

# CISC trying to attract more youth into the rank and file

By PEG HILL  
CORRESPONDENT

The Canadian Institute of Steel Construction (CISC) is trying to build bridges with Ontario's youth. The regional education committee of the CISC, which represents the structural steel, open web steel joist and steel platework fabricating industries, is trying to attract a new generation into its workforce.

Too few people choose the industry as a career option, possibly because they aren't aware of it, says Peter Boyle, who helped create the seven-member education committee about a year and a half ago.

"The average age, for instance, of draftsmen in the industry is closer to 60 than 50," he says, "and there doesn't seem to be too many people coming into it."

The committee tries to reach young people before they come out of high school, college or university through advertising and job fairs.

It has sent out information pamphlets that will go into a

magazine called Teach, which reaches every high school in Ontario.

"The flyer explains about the structural steel industry and different jobs available in the industry, such as fitter, welder, ironworker, crane operator, draftsman, stuff like that," says Boyle.

It is also advertising in a magazine called Sweat, which goes to all Ontario college students.

The committee also has sent people to visit high school job fairs.

"We have a booth that's quite visually attractive, we think. We have bits of structural steel beams and steel columns, all fastened together with bolts and welds. They can come over and look at and ask questions about it. We're trying to get their interest in it."

So far, they have gone into about 12 to 15 schools in the Greater Toronto Area. Surprisingly, he noted, no schools in Hamilton, with its large steel industry, or in Mississauga, have responded to their requests to visit.

"We're just going to have to try plugging away in these different areas and try sending out more information."

They also visit colleges and universities to talk about structural steel "because we found that a lot of engineering faculties aim more towards concrete than structural steel."

Boyle isn't certain why that is. "That's the thousand-dollar question. We've tried to figure out why, but I don't think anybody's come up with an answer. All we're trying to do is tell them that 'structural steel is there as well, and you should ask your professors to not necessarily concentrate on it, but give it a higher profile than what they do at the moment.'"

As well as trying to attract a new labour base, the education committee works with current consultants and architects, "trying to get them to look at structural steel more favourably."

Boyle said that too often, high-rise and low-rise buildings, as well as condominiums, are designed with only one material in mind. "They will automatically look at concrete before they'll look at structural steel and we want to change that round so that they'll look at structural steel, and if it doesn't work then go to concrete."

The CISC, though not specifically through the education committee, has already claimed a major victory in the concrete versus steel debate. Bridges at the airport in Toronto were originally going to be concrete.

"People from CISC went in there and proved to them it was more economical and faster to be able to use steel instead of concrete," says Boyle. "There were a lot of bridges originally designed in concrete that were changed around and they were designed in steel."

The committee is also planning to contact the Ontario government regarding its youth employment apprentice program. It wants to get jobs in the structural steel industry added to the program.

Boyle, who is one of three partners at MBS Steel in Brampton, Ont., has volunteered with CISC for 15 to 20 years. This is his first time working on an education committee; he was regional chair in 1999-2000.

He says that about 10 to 15 years ago the dearth of younger workers began to be noticeable in the steel industry.

## Project Profile

EUROPE

### PROJECT DETAILS

**Project Name:**

Ljuti Potok Crossing

**Location:**

Herceg Novi, Serbia and Montenegro, Europe

**Owner:**

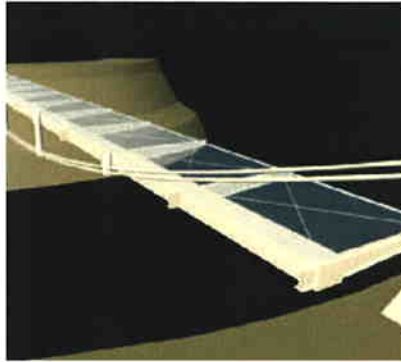
Erinzenjering ( Montenegro )

**Project Value:**

\$1,200,000 CAD

**Project Description:**

Study of prospective development for the Ljuti Potok creek crossing. Pedestrian bridge across the Ljuti Potok creek is 60m long, single span, cable supported steel structure. Main girder is torsionally stiff box-steel girder, eccentrically suspended with four 50mm diameter cables. Girder height is 0.7m and maximal live load deflection is 120mm. Simple cable anchorage into rock abutments resulted in developing very cost efficient structural system.



### COMPANY PROFILE

**Role:**

Structural Engineering and Architectural Design

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## No shortage of steel: AISC

By GRANT CAMERON  
MANAGING EDITOR

It's important for specialty steel contractors to focus not on the differences between current steel prices and last year's prices, but instead to compare steel prices with those of competing systems, according to John Cross, vice president of AISC Marketing LLC. Cross spoke as part of a program on steel pricing at a recent North American Steel Construction Conference in Long Beach, Calif.

"I would like to suggest that each of us asks ourselves a question: What value do I as a professional in the structural steel marketplace bring to a project, even in these volatile times?"

"Or maybe the better way to ask that question is: 'What value do I as a professional in the structural steel marketplace bring to a project, especially in these volatile times?'"

Cross was one of several speakers at the conference who addressed the volatile steel-pricing situation.

While steel prices are up, he said there is no shortage of material. In addition, he stressed that the material price increases will actually have only a minimal impact on the overall project cost.

"It should be considered that increases in the mill price of steel have only a small impact on the overall cost of the project."

"On a typical project, the cost of the fabricated and erected steel frame represents 10 per cent to 12 per cent of the overall project cost."

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