Editor’s Overview

Game Changer This Time

by Ricia Sturgeon-Hendrick

Our cover story and feature this month is thyssenkrupp’s MULTI, widely believed to be an industry “game changer” for high-rise construction. This is not the first time this type of system has appeared on the market; the Otis Odyssey came and went some 20 years ago. Perhaps the time was not right or the need not strong enough. But, buildings have continued to grow taller, and the race for height put strains on the elevator systems – the higher the building, the heavier the rope needed to haul us up there. I think this is just the right time for a multidirectional ropeless system to launch a new paradigm.

Like its predecessor, the marketing campaign for the thyssenkrupp MULTI was a tour de force, with invitations to more than 200 architects, engineers, consultants, developers and press from around the world, including ELEVATOR WORLD. Our managing editor, Angela C. Baldwin, grabbed the opportunity to go to Germany to see the amazing new concept in action. Her article, Framing Up the Future, takes us to Rottweil, Germany, and into the test tower, where lightweight elevators go up, down and sideways using a linear technology (the result of 77 patents). The claims are breathtaking – a 50% gain in capacity and 50% smaller elevator footprint! In just a few years, we can all “kick the tires,” as the concept will go into Berlin’s East Side Tower, to be completed in 2020.

This issue is our largest this year, as suppliers vie to be front and center for the National Association of Elevator Contractors (NAEC) Convention and Expo in Orlando. We have a special section with details of the NAEC site and expo, including the exhibit hall layout and exhibitor list. There is a great article on Orlando itself by our assistant editor, Matt Irvin, plus an Industry Dialogue, Florida Style by our associate editor, Kaija Wilkinson, touting Florida as one of the hottest markets in the U.S.

Speaking of events, we feature two others this month. Elevator U 2017 was held at the University of Virginia (UVA) in Charlottesville. Author EW Sales/Marketing Manager Caleb Givens said it was one of the best attended in recent years, with 160 attendees and 50 exhibitors. The emphasis was on education, and the background of UVA was an excellent place for it. The Elevator U board honored EW Editor Emeritus Robert S. Caporale in an emotional tribute. Further north, EW Senior Associate Editor Lee Freeland wrote coverage of CECA 2017. Sited in Collingwood, a resort nearly two hours north of Toronto, this, too, was an event fully packed with exhibits and very active member meetings. The distance did not deter visitors. This event spurred several Company Spotlights, including on AVT Beckett, which is expanding to the U.S., and Delta Elevator, celebrating its 50th anniversary. At another event, the Elevator Industry Safety Summit (reported on last month), Wilkinson finally came face to face with the man she had been pursuing for an interview, IUEC General President, Frank Christensen. In Man of Action, he was glad to share his thoughts on the state of the industry, the union, training and safety. His comments make for interesting reading — especially those on industry high wages!

Our focus topic this month is Maintenance and Modernization. In Power Play, Brad Nemeth educates on the energy consumption of elevators, which was halved in the 1990s and again recently. Now, elevators use only about 10%, but new buildings, he reports, are striving for “net zero” by using solar and low-energy components. Our Continuing Education article is part two of Traction for Field Personnel by John W. Koshak — a perfect addition to our focus topic. It examines the components used in a traction elevator, including how they are maintained and tested. A great little article by Draka and Gustav Wolf, Wire Rope Basics highlights the proper handling of rope, plus tensioning and lubrication. A How-To From Texacone by Wallace T. Wheeler follows it, providing an in-depth look at maintaining and troubleshooting packing for hydraulic elevators. Texacone has been providing seals and packing for 50 years.

There is no way to highlight all that is packed into this oversized issue. The coverage ranges high and wide to cover so many areas and topics – one might even say it is “multidirectional.” Somehow, I believe we are going to hear a lot more about that word! 🌐