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*Terry G. Fedor II*

**2013 AIST President  
Terry G. Fedor II**



# An Interview with the 2013–2014 AIST President

## Terry G. Fedor II

by Karen D. Hickey



*Terry G. Fedor II has served as vice president of U.S. iron ore for Cliffs Natural Resources in Cleveland, Ohio, USA, since February 2012, and prior to that held the position of vice president — metallics from January 2011. He previously held positions of vice president and general manager of ArcelorMittal Cleveland since March 2005, responsible for all day-to-day operations. Fedor was also responsible for ArcelorMittal facilities located in Warren, Ohio; Weirton, W.Va.; Monessen, Pa.; and Lackawanna, N.Y. He held the positions of senior division manager — maintenance and hot rolling at ISG Weirton and division manager — maintenance, engineering and utilities at ISG Cleveland, both predecessor companies of ArcelorMittal. Prior to joining ISG, he served as area manager — hot mill maintenance at the Cleveland Works of LTV Corp. from 1999 to 2002. He also worked as a mechanical engineer for Iron Dynamics Inc. from 1996 to 1999. Fedor began his steel career at LTV Corp. on a co-op program in 1986 and held various management positions of increasing responsibility in the iron producing, hot strip mill and finishing departments. Fedor earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, and an M.B.A. from John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio. He recently spoke with Iron & Steel Technology about serving as AIST's president and what he hopes to accomplish in his term.*



**Iron & Steel Technology:** Tell us about your background and how you first got involved in the iron and steel industry.

**Terry Fedor:** I am originally from Alliance, Ohio, which is between Youngstown and Canton, two steel-intensive areas. My family was always involved in the steel industry, so when I was growing up I was aware of it. They were in

the overhead crane industry, and I did some part-time work with my father. In a way, I was always involved in the industry, and my experience has centered around this part of the country. I went to the University of Akron and entered a co-op at LTV Steel's Cleveland Works in 1986, where I started in the blast furnace and finishing areas.

My father is a Life Member of AIST, and he encouraged me to join the association, stressing that I should become active with the Technology Committees and learn as much as I could from other members. AIST has given me a lot of opportunities. Early in my career, I even spoke at a Young Engineers Night for the Cleveland Section, where I talked about my experiences in the industry to local university students.



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**I&ST:** What would you tell today's younger generation about the steel industry as a career?

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**T.F.:** For me, it has been everything I could ever have wanted in a career. I have worked in all phases of the business — integrated steel, Iron Dynamics, and now raw materials. I have seen a lot and learned a lot. Over the years, I have met many great people in this industry, and they have helped me at every stage in my career. I would do it all over again, and there is nothing I would change.

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**I&ST:** How can AIST continue to promote the iron and steel industry to young people? Do you have fresh ideas for helping the AIST Foundation foster the next generation of steelworkers?

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**T.F.:** I have a few ideas. We need to start at the high school level and generate interest there. My interest came from knowing people who were actively working in the mills — my father and my friends' parents were part of the industry because of where I grew up. We also need to let people know it's still a vibrant industry. Some of the industry may have shifted geographically, but it is still every bit as important to America.

We need to meet young people where they're at, and introduce them to the steel industry using technology they are familiar with. They are engaged via smartphones, text messaging, tweets, Facebook posts. They get their information from the Internet.

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**I&ST:** Not that long ago, you served as general manager at ArcelorMittal Cleveland. Tell me about your career experiences and your current position with Cliffs Natural Resources.

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**T.F.:** I am currently vice president of U.S. iron ore operations at Cliffs Natural Resources. I am also a new officer of the company and a member of the Operations Leadership Team, which consists of leaders from all the business units of Cliffs. The Operations Leadership Team consists of 10 members looking at the future direction of Cliffs within the context of the larger operations, including domestic and foreign iron ore, coal, chromite, nickel, etc.

