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WILLIAM P. GANO •

ASSOCIATION OF IRON AND STEEL ENGINEERS

President's Message 1991

As we move into the last decade of the 20th Century, it would be prudent to evaluate the steel industry's level of technology and product performance while preparing for the 21st Century.

As president of the AISE for 1991, I have selected "Advancing Steel to the 21st Century," as the theme of the AISE. This concept challenges both producers and users to focus on advancements that will shape the future of steel production processes and steel producing equipment.

If the steel industry, its suppliers and customers are not internationally competitive, our business is at risk. Everyone must keep that in mind as we seek ways to increase productivity, improve quality, maintain or reduce costs, and provide efficient service. Never before have steel producers been so globally oriented in their facility and technology planning.

As pressure from competitive materials increases, we must become more cognizant of requirements and address new technological processes and concepts that will give steel the performance characteristics necessary to remain a viable product in the future.

In particular, the automotive industry is demanding new and better steel products. One of these new products is a bake-hardenable sheet which actually increases in strength during the forming and paint-baking process. In addition, a new family of ultra-low carbon sheet steel with improved formability for use in producing large, complex parts for automobiles and appliances is now a reality brought about by the new vacuum degassing and ladle metallurgy facilities.

For improved corrosion resistance, new technologically advanced coated sheet steel has become a real growth product. Plans call for the installation of over 4 million tons of new capacity during the 1990's—all of which will incorporate the latest in world-class technology.

These new lines will enable us to introduce new families of electroplated coated sheets such as zinc-nickel, zinc-iron and multi-layer metallic organic coatings, and to improve hot dipped coated products for more sophisticated applications.

Finally, we expect further advances in high-strength, low-alloy steel technology that has led to significant improvements in plate steel properties, and to be more widely applied to other products such as structurals, rails and bar products.

In addition to improved products, the industry is investigating and implementing new processing steps that in some cases may be revolutionary. These encompass the ironmaking process, near net shape casting, coupled and continuous processing steps, and the application of more sophisticated controls and computers.

An industry-wide investigation is underway to determine the feasibility of producing steel in one continuous operation—from ore to finished strip. The ultimate is to accomplish this within 10 hours. That may not be practical in the immediate future, but is an achievable goal in its entirety or in parts.

In the interim, some processing steps may be implemented to existing operations that would improve casts, quality, products and environmental considerations.

From those examples, it is evident that our industry is advancing rapidly with a wide range of improved and very sophisticated technology. Implementation of these technologies represents a major part of our commitment to assure the long-term success of the steel industry.

William P. Gano