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January/February 2007

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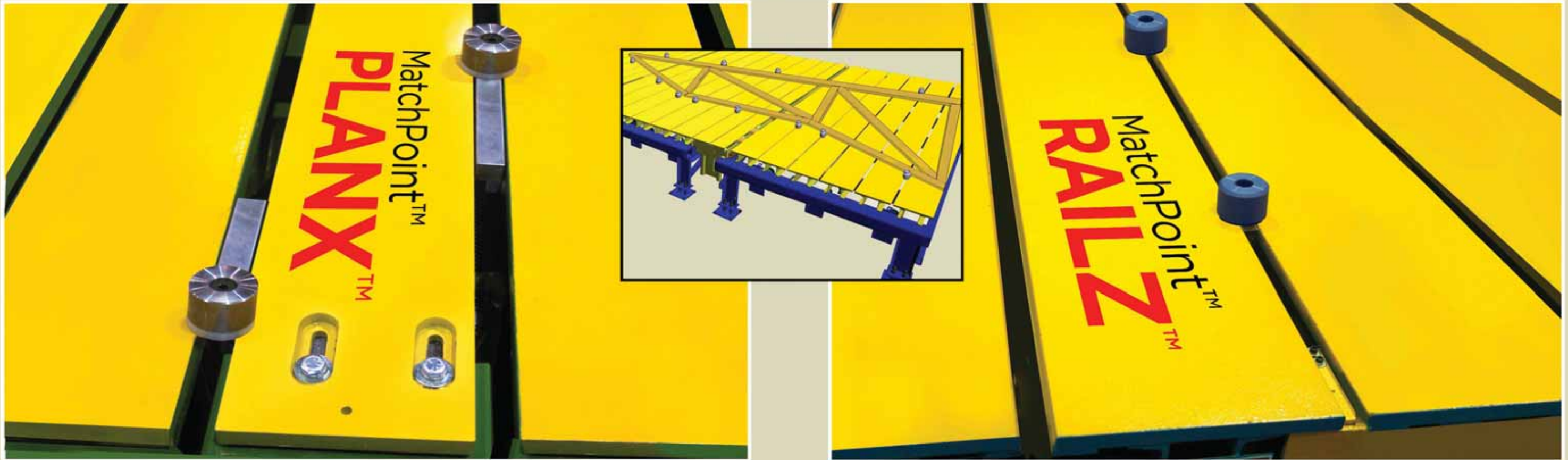
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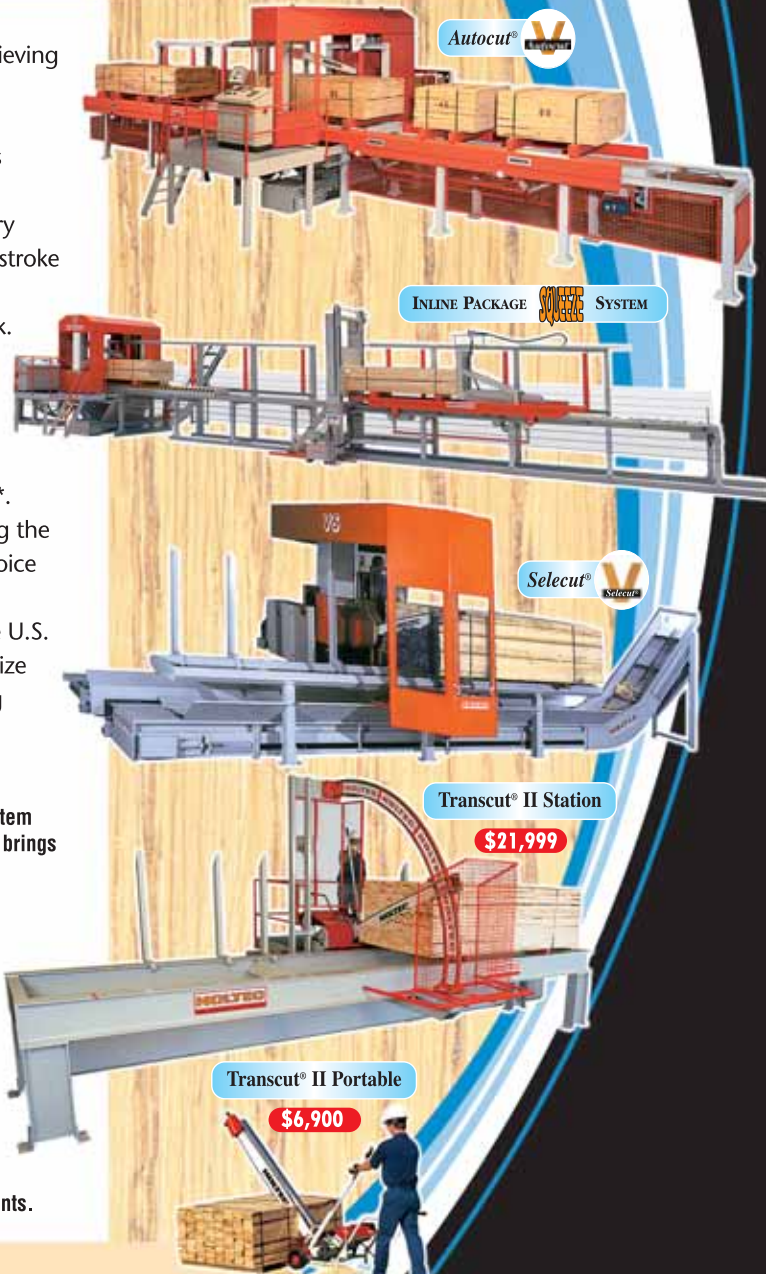


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THE FUTURE OF FRAMING

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## Editor's Message

Wall Panels—Your Customers' (and Your Business') Ticket to Added Value

by Barry Dixon

The popularity of wall components is growing; make sure you don't miss out on the benefits they hold for your business!

This issue of *SBC* focuses on wall panels, and the timing couldn't be better. This is the perfect opportunity to talk to your customers about wall components. Builders are looking to find savings in their direct costs, and wall panels just may be the answer, not to mention providing a chance to grow your business.

We all know that components save time in labor and produce less waste in building materials. WTCA's collaboration with the Building Systems Council of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) on the *Framing the American Dream*® (FAD) project clearly shows the benefits that wall panel framing bring to the construction process. This 1996 FAD project (see photo below) compared two identical houses side by side—one stick built and one with component construction—and trusses and wall panels emerged as the clear winners in terms of time and waste savings. While wall panels qualify as components, it's important to understand that the similarities end there. The wall panel industry has unique issues and challenges that manufacturers need to address before launching a wall panel business. Many factors need to be taken into consideration, including entry level manufacturing, installation services and value engineering.



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#### at a glance

- Start small—before launching a wall panel line, consider adding subcomponent product lines as a low-cost way to feel out the market demand.
- Increase your chances for success by turning framing contractors and builders into wall component advocates.
- Value engineering your walls may help you find the competitive advantage needed to create a niche in your market.

Speaking from personal experience, launching a wall panel line and supplying the full exterior and interior wall panel package can be a little overwhelming. In light of this, I recommend that you build up demand for wall panels by accumulating small successes along the way. First you may want to see if there is a market for subcomponents like corners, Ts, Ls and pre-cut headers. There are a number of advantages to this approach. For starters, it allows you to add a new product line with little capital investment. Offering subcomponents also enables you to develop lines of communication with framers and contractors without overwhelming the builder's team—which can include contractors, subcontractors, framers, architects and others—with a complete wall panel package. From this starting point, you might want to advance to window and door components, then load bearing walls without sheathing. A logical next step would be to add partition walls and then begin to sheath exterior walls. By taking this "learn to walk before you run"

Continued on page 8



## Editor's Message

Continued from page 7

approach, you will be able to identify problem areas early, develop a system that is beneficial to everyone, and turn framing contractors and builders into wall component advocates, whose word of mouth advertising alone will grow your business.

Installation is one of the biggest hurdles to overcome when trying to break into the wall panel market. Developing a plan to work with framing contractors is critical if you are going to be successful manufacturing wall panels. Framing contractors are used to assembling walls, and they have set up their labor force to build walls on site. By using components for framing, contractors can make better use of their labor because component construction requires fewer workers on the jobsite. Contractors' production volume will increase with the reallocation of their labor force as long as they believe that this reallocation has value to their business. Otherwise, the contractor will be your biggest detractor.

If the contractor is not an advocate, another route is to add field installation of your products as an additional service for your customer. This type of "turnkey" framing includes supplying all of the components for the project, the loose lumber necessary to tie them together, and the labor as well. However you choose to handle field labor, by componentizing more of the house you will definitely discover new ways to increase savings and quality for your builder.

Finally, value engineering your walls (putting in place a systematic method to improve the value of what you are providing) may also help you find the competitive advantage needed to create a niche in your market. You can easily differentiate your business from traditional framing by value engineering your products—optimizing the use of materials and incorporating that analysis into the manufacturing process and the final structure. This provides that the flow of loads through the structure have the optimal resistance provided, which will allow the best use of framing and connection materials. Properly performed, the cost savings provided will be greater than those found in the FAD project mentioned above, since that component structure was not optimized. Value engineering will also assure proper consideration of issues such as building codes; regional applications like high wind and earthquakes; critical serviceability or climate issues, etc. With value engineering, you can incorporate new technologies and materials to help lower costs for the builder and make wall components provide a very real competitive advantage over field framing.

Given all this, I believe the time has arrived for wall panels. Offering savings to builders and a growth opportunity to component manufacturers, wall panels can be a win-win. Take a look at your market and see if wall panels are being used to their full potential. While they pose their own unique set of challenges, wall panels offer manufacturers flexibility—from offering subcomponents to providing installation services to incorporating value engineering—to start small and tailor their offerings to meet the customer's needs while growing their own business. **SBC**

*Do you have an article idea for a future issue or a topic that you would like to see covered? Email your thoughts and ideas to [editor@sbcmag.info](mailto:editor@sbcmag.info).*

# STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS™ THE FUTURE OF FRAMING

Publisher

Truss Publications, Inc.

6300 Enterprise Lane • Suite 200 • Madison, WI 53719

Phone: 608/310-6706 • Fax: 608/271-7006

[trusspubs@sbcmag.info](mailto:trusspubs@sbcmag.info) • [www.sbcmag.info](http://www.sbcmag.info)

Editor

Barry Dixon

True House Inc. dba True Truss • [bdixon@sbcmag.info](mailto:bdixon@sbcmag.info)

Art Director

Melinda Caldwell

608/310-6729 • [mcaldwell@sbcmag.info](mailto:mcaldwell@sbcmag.info)

Managing Editor & Circulation Director

Libby Maurer

608/310-6724 • [lmaurer@sbcmag.info](mailto:lmaurer@sbcmag.info)

Editorial Assistant & Staff Writer

Emmy Thorson-Hanson

608/310-6702 • [ethorson-hanson@sbcmag.info](mailto:ethorson-hanson@sbcmag.info)

Editorial Review

Suzi Grundahl

608/310-6710 • [sgrundahl@sbcmag.info](mailto:sgrundahl@sbcmag.info)

Advertising Sales & Marketing

Peggy Pichette

608/310-6723 • [ppichette@sbcmag.info](mailto:ppichette@sbcmag.info)

Jan Pauli

608/310-6746 • [jpaull@sbcmag.info](mailto:jpaull@sbcmag.info)

Kirk Grundahl

608/274-2345 • [kgrundahl@sbcmag.info](mailto:kgrundahl@sbcmag.info)

Staff Writers for January/February

Molly E. Butz • Emily Patterson • Sean D. Shields

Anna L. Stamm • Jim Vogt, P.E.

Accountant

Mike Younglove

608/310-6714 • [myounglove@sbcmag.info](mailto:myounglove@sbcmag.info)

Computer Systems Administrator

Rick Saindon

608/310-6717 • [rsaindon@sbcmag.info](mailto:rsaindon@sbcmag.info)

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The mission of *Structural Building Components Magazine (SBC)* is to increase the knowledge of and to promote the common interests of those engaged in manufacturing and distributing structural building components. Further, *SBC* strives to ensure growth, continuity and increased professionalism in our industry, and to be the information conduit by staying abreast of leading-edge issues. *SBC's* editorial focus is geared toward the entire structural building component industry, which includes the membership of WTCA – Representing the Structural Building Components Industry. The opinions expressed in *SBC* are those of the authors and those quoted, and are not necessarily the opinions of Truss Publications or WTCA.

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# Publisher's Message

## Another Look at Wall Panels

by Libby Maurer

SBC is ringing in the New Year with a hearty issue.

Happy New Year! As we launch into the year, not all of us are beginning on the same page, as the business climate and quantity of order files are extremely varied right now. Those of you whose sales and production have been affected by slowdowns in construction can look forward to 2007's improvement over the last half of 2006 (so the analysts predict). Be sure to take advantage of this time to dig into improving operations, catching up on training, re-branding your image and re-crafting your business plan. Others of you have sustained typical business activity or have been downright busy through the fall, and were thankful for the holiday break. No matter what side of the fence you fall, SBC pledges to bring you leading-edge information and ideas to help you improve your business in 2007.



In the January/February 2005 debut wall panel issue, I visited two start-up wall panel shops to learn about the product and the business side of the trade. Comparing the two companies, it was clear to me that R-Squared Construction Co. had sound business principles in place that would help them be successful over the long-term. Two years later they are going strong, so they must be doing something right. Turn to page 38 for a follow-up on the company with the framer-friendly attitude.

Compared to roof trusses, wall panels are certainly a different breed. Many manufacturers even consider them a moving target in terms of how to anticipate sales and prepare for possible growth.

The moving target concept is a good reason to consider a model for wall panel manufacturing that allows flexibility, says Ed Heil, author of "A Hybrid Approach to Wall Panel Manufacturing" on page 48. By combining affordability, flexibility and forward-looking software technology, Heil thinks hybrid is the solution for manufacturers to maximize their returns on investment.

The journey of the industry toward becoming a world class industry will undoubtedly necessitate forging new relationships with everyone around us. This includes building inspectors, community colleges, volunteer and career firefighters, builders and general contractors, state and local lawmakers, and even our competitors. That's why we've created a new column in 2007 called **Build Strong Relationships**. We'll use it to bring you the stories of component manufacturers who are reaching beyond their limits to educate the professionals who, with a little education about the industry, can make a monumental difference in their businesses. On page 24, we explain why this is an ideal time of year to meet with your elected officials during a tour of your facility. We hope you agree that once you connect with

someone who has an influence on your business and employees, there are boundless possibilities.

Continuing with our special series on plant tours, this time we recount the October truss plant tour and live burn demonstration requested by the New York State Building Officials Conference and hosted by WTCA's New York chapter (page 52). WTCA-NY put together an amazing day-long event to build relationships and provide education about our industry, how our products are designed and manufactured, and the performance of components in fire conditions. Admittedly, one tour does not change the world, but it does set the stage for very important educational work as the series title, *One Tour at a Time*, suggests.

Component manufacturers are at it again; a new season of *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* on ABC started in fall 2006 with one episode being filmed in each state. We caught up with two CMs that recently participated in the show for suggestions about what you should consider if and when you are approached to assist in a project like this. They've passed along some helpful tips that you can peruse on page 62.

Look for some exciting new things from SBC in 2007! And best wishes for a successful year. SBC

Let us know about your experiences with wall panel manufacturing. Email your questions and comments to [Imaurer@sbcmag.info](mailto:Imaurer@sbcmag.info).

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Learn what is necessary to ensure that nailed connections can resist uplift requirements.

by Jim Vogt, P.E.

**T**oe-nailed connections are a common means of attaching wood joists, rafters and trusses to the top of a supporting wood wall or beam. Depending on the application, these connections must often provide resistance to uplift from wind and/or certain multi-span gravity load conditions, as well as resistance to lateral loads from wind and seismic forces. The building codes provide minimum fastening requirements for various connection scenarios that meet the "Conventional Light-Frame Construction" provisions of the code. There are many applications, however, in which toe-nailed connections are used in wood construction that are beyond the scope of the Conventional Light-Frame Construction provisions of the code. For these instances, a basic understanding of the factors affecting the withdrawal and lateral resistance of fasteners can be helpful in determining whether or not this type of connection is viable.

### Question

*I'm looking for information that will help me understand the load resisting capacity of a nailed connection. We typically attach the truss heels to the top plates of the walls with a toe-nailed connection. What do we need to keep in mind to ensure that these nailed connections can resist the uplift requirements provided on the Truss Design Drawing?*

### Answer

The resistance provided by a toe-nailed connection is governed by several factors including proper installation, lumber species, length of penetration, and type of nail.

### Proper Installation:

To get the most out of a toe-nailed connection, it is important to toe-nail correctly. Figure 1 illustrates proper toe-nailing of a truss to the wood top plates

of a bearing wall. The dimensions shown are only meant to serve as an approximate guide. *Note:* Toe-nailing through a metal connector plate of a truss does not adversely affect the uplift capacity of the connection provided the truss plate and lumber are not damaged during installation.