My career has covered the gamut of iron- and steelmaking, and I've learned something every step of the way. There are several stages to a career in the steel industry. First you learn from the hourly folks. Then you learn from those in more senior level positions. As you reach those positions yourself, you learn the financial and commercial side of the business, and then labor relations.

I learned the most when the industry was undergoing consolidation. I was at Iron Dynamics at the time, a greenfield plant, where I learned how to build a plant and start a business from the bottom up. My experiences included project management, project engineering and a lot of human resources.

When I joined the International Steel Group in Cleveland, I was part of the original team, also taking



part in the due diligence for the company's Weirton and Sparrows Point locations. With ISG, I gained experience in the mergers and acquisitions (M&A) side of the business. With the acquisition of ISG by Mittal and then Arcelor, I gained an appreciation for the global scale of M&A activities. From 2005 through 2011, I led the most productive integrated mill in terms of man-hours per ton.

With Cliffs, I am now more focused on the raw materials and mining aspects of steel production.

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**I&ST:** What do you hope to accomplish as AIST president? What will be your key areas of focus?

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**T.F.:** There have been great leaders before me, and I want to continue their tradition of forward thinking for the organization, which has enabled it to grow and prosper. I intend to promote the mission of AIST, which is the technology transfer for iron and steel manufacturing.

One area of interest for me is the development of our new AIST Digital Library, which enables our members to freely research technology from the world's foremost repository of steel-related conference proceedings. It represents a key program in the fulfillment of our mission as a trade association.

Another key area of development is our global expansion of programs and services. The steel industry is globally interconnected at many levels, and AIST needs to leverage its strengths in various markets around the world to benefit our membership, both here in North America and abroad. By developing this initiative, AIST can provide more access to our members, expose them to advanced technologies and share ideas on best practices for improving the collective welfare of our industry.

To be successful, we must continue to strengthen our core, which is the North American iron and steel business, and build from the lessons we have learned over the years to continue to grow internationally.

Another key area of focus for me will be engaging the industry with the launch of the AIST Process Benchmarker™ (APB). I am a strong proponent of

benchmarking because it arms us with pertinent data to make better informed decisions. Better decision making is a pre-requisite to creating a sustainable steel industry.

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**I&ST:** What challenges do you foresee facing the steel industry and/or AIST over the next several years?

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**T.F.:** The European Crisis needs to get sorted out; it's important if we are to reconcile issues related to overcapacity. We also need to see more global consolidation, so that antiquated capacity is more quickly weeded out of the marketplace. I also believe it is important for the industry to invest its capital in the building of technologically superior facilities that leverage our natural resources and maintain our comparative advantage against competing materials.

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**I&ST:** AIST membership recently rebounded to its peak level we experienced in 2008: 16,000 members including students. But it appears to be more challenging to retain their membership. What insights do you have for retaining members and keeping the momentum going?

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**T.F.:** In my opinion, this is quite an accomplishment. The Great Recession is finally nearing its end, yet AIST has grown its membership back up to its highest level and continues to bring value to its members, especially the younger engineers. We need to continue to bring something to the table for them, keep them engaged, get them active early so they realize tangible benefits to their career development.

A large gap is forming in the workforce, left by retirees leaving the steel industry. But there is also a large group of young people entering the industry, filling that gap. AIST is going to be instrumental in the transfer of knowledge from the older generation to the younger, not only in North America, but also globally.

We need to recruit at the university level. It's important that we get the message out and make the industry known on campuses. We could sponsor student projects while building long-term relationships with professors. I am an advocate of the AIST Foundation and its programs to encourage young people to pursue a career in steel, and I look forward to supporting these efforts during my term as AIST president.

My advice to young people is to be a "sponge." You learn the business from your peers as well as your elders, at whatever level you're on. I was fortunate to have great mentors along the way, and a mentoring program through AIST might be worth instituting in the near future. It's important to attend the major events like AISTech, and to get involved with the Technology Committees, as early in your career as possible. The younger you get involved in AIST, the more likely you're going to stay because you see the value. It worked for me, and it can work for anyone with the passion and desire to succeed. ♦