It is common knowledge that what cannot bend will break. This statement is as true for an organization as it is for concrete: flexibility is actually a source of strength.

One irrefutable sign of ACI’s flexibility is in its nimble responses to change. Each year we see the smooth transition from one ACI President to another. We also witness new members getting their bearings as they attend their first conventions, and ACI veterans passing on the torch after memorable service. On that second note, thank you, David Sanders, for the invaluable contributions made during your years of service as Chair of the Technical Activities Committee. I am thrilled to report that the Student and Young Professional Networking Event at our Spring Convention drew many participants, all eager to make their mark on this organization. The March convention also saw record attendance, despite families tightening their budgets in this time of nascent economic recovery. This is a strong indication that ACI continues to serve its members’ needs and provide excellent value.

ACI continually adapts by forming new committees to handle challenges and opportunities in the realm of concrete. Thanks to Andrea Schokker, Chair of ACI Committee 130, Sustainability of Concrete, for strong leadership in this area of growing importance. Thanks also to Peter Carrato, Chair of ACI Committee 131, Building Information Modeling for Concrete Structures, for bringing this exciting technological opportunity to our industry. Undreamed of efficiency is possible by harnessing this tool. Both of these relatively new committees are helping ACI remain at the cutting edge of technologies and trends that are truly shaping the future of concrete use.

Unfortunately, sometimes we witness firsthand the danger of rigidity: the recent devastating earthquakes in Chile, China, and Haiti serve to remind us that an inability to flex leads to collapse, both metaphorically and literally. While these natural disasters were tragic, in their wake we at ACI have the opportunity to extend our leadership and expertise in rebuilding the affected areas. A very timely event at the Spring Convention was a Hot Topic Session on the reconstruction efforts in Haiti. Presentation topics included the damage and aftermath of the Haiti earthquake from an eyewitness perspective, seismicity of the Caribbean, firsthand evaluation of the construction used in Haiti one month after the earthquake, and lessons learned for reinforced concrete construction in the Americas from the Haiti earthquake.

A significant expression of ACI’s flexibility and adaptability is its production of committee documents and other publications. These range in scope from addressing wide industry trends to informing us on very specific, technical points. Some recent publications, of which more information can be found on ACI’s Web site, include:

- “Report on Early-Age Cracking: Causes, Measurement, and Mitigation (ACI 231R-10)” contains strategies for reducing early-age cracking;
- “Report on Permeable Concrete (ACI 522R-10)” provides technical information on various properties of pervious concrete, which is widely recognized as a sustainable building material;
- “Report on the Physical Properties and Durability of Fiber-Reinforced Concrete (ACI 544.5R-10)” includes an overview to help tailor new, sustainable, and durable concrete mixtures;
- The Sustainable Concrete Guide—Strategies and Examples (published by the U.S. Green Concrete Council and authored by Andrea J. Schokker) is the first-ever comprehensive resource on concrete and sustainability and provides insight on specific strategies for the best use of concrete in high-performance, long-lasting, green buildings through case studies and technical data and references; and
- “Concrete: The Sustainable Material Choice CD-ROM (SP-269)” features seven papers presented by ACI Committees 130 and 233 at the ACI Spring 2009 Convention in San Antonio, TX.

Although it turned 106 this year, ACI has never been more nimble. Our staff, volunteers, and members are some of the most ingenious and adaptive people I have ever had the pleasure to meet. As we maintain our organization’s flexibility, we make it ever stronger.

Richard D. Stehly
Dick.Stehly@concrete.org