PITTSBURGH AREA CHAPTER
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American Concrete Institute
Pittsburgh Area Chapter
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Fall 2026

CHAPTER NEWS

Progress through Knowledge

Concrete In the Steel City

FOUNDERS AWARDS — 2026-2027 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Pittsburgh Area Chapter of the American Concrete Institute established this Award in 1988 to provide financial assistance for undergraduate students with an interest in the areas of cement technology, concrete technology, design or construction.

To receive consideration, a student must be currently enrolled into an undergraduate program at an institution, and/or originally reside, within the boundaries of the Pittsburgh Area Chapter. (Past recipients of the Founders Award are not eligible.)

At this time, we are accepting applications for the 2026/2027 academic year. To be a candidate for this award, the student must submit the following: the Founders Award application; a letter of transmittal, an official copy of their transcript of grades; and two letters of recommendation.

Applications must be received by January 31, 2027.

*If you would like to obtain an application form or additional information, go to **acipgh.org** and click on the 'Awards' tab.*

PITTSBURGH AREA CHAPTER
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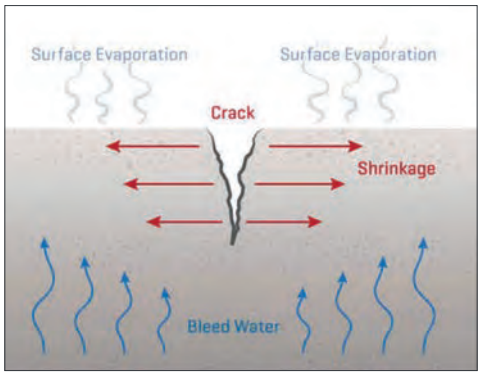
aci 2025 Excellent Chapter
Fall 2026

CHAPTER NEWS

Choosing the Right Fiber: Five Characteristics to Know

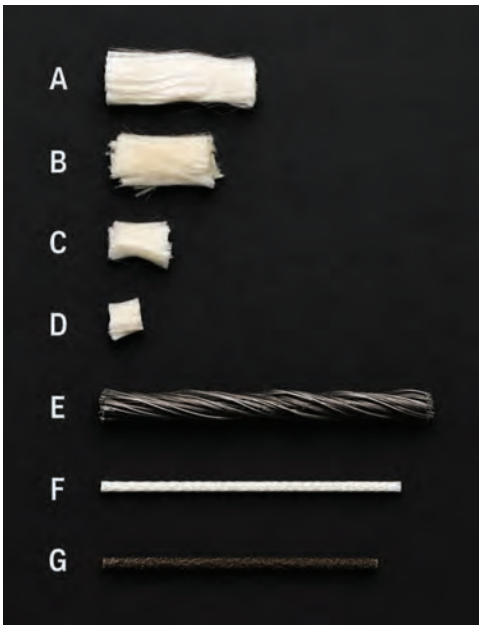
By Mac Young | Adapted from A Survey of Fiber Options, Shotcrete, 3rd Quarter 2026. Figures reproduced from original article.

Today's concrete industry offers dozens of fiber options. That variety is an advantage, but it can also make selecting the right product difficult. Fibers help control early-age cracking and bridge cracks that develop after concrete hardens. The key is matching the fiber's characteristics to the application.



Plastic shrinkage cracking (Fig. 1)

There is a lighthearted story I tell to explain why this matters. My grandmother wanted a lightweight, easy-to-walk dog, so she went to the local animal shelter looking for a beagle puppy. She chose the cutest one, named him Thor, and brought him home. Instead of becoming a beagle, Thor grew into a 120 lb (54 kg) Rottweiler. He certainly lived up to his name. Just as my grandmother should have understood the characteristics of the dog she was choosing, we need to understand the fibers we put into concrete.



Micro- and macrofiber lengths (Fig. 4)

Chemistry. A fiber's composition influences its behavior in the concrete matrix. Steel, polypropylene, acrylic, glass, basalt, and cellulose offer different characteristics. Stability in an alkaline environment and water absorption are among the factors to evaluate.

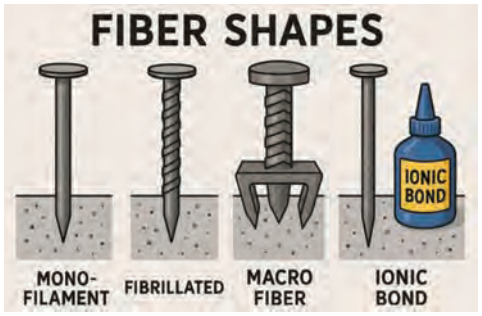
Length. Short fibers are generally more effective for plastic shrinkage and early-age cracking. Longer fibers bridge larger cracks in hardened concrete and can contribute to residual strength and toughness.

Shape. Monofilament, fibrillated, and macro fibers provide different forms of anchorage. I compare them to a finish nail, wood screw, and lag bolt: all have a purpose, but they are not designed to do the same job.

Aspect ratio and delivery. Aspect ratio compares a fiber's length with its thickness. Higher ratios can help with crack bridging but may complicate dispersion. Bundles and pucks can make certain fibers easier to introduce and distribute during mixing.

