



Potucek has recently been working on the Motzha Bridges near Jerusalem, Israel.

## TRANSFORMING DRAWINGS INTO REALITY

JINDRICH POTUCEK ENJOYS SEEING HIS BRIDGE DESIGNS TURNED INTO CONCRETE AND STEEL

By Christina M. Zweig

**JINDRICH POTUCEK**, a bridge engineer at FINLEY Engineering Group, is an active high-achiever who has traveled across the globe in pursuit of the joy of seeing lines on a drawing transformed into real, solid structures used by people. Potucek was born in 1984 in Liberec, Czechoslovakia (now Czech Republic), and attended a Structural and Roadway Engineering program at the Czech Technical University of Prague for his undergraduate degree.

Potucek said, “I always knew I wanted to go to college,” but his decision to become an engineer evolved over time. Design genes run in his family and Potucek’s brother, an architect, also gave him some insight into the profession.

Though Potucek was initially interested in both civil and chemical engineering, an experience working in construction one summer ultimately helped shape his decision as he realized how much he enjoyed seeing the physical creation of a design. “I enjoyed being part of something which was built,” he said. “I decided on civil engineering because chemical engineering is more invisible and you don’t see the results of your work.”

Potucek’s realization fueled him to pursue his academics to a high level, a drive that only became stronger with time and eventually led him to leave his home country, family, and friends in pursuit of his passion.

“I always wanted to study abroad and learn French,” Potucek said, so he bravely took a big leap and left his home country to study at École des Ponts ParisTech, formerly ENCP, in Paris. “I thought it would be a great opportunity to get my double major and master’s degree from the best civil engineering school in Europe,” he said. Potucek impressively attained a Master’s Degree in Civil Engineering from both Czech Technical University in Prague and École des Ponts ParisTech.

Potucek was required to do an internship as part of his education, and serendipitously one of his professors at the École des Ponts ParisTech, Jacques Combault, was also technical director at FINLEY. After completing his internship with FINLEY in 2011, Potucek was offered a position as bridge designer.

When asked if he had any important mentors, Potucek said, “I would name three important figures, all of them from Finley Engineering Group, Inc.: Craig Finley, P.E., president, who first gave me the opportunity and helped me with my first steps in the United States; Jerry Pfuntner, P.E., regional bridge engineer, with his infinite patience to answer my numerous questions and who mentors me on a daily basis; [and] Jacques Combault, technical director at FINLEY and professor at École des Ponts ParisTech, is a great inspiration for me — professionally and personally.”

Today, Potucek’s work experience includes concrete segmental, steel box girder, and routine structures. His first project included designing the 300-foot-long, 50-foot-high falsework for the Ironton-Russell Bridge. “This was my first design of which I saw pictures and realized that my design was actually being built,” Potucek said. “This is the point where our job gets truly exciting.”

Potucek also worked on the Motzha Bridges near Jerusalem, Israel, built using a launching gantry. “I haven’t worked more on another project than Motzha, and I did close to 100 percent of all calculations,” he said. “The bridge construction started about a month ago and again, it’s very exciting to see the structure growing. I have learned a lot about bridge design, construction, and also communicating with all parties involved in a project on this bridge.”

Potucek’s background brings an interesting perspective, humor, and outlook to the office.

“Jindrich is a complex person and an excellent young engineer,” Craig Finley said. “He has worked very hard and overcome many challenges to get to where he is today. He is very driven to work on technically difficult bridge engineering projects and puts in the effort to completely understand the challenge and investigate the solutions that he will propose to solve them. As the natural leader of the young professionals in our office, he does a great job in expressing his concerns and suggestions for improvements that could be implemented. We appreciate his maturity and his thought process and include him



Jindrich Potucek, a bridge engineer at FINLEY Engineering Group, attained master's degrees in Civil Engineering in Prague and Paris.

in several management decisions on FINLEY's intern program, health insurance/wellness program."

When asked if he had any advice for young people looking to become engineers or succeed in this profession, Potucek said, "First, engineering is a very rewarding career when you see your design being transformed from lines on a drawing into a real, solid structure that people will use. Second, it takes time to learn and grow. Be patient. Third, learn everything you can from the senior-level engineers. Work in a small, niche-focused company and you'll get to work on more complex projects."

In addition to his engineering achievements, Potucek is an avid outdoor sports enthusiast who enjoys rock-climbing, mountaineering, and snowboarding. He recently ran a marathon in Paris and a half-marathon in Tallahassee, Fla. He also enjoys spending time with his family; he and his wife Renata have a new son, Micklaus.

"I have enjoyed watching the change of a driven young bridge engineer expanding his horizons to include a strong sense of family and commitment and all that entails," Finley said. "His priorities have been refined and adjusted, and he has handled the transition in good form.

"To sum up my experience with Jindrich: He is one of the most talented young engineers I've seen in my 35 years of engineering," Finley said. "He embodies all that is good in engineering — brains, dedication, and heart. I highly recommend him as one of the brightest and best young engineers in the country. He has my utmost respect in all facets of his professional and personal life."

COMMERCIAL & STRUCTURAL

# INNOVATION

TYFO® FIBRWRAP® SYSTEMS **STRENGTHEN VITAL INFRASTRUCTURE** SUCH AS BRIDGES, PIPELINES, BUILDINGS AND OTHER STRUCTURES.



The Tyfo® Fibrwrap® systems are an innovative concept that was originally tested and validated at the structures lab in UC San Diego. With continuous testing, we invent and improve our systems worldwide. Our latest full-scale testing at UCSD has verified our patent pending anchor detailing which provides shear enhancement to columns and connections having access to only three sides.

Fyfe engineers provide personalized technical support with comprehensive design and specification support packages at no obligation and at no cost.



858.642.0694  
www.fyfeco.com

*Fyfe Company is proud to be a part of the Aegion Commercial & Structural platform.*

© 2014 Aegion Corporation