

Long Days and Hot Topics Combine for Successful Study Tour

Attendees at the BSI Kansas City Study Tour endured three very full days of meetings, presentations and tours. But they left with a keen understanding of Kansas limestone and renewed energy toward working together for the common good of the industry



Brad Poynter, Fieldstone Center of GA with Andrew and Michael Christie of Christie Cut Stone Company. Christie Cut Stone attended as a guest of US Stone Industries and is now BSI's newest member firm!

Sunday

Sunday's open committee meetings were well attended, especially the Technical and Check Off Sub-Committee meetings, which both addressed hot topic debates and gave us new information for consideration. See individual committee reports and supplemental articles for more details.

Monday Tours

Monday's tour to the new Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City was hosted by three of the architects who participated in the design of the building and landscaped grounds. Scott Bingham of Bowman Bowman Novick, a Kansas City landscape architect firm designed the park-like landscape in collaboration with Philadelphia based Olin Studio. Scott relayed the processes and challenges to deliver the desired integration of nature and architecture while maintaining the strict security requirements for the new facility. Local Cottonwood and Silverdale limestone supplied by US Stone Industries combined with Englishman's Bay granite paving supplied by Fletcher Granite were used in both interior and exterior applications.



Federal Reserve Bank, photo courtesy of Jim Owens, Indiana Limestone Institute

The 618,000 square foot structure utilized over 200,000 square feet of Cottonwood limestone in both hand laid and pre-cast panelized construction. Michael Bischoff of Pei Cobb Freed architects in New York spoke of the overall design for the bank and described again how the visual design had to work within the high security of a federal reserve.

A tour of the Money Museum housed inside the KC Federal Reserve gave a historic overview of the federal reserve banking system, and allowed attendees to view our currency management systems at work.

From there we took a short walk to the Liberty Memorial which also houses the nation's largest and most revered World War 1 memorabilia collection. Typically closed to the public on Mondays, we had the pure privilege to view the collections after hearing a brief but inspiring account of the museum's history and importance in local, national, and international society. Museum historian Carl DiCapo was captivating in his wealth of knowledge and passion for this collection, and the honor and the respect it pays to the men and women who served in this war.

Liberty Memorial

The concept for the Liberty Memorial originated in 1918 as a way to create a lasting monument to the men and women who had served in World War 1, and most notably, for those who had died. Following an amazing fundraising effort that raised over \$2.5 million in just ten days, the Kansas City Chapter of the AIA held a design competition to choose a designer. A design submitted by Harold Van Buren Magonigle was selected. Originally completed in 1935, time deteriorated the physical structure of the Liberty Memorial and in 1994 it was closed to the public. In 1998 the public voiced their support again for this memorial and once again raised funds to support restoration. This restoration included an 80,000 sq ft expansion of the World War 1 museum, which in 2006 was declared the nation's official museum dedicated to World War 1 history. www.theworldwar.org

The Indiana limestone-clad building is a classical Egyptian Revival style of architecture. The grounds of Liberty Memorial include two large sphinx sculptures,



Liberty Memorial



Kansas City barbecue is served up at Sturgis Materials

a 217-foot tower and the structures that house the museum. Other notable stones used in construction are Kasota Granite, Italian Travertine, and Kasota Marble.

Restoration specialist Charles "Chuck" Scammel, of Hoffman Cortes Restoration provided a thorough recount of the expansive restoration process undertaken at the memorial. Assisted by Indiana Limestone Institute long-time executive director, Jim Owens, attendees gained a sense of both the expertise necessary to repair and replace the stone installations, and the cultural importance given to the memorial by the veterans and townspeople of Kansas City and beyond.



Northern Stone Supply's Greg Osterhout tries out the Mighty C stone splitter at Sturgis Materials stone yard.

Sturgis Materials

Sturgis Materials then opened their doors to attendees and served up an authentic Kansas City barbecue as we enjoyed a relaxing afternoon at their showroom and stone yard. Various distributor representatives were on hand to answer questions, and a Mighty C single head electric stone chisel was on display to demonstrate the machine's convenient use for trimming thin veneer stone on the job site.