Dosage. Dosage ties the first four characteristics together. Appropriate rates vary widely by chemistry, application, and required performance. The final selection should be based on project-specific requirements rather than a generic rule of thumb.

No fiber is a one-size-fits-all solution. Once you understand chemistry, length, shape, aspect ratio, and dosage, choosing a fiber becomes less about guesswork and more about matching the material to the work.



Fiber geometry analogy (Fig. 6)

President's Message

By Ryan Pendeville



Hello everyone, and thank you for the opportunity to serve as chapter president this year. We are heading into what looks to be another great season of certifications and dinner meetings for the Pittsburgh Chapter.

Before I talk about what's ahead, I'd like to thank the people who contribute so much to the chapter. First, thank you to our past presidents, Carly McGee and Josh Bryan, for their hard work and for continuing to guide the chapter. Thank you also to Andy and Bob Lawrence, who conduct all of our certifications. They put a significant amount of time into this each year, and the income it generates is what sustains the chapter. I also want to thank Beth Rader, who organizes it all. As board members come and go, Beth is the constant who keeps everything running seamlessly. Finally, thank you to all of our board members for devoting their time to the organization and to the concrete industry as a whole. It's great to see so many people committed to advancing our industry.

We have a lot planned for the Fall/Winter season. As usual, we'll be hosting a variety of certification programs; please visit acipgh.org for the full list. New this season, we'll also offer certification classes to smaller groups upon request, so please reach out if that interests you. And of course, we'll continue our monthly dinner meetings and our annual awards banquet.

As many of you know, dinner meeting attendance has declined in recent years, and we are determined to reverse that trend. We have a great lineup of speakers this season, along with some new ideas to mix things up, like a concrete trivia night. Growing attendance is our number one priority this year, so if you have ideas for drawing more people in, please let us know. I hope to see you at a meeting this season!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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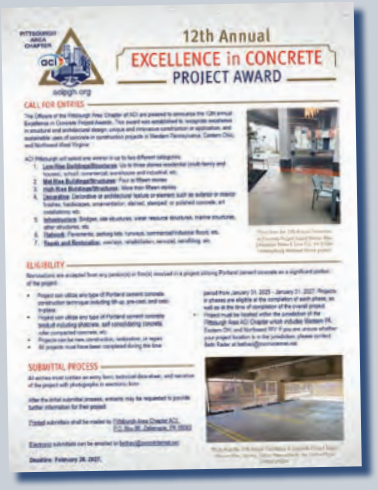
Chapter News is published by the American Concrete Institute, Pittsburgh Area Chapter for the purpose of informing members and others about issues of concern to the concrete industry. If you have information to include in this publication or any comments, contact ACI Pittsburgh Chapter at 724-452-1468

12TH ANNUAL
EXCELLENCE IN CONCRETE PROJECT AWARD



We encourage you to submit a project for the 12th Annual Excellence in Concrete Project Award – and share the opportunity with others in the Pittsburgh area concrete community – whether they are a member of ACI or not.

Please be on the lookout for the latest application at acipgh.org/.

Your help is needed to make this program successful!

2026-2027 Pittsburgh Area Chapter Meetings & Events

MEETING DATES

Wednesday - November 11, 2026
Allegheny Mineral's Princeton Quarry Tour

Wednesday - December 16, 2026
Trivia Night

Wednesday - January 20, 2027
(Details TBD)

Wednesday - February 17, 2027
(Details TBD)

Wednesday - March 24, 2027
(Details TBD)

THANK YOU!
- 2026 GOLF OUTING SPONSORS -

- Bryan Materials Group
- DensiCrete
- Euclid Chemical
- Golden Triangle Construction
- KTA-Tator, Inc.
- Lutz Concrete Construction



ACI – PITTSBURGH AREA CHAPTER
FALL 2026/SPRING 2027 CERTIFICATION SCHEDULE

ACI Concrete Field Tech – Grade I	Location
November 23-24, 2026	Castle Builders Supply, Hermitage, PA
December 14-15, 2026	Ligonier Stone & Lime, Latrobe, PA
January 11-12, 2027	Castle Builders Supply – Shippenville, PA
January 25-26, 2027	Riverside Builders Supply – Coraopolis, PA
February 8-9, 2027	New Enterprise Stone & Lime – Roaring Spring, PA
February 22-23, 2027	Golden Triangle Construction – Imperial, PA
March 8-9, 2027	Howard Concrete Pumping – Canonsburg, PA
Concrete Flatwork Finisher/Tech	**Location**
March 12, 2027	Golden Triangle Construction - Imperial
Concrete Strength & Aggregate Testing Tech	**Location**
TBD – Based on Demand	Pittsburgh Area *Minimum of 10 registrants required to hold a class*
To download a registration form or to register on-line log onto: acipgh.org	

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RECERTIFYING AND BECOMING CERTIFIED FOR THE FIRST TIME?
From a testing standpoint there is no difference. Whether you are obtaining your certification for the first time vs. renewing your certification you still must take both the written and performance exams. The only difference would be if you would choose not to attend the review portion of the course (Day 1). However, most people choose to partake in the review because of the changes that may have been implemented since your initial certification.