### Species of Lumber:

The species of wood that the nail is driven into also affects the amount of resistance provided by a toe-nailed connection. More specifically, nail resistance to withdrawal and lateral forces is directly related to the specific gravity (SG) of the wood. For example, a toe-nailed connection into Southern Pine (SG = 0.55) will provide greater resistance than the same connection into Spruce-Pine-Fir (SG = 0.42).

### Length of Penetration:

The withdrawal and lateral resistance provided by a nail depends, in part, on the length of penetration into the wood member. The greater the penetration, the greater the resistance.

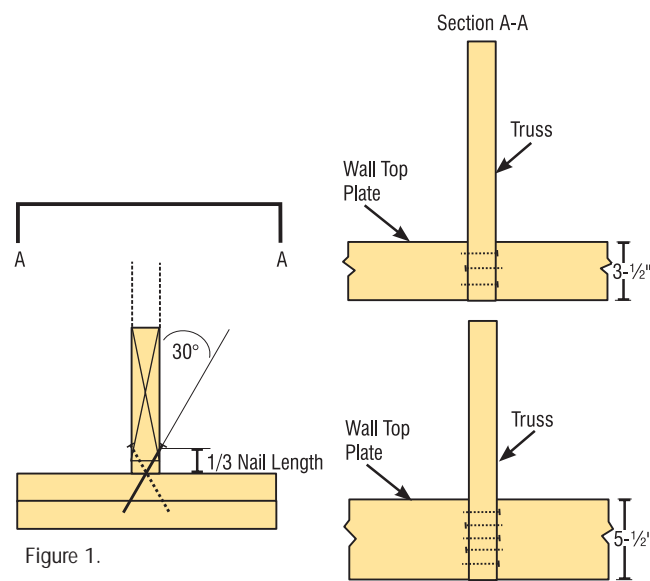


Figure 1.

### at a glance

- ☐ Toe-nailed connections are a common means of attaching wood joists, rafters and trusses to the top of a supporting wood wall or beam.
- ☐ Many applications go beyond the scope of the Conventional Light-Frame Construction provisions of the code.
- ☐ The resistance provided by a toe-nailed connection is governed by several factors including proper installation, lumber species, length of penetration, and type of nail.

B8 of the 2006 edition of BCSI provides the uplift and lateral load capacities for toe-nailed connections consisting of three, four or five nails for various types and species of wood.

### Type of Nail:

The type of nail used in a toe-nailed connection also influences capacity. The larger the diameter of the nail shank, the greater the resistance to withdrawal and lateral loads. For this reason, common wire nails provide greater resistance than the same size (i.e., penny-weight) of box or sinker nails. The type of nail shank will also influence nail holding capacity. Deformed shanks (i.e., ring- or screw-shank) typically provide greater withdrawal resistance than smooth shank nails.

When installing toe-nails, use care to avoid splitting the wood. The Building Designer typically provides nail spacing and minimum end and edge distances. In lieu of such guidance, a well accepted rule is to limit the total number of toe-nails to three (total, including both sides) for full bearing on a 2x4 top plate (i.e., 3-1/2") and five (total, including both sides) for full bearing on a 2x6 top plate (i.e., 5-1/2"). (See Figure 1.)

When using toe-nails to attach the top or bottom chord of a truss to the side of a girder truss or wood beam, the number of nails used is generally limited to a maximum of three toe-nails for 2x4 chords and four toe-nails for 2x6 chords.

The National Design Specification® (NDS®) for Wood Construction, published by the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) provides the engineering basis for toe-nail and slant-nail connections when used to resist withdrawal and lateral loads. In addition to the factors mentioned above, the load carrying capacity of a toe-nailed connection is also affected by the duration that the load is applied to the connection, the moisture content of the wood (at the time the connection is made as well as in-service), the sustained temperature of the wood and whether or not the nails are driven into the end-grain of the supporting member. The NDS provides a detailed review of the affect each of these factors has on the allowable withdrawal and lateral resistance capacity of a nailed connection. In addition, B8 of the 2006 edition of Building Component Safety Information (BCSI) provides the uplift and lateral load capacities for toe-nailed connections consisting of three, four or five nails for various types and species of wood (see **Support Docs** at [www.sbcmag.info](http://www.sbcmag.info) for Chapter 8 of BCSI). The information provided in each of these documents can be used to determine if a toe-nailed connection has adequate capacity to resist the applied loads. **SBC**

*To pose a question for this column, call the WTCA technical department at 608/274-4849 or email [technicalqa@sbcmag.info](mailto:technicalqa@sbcmag.info).*

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# Safety Scene

## Fire Safety in a Component Manufacturing Facility: Part 1

by Molly E. Butz

In the blink of an eye a fire can wreck havoc on your facility. Learn what easy steps you can take to prevent a full blown catastrophe.

**C**omponent manufacturers have many things to think about every day, from production numbers to delivery schedules. With so many details to manage, it's possible that fire safety isn't on the list of priorities most of the time. However, a facility full of fire-friendly fuel means that component manufacturers should always keep fire safety in mind.

Fire safety in the plant can be broken down into two main topics—causes and prevention. For a manufacturer, the causes are very straightforward, as both fuel and ignition sources for a fire are abundant. It's no secret that component manufacturing operations contain large quantities of lumber and other wood products, sawdust, loose papers and flammable materials such as cleaning agents, lubricants, solvents and liquid propane (used for forklifts). Unfortunately, all of these materials make excellent fuel. Most plants also often contain one or more ignition sources including potentially faulty electrical wiring, welding and cutting sparks, propellant actuated tools (such as nail guns) and employee tobacco smoking (Source: OSHA Wood Products eTools: Fire and Explosion). Other ignition sources may include static electrical discharges and lightning.

**A facility full of fire-friendly fuel means that component manufacturers should always keep fire safety in mind.**

### Prevention

Eliminating the obvious fire hazards is simple enough for any component manufacturer to accomplish. Each of the following fire hazards is accompanied by an easy, inexpensive solution.

- **Sawdust build-up:** Good housekeeping is the easiest way for your facility to keep this fire hazard swept away. Using a good broom, be sure your area is clear from sawdust and scraps after your shift everyday, or in between shifts if it gets messy.
- **Loose cut sheets and paperwork:** Here again, housekeeping is your best line of defense. Keeping track of all of your paperwork will ensure you don't end up with dangerous piles of paperwork kindling for a fire.
- **Lit cigarettes/smoldering cigarette butts:** Designate a specific smoking area for your employees and strictly enforce your "smoking in designated areas only" policy. One careless toss could devastate your business.
- **Flammable liquids and gels:** Assign an area away from possible ignition sources to store flammable materials, such as cleaning agents, lubricants, solvents and liquid propane. In addition, train your employees to understand the hazards associated with each flammable material.
- **Welding sparks:** Physically separate job tasks that may cause a fire, such as welding operations and sawdust. If this is impossible—for instance you need to have someone repair a saw—consider dousing the area with water and then appointing a "fire watcher" to stand by with a fire extinguisher in case of an emergency. In addition, be sure each of your employees designated as maintenance

Continued on page 18



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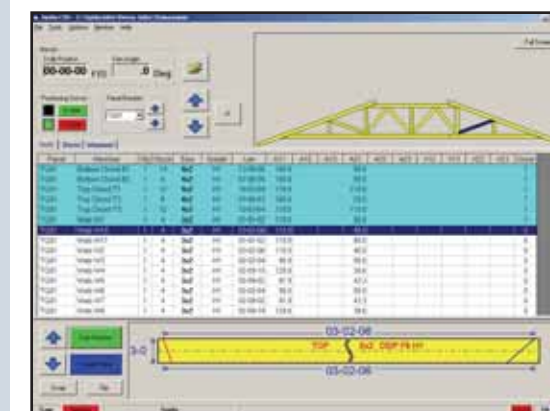


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### at a glance

- ❑ Fire safety can be broken down into the main topics of causes and prevention.
- ❑ Truss plants often contain one or more ignition sources.
- ❑ Keep spark resistant jackets handy to prevent incidents where flammable chemicals and welding sparks may exist.



**Safety Scene**

Continued from page 16

nance have all of the proper personal protective equipment they need to avoid injury (see sidebar).

- **Potentially faulty electrical wiring:** Ensure your electrical systems are rated for the purposes they will be used for and protected by appropriate circuit breakers, grounding all equipment prone to accumulating static electrical charges (Source: OSHA Wood Products eTools: Fire and Explosion).

**Prevention**

With the basics out of the way, now is an appropriate time to turn our attention to the other more sophisticated and necessary ways that you can protect your facility from a devastating fire. However, flushing out the details of fire resistant materials, emergency exits, emergency alarms, sprinkler systems and in-plant fire extinguishers is a lot to cover. Stay tuned for Fire Safety in a Component Manufacturing Facility: Part 2 in the next issue of **SBC**. "One spark is all it takes to put you out of business!" (Source: Loss Control Services from CNA Insurance). Safety First! **SBC**

*To pose a question for this column or to learn more about WTCA's Operation Safety Program, contact WTCA Staff at 608/274-4849, email wtca@sbcindustry.com, or view the Operation Safety demonstration online at [www.wtcalco.com](http://www.wtcalco.com).*

One component manufacturer relayed the following story about fire prevention. Don't let this happen at your facility!



"As a member of our maintenance staff, I often used various lubricants, solvents and other chemicals throughout the day to fix our machinery. On one particular day, one or possibly more of these chemicals had leaked onto the cuff of my work shirt. At the time I didn't think anything of it and continued about my business. Later in the day I began a repair project that required me to do some welding and in haste, I didn't put on a protective welding jacket. The project required me to weld over my head while standing on a ladder. One of the sparks from the welding hit my unprotected shirt cuff and the combination of the chemical and the spark set my shirt on fire. Before the ordeal was over, all that was left was the collar and shoulders of my shirt. Luckily, that time, the fire was easily extinguished and I wasn't badly burned. However, a simple spark resistant jacket could have prevented the entire incident."

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# Bcmc 2007

## Market Research: Another Benefit of BCMC

Don't let the value of market research slip between the cracks; make use of it at BCMC!

by Emmy Thorson-Hanson

**W**hen you think of the benefits of exhibiting at BCMC you probably think of new sales leads, strengthening relationships with existing customers and increasing the recognition of your product in the marketplace. But there is one HUGE opportunity that exhibitors often overlook...market research!

Don't assume that market research involves complicated procedures that take time away from the "important stuff." Philip Kotler in *Marketing Management* (1999) defines market research as "systematic problem analysis, model-building and fact-finding for the purpose of improved decision-making and control in the marketing of goods and services." Market research is the "scientific" approach to building value in the eyes of an organization's target market.

All successful businesses must know their markets, competitors, customer wants and needs, and "what it takes to be competitive." It is not enough to know the answers to the what, where, when, and how questions about our businesses. We also need to know why people buy (or don't buy) our products and services.

Most companies in our industry aren't able to afford a separate market research department to gather and monitor information and make decisions based on that information. However, all successful businesses must know their markets, competitors, customer wants and needs, and "what it takes to be competitive." It is not enough to know the answers to the what, where, when, and how questions about our businesses. We also need to know why people buy (or don't buy) our products and services.

Market research is an effective means of learning about your customer and is not complicated. In fact, you may be surprised to know that you conduct market research unconsciously. While there are formal approaches, market research can be as informal as having a conversation with your customer. A good example of a barebones level market research campaign is something many of you already do. If you have ever held a meeting before BCMC to outline the company's goals with regard to collecting information and then regrouped after the show to compare and analyze feedback, you may not have called it market research but that is what you have done. Next year, try adding another layer of depth to advance your research goals; make a list of things you'd like to find out from your customers at BCMC and work those questions into your conversations during the show. Then plan on asking all staff members to share their findings when you regroup after the show. If you make this as systematic as possible, your chances of finding jewels of information among the chaos of BCMC will increase dramatically.

Because BCMC attracts component manufacturers from across the world to one place for an action packed two and one-half days, it is the perfect venue to learn about current market conditions, have a few conversations with your competitors, and most importantly learn more about your customers' wants and needs, and what it takes for you to be most competitive.

Continued on page 22

### at a glance

- Market research is systematic problem analysis, model-building and fact-finding for the purpose of improved decision-making and control in the marketing of goods and services.
- You can increase your chances of finding jewels of information at BCMC by using a systematic approach to ask all your staff members to share their findings when you regroup after the show.
- According to one Loyal Attendee, "it doesn't matter how long you've been in the business, you can always learn something and pick up something new at BCMC."

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## BCMC 2007

Continued from page 20

What you learn from your customers will not only reveal what is driving their decisions, but you can also develop new marketing strategies as well as shape new product development based on your findings. Let's explore some more formal yet simple ways that you can learn as much as possible and draw more value from the BCMC experience.

### Establish an Objective

The first thing to determine is your knowledge objective for BCMC. Do you need to test a new product concept? Create a strategy to strengthen your full range of product line sales? Identify market trends? Whatever the case, first define your goal and then choose a means for obtaining the information you need.

### Quantity vs. Quality

There are two main approaches that you can take. The first is quantitative—numbers-based—and draws conclusions about a group based on the most common answers. The results are used for evaluation and can measure product satisfaction and performance as well as customer attitudes and behaviors. The results are proportionate to the total population, so it can be used to decide if one product or concept is better than another.

The most popular means of quantitative research is a survey. The best surveys are brief and ask questions that are targeted to deliver the specific responses you seek to improve your business or product.

Surveys can be conducted on paper, a laptop computer or with a "lead retrieval system" available for rental at the show. This scanner makes it effortless to follow up with contacts by organizing and delivering the contact information of leads, prospects and customers who stopped by your booth.

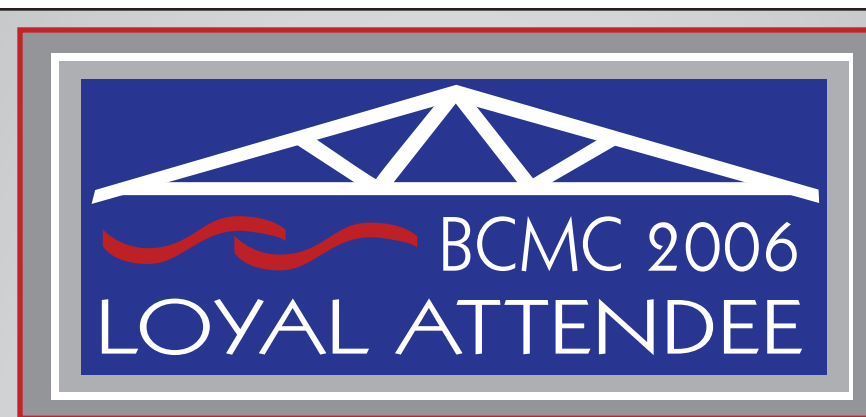
The second kind of market research that you might conduct is qualitative, which involves in-depth discussions with prospects in your booth. Questions build on previous responses, providing in-depth insight to your customers' viewpoints. Qualitative research can generate new ideas, help with decision making and aid in initial learning about a new concept/product. Stan Axsmith of Panels Plus says, "Our best ideas for new products come from this show because customers give us information on what they need to accomplish their goals."

This can also be as simple as engaging attendees who stop by your booth in a conversation where detailed responses on their satisfaction, expectations and interests are given. "[BCMC] allows us to hear exactly what the customers' new needs and concerns are," said Blake Bailey, BOSS Tiedowns & Strapping. The feedback you receive can help you to better understand your customer and exactly they are looking for.

### Conclusion

When there is something you want to know about your market, or if there is input that could help you in making a decision, don't forget to consider focused market research at BCMC as a useful tool to help you achieve your objectives. Whether you are looking to measure product awareness, establish customer profiles, determine market share or generate new ideas, knowledge gained at this show will help you reach better conclusions. **SBC**

*BCMC 2007 will be held October 3-5 in Columbus, OH. For more information about exhibiting at this year's show, go to [www.bcmshow.com](http://www.bcmshow.com).*



Loyal Attendee\*: Daryl Blevins

Company: Truline Truss, Inc., Sparta, NC

**SBC:** When was the first BCMC that you attended?

**D.B.:** It was the 2000 BCMC in Milwaukee.

**SBC:** In your opinion what sets BCMC apart from other trade shows?

**D.B.:** It's a very focused tradeshow, not broad spectrum like other tradeshow can be.

**SBC:** What is the value of attending BCMC?

**D.B.:** You can shop for what you need and what you are looking for at the time in person, not through videos and brochures.

**SBC:** What is your favorite part of BCMC?

**D.B.:** The best part of BCMC is the networking with other companies and seeing what they are doing. It's about developing relationships and getting outside the realm of my area.

**SBC:** How do you prepare for the show?

**D.B.:** We usually go with a predefined agenda of things that we are interested in. I make sure to take a look at new products or upgrades, and then I visit other booths where I know people.

**SBC:** Why should other component manufacturers attend? What do you want fellow CMs to know about the show?

**D.B.:** It doesn't matter how long you've been in the business, you can always learn something and pick up something new. Lots of networking goes on there, and the show floor shows everything that you can't see in the books, plus you have someone to answer your questions so that you don't have to play phone tag. The sessions are great because they aren't rehearsed. The presenters are people who have worked or work in the industry and can answer the questions that you have.

\*The BCMC Loyal Attendee Program rewards attendees and their companies for supporting the show. Here's how to qualify.

