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Third annual SteelDay events grow attendance to more than 10,000 people

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More than 10,000 people attended nearly 200 free events across the U.S. on September 23 for the third annual SteelDay, the structural steel industry's largest networking and educational event for the design and construction community. Hosted by the American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC), its members and partners, this year's SteelDay built on the success of the past two years, drawing in thousands more attendees and increasing its variety of events.

Architects, engineers, contractors, university faculty and students, government officials, and the general public visited steel mills, fabricators, service centers, galvanizers, and other steel facilities to see the industry's latest technologies and innovations in action and learn directly from industry experts. "It's a great opportunity for designers and others to see first-hand how the structural steel industry is building high-performance and sustainable projects," said Roger Ferch, P.E., AISC's president.

Steel facilities throughout the country opened their doors for tours, demonstrations, presentations and other celebratory activities. A number of event hosts also partnered together to offer tours of multiple facilities that showcased how the various pieces of structural steel systems work together and are prepared for construction in the field.

In addition to connecting with local structural steel representatives across the U.S., this year's SteelDay featured live webinars and special events in New York City, Washington, D.C., Chicago and others.

In NYC, AISC hosted a networking event at McGraw-Hill headquarters in Midtown Manhattan, including a panel discussion on award-winning steel-framed buildings in NYC - all recent recipients of AISC's prestigious IDEAS2 Award. Industry experts shared their views on trends and issues shaping New York's building construction scene now and in the future.

The event garnered recognition from mayor Michael Bloomberg, who said, "New York's iconic skyline is recognized the world over, and it is impossible to imagine our City without the steel firms and construction professionals who have helped us reach ever higher throughout our history. Today, all five boroughs are building, and we are committed to keeping these projects safe and ensuring that New York remains a great place to live and start or expand a business. As we continue to lay the groundwork for our City's future, we are grateful for the hard work and dedication of everyone in the steel industry. Together, we look forward to even greater progress and innovation at sites from the World Trade Center to Willets Point, and all points in between."

At Central Texas Iron Works in Waco, Texas, students learned about the fabrication process and 3D detailing software, which will help them tackle practical issues in steel construction. "These trips give our students a unique opportunity to see facilities and operations related to steel construction that they would not otherwise have a chance to see," said Michael Engelhardt, a professor at the

University of Texas at Austin. "It enhances what they learn in the classroom, and the up-close, hands-on experience they gain allows us to address a greater breadth of topics related to practical issues in steel construction."

SteelDay proves to be just as an invaluable opportunity for experienced AEC professionals, such as Tom Kunsman with HWH Architects - Engineers: "At Steel Dynamics, a steel mill [in Indiana], this had been a first chance to visit a mill for one member of my group who had been an engineer for 30 years. For me, 17 years, also a first. It gives engineers a chance to learn more about the structural steel industry."

At a pre-SteelDay event on September 22 at the U.S. Department of Transportation in Washington, D.C., student teams from Howard University and Virginia Tech, participants in the 2011 ASCE/AISC Student Steel Bridge Competition, assembled and displayed their modular bridges in a mock race for guests to see. FHWA administrator Victor Mendez, president-elect Andrew Hermann from ASCE, Brian Raff from the National Steel Bridge Alliance (NSBA), and Lawrence Cavanaugh, president of the Steel Market Development Institute (SMDI) also spoke about the role of innovative technologies in bridge building.

At the event, both groups of students illustrated the importance of engineering education and training. Administrator Mendez said, "We certainly need all the bright, creative minds we can get to help build our 21st century transportation system, especially people who excel in science and math."

Added Chris Moor, AISC director of industry initiatives, "This year's incredible SteelDay turnout and recognition was a major achievement for the structural steel industry, and AISC would like to thank everyone involved in its success. It's truly a one of kind experience that allows the design and construction community, future engineers and architects, and others to learn how the industry works together to achieve amazing products - and we hope to provide even more opportunities in 2012."

If you attended a SteelDay event, share your experience by submitting a video to AISC to be featured on the "SteelDay TV" channel on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/SteelDaytv>. You'll also be entered into a drawing for a chance to win an iPad 2. For more information, please visit www.SteelDay.org/mySteelDay.

SteelDay photos, videos, certificates of attendance, and more information can be found at www.SteelDay.org. Next year's SteelDay is scheduled for September 28, 2012.

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