

FOREWORD

Since the formation of AIST in 2004, the association's annual conference — AISTech — has grown stronger each spring, evolving into the world's most comprehensive technology conference for the steel industry. In 2008, AISTech achieved record attendance, a record number of exhibits, and greatly increased international participation.

What can we expect in 2009? That is a question on all of our minds and one that goes far beyond this conference and the steel industry. Although the current economic climate is unlike anything experienced during our professional careers, we know that eventually the market will improve. Companies with a well-trained workforce, utilizing the latest in manufacturing efficiencies, will fare the best in this competitive, global steel market.

This year's Conference Planning Committee (CPC) has worked diligently to build on the foundation of past events to provide unparalleled value in both educational and networking opportunities. Our event, on May 4–7, will feature more than 300 diverse technical presentations, a Town Hall–style panel of our industry's top executives, as well as several additional presentations by respected leaders. In addition, this year's convention will host the Asia-Pacific Partnership's Technology Showcase, focusing on clean energy technologies.

Working in tandem with the Conference Planning Committee is the Exhibitor Committee. This year's Exhibitor Committee, under the direction of Laura Freehling of Berry Metal Co., has worked to bring together one of the world's largest collections of iron and steel technologies under one roof. With over 350 companies represented on the exhibit floor, there will be ample opportunity for every attendee to discover numerous technologies to improve performance in his or her organization.

Bringing new technical talent into our industry is certainly critical for our sustained success. The AIST Foundation works to attract that talent through scholarships and grants, and by educating the public about rewarding career opportunities available in the iron and steel industry.

On behalf of everyone involved, welcome to St. Louis, Mo., for AISTech 2009 — a world-class steel conference and exposition.



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