To qualify for the Company Program:

- Your company has to have sent at least one person to BCMC for each of the last five years (2002 - 2006) and must be a component manufacturer member of WTCA.
- One pin will be given to the owner, president or other representative from your company.

To qualify for the Individual Program:

- You must have attended BCMC five out of the last seven years (2000 - 2006) and BCMC 2006. Your company must be a component manufacturer member of WTCA.

Companies and individuals who qualify as Loyal Attendees will receive perks at BCMC 2007 in Columbus. Perks include extra tickets for prize drawings, discounts on WTCA publications and a commemorative pin.

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# Build Strong Relationships

## Getting the Worm

Rookie. Novice.  
Trainee. Freshman.

by Sean D. Shields

**T**he General Election of 2006 brought us 50 brand new members of Congress. That's a lot of new people to bring into an organization all at once. Just imagine if more than ten percent of your workforce was hired yesterday. It would be a challenge to maintain production, wouldn't it? Each of those employees need training, a chance to practice the skills required to do their job, and time to build relationships with those around them who will support them in accomplishing their work.

Congress is no different. There are 50 lawmakers in Washington, DC that go through that same process. "Freshmen" lawmakers are excellent individuals to reach out to because they are just now starting to develop a relationship with their constituency (that's you) in an effort to do their jobs well. There are at least 50 individuals who need an introduction to the building components industry, and you're a perfect person to give them that introduction. If you live in a district where the incumbent lost, or didn't run, call your new member of Congress today and invite them on a tour of your facility.

### Be an Early Bird

It is an excellent time to roll up your sleeves and capitalize on this situation. In the early part of 2007, Congress is just getting started, and lawmakers generally do a lot of traveling back to their home districts for extended weekends. In these early winter months it's also likely your production capacity isn't maxed out, so you probably have some time to devote to a guided tour.

Look at January through March as "lawmaker season." Armed with safety goggles and a thorough knowledge of your business, you can concentrate on showing your elected officials how a bunk of 2x4s quickly becomes a stack of ordered trusses ready to be delivered to a jobsite. Simply put, plant tours are the most effective way to cement your company, and this industry, into their minds. And these winter months are the best time to host such a tour.

Why? Because while new members of Congress already have some good connections in your community (otherwise they never would have been elected), they don't have nearly the network most established lawmakers have. The best way to become part of that network is to build a relationship with them in the beginning. Think of yourself as an early bird. We all know what the early bird gets!

### Follow the Leaders

Herb Hildebrand from Casmin answered that question when he took the time to arrange a meeting at the office of his Senator, Mel Martinez (R-FL), last year. After the meeting, Herb said, "I could see the light bulb go on as I shared how these issues affected our company." More importantly, he felt he was able to make a good connection with everyone at the meeting: "If I called them, they'd take my call. This was very valuable from a networking perspective." Senator Martinez is now the newly-elected Chairman of the Republican Caucus, a very powerful position. The entire industry will have the opportunity to benefit from the relationships Herb established through that meeting.

Continued on page 26

### at a glance

- "Freshmen" lawmakers are excellent individuals to reach out to because they are just now starting to develop a relationship with their constituency.
- There are a number of new committee Chairs to begin building relationships with now that the Democratic party controls both chambers of Congress.
- The winter months are a good time to devote time to giving plant tours. Call your new member of Congress and invite them on a tour of your facility.

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## Building Strong Relationships

Continued from page 24

There's also another opportunity you could capitalize on. There are a number of new committee Chairs to begin building relationships with now that the Democratic party controls both chambers of Congress. In the Senate, Max Baucus (Montana) is the new Chair of the Finance Committee; Patrick Leahy (Vermont) is the Chair of the Judiciary Committee; and John Kerry (Massachusetts) is Chair of the Small Business Committee. In the House, John Conyers (Michigan) is Chair of the Judiciary Committee; George Miller (California) is Chair of the Education & Workforce Committee; and Nydia Velazquez (New York) is Chair of the Small Business Committee. If you live in the state or Congressional District of one of these lawmakers, your active participation will have a positive impact on behalf of the industry.

Speaking of new leaders, Glenn McClendon, Sun State Components, and Mike Murray, A.C. Houston Lumber, met with their Senator, Harry Reid (D-NV), in 2006. Having never visited with a member of Congress before, Mike said, "I felt really good about this meeting. I felt we were able to establish a good relationship with him; he was very accessible. I also learned which methods to use to make sure our views are heard in the future." That's especially valuable information to have now that Senator Reid is the Majority Leader of the Senate.

### Focus on Core Issues

Jobs. Economic Growth. Affordable Housing. These things are the foundation of a vibrant community, and are priorities of most lawmakers. And this means you have a built-in common link with any lawmaker. Fortunately, they are all made possible through you and your company, a fact that should not be lost on any elected official. Your voice has power in Congress, as long as you use it and talk about the issues affecting your company. For instance, it is clear there are

some things in this country that are broken: our immigration laws and our health care system are two examples of areas in need of overhaul, which affect our industry significantly.

Building a relationship with your lawmaker now, through phone calls or plant tours, will enable you to share your important perspective on these issues once Congress starts debating potential solutions.

### Get More Worms

Knowing your lawmaker and his or her staff can be beneficial beyond influencing legislation. Your lawmaker's office is also a powerful contact to have when you need help interacting with OSHA or other regulatory agencies. They can also help you find grants to pay for training your employees on new technology or production techniques. Uncle Sam has a lot of money available for such things, and many times the best person to put you in contact with it is your Congressperson. In addition, your lawmaker can help you get to the bottom of a workers' compensation claim, or find a solution to dealing with an overzealous transportation enforcement official.

In this regard, being an early bird in building a relationship with your lawmaker now, not only will help you "get the worm," it might help you get more than one! Time is precious, and many times there isn't enough of it. However, it is possible to more than make up for the time it takes to host a plant tour with your members of Congress when one subsequent phone call to them can help you resolve a permitting issue that threatens to hold up your production for days.

As you may have read in last month's issue (see "Plant Tour of Duty," December 2006), WTCA staff is ready and willing to help you schedule a plant tour or office meeting with your lawmaker. **SBC**

Contact Sean Shields at [sshields@quallim.com](mailto:sshields@quallim.com) or 608/310-6728 for more information about scheduling a plant tour or office meeting with your lawmaker.



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# The Big Picture

## ICC Code Development Process

More than two years of participation on an ICC committee has yielded a plethora of positive results for the industry.

by Kirk Grundahl

There was a period of time in WTCA's history where we were relying on other industry organizations to monitor and provide code changes affecting our industry. It was not until the 2003 IBC and IRC came out that it became clear that this was a strategic mistake and we needed to get actively engaged in this process. We did so by stepping in, working hard with Dave Brakeman (Alpine Engineered Products), Steve Cabler (MiTek Industries), Dave Gromala (Weyerhaeuser), Dave Tyree (American Forest & Paper Association) and Ed Huston (Smith & Huston Inc. and the National Council of Structural Engineers Association) to correct an error in the way bottom chord live loads were to be interpreted. The work we did turned into a successful code change at the final action hearings in May 2004. This was just the beginning.

We then applied for committee membership within the code development cycle and were selected to become part of the IBC Structural Committee. Having participated on the committee for nearly two years, I can say that the code change and hearing process is a pretty straightforward concept, yet it has a significant degree of complexity when you consider all the varied interests involved. As such, it is vitally important for our industry to be involved. There is a new edition of all the model codes adopted every three years, with code supplements produced between editions. The first edition was in 2000 with the following schedule taking place subsequently:

1. 2003 Edition
2. 2004 Supplement—developed during the 2003/2004 Cycle
3. 2006 Edition—developed during the 2004/2005 Cycle
4. 2007 Supplement—to be developed during the 2006/2007 Cycle
5. 2009 Edition—to be developed during the 2008/2009 Cycle
6. The edition and supplement cycles continue

Each cycle is for a period of 18 months and the following generally occurs within a cycle:

1. A deadline for proposed code changes is published. An announcement is posted on the ICC website and other media. Anyone can submit a code change.
2. The ICC staff review all proposed code changes and ensure that they are in a standardized legislative format. All proposals must be based on current code text.
3. The proposed changes are published on the ICC website approximately 90 days prior to hearing and in print form approximately 60 days prior to hearing.
4. Approximately six months after the proposed code change deadline, the first public hearing is held. This hearing is where code change proponents advocate before each of the ICC code change committees (i.e., the IBC Structural Committee). The committee listens to testimony and then votes on the code change.
5. Once that hearing is completed, the results are tabulated and published approximately 60 days later and 45 days after that any public comments on the code changes that were made are due.
6. These comments are published approximately 60 days prior to the final action hearing.

Continued on page 30

### at a glance

- ❑ WTCA no longer relies on outside organizations to monitor code changes that affect component manufacturers and their suppliers.
- ❑ Since 2004, WTCA has occupied a spot on the IBC's Structural Committee. This group reviews and votes on several hundred code change proposals in each 18-month cycle.
- ❑ By participating in the IBC structural committee, WTCA has developed favorable relationships with members of the forest products industry, the steel industry, homebuilders, structural engineer groups and building code officials.



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S O U T H E R N P I N E : Y O U R C H O I C E F O R C O M P O N E N T S



7. The final action hearings, which are before the ICC member assembly, are held approximately six to eight months after the committee hearings.

In the 2007 supplement cycle, the committee hearings were held from September 20 through October 1, 2006, and the final action hearings will be held May 21-26, 2007, in Rochester, NY.

### A Day in the Life

So what is it like to be an IBC Structural Committee member? It takes an amazing amount of work. With respect to the 2006 Edition, the IBC Structural Committee alone listened to roughly 260 change proposals. At the most recent hearings this was reduced to roughly 160. Prior to the hearings we review all the code changes that we will vote on so we have the background needed to make a wise assessment. To put a hearing day in perspective here is how it works:

1. Proponents of the change each have two minutes to advocate for the change. There is no limit to the number of people permitted to state their opinion on the change.
2. Then opponents of the change each have two minutes to define why they believe the change is not ready for prime time.
3. Then the proponents each have one minute to rebut the opponent's arguments.
4. Then the opponents each have one minute to rebut the opponent's rebuttal.
5. Then the committee makes a motion to approve the change as submitted, provided there is not a floor modification or a committee modification (in this case, the motion may be to approve the change as modified). Or the motion may be to disapprove everything.

Anyone who desires to have a voice in the process can testify, and there is no cost to attend. The final vote on all code changes rests with the "Active" Governmental Members at the final action hearing. These are the people who enforce the code and are charged with protecting the public's safety.

By being much more intimately involved in the process, one of the things you learn quickly is that it is best to have a united message in front of the committee and at the final action hearings. This means working with all interested parties in the section of code that one desires to change and craft language that meets the best interests of building construction first and foremost and then tends to the perspectives of all interests.

We have been very fortunate to establish very good relationships within this code change process. These include:

1. Ed Huston, John Hooper, Jim Robinson, Stephanie Young, Norm Scheel, Phil Brazil and John Grenier, structural engi-

By being much more intimately involved in the process, one of the things you learn quickly is that it is best to have a united message in front of the committee and at the final action hearings.

neers who are very involved with the National Council of Structural Engineers Association.

2. Dave Gromala, Sam Francis, Phil Line, Dave Tyree, Dennis Pitts, and Ed Keith, who are involved representing the forest products industry, which is a very important supplier group.
3. Jonathan Humble, Jay Larson, Hank Martin, Mark Miller and Robert Hackworth who are involved representing the steel industry, another key supplier group.
4. Ray Kothe, Ed Sutton, Jeff Inks and Gary Ehrlich who are involved representing the home building industry, a critical customer group.
5. Randy Shackelford, Steve Pryor and Shane Vilasineekul who represent Simpson Strong-Tie.
6. Jay Crandall, Greg Bergtold and Lorraine Ross who represent the foam sheathing producers.
7. Eric Stafford who represents the Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS).
8. Dan Dolan who represents the academic community.
9. Building officials Joe Hill (State of New York), Wayne Jewell (State of Michigan), Dan Kelsey (State of Minnesota), Bob Boyer, Mo Madani and Tom Allen (State of Florida), and Don LeBrun (State of Indiana).

It is very clear to us that the more we work in concert with anyone interested in the same code provisions and changes, the more positive progress we are going to make, because all points of view are taken into account as the code change is developed. Over the next few years our code involvement process will become more robust as we continue to work inside our industry's technical groups—TPI TAC and WTCA's Engineering and Technology Committee and integrate the voices of all of our relationships on key issues that affect us all.

We have found that immersing ourselves in the building code process is an extremely important industry activity because the code touches multiple aspects of our business in both overt and very subtle ways. Having a pulse on the changes that are taking place within the regulatory and technical environments helps us navigate forward much more quickly and effectively. **SBC**

*Kirk Grundahl is WTCA's Executive Director. If you have questions or comments regarding the issues discussed in this new column, email [kgrundahl@qualtim.com](mailto:kgrundahl@qualtim.com).*

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# Wtca Update

## Major Changes from 2006

by WTCA Staff

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

—Margaret Mead

With the start of a new year, we thought it might be helpful to reflect on two major changes that took place in 2006: WTCA's natural evolution and the formation of the Cold Formed Steel Council (CFSC). Let's take a look back at these landmark transformations.

### Name Change

In April, WTCA's Board of Directors unanimously approved the resolution that evolved the Wood Truss Council of America's name to WTCA – Representing the Structural Building Components Industry.

2006 WTCA President Don Groom of Stark Truss Company, Canton, OH stated, “I believe embracing this change will help our association and industry continue to focus properly on the aggressive advancement of components as the future of framing for all building construction.”

WTCA Executive Director Kirk Grundahl commented, “The WTCA membership has reached an incomparable level of diversity. Based on customer demand, our members are rapidly becoming full service suppliers of a wide variety of structural framing solutions. The best economic solution will prevail in the market, and WTCA is committed to supporting its members through solid industry programs that help our members provide a wide range of solutions.”

As a result of the change, WTCA's website domain also changed from [www.woodtruss.com](http://www.woodtruss.com) to [www.sbcindustry.com](http://www.sbcindustry.com). It is the industry's largest one-stop online shop of building component information and tools available.

### Cold Formed Steel Council

For many years members were asking us to expand our area of activity. WTCA's Executive Committee made the decision to implement a council concept inside the structure of WTCA. This led to the formation of the Cold Formed Steel Council (CFSC), comprised of steel component manufacturer members of WTCA, which is one of our beta councils. The goal of CFSC is to focus on advancing the structural building component industry through an emphasis on steel component manufacturing issues.

Joe Odgers, Sales Manager for Bama Truss & Components, Inc. and CFSC co-chair said, “Creating the council and working with WTCA offers members the opportunity to participate in key WTCA committees, network with component manufacturers on common issues, and have access to tools and resources for steel component manufacturers that are unprecedented. This will be a beneficial move.”

The new council will offer services that build off the ongoing work of our association, including: risk management tools; *Technical Notes* providing assistance on building codes, professional engineering laws and design responsibilities; the annual Building Component Manufacturers Conference; the SBC Legislative Conference; approved insurance broker programs; and coverage of steel-related issues in *SBC*. We are currently working on a steel-focused Building Component



Safety Information (BCSI) publication and related B-series Summary Sheets, Technical Assessment Tests Online (TATO), Truss Technician Training updates and an In-Plant CFSC Quality Control program. More information can be found at [www.cfsc.sbcindustry.com](http://www.cfsc.sbcindustry.com).

“The time is right to implement CFSC,” said Odgers. “The market has matured over the past few years, and the cold formed steel business is here to stay. Being a wood and steel component manufacturer, we know intimately that our business is not a wood versus steel business; it is truly a component manufacturing business. Wood components and steel components are very complementary product lines for us—we're really all simply in the building component business.” *SBC*

## New WTCA Members

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2141 James Hagood Hwy  
Halifax, VA 24558-2655  
434/572-1379  
Mr. Ronnie Jones

#### Startek Enterprises Ltd.

111-3rd St North  
Vulcan, AB T0L 2B0 CANADA  
403/312-9222  
Mr. Arthur W. Radmore

#### Western Integrated Building Systems Inc

PO Box 5517  
High River, AB T1V 1M6 CANADA  
403/652-1772  
Mr. Parry Protsch

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

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Port Townsend, WA 98368-4321  
360/385-3427  
Mr. William D. Dauenhauer

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Murrieta, CA 92562  
800/854-2461  
Mr. William Rodriguez

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5570 32nd Ave  
Hudsonville, MI 49426-1599  
616/669-5190  
Mr. David A. Weaver

#### Roger A Behrens

474 Kimberly Dr  
Melbourne, FL 32940  
Mr. Roger A. Behrens

#### Vetter Engineering Inc

5754 Eastview Dr  
Clinton, OH 44216-9706  
330/882-6119  
Mr. Bruce Vetter, PE

For more information about WTCA membership, contact Anna (608/310-6719 or [astamm@quallim.com](mailto:astamm@quallim.com)) or visit [www.sbcindustry.com](http://www.sbcindustry.com). Listing as of 12/13/06.