Architects Panel

Back at the hotel, our group met with three members of Populous Architects, who are based in the firm's Kansas City office. Populous, formerly HOK Sport, encompasses every expertise in building design and services and fosters human connection by creating environments that draw people together.



Ranier DeVido – Devido Stone; Ed Walsh and Marc Lonesk of Sturgis Materials enjoying a moment at JJ's restaurant.



Drilling limestone blocks at US Stone Industries Cottonwood Falls quarry.



Cottonwood Falls quarry – block extraction

Greg Sherlock, AIA NCARB stated that stone is the material of choice for architects – it provides a connection to place. He added that his clients are demanding more quality for less construction time and less money. He challenges that we as an industry need to respond to this trend.



Michael Bischoff, Pei Cobb Freed NY, worked in conjunction with local architect Jeff Ramsey of Ellerbe Becket who provided on site management.

Craig Milde, AIA, NCARB, admitted he had not had much experience working with stone in his designs, and that his construction managers tell him “no, can’t use stone, it is too expensive”. Craig again spoke of the building industry being on a fast track and challenged our industry to consider utilization of building systems that incorporate installation of stone in reduced time and with reduced construction costs. He used the Empire State Building as a successful system-built structure and noted that our installation methods haven’t evolved much since then. He mentioned curtain wall and panelized stone installation systems as a necessary way to maintain stone in contemporary design.

John Williams, CSI, CCS, a specifier at Populous, feels one of the key pieces of stone information lacking for the designer is “are we using the stone the right way?” He added that designers need standards for ADA compliance; product test results; support guidelines; vertical load limitations; and where do they find this

information? The audience gave several examples of where to find some information but agreed that we as an industry must do more research.

When asked about how the stone industry can do a better job promoting natural stone to designers, John replied that there should be some kind of medallion they can “stamp” on a project to denote natural stone was used. This and the reference to further research needed to give designers what they need was a perfect tie in to the Natural Stone Council’s update on their research progress. (Notes from that discussion are included in the BSI Sept/Oct 2009 newsletter).

In closing we also learned that none of the three architects receives our Building Stone magazine, and they didn’t believe the industry had such a publication. We also heard that if the designers are looking for specs, they will look at www.4specs.com, or go directly to the source, and they use www.ARCAT.com only as a last resort, as this is an outdated mode of providing detailed data. Web sites are best.

Tuesday

While Tuesday involved a lengthy bus ride throughout Kansas, we covered a lot of territory and saw many great sites.

US Stone Industries welcomed us at their Cottonwood Falls limestone quarry where we saw huge blocks plucked from the ledge floor with a large excavator. This seemed effortless after precise rows of sawn channels were cut into the ledge. US Stone allowed full access to their site both in Cottonwood and in Herington, KS where they operate a large fabrication facility from a refurbished airport hangar. Stone was being split, sawn, chiseled, and tumbled while we were there giving everyone a full demonstration of their fabricating capabilities.

Additionally, we were treated to a presentation by Ian Avent and Jeff Lackie of Husqvarna-Diamant Boart, who gave full explanation of their diamond saw blade technology currently available, and in use by our industry. Several examples were in works on the US Stone fabrication equipment.

Back on the buses and off to Topeka, Kansas for an impressive tour of the State Capitol restoration progress. Eric Kudrna and Mike Katske of Quarra Stone Company, fabricators of the Cottonwood limestone supplied by US Stone Industries, and JE Dunn Construction are involved in a four year project started in 2008 to replace over 4,000 units of aged and deteriorated Kansas limestone. This restoration effort requires traditional masonry handwork and the utilization of highly refined techniques for hammer and chisel work to replicate the finish on the original stonework. The goal is to seamlessly patch the repaired or replaced stone so it is not visible to the eye. By all counts, they have done an awe-inspiring job.

The 2009 BSI Study Tour wrapped up with a casual dinner event at JJ’s restaurant just blocks from our hotel. This gave us a chance to stretch our legs after a long journey and enjoy a great meal and one final opportunity for fellowship.

Thank you again to our hosts, sponsors, and all who attended this event.



Restored view of the Kansas State Capitol building.



Slab sawing at US Stone Industries’ Herington, KS facility.



Eric Kudrna points out a Dutchman patch at the Kansas State Capitol restoration project.



Slab being moved onto saw at Herington facility.