirements and all neighboring States that touch PA’s borders.

Finally, HB 1838 supports a better delivery for public-private partnerships to provide good design from conception thru construction.

Until next time,
Tom
Mark your calendars now for the 2014 AIA Middle Pennsylvania Chapter’s Annual Picnic.

WHERE: The Blairmont Club

WHEN: July 11, 2014

Stay tuned for details on this upcoming event.
AIA Pennsylvania Seeking Regional Director

AIA Pennsylvania will hold its triennial election for our Regional Director at the September Board Meeting.

The Regional Director is elected by the AIA Pennsylvania Board to serve a three-year term and serves as the liaison officer between the local, state and national levels of AIA. In this capacity, the Regional Director shall represent the members of AIA Pennsylvania on the Board of Directors of the Institute and shall express the experience and the views of AIA Pennsylvania. The Regional Director shall in turn keep AIA Pennsylvania informed as to the Institute-level activities, policies and programs.

At the State level, the Regional Director is a member of AIA Pennsylvania’s Board of Directors and Executive Committee. There are four in-person board meetings and one board conference call each year. The Executive Committee meets monthly via conference call.

Also, the Regional Director is part of the state leadership team that visits each chapter each year. The others that attend are the AIA Pennsylvania president and the executive director.

In regards to the national responsibilities, our current Regional Director, has prepared a short “job description” (see below).

The term begins January 1st; however, all newly elected Regional Directors are expected to attend the AIA National’s New Board Orientation and Board Meeting in December.

Each chapter may nominate one candidate. The candidate need not be a member of the nominating chapter; however, the candidate must be an AIA Pennsylvania member in good standing. Nominations should be made in writing to AIA Pennsylvania no later than August 1st.

National Responsibilities

Pennsylvania, like many regions, is home to a widely diverse family of Chapters, from the very large Philadelphia Chapter to our smaller unstaffed chapters. The needs and perspectives of each vary considerably. Likewise our member firms cover the gamut - small firms, large firms, firms that practice in rural Pennsylvania and around the globe, start-up firms and those in their third and fourth generations, we have it all in Pennsylvania.

There are three fundamental tasks for the Regional Director:

- Become knowledgeable about the concerns and perspectives of our membership. It’s the job of the Regional Director to reach out to each and every member to better understand the issues that face us all.
- Share the knowledge and perspectives of our colleagues around the country. We aren’t alone and there are often common experiences from which we can learn.
- Share the positions and discussions from the national board with our members in Pennsylvania, to keep them informed and provide a conduit between the Institute and our members.

The Regional Director has to attend the four national board meetings each year. They typically span two days and are scheduled as follows: preceding the National Grassroots Conference, preceding the National Convention, a standalone September Meeting; and a standalone December Meeting.

In addition to the national meetings, each national board member is assigned to a national committee. These generally meet via conference call or in conjunction with the board meetings. It can require one additional in-person committee two-day meeting, in late summer or fall.

Having outlined all of the above I would add that this is subject to change when/if the membership votes for the bifurcation of the National Board. This will probably impact the frequency of meetings, since the Regional Directors would then serving on the new Advisory Council.
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