### at a glance

- WTCA evolved into WTCA - Representing the Structural Building Components Industry in 2006.
- WTCA's new website address is [www.sbcindustry.com](http://www.sbcindustry.com).
- The Cold Formed Steel Council was formed in 2006 to support the technical and marketing needs of cold formed steel manufacturers.

## WTCA Board of Directors

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- **Dwight Hikel** • Shelter Systems Limited • 410/876-3900 • [dwhight@sheltersystems.com](mailto:dwhight@sheltersystems.com)
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For reader service, go to [www.sbcmag.info/wtca.htm](http://www.sbcmag.info/wtca.htm)

## Getting a Handle on Wall Panels

The start of a new year is an appropriate time to revisit your company's marketing strategy and educational efforts in the marketplace. As the membership of WTCA becomes more diverse each year, we've developed resources to suit the varying needs of all component manufacturers, including those that produce wall panels.

Now you can find wall panel marketing tools, technical information, *SBC Magazine* articles, and other resources all in one place. WTCA has created a new web page specifically to meet the needs of wall panel manufacturers. Find these resources and more when you visit [www.sbcindustry.com/wallpanels.php](http://www.sbcindustry.com/wallpanels.php).

### Marketing & Education

Use these tools to demonstrate the cost efficiency, time savings and other benefits of using wall panels along with other building components.

- *Framing the American Dream*® brochure and CD-ROM
- *The Future of Framing* brochure
- Updated Wall Panel TTB - Coming in 2007!
- A list of articles about wall panel manufacturing published in *SBC Magazine*

### Technical

Need technical assistance? Wall panel design and building code resources are at your disposal with these resources.

- WTCA *Tech Notes*
- **The Load Guide** for wall panels - Coming in 2007!

### Manufacturing

In addition to the marketing and technical information on the new web page, keep your ears open for news from WTCA about the development of new training programs for wall panel manufacturers in 2007. For instance:

- Wall panel production training modules are currently being developed.
- A quality control program for wall panel manufacturers will be created.

What are you waiting for? Visit [www.sbcindustry.com/wallpanels.php](http://www.sbcindustry.com/wallpanels.php) today for all the information you need to operate a successful wall panel operation. **SBC**



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—Scott Ward,  
Southern Components  
(2006 Participant)

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## IBS Plant Net

Plant Net is a unique, state of the art solution for the panel manufacturing industry. It provides a paperless process from design to production utilizing computer terminals at each work station interfacing with optional equipment such as Auto Stops, Light Bar and other automated equipment such as the IntelliSheather and IntelliFramer.

The on-screen graphics provide a powerful visual aid for easy assembly but also helps train unskilled labor in minimal time. It greatly reduces lead time between design and production and offers intuitive scheduling solutions to keep your operation moving and productive.



## IBS Component Table/Auto Stop/Plant Net

This split-table design with a raised grate allows workers easy access to every part of a component. Heavy-duty air-actuated rollers make component handling easy, while the squaring lips and color-coded table stripes make cripple layout easy and accurate. Add the optional Auto Stop for automatic cripple location and the table becomes a virtually mistake-free operation. The IBS Auto Stop eliminates human error by automatically adjusting to the start of each component and verifies its position for accuracy.



## IBS Framing Table/Light Bar/Auto Stop/Plant Net

This open design framing table has a clamp and align system that aids in flushing studs with plates, assists with squaring panels and assures tighter stud joints. Combined with the optional Auto Stop, which repositions the panel for those special first stud starts, and Light Bar, which eliminates the need for manual plate marking, expensive laser systems or ink marking systems and most human error, the IBS framing table offers fast production and provides better quality control.

## IBS IntelliSheather

This software driven sheather indexes the panel under the guns while straightening the studs and then securing the sheathing at the studs and plates. Its rugged gun mounts tilt to prevent shiners, and the heavy-duty plate stitcher has designer-selectable stitch spacing and is adjustable for the very top plate.

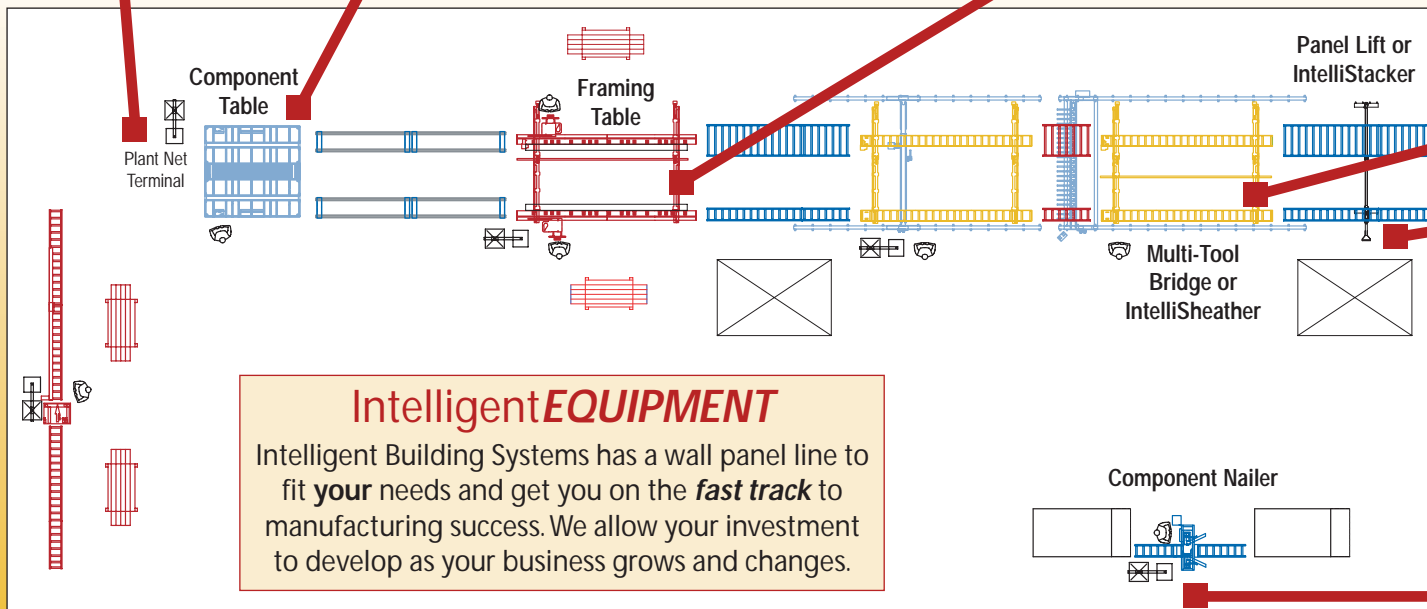


## IBS IntelliStacker

The IntelliStacker builds bundles of panels exactly as designed by the designer and can stack two lines simultaneously.

## IBS SubComponent Nailer

The Component Nailer handles a variety of subcomponents such as nailing tees, posts, beam pockets, corners or headers and is fast to set up and easy to use. The simple-to-adjust fasteners and a wide variety of nailing patterns make subcomponent building easy. The lumber is clamped both horizontally and vertically with a combined force of more than 1800 pounds. This one-man operation with its flow-through design produces straight and flush subcomponents fast enough to feed two framing lines.



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business with an expandable, affordable and paperless platform that reduces production delays while increasing accuracy, consistency and vastly improving communication efficiency in your shop. And the best part is ShopNet is flexible enough to work with the equipment you have now, as well as the equipment you want to have tomorrow.

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## Follow-up on R-Squared: "We're Preparing for Growth"

by Libby Maurer

Being framer friendly and conservative in the first years of business increases the chance of success.

### at a glance

- ❑ R-Squared, a framing company, started a small wall panel shop in 2001 to increase efficiency on the jobsite.
- ❑ After several years of gradual growth, the company is preparing for more dramatic growth in the next few years.
- ❑ The Roods have been successful by learning about smart marketing, launching their own version of turnkey framing services, and focusing on personnel development.

It's been nearly two years to the day since *SBC* first met with Robbie and Dean Rood at their Freeport, IL wall panel shop. After chatting with them in between educational sessions at BCMC 2006 in Houston, we decided to check in on the brothers to find out what has changed. Here, they talk about knowing when to take risks, what it takes to sell panels, and why wall panel manufacturers need to focus on educating the marketplace.

The Roods came from a framing background where wall panels were never used. They decided to go into business together in 1995 and by 2001 their framing company R-Squared started a very small but profitable wall panel shop. "We decided to try it because [wall panels] seemed so much more efficient than stick framing on the jobsite," said Robbie.

Turns out they were right; R-Squared's business has more than doubled since late 2004, and they are planning for steady growth into the future. Although they've seen healthy increases on the balance sheet, the Roods still believe in running their business conservatively. They believe what they've learned along their journey is an important lesson for start-ups, small businesses and long-established companies to take to heart. Here are just a few things they've done right.

### Setting Goals & Benchmarking

Dean and Robbie say that for their first few years in business, they didn't set many

Continued on page 40



**Follow-up on R-Squared...**

Continued from page 38

long-term goals for the company. "Our sights were set on making it," they said, adding that growth was so incremental that it didn't seem to make sense to make big plans. "Smaller businesses with people who have little business experience don't know that setting business or revenue goals is important," Dean said.

Now that R-Squared is more established, they've started to track their progress and set realistic revenue goals. "This has helped with benchmarking. If we don't set goals and hit certain marks, we can't tell where or when we've grown, when to invest in new equipment, or even when we need to hire," said Dean.

Conversely, knowing when not to grow is also important from a goal-setting perspective. "You have to be very careful not to expense yourself out," he added.

**Smart Marketing**

Their new focus on benchmarking has made it easier for R-Squared to pay more attention to their marketing efforts. The

brothers say despite coming from a framing background, knowing how to effectively market their product is a learned skill. Robbie and Dean believe the acceptance of wall panels has been slower than they'd like partly because manufacturers haven't fully mastered how to market them.

One mistake, they say, is viewing general contractors as competitors instead of business partners. "We're trying to

partner with them, not compete. If you encourage this type of relationship, eventually they will stop feeling threatened," Robbie said. On the other hand, Dean says it is wise to expect general contractors to react skeptically about using panels at first. "My priority—in the beginning—is to get them to keep an open mind," he said. He

thinks hesitancy in the marketplace to specify panels can be remedied with increased education of the product.

They've also taken seriously their commitment to market the product after making the sale. Dean, who does most of the company's design work, encourages working intimately with roof truss manufacturers throughout this stage. From his per-

spective, it's important to be in close communication because architects' prints are often short on the details necessary to make sure the wall panels and trusses work perfectly together on the jobsite. "Discussing the architectural drawings with the truss manufacturer saves time and money for everyone in this process. If we're not reviewing each other's designs, each party leaves a lot to interpretation."

But why do they view this as a marketing tool? "Because it makes our product look and perform better in the field," they say. "The way I look at it, a customer who has a bad experience is a lost customer for everyone, not just me," Dean said. "You've got a one-time chance to impress who you are working for. Word of mouth makes or breaks your reputation in this industry," Robbie said.

**Refining the Business Plan: Provide "Niche" Turnkey Solutions**

A gradual evolution in their business model contributed to the Roods' success since our visit in 2005. Their decision to provide their own brand of turnkey framing services to their builder customers was a natural progression. "Our goal is for [builders] to find us irreplaceable, so we developed our own version of the turnkey model," they explained.

Coming from a framing background, R-Squared has always supplied framing labor for their customers. Their "niche" turnkey service involves supplying and coordinating any wood products needed for the job, including roof and floor truss packages built by local component manufacturers and loose framing lumber from lumberyards.

R-Squared says its turnkey services have become popular partially because of the volatility of lumber. "Working so closely with vendors, we've been able to lock in prices for longer. It not only benefits the customer, but it also works to our advantage," Dean explained. They've established partner-

**The Roods' Top Five Tips for Growing a Wall Panel Plant**

1. Set realistic goals and benchmark your successes and failures.
2. Market the product both before and after the sale.
3. Find your "niche" and revise your business plan accordingly.
4. Evaluate efficiency on a continuing basis.
5. Hire for growth and longevity to build a loyal team.

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## Follow-up on R-Squared...

Continued from page 41

ships with lumberyards to provide turnkey, which has taken some of the competitive edge away. "Everyone is partnering with each other in a way that is win-win," said Robbie. "It obviously increases our wall panel sales, and it increases the lumberyards' sales on the other products."

Their customers appreciate not having to do the ordering and scheduling of all the jobsite materials. "Customers like it because it's convenient and takes a lot of pressure off," Dean said, estimating that 30 percent of their business is now turnkey.

## Roof Trusses & Wall Panels Are Like Night & Day

It's been said that wall panels are a very different product from roof trusses in terms of how to market and sell them. Dean advises that roof truss manufacturers looking to start a wall panel division adopt a framer's attitude to succeed. "Wall panels are not as much of a moving target if you think like a framer," he commented.

He also said it helps to realize that panels can be a tougher sell than roofs, and that they generally have a lower margin. "The tendency is to have to provide the labor and a lot more materials if you want to make the sale (on panels)," he said. This includes turnkey framing products like plates, studs, different sheathing types (depending on the contractor), header styles, and various dimensions of lumber. With all these variables, Robbie said providing trusses is far easier and more efficient because there are fewer materials. But he reminded it is important to keep your eye on the prize. "We know panels make us more efficient and productive than stick framing. Which is why we ventured into walls in the first place."

In the shop, Robbie says the differences continue: "You might build the same truss several times," he said,



**"Wall panels are not as much of a moving target if you think like a framer."**



adding that nearly every wall set-up is different from the next. This is a good reason to evaluate efficiency on a continuing basis.

## Make Smart Use of Down Time

Robbie said orders slowed considerably in October and into November of last year. Instead of laying people off, he adopted a healthy attitude and put them to work on updates to their facilities. "We've always taken advantage of slow times. That's when we use the opportunity to improve ourselves, and plan for when we get busier," he said. As a result, cosmetic improvements—insulation on the building and a new façade for the front—have been made to the building. A conference room and reception area were also built, and a (heated!) bathroom was added.

An added benefit of filling up the slow times is an improved relationship with your employees. Robbie said, "[Our employees] know that we're trying as hard as we can to get them a full paycheck at the end of the week and they really appreciate it." Dean says there is great benefit in inviting employees to participate in making their work environment better. "Among other things, it's a pride-building exercise. When the team is involved in a cosmetic change in the company, they are literally seeing the company grow before their eyes."

Thanks to their recent benchmarking efforts, Robbie is already filling his plate with shop improvement house-keeping activities for a slow winter: "We are planning to relocate the line, and hopefully it will improve our efficiency." Making this adjustment when production is slow will give the workers time to get used to the change, Robbie said.

## Personnel: Building a Workforce for Longevity

In an industry that is challenged by a volatile workforce, keeping good labor around often seems like an unrealistic

Continued on page 44

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Follow-up on R-Squared...  
Continued from page 42

goal. From a business philosophy, Dean says, R-Squared looks at growth from every angle, including hiring. Since our first interview, they've put a heavy emphasis on hiring for growth. "We've started to focus on longevity when we hire," he explained. "We're looking for people who are open to taking on different roles in the business so our company can grow."



### What the Future Holds: Growth

In terms of goals for the next several years, Dean and Robbie intend to hire another salesperson, additional office staff and a few more designers. They've doubled their staff since our last interview, and predict that they could double again in another few years. In the shop, Robbie says R-Squared could significantly increase production capacity without making any new major equipment investments.

Hiring people who want to grow with the company has inspired loyalty among the Roods' workforce. "I'm starting to see a greater level of respect from employees than I used to [a few years ago]," said Dean. "They understand that we are committed to steady growth and improvement, and that builds loyalty."

**"We've started to focus on longevity when we hire. We're looking for people who are open to taking on different roles in the business so our company can grow"**

One thing is certain; the Roods are committed to growing their business one step at a time. They don't necessarily talk about it, but Robbie and Dean say they both have the same vision for R-Squared. You can bet it has something to do with growth. **SBC**

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# A Hybrid Approach to Wall Panel Manufacturing

by Ed Heil

Building your system on a versatile software platform will build the capability of your business as well.

**W**all panel manufacturing has a limited history in our industry. Today's manufacturers come from widely varied backgrounds—framers, lumber retailers, builders, and component manufacturers, to name just a few. Predictably, each brings different skill sets, production requirements, and business goals to their manufacturing operations.

In this article, I'd like to talk about a comprehensive "systems" approach to wall panel manufacturing that allows users to be financially prudent early in their ventures and still ensure flexibility and potential for future growth. I call this the hybrid approach.

In the context of this discussion, a hybrid system is a solution that mixes technologies, carefully coordinating machinery options with a powerful and expandable production software platform (the key component of a manufacturing system). This is a system designed to maximize an operation's chances of success because it accounts for production expectations, available building space, and the workforce's manufacturing expertise. Simply put, hybrid systems are designed to provide maximum flexibility.

I believe that the wall component manufacturing market cannot be effectively served by "off the shelf" solutions. There are simply too many variables from company to company. Having owned and operated a truss and panel plant and visited close to 50 additional operations, I've learned that clients and prospects need a wide range of cost effective tools to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the ever-changing wall manufacturing industry. That's why I advocate this approach.

