



2015 Leadership CONFERENCE RECAP

“You need good people. Put them in the right spot and they will resolve your problems.”

— Lourenco Goncalves

The AIST Leadership Conference is an annual event for AIST’s Technology Committee and Member Chapter officers, as well as the Board of Directors and Foundation Board of Trustees. The objectives of the conference are to enhance the value of AIST programs and to build strong leaders for our Association and the steel industry. The conference provides strategic direction for continuous improvement to ensure AIST meets the needs of our members and the steel industry.

The 2015 Leadership Conference was held 16–18 November 2015 at the historic Francis Marion Hotel in Charleston, S.C., USA, in conjunction with the AIST Southeast Member Chapter’s annual meeting.

Monday, 16 November began with the option of taking part in the Southeast Member Chapter golf outing at Patriots Point Links on Charleston Harbor, followed by an evening welcome reception with vendor displays at the Francis Marion Hotel. The Leadership Conference’s main programming started early Tuesday morning with a welcome address and AIST State of the Association Update from Ron Ashburn, AIST’s executive director. Chris Kuehl, managing director, Armada Corporate Intelligence, followed with an overview of the manufacturing economy titled “The Good, Bad and (Really) Ugly — Economic Trends in the U.S. and the World.”

Kuehl’s engaging presentation was comprised of information about trends and potential sticking points,

including China, oil prices, interest rates, the pros and cons of the strength of the U.S. dollar, and positive employment trends in the U.S. He also gave some perspective about U.S. manufacturing. On its own, the U.S. manufacturing sector is the 10th-largest economy in the world. Kuehl said technological advancements have increased U.S. manufacturing, but there is a lack of skilled workers to fill the jobs that are available. He followed with a refrain familiar to those in the steel industry: training is needed for the positions, and communicating the needs for these jobs must begin earlier in the educational process.

After the economic perspective, the annual Leadership Conference “Air-It-Out” discussion was held so that attendees could give AIST direct feedback, both positive and negative, on our programs and products. The discussion provided insight into improving our online bookstore, internship program and Technology Committee meetings, among other topics.

Attendees participated in the Strategic Initiative Planning Session.



Lourenco Goncalves, chairman, president and chief executive officer, Cliffs Natural Resources Inc., was the Leadership Perspectives keynote speaker, which ended the morning's presentations. With questions from moderator Ron Ashburn, Goncalves described his journey from a high school teacher to his current position. He had not intended to work in the steel industry, and took a pay cut when he started in research and development at Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional (CSN). He spent 17 years at CSN, moving to various divisions, developing a career in operations, and eventually helped transform it from a state-owned steel mill into a public company. "There are many things I wished I had been given advice about, but you learn from your mistakes," Goncalves said.

Goncalves eventually moved from what he felt was a dangerous environment for his family in Brazil at the time to California Steel Industries Inc. (CSI), and from there to Metals USA. When asked about the traits one needs to be successful, he said, "Be honest; say what you believe. You must be able to influence in a positive way. Conviction is not stubbornness.

"With every single problem, there are many issues, but there are typically only one or two root causes," Goncalves said. "You need good people. Put them in the right spot and you will resolve the problems. They will find the root causes."

Dr. Chris Kuehl provided an overview of the manufacturing economy.



The afternoon session began with presentations from AIST general managers Bill Albaugh, Brian Bliss, Mark Didiano and Stacy Varnecky on new programs and products, including AIST member orientation videos, the updated My Profile section at AIST.org, the online Steel Manufacturing Process (a.k.a. the interactive Steel Wheel), Technology Committee study tours, the AIST Road Show and the new Electrical Engineering Grant for students.

Lourenco Goncalves provided valuable insight to attendees during the Leadership Perspectives presentation.



Eric Papp interacted with the audience during the leadership training session.



Using the discussion points from the morning's Air-It-Out session, the Strategic Initiative Planning Session broke the attendees into small groups to brainstorm ideas about building AIST brand awareness, relations with China, evolving social media strategies, communicating the latest technical developments, linking steel with unconventional resources, expanding AIST's internship program, increasing producer involvement and getting young professionals more involved. The last topic in particular produced a significant amount

of conversation and ideas, including the "Bring Your Own Young Professional" (BYOYP) — program to get young professionals more involved in AIST and help them create their own networks.

The day concluded with a joint networking reception and dinner with the Southeast Member Chapter. Jason Curtis, maintenance and engineering manager, Nucor Steel-Berkeley, gave a keynote presentation titled, "Overview of Nucor Steel-Berkeley and Facing the Challenges in the Steel Industry," at the dinner.

Day two kicked off with leadership training by Eric Papp, a consultant on behavior change and performance. Papp discussed values for obtaining high levels of effectiveness and increasing your own self-awareness. The latter portion helped attendees work on skills to identify triggers that were causing stress, and provided methods to help reduce the stress to improve productivity. The morning concluded with a second session from Papp centered on having honest conversations; responsibility vs. accountability; and managing a promise, not a plan.

The Leadership Conference concluded with the annual game of AIST Jeopardy. Teams of attendees competed to answer questions based on their knowledge of AIST activities, and also of the city of Charleston. Ron Ashburn closed the conference with

Jason Curtis speaking at the AIST Southeast Member Chapter Dinner.



a summary of the action items the staff would begin pursuing in furtherance of the 2016–2020 Strategic Plan for AIST.

Leadership Conference attendees traveled from locations far and wide, from Australia to South Carolina. We thank you for your time and input. Additionally, we appreciate our sponsors, American Chemical Technologies Inc., Phoenix Services, Thermo Scientific, Baltimore Aircoil Co. and OBR, for their support. We encourage all of our members to get involved with AIST’s Member Chapters and Technology Committees to help us define and grow our programs, both in the near term and the future. ♦



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