

SSDA, Inc.

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Seismic Structural Design Associates Successfully Upholds Its Groundbreaking Patent for Design of Structural Steel Seismic Connections

Company settles infringement suit with WHL Consulting Engineers over SlottedWeb™ design used in earthquake-resistant construction; SSDA receives payment and issues license to WHL; industry-standard patent credited with improved safety and major savings in large building construction; Venable LLP represented SSDA in asserting patent rights

LOS ANGELES, CA (March 9, 2007) – Successfully resolving its first patent infringement suit, construction engineering firm **Seismic Structural Design Associates, Inc. (SSDA)** has upheld the patents protecting its SlottedWeb™ structural steel seismic connection against unlicensed use.

The settlement includes confirmation by Defendants Loren Carpenter, Ph.D. and WHL Consulting Engineers that the extended weld access hole is covered by the SSDA SlottedWeb™ patents, by virtue of their purchase of a license to utilize this SSDA technology.

The award-nominated SlottedWeb™ connection is a structurally important and cost-effective design that has become the standard for earthquake resistant construction. Over 400 buildings nationally, including commercial office buildings, hospitals, schools, hotels, and residential structures, already license SSDA's SlottedWeb™ connection to secure the integrity of their structures.

Washington, DC-based law firm **Venable LLP** represented SSDA in the litigation. Venable partners **James Burdett** and **Peter Curtin** were among the attorneys working on behalf of SSDA.

“We are very satisfied with this settlement, especially since it follows the first time we had to take legal action to support the patent for our slotted web design,” said SSDA President **Jay Allen**.

“We believe this case demonstrated the strength of our intellectual property and reflects the merit of our design, as well as the importance of the SlottedWeb™ connection to builders throughout the construction and engineering industries,” said James Partridge, a

co-inventor of the patented connections along with Jay Allen and Ralph M. Richard, Ph.D.

“We would also like to acknowledge the work done by Venable, first in taking our case forward and then helping secure a successful resolution that led to our licensing agreement with WHL,” Mr. Allen said.

The settlement comes out of a suit filed in Los Angeles federal district court in 2005, charging that WHL engaged in various infringements of SSSA patented designs. The infringement occurred at Constellation Place, a 35 story high-rise property designed by architect Johnson Fain Partners, developed by JMB Realty Investment Partners, and built by Hathaway-Dinwiddie Construction with steel subcontractor Herrick Corporation.

The SlottedWeb™ connection, which was nominated for a 2002 NOVA Award for innovation in the construction industry, works to improve a previous method of field-welded beam-to-column frame connection that was in widespread use prior to the famous Northridge earthquake of 1994. Despite its widespread use, that field-welded connection was later considered by most structural engineers to be fundamentally flawed.

In SSSA’s patented design for the SlottedWeb™, longitudinal slots are cut to separate beam flanges from the beam web in the region of the connection, and the beam web is welded to the column flange. These changes dramatically alter the force, stress, and strain distributions and greatly extend the connection’s seismic cyclic life.

There are two other designs that also fix the pre-Northridge flaw, but both are significantly more expensive than the SlottedWeb™. The SlottedWeb™ connection has been approved for general use as a pre-qualified connection in Special Moment Frames (SMF) by the International Code Council (ICC). It also satisfies the April 15, 1997 Seismic Provisions for Structural Steel Buildings of the American Institute for Steel Construction (<http://www.aisc.org>), as well as its Supplements No. 1 dated February 15, 1999 and No. 2 dated November 10, 2000.

A description of the SlottedWeb™ connection is also shown in widely disseminated publications of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (), such as FEMA-350 "Recommended Seismic Design Criteria for New Steel Moment-Frame Buildings," and in FEMA-351 "Recommended Seismic Evaluation and Upgrade Criteria for Existing Steel Moment-Frame Buildings." The SSSA website, with extensive technical data, is located at www.slottedweb.com.

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