A typical hybrid system includes manual machine technologies, production software, material delivery components, and eventually, automated machine systems. Each system is designed to meet specific, defined challenges presented by an evolving wall component market and to accommodate the widely varied levels of expertise each organization brings to its business.

A hybrid system offers four big advantages over off the shelf systems: It is affordable, expandable, forward-looking, and technology-driven. In my opinion, the key to a healthy return on investment in wall panel manufacturing is striking the proper balance of these characteristics for your needs. Let's take a look at them individually:

**Affordability**  
So why are you in business, anyway? It's likely your overall goal is to achieve a good return on your investment. And ideally, that return should improve over time. So controlling your initial capital investment in a manufacturing plant is critical.

## Do Your Homework

As with many other businesses, the future of wall panel manufacturing can seem like a moving target. That fact alone makes researching the marketplace and your prospective customers' needs so important before you make any machinery or software investments. Exciting markets are developing all over the country, but best practices in this industry are just beginning to be established. Market forecasts for product demand vary widely, even in the same region, and this factor affects both the short- and long-term viability of wall manufacturing systems. The bottom line? Do your due diligence and purchase wisely!

## at a glance

- ❑ A hybrid wall panel manufacturing system coordinates machinery options with expandable production software platform.
- ❑ The initial capital investment for wall panel manufacturing equipment is closely tied to your return on investment.
- ❑ The software package available through the hybrid approach offers expandability and works well with automated and manual equipment systems.

For instance, if your initial machinery investment overwhelms the skills of your workforce, your rate of return will certainly suffer. It's important to realize that your actual rate of return will be directly proportional to your organization's abilities in areas like manufacturing procedures, personnel development, design skill development, and service and maintenance skills. In many companies, such skills are inadequately developed, and it's important to recognize that a machinery investment alone cannot compensate for a lack of technical ability. Therefore, use your organization's collective skill level to help you determine the appropriate choice for machinery investment.

And this is where the hybrid concept really shines. Because it is built on an affordable, flexible software platform, it enables manufacturers to enter the market with a minimal investment in machinery while allowing your team to build the skills necessary to compete, capture greater market share, and as a result, deliver a good return on investment. In other words, it's a simple, scalable "pay-as-you-go" approach.

### Expandability

Wall panel manufacturers benefit immensely from the hybrid approach's capacity for expansion and growth. This flexibility is delivered through production software that provides an essential framework for organizational development. An initial investment in production software also enables easy connectivity to higher levels of machinery sophistication in the future.


A sound software investment delivers essentially the same manufacturing functionality and benefits at each level of organizational sophistication. This means it delivers a paperless stream of management and manufacturing instruction regardless of whether the machine operation is either very manual or very automated. So manufacturing personnel trained with this technology are able to operate efficiently whether laying a plate out by hand, for example, or monitoring the performance of a highly automated saw that cuts and marks the plate.

The right software enables a framework from which standard operating procedures and operator skills can fully develop. In this way, a hybrid system investment provides a great degree of flexibility.

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### Forward-Looking

Who can predict how wall panel manufacturing technology will develop? The building component industry itself is a recently established, yet burgeoning business. However, no one can determine with absolute confidence whether wall components will become as common as roof components. Therefore, it is difficult to say today which equipment-driven systems will become obsolete or less efficient than others.

Manufacturers who invest in a hybrid system understand that software developments drive our industry and help define its future. When opening a new shop, manufacturers often

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## A Hybrid Approach...

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wonder whether an operation too small is practical and whether a larger one can still be efficient. By design, a hybrid system is expandable, and can anticipate and accommodate future industry developments. Such carefully considered and powerfully designed software platforms create the most forward-looking systems in the industry.

### Technology-Driven

This characteristic is very important because high production settings require highly skilled personnel. And the higher the production rate, the more significant this criterion becomes. This reality runs contrary to the common belief that highly automated facilities can operate with low levels of personnel skill.

Manufacturing walls is not like building typical assembly-line products. Wall designs involve many specialized exceptions. Therefore, it makes sense to develop your organization's collective skills while also ramping up your wall component production rate. It is here, again, where the technologies associated with a hybrid system can help your operation grow. For instance, in a hybrid system, production software provides a paperless interface to production workstations,

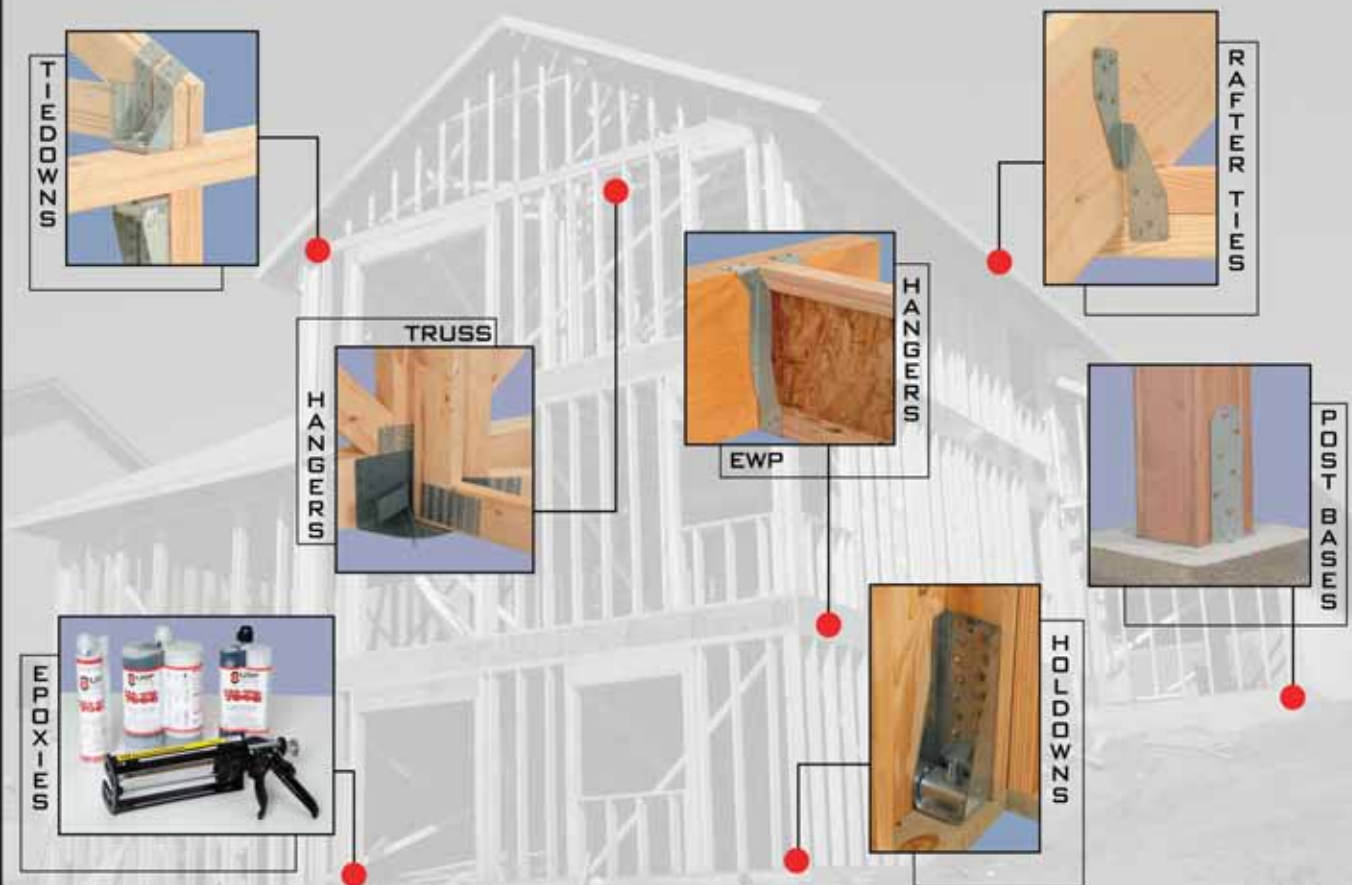
complete with specific personnel work assignments designated by the design office. And even the most basic production software platform also delivers greater material scheduling, handling and material delivery efficiencies.

The overarching goal is to meet changing market opportunities with higher levels of automation when it is strategically wise to do so. More expensive equipment technology becomes an appropriate and attractive investment when it can be carefully justified and implemented.

In summary, I believe that choosing a hybrid approach will enable your organization to enter and compete in the growing manufactured wall panel market at a reasonable cost to enter. When you put powerful, expandable and affordable production software at the core of your business, you ensure you'll be both strategically positioned and agile enough to anticipate, respond to, and capitalize on growth opportunities in this dynamic industry. Good luck! **SBC**

*Ed Heil worked as an apprentice on a wall panel line at age 15. He later started a labor-only framing company, which became a national turnkey framer providing material, labor, and engineered products for multi-family framing projects in 15 states. He opened a truss and panel plant in Baltimore in 1989 to service his framing company. Ed joined MiTek in 2003 to oversee wall panel software and machinery development.*

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## Fire Demonstration & Plant Tour Show off Truss Industry for NY Building Officials Conference

by Libby Maurer with Will Warlick & Melanie Birkeland

The effort to educate the market about our industry continues—this time in New York.

Since a May 2006 WTCA Board of Directors resolution encouraged component manufacturers to open their doors to professionals outside the industry, truss plant tours have worked in the industry's educational favor. So far, lawmakers, building inspectors and others have assembled at truss plants across the country to learn about the design and manufacture of structural building components. The response to this effort has been overwhelmingly positive, and important relationships have been formed.

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To us it's innate that structural components are the future of framing buildings because they provide the most affordable, efficient and technically advanced framing option possible. But to others, trusses and other building components are very new, non-traditional products that have unknown performance characteristics. Hence, they have attributes that can cause them to be viewed in a less than favorable light. Because there are widely varied messages about our products in the marketplace (in particular within the fire service), it reasonable to expect that it will take a great effort by our industry to inform the market that the use of engineered building products/components is quickly becoming standard across the country, and everyone will benefit from understanding their true performance and capabilities. The component manufacturers of WTCA-NY made a significant impression in the New York State Building Officials Conference's (NYSBOC) perception of trusses on October 17, 2006.

WTCA staff has a relationship with Sam Ricotta from the New York Department of State Codes Division because we had worked together to get some educational classes approved with the state. Ricotta contacted WTCA to collaborate on a truss plant tour and also requested a live fire demonstration as part of our presentation for their annual educational conference. We then worked together to get the tour and the fire demonstration approved for CEU credit as well.

WTCA-NY became very involved from a planning and logistics perspective. Bruce Hutchins, chapter president, offered that the chapter would sponsor the event and worked closely with everyone involved on the catering, the handouts, the buses for the attendees, and some of the raw materials for the burn demonstration.

Continued on page 54

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### at a glance

- ❑ Truss plant tours have worked in the industry's educational favor.
- ❑ The WTCA-NY made a significant educational impression in the New York State Building Officials Conference's (NYSBOC) perception in October 2006.
- ❑ The tour shed a lot of light on the truss industry for building code officials and fire service members.

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## One Tour at a Time...

Continued from page 52

Saratoga Lumber Traders, in Ballston Falls, NY, was one of the closest truss plants to the town of Colonie, NY, where the whole event was taking place so they were called to see if they would be willing to help with the opportunity. They stepped right in and took on the responsibility with passionate leadership. This is just another great example of WTCA Chapters and staff collaborating well together.

### Plant Tour at Saratoga Lumber Traders

A total of 280 attendees (half of which were fire service members and half were building officials) were split into groups of 25 to tour Saratoga Lumber Traders.

Ricotta said, "The tour shed a lot of light on the truss industry for people on what they often see arriving banded at the jobsite. It was well-received by all, including new-comers and veterans alike, among the building and fire officials."

One retired building inspector said the plant tour was a great experience, especially for the younger firefighters. "The most interesting part was learning how the design is sent right out to the floor where the trusses are assembled," said John Flanigan, also a fire service commissioner.

Flanigan commented that there are many custom homes being built in this area of the state, and it's best to assume that there are trusses in these houses. "It's amazing all the different shapes they get in those homes," he said. Another firefighter/fire inspector/building inspector said it was really good to see how trusses are made, since most big houses now contain them. "I'm impressed with the quality of these products," he said.

As noted by one of the suppliers in attendance, it was important for the fire service to observe the quality and sophistication of the production equipment. "The point was made that the machinery isn't nickel and dime stuff, that these guys are making serious investments into this work," said Dennis Fleishman of Robbins Engineering. Ricotta said, "The component saws were very intriguing. I noticed a lot of people trying to figure out how [the saw] was cutting all those angles at the same time."

Hutchins said getting participants in the door can be a challenge, but in nearly every instance it fosters communication and builds goodwill.

Marc James of MiTek noted that firefighters took particular interest in the QC station at Saratoga. "It seemed to be the biggest eye opener of all. The way they check the joints with vellum for plate placement was impressive to many on the tour," he said.

Continued on page 56



Tour participants watch as John Mulligan talks about assembling trusses on the gantry table at the Saratoga Lumber Traders (SLT) plant in Ballston Spa, NY.



The tour group watches the gantry. To manage the large numbers arriving at their plant, the participants were divided into groups of about 25.



The automated linear saw was interesting to many participants. People were trying to figure out how it could cut so many angles at once.



An SLT truss technician gave the design presentation. He showed the truss design process on his computer and discussed code issues that truss technicians consider.

John Mulligan and Mark Colbath of SLT present on Quality Control procedures.

John Mulligan answers questions at the QC station of the plant tour. Comments from participants indicated that this was an aspect of the industry that particularly impressed them.

Mark Colbath continues the presentation on Quality Control procedures.

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## One Tour at a Time...

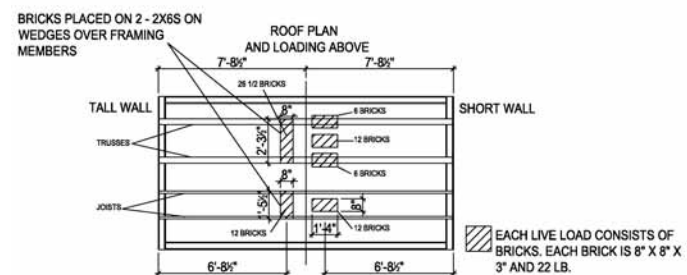
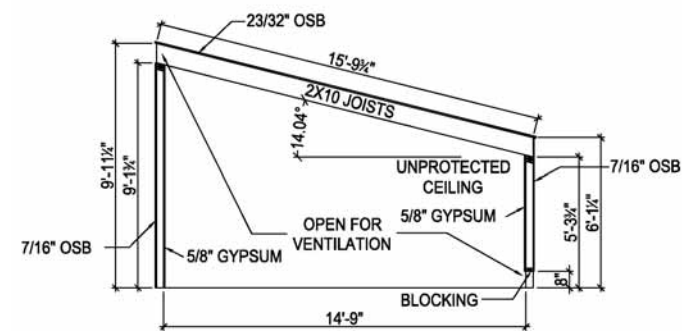
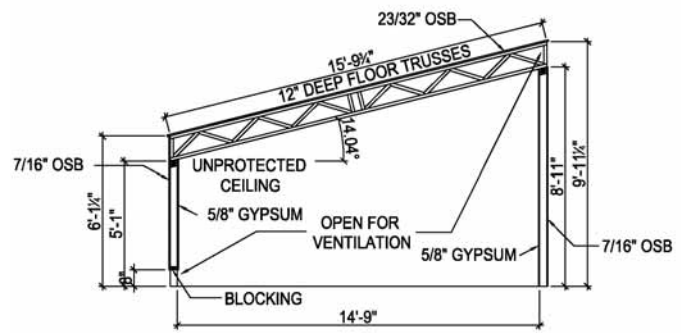
Continued from page 54

### Fire Test: NYSBOC Fire Demonstration

The objectives of the fire demonstration were as follows:

- The goal was to demonstrate the growth of fire and its effects on two typical unprotected floor structural elements included in a sheathed assembly.
- A floor assembly measuring approximately 8'x15' was placed on top of walls that enclose all four sides so that the fire will be unaffected by wind and the elements.
- The floor assembly included both traditional joists and trusses in the same structure so both structural elements experienced identical fire conditions.
- The floor was built at an angle so observers could view the effects of the fire on the concentrated loads that were applied directly onto the sheathing and onto both the trusses and 2x10 joists in the floor assembly.
- The load was applied so that both the 2x10 joists and the trusses were stressed to equivalent levels.

Continued on page 58



The burn demonstration was provided at the request of the NYSBOC for its Capital District Educational Conference at the Town of Colonie, NY's Municipal Training Facility on Oct. 17, 2006. It was offered in conjunction with the truss plant tour.



280 firefighters and building officials attended. The observers were asked how long they thought the joists would last in the fire, and how long the trusses would last. Many thought the trusses would fail much sooner.



The demonstration assembly was an approximately 8'x15' unprotected floor assembly that was sloped to be viewed from the ground. The walls were panels provided by Saratoga Lumber Traders.



