Notes From The Director

A special election was held last November to fill a vacant seat in New York’s 52nd Senate District. The election was handily won by Republican Fred Akshar, who most recently served as Broome County Undersheriff. As a constituent of the 52nd District, I contacted Senator Akshar in December to congratulate him on the election and to introduce PCANY as an organization with many small to mid-sized locally owned businesses who are heavily involved in the rebuilding of New York’s infrastructure.

In response to my email, Senator Fred (as his staff refers to him) graciously agreed to meet and take a tour of Binghamton Precast & Supply. We took the opportunity to show off our member’s many infrastructure products as well as the contribution to our local economies. He invited the press along and took the opportunity to announce his small business tax initiatives including the repeal of utility surcharges and extending the STAR program to eligible business properties. (See article in [Pressconnects.com](http://Pressconnects.com))

Warmest Regards,

Ronald E. Thornton, P.E.
NY Gateway Connections Improvements to the US Peace Bridge Plaza

Submitted by Kevin Balachick of Binghamton Precast & Supply Corp.

The Peace Bridge, which crosses the Niagara River in Buffalo is the second busiest border crossing between the US and Canada and NYSDOT has undertaken a major project to improve access to the US toll plaza from I-190 in order to alleviate traffic on local roads. Part of this project included a new tunnel at Niagara Street constructed with 36’ span precast arch elements installed on cast-in-place pedestal abutment walls.

Precast arch units like the ones shown below are structurally efficient due to the concept of soil-structure interaction, which essentially means that the passive resistance of compacted fill surrounding the concrete elements enhances the structural integrity of the bridge.

The project also included precast barrier sections, drainage units and a ReCon modular retaining wall.
Use of Forming Skirts for Ductile Iron and Aluminum Hatches

Submitted by: Brian Steitz, EJ USA, Inc.

Hatch doors are commonly used in precast underground utility structures to facilitate access for maintenance workers and equipment. The thickness of hatch doors can vary with 3 1/2” being a common size for aluminum. Roof slabs are typically 8” - 12” thick, which results in a space within the clear opening of at least 4 1/2” that has to be formed and secured to the hatch prior to placing concrete.

Back in 1984, PCANY producer member Kistner Concrete Products contacted EJ Facilities Manager, Tim McKernan, to explain the complications and costs associated with the forming of this space. Making and stripping the formwork, according to Kistner, was tedious and often unsightly.

This collaboration between producer and supplier resulted in the development of the lightweight aluminum forming skirt; a product enhancement that is still widely used and has proven to be a winning solution with several advantages over the old process:

- Skirts are easy to customize as needed for different slab thicknesses.
- Precasters no longer have to build custom forms and, since the skirts stay in place after the pour, form stripping is eliminated, thus reducing labor cost.
- The forming skirt provides a precise, durable, and aesthetic clear opening that absolutely ensures a proper bearing surface for the hatch frame.

EJ has recently extended the forming skirt idea to their line of ductile iron hatches with a modified version that can be set in place within a slab form. The heavy iron hatch is set securely onto the skirt providing support during the pour and eliminating the need for suspension of the hatch by crane of gantry.

EJ USA is an Associate Member of PCANY (See Buyer’s Guide)

"The skirts are efficient, cost-effective, and make for a higher quality product—they’re a great innovation."

Clarence Conrad, Sales Engineer at Kistner Concrete
U.S District Court Strikes Down Buy America Exemptions.

Steel rebar tie wire and steel lifting devices manufactured overseas will no longer be authorized for use in federally funded highway construction projects based on a ruling by a U.S. District Court. NPCA is encouraging FHWA to promptly resubmit a rules change to avoid disruptions in upcoming projects. Stay tuned. (See [NPCA Member Alert](#))

**Capital District Engineers Week Event**

The 36th Anniversary Celebration of National Engineer’s Week will be held February 25 & 26 at the Albany Marriott, 189 Wolf Rd, Albany. PCANY will have a table-top display for both days of this event. Please stop by and say hello. ([Information](#))

**The Precast Show 2016**

NPCA and PCI are co-sponsoring the event occurring March 3-5, 2016 at the Gaylord Opryland Convention Center in Nashville, TN. There will be several meetings and educational opportunities along with hundreds of exhibitors on display. ([Information](#))