



Lean Construction Institute

Building Knowledge in Design and Construction

Chicago of all places! That was my mantra going into last week's kick-off of the Chicago Community of Practice. I meant it seriously and half-heartedly at the same time. On the jocular side, I love Chicago. It is a great city with a great tradition of building and architecture and a place where lean design and construction principles can really benefit the community. On the serious side, though, there are many traditional barriers to the introduction of a new paradigm meant to transform the industry. Chicago is very parochial (I was told by my friends in Milwaukee). It has a strong Union tradition. It's politics are very "political." The idea of introducing a collaborative, transparent process in Chicago was just as odd as say, introducing that process in Boston, New York or Philadelphia. We have in fact introduced these ideas in Boston (perhaps as early as 2009 but certainly in 2010) and in New York and Philadelphia (this year).

So I should not have been surprised that the ideas had currency in traditional urban settings. I just didn't know how much. Thanks to the terrific efforts and "big shoulders" of the Chicago Community of Practice Core Group (including Afshan Barshan, Mark Skender, Bob Krier, Bob Pratt, Cindy Menches and Rich Seiler among others), 67 participants showed up for the two-day introduction in space provided by Drinker Biddle (a national law firm with beautiful space on the 37th floor on Wacker Drive overlooking the Chicago River).

After the traditional Introduction to Lean on Thursday, Friday hosted presentations by Bob Krier (Hill) and Karl Heitman (Heitman Architects) reported on Building Information Modeling and leveraging it in lean ways for clients; Afshan Barshan and Mark Skender discussed Skender Construction's lean journey and included an owner/superintendent/trade panel to discuss implementation of lean on a Northwest Hospital project and Clay Goser and Dawn Naney (Symphony) discussed the owner's experience in implementing a lean operation system on the St. Peters Hospital project in St. Louis.

It was a tremendous event. It is certainly one of the largest groups we've had for a kick-off Introduction to Lean. The extraordinary energy of the Core Group leads me to believe that in addition to Northwest and new projects by Advocate Health Care, Chicago may well be an increasingly vibrant market for lean and IPD services.

Hopefully this report will find you preparing for a Thanksgiving Day with family and friends. We have much to be thankful for this year at LCI. We have had great growth in our community, great support for our programs and Congress and increasing interest within the industry for lean design and construction principles and processes. We've added stronger industry relationships and we'll be adding more in the coming months. But most importantly, we have

you to thank for your continued contributions to our community. Your support is vital to our mission. Thanks for all you do.