The floor assembly had 2x10 SPF joists and 12" floor trusses spanning from the low end to the high end. These were sheathed with 23/32" OSB. Joists and trusses were included in the same structure so they would be exposed to identical fire conditions.



The concentrated live loads were applied using 22-lb. bricks. The joists on the left carried 528 lbs, and the trusses on the right carried 1112 lbs. The joists and trusses were equivalently stressed under these loads. See [www.fire.carbeck.org](http://www.fire.carbeck.org) for a more detailed description of the demonstration design.



At 9 minutes, 31 seconds. The loads begin to tilt more noticeably as the floor assembly sags. Sag warns of impending collapse, but it is not always present, and is rarely so noticeable.



At 11 minutes, 23 seconds. The sag increased gradually during the burn as the structural members charred and lost strength. Before collapse, the floor assembly was sagging about 8-10".



At 12 minutes, 15 seconds, the fire penetrating the floor indicated significant gaps in the decking on the truss side. At 12 minutes, 51 seconds, both the joists and the trusses are still holding load.



At 13 minutes, 11 seconds. The concentrated loads bearing on the sheathing have now fallen through. One point made by the demonstration is that sheathing typically fails in fire before the structural members.



Comments

John Flanigan said the fire demonstration was a great experience. "In the fire service we are told that trusses are dangerous and don't go in the building if there are trusses. This shows that with some protections trusses will hold," said the 50+ year fire service veteran.

Dennis Fleishman also found it very valuable, but noticed that some members of the fire service were questioning the results of the burn. "It seems to me that some people are set in their opinions and when a demonstration does not show what they believe in it raises big question marks. It will probably take many demonstrations like this over many years to address the pre-set opinions," he said. Bruce Hutchins heard the same questioning from some in attendance. "The reactions I heard just shows how much educational work we have to do," he said. Fleishman encouraged future interactions with the fire service based on the fact that this made a real impact on those in attendance, something they will never forget: "The way the demonstration played out was not lost on anyone in attendance."

Marc James said he heard that a lot of the attendees were impressed with the performance of the trusses and joists and the fact that their performance was essentially the same.

There was a noticeable difference in how the veteran and young fire service attendees reacted to the demonstration. Sam Ricotta said, "The 'newbies' tended to be more in awe of the test. The 'old guard,' (older code officials and former firefighters who now do code enforcement) were more critical." Bob Cordell agreed that there was mixed reaction about the test: "We got comments—some said it was good, others not so good. It was good people could see it; they could make their own call."

The fire test and truss plant tour got the following rating from 86 participants who returned evaluation forms. [SBC](#)

**NYSBOC Truss Plant Tour & Fire Demonstration Feedback**

Excellent	36	42%
Good	39	45%
OK	6	7%
Not so good	3	3%
Poor	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100%</b>



At 13 minutes, 19 seconds, the trusses and joists collapsed simultaneously. This demonstrated that trusses and joists, when equivalently loaded, perform similarly in fire. It also showed that unprotected construction will not last long in fire.



After the collapse, firefighters extinguished the fire.



After the fire, severe charring was seen on all structural members. Even on the outside truss, charring reduced the size of the chords significantly. Without trying to make this point, the demonstration also showed the effectiveness of gypsum protection on the walls.

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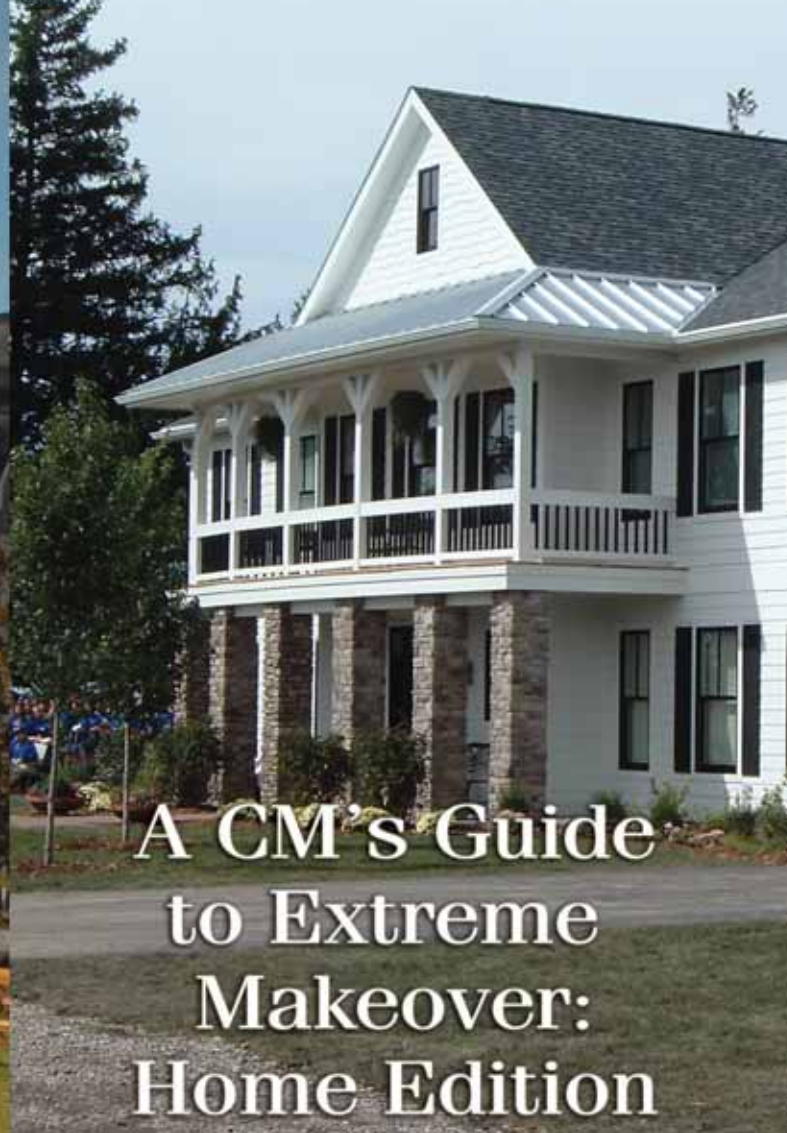


# LAKESIDE

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# “Move That Bus!”



## A CM's Guide to Extreme Makeover: Home Edition

by Emmy Thorson-Hanson

What would you do if approached by *Extreme Makeover*? Get the inside scoop so that you are prepared to make the right decision.

### at a glance

- ❑ Structural building components are essential for a show like *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.
- ❑ With such a tight schedule, structural building components are the single most critical material in helping reach the show's deadlines.
- ❑ The most important thing you can do throughout all four stages of production is to be flexible.
- ❑ Be onsite for the framing the whole day to help with any questions or conflicts should they arise.

You may be familiar with that now famous phrase “Move that bus!” With ABC's hit TV show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* taking the nation by storm, structural building components are in high demand for the homes being built. This season, the show is featuring a project in each of the 50 states, and it is possible that you may be asked to participate at some point.

SBC recently caught up with two companies that were involved in the show (Richco Structures of Haven, WI and Cascade Mfg Co of Cascade, IA) to bring you an insider's look at what it is like to undertake a project like this. Here we present exclusive information about what you can expect if ever approached by the show, or a similar project.

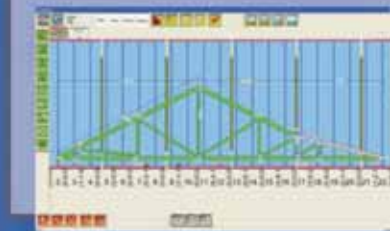
One thing is obvious. Without the use of structural building components, *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* as we know it would not be possible. With such a tight schedule for the show, components are absolutely necessary to pull these projects off in such a short window of time. Sean Kelly, operations manager at Richco says, “Structural building components are essential. It's not a question.”

The show only allows seven days to complete the entire project, from demolishing the old structure to making the home move-in ready, so components enable the show's cast more time to paint walls, arrange furniture and decorate. According to Merle Nett, president of Richco, “Our product is probably the single most critical product in helping them accomplish their goal.”

Continued on page 64

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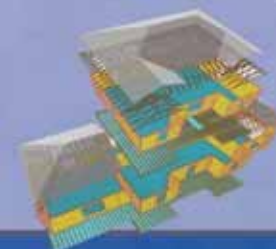
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“Structural building components are essential. It’s not a question.”

## Project Background

### Richco Structures • Haven, WI

The Koepke family of Dundee, WI was left to live in an unsafe house with exposed electrical wires and insulation, a leaking roof, broken windows and an attic infested with bats after losing their father to cancer just five months after his diagnosis.

Richco accepted the request to supply the roof trusses and wall panels for the project that aired on November 19, 2006. “We felt good about helping the family and adding to the benefit they would derive from the project,” remarked Merle.



In just one week, 1,500 volunteers pulled together to build this 3,740 square foot country colonial home with a wrap-around porch with dormers for the Koepke family of Dundee, WI.

### Cascade Mfg Co • Cascade, IA

After losing their home to a fire in 2005, the Kibe family of Gladbrook, IA, was living in a trailer and on the verge of losing their farm. So when *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* approached Cascade to provide the floor and roof trusses, they graciously accepted the opportunity.

But that doesn’t mean the project was easy. James Kurt, central Iowa design manager for Cascade remarked, “It definitely tested us. But at the end of the day it was all about building a nice house for this deserving family.” The episode aired on October 29, 2006.



After seven days of extreme effort, the final product is a beautiful house for the Kibe family in Gladbrook, IA.

### “Move That Bus!”

Continued from page 62

We’ll now hear feedback from these two companies about their experiences and they will offer advice in each of the four main categories component manufacturers are involved in for the show: design, manufacture, transportation and on-site framing.

### DESIGN

When it comes to design, you and your team must be prepared to go the distance, both in time and flexibility. According to James, Cascade had to be in constant contact with the builder, Hubbell Homes. “The amount of hours and coordination were the biggest challenge; things were changing every day. Every meeting we had involved changes with updated plans; every time I talked to the designer at Hubbell he had a new updated plan to send me.” Jake Schmidt, central Iowa sales representative for Cascade, recalls that many little details popped up without advanced notice: “We had to constantly change things in the plans to accommodate the designers from the show.”

The changes that occur in an *Extreme* project are not as unusual as you would expect, and are not all that different from the changes that happen when designing a regular project, according to these companies. Sean says, “There are no more changes in plans than you would see on a normal house, but everything happens within a week, so you have to adapt to the changes immediately.”

**Be Flexible:** The most important thing you can do throughout all four stages of production is to be flexible, but it especially comes in handy during the design process. “Flexibility is the key, because you may get calls at any time. Everyone needs to be on call and ready to go at any time, from the engineers to the truckers. If the design team decides to put an extra load on the structure, you have to change the design of the trusses,” advises Sean.

**Expect Late Nights/Long Hours:** Cascade put in extra effort to make sure everything went perfectly. “Whatever we had to do to make this thing go quickly and as easily as possible is what we did. We worked closely with the design team at Hubbell Homes, and I even stayed up all night to do

Continued on page 66

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Work continued at a steady pace for framers on the Richco site, while the show's cast filmed segments.



A roof truss is hoisted into place on the Cascade site.



Coordination is key for any *Extreme* build. At the Richco site, sheathing was applied to the garage roof while concrete was poured for the basement below.

### "Move That Bus!"

Continued from page 64

the final design," said James. "There was a lot of action in a short amount of time and it really tested our ability to work together."

Richco anticipated changes and tried to prepare for them, which came in handy when the attic trusses were removed from the plans a couple of days prior to construction. "We had to put in some overtime to get it done," Sean said of the last minute changes.

"It takes a lot of coordination both internally and externally, because if something goes wrong, you have to be able to adapt at any time." Sean also offers some advice: "I'd tell truss companies (getting involved in an *Extreme* project); you must take into consideration that you'll be on call from two days prior to construction to two days after the build is over."

**Plan Ahead:** It is important to be prepared for anything, and devising a plan for how to deal with any situation that may arise is highly advised. According to Sean, Richco had three designers on call at all times leading up to the framing. Only one was actually working on the project, the other two were just on call for backup. By covering all of their bases, Richco ensured they weren't caught off guard with inadequate staffing.

James gives similar advice: "Make sure you plan, plan, plan. Plan for every possible question or problem. No amount of planning is enough, so make sure to cover everything on the front end and it will be appreciated by everyone involved."

**Cooperate:** Not only will you have to work well within your own team, but you will also have to work closely with other trades, which may be something new for you. "It was by far the most contact I've ever had with other trades on a job. It was really interesting because everybody knew that the more time we spent on the front end, the better off everyone was going to be in the long run," explained James. "It was great working closely with the plumbing and HVAC trades. I worked with them to find out exactly where they needed to put the plumbing and air ducts and then adjusted my design accordingly so that they wouldn't have problems. They were able to give me the exact locations of where they needed an air duct, or a plumbing drain."

The collaboration that goes on between the different trades during *Extreme* projects is its secret to success. Without the mutual respect between trades and the willingness to combine forces, it would be impossible to meet the deadlines set by the show.

"We don't usually work directly with a lot of people that supply products to the same jobsites and we don't tend to run

Continued on page 68

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Wall panels were hoisted to the second floor of the building on the Richco site.



Framers set wall panels in place on the Richco site.



Walls for the Richco project were set ahead of schedule, speeding up framing overall and allowing designers more time to work on the interior of the house.

## “Move That Bus!”

Continued from page 66

into them. On this project everybody was willing to take their time to plan ahead so that we wouldn't run into issues or problems later on. It's too bad we can't work together on every job," said Jake.

## MANUFACTURE

The manufacture of the components needs to be perfect so that the framing process goes smoothly.

**Teamwork:** Your production workers will need to be able to work efficiently. "The cooperation among people in our company is what made it go so smooth, it tested how well everyone in your company cooperates. It was easy because we all worked together," said James. He also recommends that production workers be flexible with their schedules and plan on putting in some overtime.

**Get a Head Start:** Another useful tip James shared is to start building as soon as possible. "Make sure you build and load as early as you can because it gives you a safety net, so that if something happens to a truss during loading you have time and can fix it."

It is also important to note that the size of your company makes a difference in how much your other projects will be affected. James said Cascade was able to continue with all of their ongoing projects while undertaking the *Extreme* project. This balancing act was possible because they have three plants in Iowa where they were able to send other projects that needed to get done. "It helps to have the other plants, so that we can push a project in if it's hot," he said.

## TRANSPORTATION

The transportation of trusses to the jobsite is a very fragile step where being one minute off schedule can spell disaster.

**Pay Attention to Details:** Homes are often built on a narrow street where there is only room for one truck. "The biggest challenge was that there were people on the jobsite 24/7. It was tricky coordinating the product delivery at the last minute, and making sure we didn't slow anything down. Something that might not be a big deal on a regular jobsite can easily become a catastrophe at this jobsite," recalls Jake.

Richco also had to follow a tight transportation schedule that could change at any moment. "On Sunday at about 10 p.m. I got a call that they wanted loads moved over to the house around 3 a.m., so we had to contact the driver and have him move his time around. Everyone has to adapt," advises Sean.

And don't expect it to be a normal delivery either. "The truck drivers had to get up at 2 a.m. on a Sunday and be on call to bring products in," recalls Merle. "Our trailers had to be parked there (at a nearby sports field) for what you could call staging. Everything stayed on the trailers until they needed them."

Continued on page 70



Roof trusses for the garage being set on the Richco site.



Coordinating deliveries was especially important for the Richco project because the site was located on a small city street, so trucks had to quickly unload materials and move to make room for the next delivery.



The Cascade house as it was starting to come together.

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Volunteers at the project in Dundee, WI, braved extreme weather conditions including rain, thunderstorms and a tornado warning.

### “Move That Bus!”

Continued from page 68

The size of your fleet can play a part in how the transportation is handled and how your other projects are affected. According to Merle, normally 80 percent of the trucking they use is from their own fleet. “We used our own trucks and drivers for this project, although since it was during a busy time we did have to get outsourced trucking to cover our other projects.”

**Coordinate:** The delivery schedule can be just as challenging as changing the design. The schedule actually changes a

lot so the driver needs to be available to be at the jobsite for the entire day. James recommends that you don’t take the schedule as the absolute final word because it most likely will change at least a few times.

Cascade put forth a large effort to ensure that they didn’t cause any problems. They staged the deliveries, collated the trusses to come off the truck in the order they were to be set and fabricated oversized trusses in one-piece to minimize piggyback framing on the site.

### ON-SITE FRAMING

**Have someone onsite:** You also need to be prepared to stay on-site while the house is being framed. “I arrived at 4:00 a.m. and didn’t leave until after 8:00 p.m. The floor was up in ten minutes and I was there to help them if they had any questions. We had to do more service than a typical job because every little bit really helps the end result in this project. It’d be nice if we could do that on every job if it could work out,” notes James. “This was a once in a lifetime kind of thing, it was pretty neat watching it go up with no problems.”

**Help Out:** Sean highly recommends that you have someone onsite for another important reason; to help out. It came in handy for Richco when they noticed that the framers were doing something that wasn’t on the plan, and even though it didn’t affect Richco’s product, they were able to bring it to the attention of the framers. “Since we knew the plan so well, we saw some things that they were doing wrong and pointed it out for them, which saved time,” Sean said.

