

Construction Collapse Case Studies – What Engineers Should Know

Best Presentation at the 2011 Structures Congress

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At the 2011 SEI Structures Congress in Henderson, Nevada, participants selected the presentation they found to be the “Best of the Best” among those offered during the three days of technical sessions. This year’s winner for best presentation was “Construction Collapse Case Studies – What Engineers Should Know” presented by Jon Magnusson of Magnusson Klemencic Associates, an engineering firm which maintains its headquarters in Seattle, Washington with offices in Chicago and Riyadh. Mr. Magnusson is a licensed professional engineer in 23 states.

At the 2011 Structural Engineering Congress, Mr. Magnusson shared the insights he has gained from his 35 years of experience by providing an excellent presentation which included a case study of a construction crane collapse during the early phases of construction. Beginning with the core technical and communication issues which caused the collapse, he went on to discuss the issues which then grew out of a work site incident of this kind and how firms and their staffs could best respond to these issues. The presentation provided a number of excellent practical examples of how communication can be improved between the general contractor and the engineers performing “means and methods” construction engineering, to help prevent problems of this kind. There was a discussion of how various claims stemming from an incident should be dealt with from the beginning of the incident on through the process of its resolution. The presentation provided a primer on the response to a major construction claim, and provided those in attendance with insights to consider in their future project development efforts. Mr. Magnusson has a gift for communicating complex subjects in a straightforward and clear manner that the members of the audience were able to easily grasp and find relevant to their own work experience. The appreciative audience responded to this excellent presentation by selecting it as the 2011 ASCE SEI Structures Congress Best Presentation.

Jon Magnusson is the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Magnusson Klemencic Associates. Originally founded in 1923, the firm has completed projects

in 47 states and 48 countries. Jon joined the firm, then known as Skilling Helle Christiansen Robertson, in 1976. Jon arrived on the scene after completing his bachelors’ degree in civil engineering at the University of Washington, where he graduated summa cum laude, and a master’s degree at the University of California Berkeley. He was named a principal at the age of 30, CEO at age 34, and Chairman at age 44. In 2003, the firm was renamed Magnusson Klemencic Associates (MKA). Nationally, he has contributed his engineering expertise to many significant projects, most recently to the design of a new football stadium on the University of Minnesota campus, as well as convention centers in Phoenix, Honolulu, and Minneapolis. Current projects include a

complete reconstruction of the University of Washington Stadium and a new stadium for the San Francisco 49ers. He has contributed to the skyline and culture of his home in Seattle, providing structural engineering for the Experience Music Project, Safeco Field, Qwest Field, Key Arena, the Seattle Central Library and many other projects. He has previously served on the SEI Board of Governors and was recently recognized as a Distinguished Member of ASCE, has been “Engineer of the Year” for the State of Washington, is a Lifetime Honorary Member of the National American Institute of Architects, a Fellow of the Institution of Structural Engineers in London, and is a past recipient of the ASCE Ernest E. Howard Award for contributions to the advancement of structural engineering. ■

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