

It's over, but not forgotten: 2005 convention a testament to quality



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After almost three years of considerable effort, the American Concrete Institute 2005 Spring Convention is behind us, but the legacy will live on for the total attendance, guests, delegates and students was 1664, a new unofficial record.

The feedback from many has been quite humbling and the successes were many. A statement heard more than once when an initiative was implemented was that the 2005 Spring Convention was setting a bad precedent. Bad in the sense that the Spring 2005 Convention was setting the bar rather high and conventions to follow may not be able to mimic some of the benefits – such as a well-stocked food cart at the Hot Topic Session.

Some highlights: the Concrete Mixer, the Contractors Day Lunch, the Student Lunch, the Hot Topic Session, the technical sessions, and the Student Competition. But the real highlight may have been the backdrop — Manhattan and the perfect weather.

Though the Convention Committee can share much of the credit for the execution, the weather may have been the result of one of the few glitches. Some of the tickets were not sold for the Broadway play *Hairspray*. A decision was made to donate tickets to the York Street Project in Jersey City that helps homeless and economically disadvantaged women and children step out of poverty and into a life of self-sufficiency.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of

Peace run the Project and have been involved with Jersey City Community since 1885. Just maybe the Sisters had something to do with weather? The Sisters asked that I thank all involved for giving them and the women they assist the opportunity for a night out.

The success of the Convention was based on the close working relationship between the members of the Local Convention Committee, American Concrete Institute National, New Jersey ACI and the Concrete Industry Board of New York City.

From the very first meeting, Committee members worked tirelessly to meet the deadline for every activity and to complete every initiative the committee targeted. Initiatives like street banners and a Convention newspaper, ACI Convention firsts.

Enough accolades cannot be bestowed on the convention committee volunteers and the firms that allowed them to participate in the painstaking task of bringing the Convention to fruition.

Enough thanks cannot be given to the Convention Sponsors, all sixty-nine of them, for no matter how congenial the members of NJACI and the CIB are, it was the generous financial support that allowed the two organizations to be such gracious hosts, check off every initiative and, therefore, deliver a Convention that was both productive and memorable.

Back to the successes: a full Exhibit Hall, a Concrete Mixer that had an auspicious

start, quality entertainment and an abundance of food, the Student Lunch highlighted by David P. Billington talking on major innovations in concrete construction and the structural designers that fueled the innovations, a Hot Topic Session featuring Colin Lobo, Celik Ozyildirim and Thomas Ruttura and our own Cas Bognacki, the Contractors Day Lunch with Anthony Cracchiolo tracing the past, present and future of the World Trade Center site, two tightly contested Student Competitions, one being the NJACI annual student competition, that awarded record monies to deserving college teams, the sold out WTC site visit hosted by Tom O'Connor, the local Technical and Contractor Day Committee sessions and a guest program that included visits to the Statue of Liberty, the New York Botanical Gardens, the Guggenheim Museum and the Garment District.

The 2005 Spring Convention was a testament to the quality personnel and companies that create the vibrant concrete industry that exists in the New York and New Jersey metropolitan area. It stands as a prime example of what can be produced when members of the concrete industry work as a team to complete a task. Thank you for your cooperation and for a job well done! Who will we pass the baton to for planning the next convention in New York?

Daniel Webber was co-chair, with Bill Lyons of Separation Technologies, of the ACI Spring Convention.