James agrees that it is helpful to be available should problems arise: “I would highly recommend that you have someone onsite. It is an opportunity to make things easier for the framers. It just helps to be there so that you can answer questions should anything come up.”

**Be ready for the elements:** But there is something that you can never plan for—the weather. If you participate in the show, remember that this is show business, and we all know the catch phrase “the show must go on.” There is no time to reschedule for a different day with nicer weather, as Richco learned. “Framing was through rain storms, lightning and tornado warnings—some really rough conditions. They only

Continued on page 72

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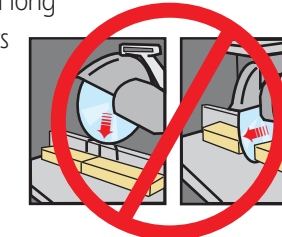


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“Our product is probably the single most critical product in helping them accomplish their goal.”

See page 74 for a continued point/counterpoint discussion about CM participation in ABC's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* in “The Hidden Value of Marketing” and “Make Sure Your Eyes Are Wide Open.”

“Move That Bus!”

Continued from page 70

took off one hour during the storm because of the danger, and then they went back at it. They were like the mailman; nothing was going to stop them,” said Merle.

**Be positive:** Despite the unsatisfactory weather, everyone kept a “sunny” outlook. “We had no negatives. We were successful in getting the house built on time despite the horrendous weather,” noted Merle.

At the end of framing, everyone felt great about how flawlessly everything came together. “From start to finish, the way everyone pulled together was great, from the designers to the truck drivers,” he said. It’s something to be proud of when things go seamlessly with no mess-ups.

**Conclusion**

As we have seen there is a lot more to this show than meets the eye. While it is an honor to be asked to contribute to an *Extreme* project, it is also a major decision not to be taken lightly. It requires lots of time, effort, dedication and financial investment to get the job done. And once you commit to involvement, everyone will be depending on you to do your job, and do it well. We hope that you are now armed with knowledge that could help you make the right decision for your company if the opportunity arises. **SBC**

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# Point • Counterpoint

## Point: The Hidden Value of Marketing

By Emmy Thorson-Hanson

Doing a good deed and being part of a unique experience are obvious reasons for participating in an *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* project. But there is a hidden value, one which benefits your company and the industry. Richco let us in on how the marketing from the show impacted their company.

Merle Nett commented on the advantages of using components for the project. "This allows us to build in a factory environment with perfect conditions, and get the components completed and to the jobsite on time. There's a tremendous amount of time savings, everything fits like a glove, and people don't have to spend a lot of time looking at plans."

Merle also mentioned the exposure the industry receives when component manufacturers are involved in it: "It promotes the use of manufactured building components to turn things around quickly...the reason we're in business."

Sean Kelly agrees that the time and energy are well worth the effort. "It's a way of showing the community and Wisconsin what we can do," he said. "Seven days is no big deal to us. It makes a statement about your company."

"When you commit you realize that there is a tremendous responsibility resting on your shoulders," noted Merle. "There are literally thousands of people relying on you to do your part, and do it well."

Sean also learned that not only does it make a statement, but it gets your name out and recognized in the public eye. "I most definitely would encourage component manufacturers to get involved," he said. "To be seen in the community, the advertising alone is worth it. I've walked into businesses with my Richco jacket on and people say, 'Oh, you were involved in *Extreme Makeover*.' You can't put a price on that."

With all of the other benefits that this project offers, marketing is just icing on the cake. Sean has advice for component manufacturers that may get asked to do the show: "If you get the opportunity to be involved, do it hands down. Nothing is better for your company than community involvement." **SBC**

## Counterpoint: Make Sure Your Eyes Are Wide Open

By Kirk Grundahl

Joe Hikel's Shelter Systems committed to an *Extreme* project during Season 3 (March 2006) at the urging of a customer with whom Hikel hoped to develop a stronger relationship. "We thought working together on the show would lead to more business in the future," Hikel said. He also hoped his company would derive some recognition after donating the \$30,000 of roof and floor trusses for the new home. When the episode aired in August 2006, Hikel was disappointed that not only was the framing process omitted from the footage, but Shelter's contribution was not included in the credits. "We got hosed. We felt like we bent over backwards to accommodate the show's schedule and all the last minute changes," he said. "And we saw nothing in promotional value after the fact. Nothing."

He pointed out that you have to sign your life away in terms of contractual rights from a marketing perspective. The experience has decidedly soured Hikel's opinion of the feel-good show. "I'd never volunteer again, and I'd caution any CM thinking about getting involved to understand that they shouldn't expect anything in return except the satisfaction of knowing they helped someone," he said.

On the heels of Hikel's feedback and an *Extreme* project happening in each state, the industry would be wise to consider the following thoughts. In the last several years, many WTCA member manufacturers have generously donated their time and products to *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* projects. However, there is something about this that has recently begun to bother me. The most central tenant of my argument has been stated over and over: without the use of structural building components, *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* would not be possible. With such a tight schedule for the show, components are absolutely necessary to pull these projects off in such a short window of time. You should know that manufacturers are asked to donate time and materials to make these projects happen, and receive no compensation for their efforts.

Here is some history on the show. *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* is an Emmy Award-winning ABC series that began broadcasting on November 3, 2003 as a special and as a regular series since February 15, 2004. The show is

one of ABC's top-rated series. The show is hosted by Ty Pennington, whose pay is estimated to be \$6 million annually from the show and various endorsements.<sup>1</sup>

Now about the network. ABC is a for profit business. To that end, all the networks have moved to up-front advertising sales. In 2005 a resurgent ABC grew \$500 million and moved up to \$2.1 billion. In comparison, rival network CBS added \$400 million to total \$2.6 billion. Fox settled in at \$1.6 billion (about the same as in 2004). The WB was at \$675 million (also the same as in 2004). UPN grew some \$25 million to \$375 million.<sup>3</sup>

ABC has the strongest hand based on the continuing strength of hits like *Grey's Anatomy* and *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. It is expected to lead the market in advertising rate increases and possibly dollars. It could even beat the network's upfront take last year of \$2.1 billion. ABC is the only network that will finish higher in the ratings both in 18-49 and in total viewers—both up eight percent over the 2004-05 season.<sup>3</sup>

With this background in tow, I ask these questions:

1. Since without the use of structural building components this show would not be possible, why are WTCA members being asked to donate time and materials?
2. Since we make it possible, doesn't it seem that industry donors should be getting paid handsomely for that benefit or value?
3. What value has ABC given back to the industry that makes *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* possible?
4. Have you seen an ABC program dedicated to the value of the structural building components?
5. Have you seen ABC investing any resources to improve or advance the structural building components industry?
6. Is it possible that ABC found the perfect profit formula—a heart wrenching need, companies and people willing to donate to serve that need, an emotion-packed TV show and the guise of benevolence?

I'm not suggesting that there hasn't been a great deal of good done through *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*—my intent is not to throw cold water on that. However, there are times when it is appropriate to look at an issue without any emotional overlays and ask: a) Is anyone being inappropriately taken advantage of? b) Whose back are all the profits being



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made on? and c) Do the facts of this make any good common sense at all?

The WTCA Executive Committee is currently evaluating this issue. Please send your thoughts and comments on this topic to [extrememakeover@sbcmag.info](mailto:extrememakeover@sbcmag.info). **SBC**

#### Sources:

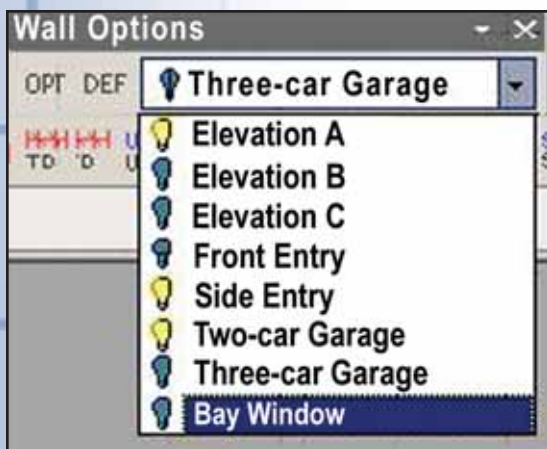
- <sup>1</sup> <http://www.forbes.com/lists/2006/53/J2KW.html>
- <sup>2</sup> [http://publications.mediapost.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Articles.showArticle&art\\_aid=42678](http://publications.mediapost.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=Articles.showArticle&art_aid=42678)
- <sup>3</sup> <http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117943141.html?categoryid=14&cs=1>



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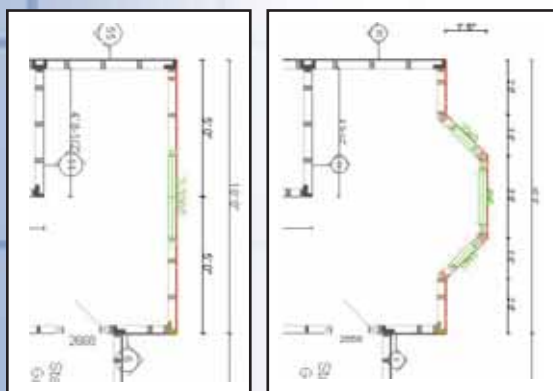
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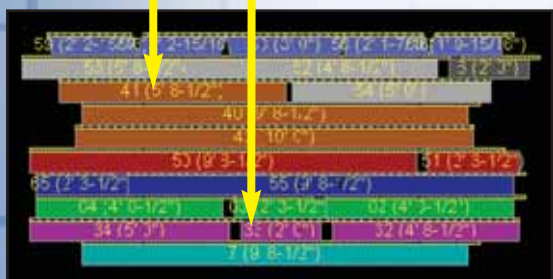
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✓ [42]	[B1]	3-1/2"	8'-1-1/2"	10'-0"	7/16 OSB
✓ [41]	[B1]	3-1/2"	8'-1-1/2"	5'-8-1/2"	7/16 OSB
✓ [40]	[B1]	3-1/2"	8'-1-1/2"	9'-8-1/2"	7/16 OSB
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For more information about WTCA Chapters and how to become more involved, contact Anna L. Stamm (608/310-6719 or [astamm@quallim.com](mailto:astamm@quallim.com)) or Danielle Bothun (608/310-6735 or [dbothun@quallim.com](mailto:dbothun@quallim.com)). Contributions to Chapter Corner, including pictures, are encouraged. Submissions may be edited for grammar, length and clarity.



## Chapter Spotlight

### Chapter Publications Co-ops: One More Benefit of Membership

by Anna L. Stamm

By the end of 2006, WTCA Chapters had one more benefit of membership to discuss when encouraging nonmembers to join—automatic inclusion of a member's purchases each month in the chapter's publications cooperative.

Previously, a chapter member had to specify that he wanted his order held for the co-op. Orders were then fulfilled on the designated date each month and any applicable quantity discounts were applied.

Now, ALL chapter member purchases are automatically included in the pubs co-ops. In addition, ALL orders are fulfilled as they are submitted since none of them needs to be "held for co-op." Instead of showing a quantity discount at the time of purchase, the saving is credited back to the member at the end of the month.

The possible savings to chapter members are great. All WTCA publications are included in the co-op as well as other products and even educational courses. The best part is that no effort is required on the part of the person submitting the order—the discounts will be credited back at the end of the month automatically.

To see if you have earned a credit, you may log onto the WTCA website at [www.sbcindustry.com/loc\\_chap\\_coop.php](http://www.sbcindustry.com/loc_chap_coop.php). A report of the money saved by the members of each chapter is available, too.

So, the next time you are encouraging someone to join your local chapter, remember to tell them about their potential savings from your publications co-op. It is a very measurable benefit of membership in a WTCA Chapter. **SBC**

## Chapter Highlights

### Central Florida Component Manufacturers Association

The Central Florida Chapter held its final meeting of the year in November. High on the agenda was discussion of the educational programs and truss plant tours that the chapter is planning to provide for the fire service. Depending upon attendance, they may run several tours on consecutive days to accommodate all fire shifts. In addition to the tour, they plan to offer one or more Truss Technology Workshop courses. Since the event will offer continuing education credit, they anticipate a solid turnout.

At the meeting, the 2007 Florida Legislative Conference, a joint effort between WTCA and the Florida Building Materials Association (FBMA), was discussed too. The attendees reviewed how WTCA will be responsible for all initiatives that affect the structural building components industry and FBMA will be responsible for everything else in which a retail dealer is involved. The chapter agreed to move its meeting date from March 13 to March 27 to align with the conference on March 28-29. They also supported the idea of a Florida component manufacturers' legislative and related issues discussion on the first day of the conference.

### Iowa Truss Manufacturers Association

BCMC in Houston, TX was the site of the Iowa Chapter's fall meeting. The chapter's Education Committee reported on its continuing efforts to educate local fire departments and schedule regional fire service training events on the fire performance of trusses. The latest Carbeck binder and CD have been furnished to the Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau as well. As the committee gears up for the winter educational sessions, first on the calendar will be a Truss Technology Workshop for builders on recommended best practices on truss handling, installation, restraining and bracing in North Liberty, IA. Workshops for homebuilders, building officials and the insurance industry will be conducted this year. Serving on the committee will be: Ray Noonan, Jr., Craig Thier and Andy Green of Cascade Mfg Co, Alan Esch of Lumber Specialties, Bruce Kinney and Scott Baker of Timber Roots, Rick Parrino and Jim Gach of Plum Building Systems, Tom Lambertz and Wes Parker of Roberts & Dybdahl, Dave Mitchell of Engineered Building Design and Tod Hennessy of Alpine Engineered Products.

Under old business, Ray Noonan, Rick Parrino and Tom Lambertz reported on their attendance at the State Fire Marshall's Fire Code Advisory Committee meetings as "persons of legitimate interest." A letter on behalf of WTCA and the Iowa Chapter with comments on the proposed adoption of the International Fire Code (IFC) and portions of the International Building Code (IBC), 2006 editions, as proposed in Public Safety Department (661) Notice of Intended Action (PSD 661) was reviewed. The letter describes how the adoptions proposed in PSD 661 are problematic. In contrast, WTCA and ITMA suggest that the State of Iowa adopt the entire IBC 2006 statewide as well as the 2006 IFC, and suggest the adoption of the 2006 edition of the IRC statewide to complete the set of building codes coordinated with the IFC. The members approved the submission of this letter to the State of Iowa Rules Administrator.

### Mid Atlantic Wood Truss Council

Once again, the Mid Atlantic Chapter held its fall meeting at Williamson in Horsham, PA. The guest speaker was WTCA Legal Counsel Kent Pagel, who delivered his final presentation of the year on successfully negotiating an acceptable customer contract. The attendees appreciated the valuable presentation content and expressed their thanks to Kent.

Education remains a top priority of the Mid Atlantic Chapter. With a solid track record of supporting courses for code officials through Rutgers University in New Jersey as well as presentations for local associations, the chapter was pleased to add participation at the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Pennsylvania Building Officials Conference (PennBOC) in October. The chapter has also taken on the charge of the WTCA Board Resolution requesting each chapter designate a local relationship-building chair to facilitate at least two truss plant tours and other educational efforts each year for building and fire officials, architects and engineers, legislators and students. Rich Phalines will head up this effort, which has already begun with a request from the Deputy Chief of the Winslow Township Fire Department and a tour planned for a builders trade school.

### South Carolina Component Manufacturers Association

The South Carolina Chapter held a special evening meeting on November 7 and welcomed John McLeod, Certified Building Official for the County of Greenville as the guest speaker. His presentation featured significant changes from the 2003 to 2006 IBC/IRC and South Carolina Amendments. Attendees were encouraged to bring their questions. Local building officials were invited to dinner on behalf of the chapter, too.

Mr. McLeod provided an overview of some of the proposed changes relating to trusses that were discussed at the recent ICC Code Hearings in Orlando, FL. He used the ICC Hearing Summary document prepared by WTCA as his point of reference when discussing this information. He also reviewed some of the more significant differences between the 2003 and 2006 IRC, as well as the SC amendment process. SC is currently reviewing the 2006 IRC and IBC and accepting code change proposals. All proposed changes will be compiled by the end of the year, reviewed by various committees, and hearings will be scheduled for further public input. The 2006 editions of the IBC and IRC, with SC amendments, are currently targeted for adoption in early 2008. Mr. McLeod also invited the chapter to provide a seminar at a future state code officials meeting.

During the abbreviated membership meeting portion of the evening, chapter members discussed marketplace issues. More and more code jurisdictions are requiring that roof trusses be attached to the supporting wall with framing anchors. There was a brief discussion regarding the pros and cons of using framing anchors as well as a discussion of the pros and cons of using toe-nailed connections. (Section B8 of BCSI was referenced.) The apparently growing trend of building designers questioning the wind uplift reactions provided on the truss design drawings was noted also. In addition, members were updated on an educational seminar that the chapter would be providing at the next meeting of the Coastal Region of the South Carolina Code Officials.

