It’s been two years since PCI Gulf South formally became a chapter of PCI. The two years have been filled with change as we have worked together to chart our direction and handle challenges along the way. When I jumped on board, it wasn’t immediately clear to me how the association would unfold, but two years later, I am both happy and proud of the work our producer members and associates have put in to building the organization. Most recently, I have enjoyed the support of members willing to take on the responsibility of a presentation when I was already booked (Thank you Chris Ard!) and attending an annual spring meeting where all 12 of our producer members were present and engaged. That kind of support and commitment to the mission of PCI Gulf South to grow the precast market is what will ultimately take us where we want to be...at the forefront of the building industry. PCI Gulf South will continue to spread the word and expand in every direction possible. Great things are happening!

Mississippi State & the ASCE Report Card Presentations:

The ASCE Report Card is a valuable advocacy tool that showcases to decision makers, the importance of investing in our infrastructure and the impact not investing can have on commerce and safety. Mississippi State engineering students played a valuable role this year with gathering and evaluating the immense amount of information that exists regarding our state’s infrastructure. The information is divided into 8 categories and then put into written format for use by the individual chapters. (Chapters are individual sections of the infrastructure report card i.e. roadways, bridges, dams etc.). As part of their final grade, the students gave presentations on their assigned section of the report card. Dr. Truax invited the Chapter Chairs to witness the presentations and assist with the grading. It was nice to see our future decision makers engaged in the process. Their work was impressive! Great job engineering students!

University of Mississippi:

At the end of March, I had the opportunity to speak to students and faculty at the University of Mississippi. As has been the trend lately, I was asked to talk about the practical side of the precast industry. During one portion of my presentation, I used 4 different pictures to represent how, at each stage of a project, the project is viewed. The students found it amusing that a clean, well-drawn picture is how an engineer looks at a project. The second picture shown was a bunch of scribble with dimension and depicts how an estimator/salesman looks at a project. The third picture showed an aesthetically pleasing piece of art work which is typically how an architect views that same project. Finally, the fourth picture showed $$$ signs, because in most cases, that is how the owner regards the project. As amusing as it was, it is the truth. Too often, we forget that our eyes aren’t the only set of eyes on a project and yet somehow, it all fits together seamlessly. The “real world” pictures provided a visual representation for what the professors are teaching.

I would like to thank the Engineering Department at Ole Miss for their hospitality and a special thank-you to Dr. Ervin for taking me on a tour of their wonderful campus. Trips to Oxford are always a treat!
PCI Gulf South Spring Meeting: The Spring Meeting was recently held in historic Natchez, MS along the Mississippi River. In attendance were ALL 12 precast producers from our region and many associate members. As previously mentioned, the dedication to our mission is alive and well! This year, we enjoyed speakers from PCI National and Tulane's School of Architecture. Amy Stanton, PCI Managing Director of Market Development gave the group an overview of the activities PCI is engaging in relative to marketing strategies and PCI programs. She also outlined issues PCI is working to overcome as we continue to strive to grow the market. Charles Jones RA, from Tulane provided an overview of his school’s concept relative to the newly awarded PCI Foundation Studio they received and how it will integrate with the city of New Orleans water management plan.

University of Southern Mississippi IAC Board Meeting: The USM School of Construction Spring Board Meeting was held at the ABC of Mississippi in Jackson, MS. The well-attended meeting including academic professors, current students, past students and supporting board members. Dr. Erich Connell gave a brief overview of the School of Construction’s activities over the past 6 months including the success this year at the Craft of Construction Day. It appears as though USM’s School of Construction, with its emphasis on Design Build, is gaining the attention of some national organizations namely DBIA. The school recognizes the invaluable connection between education and the industry with professor/industry member partnerships. This aspect of the program connects current industry members with current professors to allow the industry professional access to the classroom and the ability to teach the students “practical” knowledge. This is definitely a win-win all the way around!

University of Alabama:

PCI Gulf South presented our Principles of Precast-Prestressed Concrete Construction to a vertical construction class at the University of Alabama in March. The Principles is a down-to-earth presentation exploring the stages a typical precast project goes through from sales/estimating to production/delivery to project close out. The objective of the program is to present a realistic view of what can be expected in the professional arena after the students embark on their careers as designers. Assisting me with the presentations was Chris Ard from Gate Precast-Monroeville. Chris presented the installation portion of the program while I presented the basic overview of a precast project. We would like to thank Dr. Sri Aaleti and Dr. Back for inviting us into their classrooms. We’ll be back!

LaDOTD Transportation Committee meeting: On March 27th, the PCI Gulf South Transportation Committee met with Louisiana’s Bridge Department. The Transportation Committee mission is to act as a resource for the DOT designers and decision makers, as well as a communication conduit to the producers. Being only the second meeting with LaDOTD; we’ve already accomplished many items on the agenda. Paul Fossier, Bridge Design Engineer Administrator kicked the meeting off with an overview of the department’s activities and the use of the LG Girder shape and the upcoming LU shapes. Dave Tomley, P.E. of Thompson Engineering, wrapped up the meeting with a presentation on the NEXT beam and its targeted uses. We look forward to more productive meetings between PCI Gulf South and the area DOT’s.
Product Highlight: Bridge Components-Flat Slabs & Sound Walls

Flat Slabs

Precast, prestressed flat slabs are used in short span bridges. They typically have spans between 25 and 45 feet between supports. They can have a concrete or asphalt wearing surface cast onto the structure.

Sound Walls/Noise Barriers

These structures are designed and located to meet requirements for noise abatement. They are typically constructed with a post and panel configuration. The project noise study will specify if the system is an absorptive or reflective design. They may include traffic barrier protections when constructed adjacent to the travel lane. These structures typically have a texture or design as a part of the overall system.

DID YOU KNOW?

Although prestressed concrete was patented by a San Francisco engineer in 1886, it did not emerge as an accepted building material until a half-century later. The shortage of steel in Europe after World War II coupled with technological advancements in high-strength concrete and steel made prestressed concrete the building material of choice during European post-war reconstruction. North America's first prestressed concrete structure, the Walnut Lane Memorial Bridge in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, however, was not completed until 1951.

Upcoming Events:

PCI Transportation Committee Meeting/ALDOT
May 24, 2018
Montgomery, AL

MS/AL Engineering Society Annual Meeting
June 11-13, 2018
Biloxi, MS

PCI Gulf South Summer Meeting
July 12-14, 2018
Destin, FL

ASCE-APWA Alabama Section Meeting
July 16-18, 2018
Perdido Beach, AL

PCI Gulf South Fall Board Meeting
September 11, 2018
Hattiesburg, MS

PCI Committee Days
October, 2018
Rosemont, IL

PCI Gulf South Golf Classic
November 7, 2018
Gulfport, MS

PCI Gulf South Winter Meeting
November 7-8, 2018
Biloxi, MS

PCI Gulf South Learn@Lunch: PCI Gulf South offers a variety of ways to reach the existing design community. The Learn@Lunch program was developed to allow professionals the opportunity to learn about precast products and systems without leaving the office. Call or email today to schedule your Learn@Lunch.