### South Florida WTCA

The South Florida Chapter kicked off its November meeting with a review of the changes in the 2006 edition of Building Component Safety Information (BCSI). WTCA staff member Ryan Dexter prepared a handout to summarize the main improvements and discussed the thorough review process involved in updating this industry standard. A summary of the 2006 Supplement to the Florida Building Code was reviewed also. The changes in this 2006 glitch cycle supplement take effect on December 8. Including extensive revisions to the both the 2004 FBC-Building and FBC-Residential (plus extensive restructuring), as well as the FBC-Mechanical, the changes are not trivial (comprising 300 pages) and the 2006 Supplement should be considered more like a full code revision.

Under other updates, the meeting attendees reflected on their experiences at the 2006 BCMC show in Houston, TX. Once again, the show did not disappoint, and the truss plant tours were especially good this year, too. A new Chapter President was elected for 2007 as well—Glenn Gelatt of Space Coast Truss will fill the position starting in January.

### Southern Nevada Component Manufacturers Association

The Southern Nevada Chapter had many items to discuss at its fall meeting. First up was the Code Committee with an update on the 2006 IBC adoption. All municipalities in Las Vegas will adopt the 2006 IBC Code, and all relevant information is posted on the Clark County website. The implementation date is May 1, 2007. Currently, Clark County is accepting the new code as a variance; though it is not officially approved by the councils of various municipalities, once it has passed the county commissioners, a variance will not be necessary. Members were cautioned that there are numerous changes that should be reviewed, but that the economic impact will likely be small in Las Vegas. The chapter is considering a letter to the Structural Engineers Association (SEASoN) and the Southern Nevada Home Builders Association to urge them to move quickly through the issues as well.

The chapter continues to work with the Drywall Contractors Association (DCAN) on a document to define responsibilities for shoring and stack heights. The latest draft of the handout was reviewed and will be returned to DCAN with edits.

A memo from Clark County was produced that appeared to open the door to having looser standards for light commercial projects compared to residential. The consensus was that the chapter would oppose this strenuously, and the Code Committee would contact Clark County and register an objection.

Next, the Code Committee raised the issue of proposed modifications to TG12 at the Clark County Building Department (CCBD) and a desire to have concentrated loads indicated on the truss design drawing. General consensus was that this should not pose a problem, but that they should be asked to define what a "concentrated" load is. The chapter agreed to send some good and bad examples to help the CCBD define the issue.

The 2007 slate of chapter officers was presented and approved. Glenn McClendon of Sun State Components will return as President, Ron Barrette of General Building Systems will become Vice President, Art Ramirez of Landmark Truss will return as Treasurer and Stuart Coles of Sun State Components will be Secretary. In addition, a motion was made and passed to create a Projects Committee to head up training and educational/truss plant tour opportunities. The first objective of the new committee will be to schedule a fire service educational truss plant tour/presentation in Las Vegas.

### Truss Manufacturers Association of Texas

The Texas Chapter Board of Directors met in November to determine the 2007 slate of officers and meeting locations. Paul Johnson of Universal Forest Products will become President, Shaun Allen of Trussway will move up to Vice President, Gary Walls to Treasurer and Garry Tebbins will enter the officer rotation as Secretary. The meeting dates and locations will be: January 18 in San Antonio, April 19 in San Antonio with golf, June 21 in Austin and September 20 in Austin with golf.

In addition, the attendees acknowledged their third straight win as the #1 Recruiting Chapter in WTCA's Annual Membership Drive. Gary Weaver of Timber Tech Texas (following in the footsteps of Ben Doyle

Continued on page 80



of Truss Component Building in 2005 and Frank Klinger of Mid-Valley Truss & Door Co. in 2004) won the title of #1 Component Manufacturer Recruiter for 2006. Norm McKenna of MiTek Industries captured the #1 Supplier Recruiter title for his third straight year. Though the Arizona Chapter nearly passed Texas in the #1 Chapter portion this year, the members made an outstanding recruitment push in the final hours of the competition and brought on board nine new members in three days—one component manufacturer, five suppliers and three professional members.

### West Florida Truss Association

The turnout was unprecedented for the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual West Florida Chapter Building Officials Event in November at Robbins Engineering's truss testing facility. Exceeding all expectations, nearly 140 building officials, architects, engineers and chapter members gathered for two Truss Technology Workshop presentations (on Jobsite Inspections and Design Responsibilities) and the annual testing of a truss to the limit, this year comparing a braced and unbraced truss to demonstrate the effect of bracing. With lunch courtesy of Simpson Strong-Tie Co., the event, though crowded, was a resounding success!

At its December membership meeting, the chapter voted on its 2007 officers. John Goley of West Coast Truss was elected President and Ralph DeValle of 41 Truss was confirmed as President-Elect. Remaining in their positions were Robert Wall of Architectural Services and Engineering as Vice President, Ron Gaines of Simpson Strong-Tie Co. as Secretary and Stephen Santos of Builders FirstSource as Treasurer.

### Wood Truss Council of the Capital Area

The Capital Area Chapter's 2007 officers were approved by its Board at the November meeting. Russ Airington of Chesapeake Structural Systems will be stepping up as President with Craig Dewees of Chesapeake Building Components becoming Past President. Ed Basham of Chesapeake Building Components will remain Secretary and Shep Campbell of Glaze Components Treasurer. Added to the officer rotation was Brian Johnson of Structural Technologies as Vice President.



The Texas Chapter Board of Directors met in November to determine the 2007 slate of officers and meeting locations.



At BCMC 2006 in Houston, TX, members of TMAT proudly posed with the #1 Recruiting Chapter trophy for WTCA's Annual Membership Drive—their third straight win!



Above/below: WFTA enjoyed incredible attendance at the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual West Florida Chapter Building Officials Event. Ryan Dexter of WTCA staff presented the TTWs.



The guest speaker at the membership meeting was Ed Buck, Vice President, Strategic Programs, Boozer Lumber Co. His program on manufacturing efficiency emphasized labor reductions, which are perceived as the best source of savings to compete in the DC market area. Estimating, production and operation managers were encouraged to attend, too. During the open forum discussion, Joe Hikel of Shelter Systems Limited also spoke on his methods of capturing costs for trusses, and chapter members were invited to share their ideas on truss shop costing.

It was agreed that the January meeting would be held at the Hyatt Dulles but a subcommittee would investigate new meeting locations. Fairfax and Prince William County code officials would be invited back on January 11 to speak to the chapter on changes under the 05/06 IRC code. Also, the date of the fall 2007 meeting was moved from October 10 to November 7.

### Wood Truss Council of North Carolina

At its November meeting, the North Carolina Chapter members reviewed the success of their presentations for the North Carolina Department of Labor (NCDOL). Focusing on permanent bracing and jobsite safety, the two half-day presentations at the three-day conference in Raleigh were very well received and did much to support the chapter's ongoing cooperation with NCDOL. The chapter expects future training opportunities to follow.

Discussed at the chapter meeting were several current marketplace issues. An update was given on a reducible load issue being addressed by the chapter. Recent requests for sealing I-joist placement plans were noted. The changes made to the 2006 edition of the Building Component Safety Information (BCSI) booklet were described. The WTCA Board Resolutions on a local relationship-building chair and responding to local media situations were covered. As with several other chapters this fall, the attendees agreed that the media resolution was a sound one and that even more information could be developed to train all levels of employees in the industry on how to respond to difficult situations.

The next meeting of the North Carolina Chapter will be held jointly with the South Carolina Chapter on March 14. The speaker being approached is Immigration Attorney Charles Kuck, who spoke at the Georgia Chapter meeting in October. **SBC**



## Calendar of Events

Check out WTCA's web site at [www.sbcindustry.com](http://www.sbcindustry.com) for the most current calendar information.

### January 2007

- **23:** Mid South Component Manufacturers Association (MSCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qaltim.com.
- **25:** Alabama / Georgia / Kentucky / Tennessee Joint Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA 608/310-6719 or astamm@qaltim.com.
- **31-Feb 4:** Truswal Systems 2007 National Manufacturers Conference, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. For more information, visit [www.truswal.com](http://www.truswal.com).

### February

- **7-9:** NAHB International Builders' Show, Orlando, FL. For details, visit [www.nahb.com](http://www.nahb.com).
- **7:** Southwest Florida Truss Manufacturers Association (SWFTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Jim Swain at 239/437-1100 or jimsw@carpentercontractors.com.
- **8:** West Florida Truss Association (WFTA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President John Goley at 813/887-3664 or johngoley@westcoastruss.com.
- **8:** Wisconsin Truss Manufacturers Association (WTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Gene Geurts at 920/336-9400 or ggeurts@richcostr.com.
- **15-17:** Alpine Engineered Products Executive Retreat, San Juan, Puerto Rico. For more information visit [www.alpeng.com](http://www.alpeng.com).
- **15:** Minnesota Truss Manufacturers Association (MTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Tom Nomencland, 507/872-5195 or tnomencland@ufpi.com.
- **21-23:** WTCA Open Quarterly Meeting, Jacksonville, FL. For more information, contact Peg at 608/310-6723 or ppichette@qaltim.com for details. All are welcome to attend!

### March

- **6:** WTCA-Illinois Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qaltim.com.
- **7-8:** Alpine Educational Workshop, St. Charles Convention Center, Charles, MO. For more information visit [www.alpeng.com](http://www.alpeng.com) or contact Karla Derickson at 866/237-2878.
- **8:** Missouri Truss Fabricators Association (MTFA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qaltim.com.
- **8:** Wood Truss Council of Michigan (WTCM) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qaltim.com.
- **13:** California Engineered Structural Components Association, Southern Region (CalESCA-South) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qaltim.com.
- **13:** Colorado Truss Manufacturers Association (CTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Dennis Wilson at 303/307-1441 or DWilson@HomeLumber.com.

- **14:** California Engineered Structural Components Association, Northern Region (CalESCA-North) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qaltim.com.
- **14:** Iowa Truss Manufacturers Association (ITMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Tom Lambertz at 515/283-7100 or tlambertz@robertsdybdahl.com.
- **14:** North Carolina/South Carolina Joint Chapter Meeting. For details, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qaltim.com.
- **15:** South Florida WTCA (SFWTCA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qaltim.com.
- **21-23:** WTCA Annual Workshop & Conference, Las Vegas, NV. All members are welcome to participate! For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qaltim.com.
- **27:** Central Florida Component Manufacturers Association (CFCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qaltim.com.
- **28-29:** FBMA/WTCA Joint Florida Legislative Conference. For more information, contact Sean at WTCA, 608/310-6728 or sshields@qaltim.com

### April

- **11:** Southwest Florida Truss Manufacturers Association (SWFTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Jim Swain at 239/437-1100 or jimsw@carpentercontractors.com.
- **11:** Wood Truss Council of the Capital Area (WTCCA) Chapter Meeting. For details, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qaltim.com.
- **12:** Alabama Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qaltim.com.
- **12:** West Florida Truss Association (WFTA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President John Goley at 813/887-3664 or johngoley@westcoastruss.com.
- **16-18:** SBC Annual Legislative Conference and WTCA Open Quarterly Meeting, Washington Court Hotel, Washington, DC. All members are welcome to attend! For more information, contact Sean (608/310-6728 or sshields@qaltim.com) or Stephanie (608/310-6721 or swatrud@qaltim.com).
- **19:** Truss Manufacturers Association of Texas (TMAT) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qaltim.com.
- **24:** Mid South Component Manufacturers Association (MSCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qaltim.com.
- **24:** Rio Grande Component Manufacturers Association (RGCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information on this chapter under development, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qaltim.com. **SBC**



## Housing Starts

November housing starts reversed the downward trend of the past ten months, increasing 6.7% to 1.588 million (SAAR). Single family starts were up 8.1% to 1.281 million (SAAR). Permits, a good indicator of what may happen in the next two to three months, fell 3%.

U.S. Housing Starts			
Millions - Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rate (SAAR)			
U.S. Totals	Nov	Oct (rev.)	% Change
<b>Starts</b>	1.588	1.488	6.7%
<b>Permits</b>	1.506	1.553	-3.0%
<b>Single Family</b>			
<b>Starts</b>	1.281	1.185	8.1%
<b>Permits</b>	1.144	1.181	-3.1%
<b>Multi Family</b>			
<b>Starts</b>	0.307	0.303	1.3%
<b>Permits</b>	0.362	0.372	-2.7%
Starts and Permits By Region:			
<b>NE</b>			
<b>Starts</b>	0.165	0.152	8.6%
<b>Permits</b>	0.147	0.161	-8.7%
<b>MW</b>			
<b>Starts</b>	0.222	0.237	-6.3%
<b>Permits</b>	0.235	0.242	-2.9%
<b>S</b>			
<b>Starts</b>	0.851	0.718	18.5%
<b>Permits</b>	0.791	0.790	0.1%
<b>W</b>			
<b>Starts</b>	0.350	0.381	-8.1%
<b>Permits</b>	0.333	0.360	-7.5%

**Analysis & Outlook:** On a year-to-date basis (i.e., Jan-Nov 2005 versus Jan-Nov 2006), housing and single family starts are down 12.5% and 14% respectively, while permits are down 14.1% and 17.1% respectively. As we mentioned in last month's report, the main concern for 2007 is whether the housing correction will drag the economy into a recession. I haven't seen anything in the past 30 days to change my mind that housing should not derail the economy. However, "re-fi" activity continues to weaken and the recent PPI report and the transcripts from the recent Fed meeting suggest that inflation concerns have not disappeared. In fact, a steady job market (service related growth offsetting manufacturing weakness) is driving solid income gains and lower energy prices are putting more money in consumers' pockets. It's true that recent manufacturing data suggests some pullback—related primarily to the auto sector and construction related activity. The economy is slowing—NAHB estimates GDP growth of 2.6% in 2007, compared to 3.3% this year. Their housing forecast for 2007 is 1.56 million starts with 1.25 million being single family—compared to 1.808 million and 1.47 million respectively in 2006—off about 14%.

As we mentioned in previous reports, inventory overhang is the main problem and that is being caused by poor affordability. Affordability (the ability to carry a mortgage) is weaker today than at anytime in the past 20 years, due to high house prices and rising mortgage rates. Most analysts expect the inventory overhang to continue for another six months or so—until it is rebalanced, builders will keep a close eye on starts. A key factor will be the resale market. When that picks up again (inventories are high there too), housing starts will rebound. **SBC**

This housing starts report is provided to **SBC** on a monthly basis by **SBC Economic Environment** columnist Al Schuler. Visit [www.sbcmag.info](http://www.sbcmag.info) for more economic news.



## Builder Banter

### Caulk Is Put to the Test

A new research project supported by the Partnership for Advanced Technology in Housing (PATH) and is taking place at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). It will provide a realistic method for predicting the durability of caulking material, which until now has no accepted procedure to help builders determine which caulk will provide superior value.

The SPHERE (Simulated Photodegradation via High Energy Radiant Exposure) is a testing device developed by NIST in conjunction with the caulking industry that exposes samples to high intensity sunlight (up to the intensity of 50 suns) at controlled temperature and humidity. This test will take two to three weeks of testing compared to the previous 26-month exposure period used to test caulk. With these results builders can look forward to choosing caulking products with proven qualities that will not only lower maintenance costs but also reduce water leakage and improve durability. [Source: [www.pathnet.org](http://www.pathnet.org)]

### California's Solar Power Requirement

The California Solar Initiative, known as a "million solar roofs" bill was recently signed into law by California's governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in response to the rising costs of new electric power sources. The plan aims to have one million solar roofs created in California by 2018, and will be implemented by the California Public Utility Commission. Those roofs could provide 3,000 megawatts of additional clean energy and reduce the output of greenhouse gasses by three million tons, which is comparable to taking one million cars off the road.

The bill includes \$2.9 billion in incentives to homeowners and building owners who install solar-electric systems and will allow consumers who install solar panels to sell excess energy back to power companies for credit on their monthly bills. Beginning January 1, 2011 the law also requires California developers of more than 50 new single-family homes to offer solar-energy systems as an option to all customers. [Source: Green Builder, Oct. 2006, p.14]

### Builder Confidence Holding Steady In December

Heading into the holidays, builders of new single-family homes continue to believe that the worst of the downswing in home buying is behind them, according to the National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI) for December. At 32 for the present month, the overall HMI is down a single point from November but remains above the recent low of 30 in September. "This was the third consecutive month in which builder expectations for sales over the upcoming six-month period have improved, and it's a good sign of things to come in the new year," said NAHB President David Pressly, a home builder from Statesville, N.C. "The HMI has come off September's low point, and other recent indicators confirm that buying conditions have improved and that demand is stabilizing—including improvements in measures of housing affordability, strengthening consumer assessments of home buying conditions and an upswing in applications for mortgages to buy homes," said NAHB Chief Economist David Seiders. [Source: [www.nahb.org](http://www.nahb.org), 12/18/06] **SBC**

### Housing Market Index 2006 (HMI)

The HMI is a weighted, seasonally adjusted statistic derived from ratings for present single family sales, single family sales in the next 6 months and buyers traffic. The first two components are measured on a scale of "good" "fair," and "poor," and the last one is measured on a scale of "high," "average" and "low." A rating of 50 indicates that the number of positive or good responses received from the builders is about the same as the number of negative or poor responses. Ratings higher than 50 indicate more positive or good responses.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
57	56	54	51	46	42	39	33	30	31	33	32

Source: National Association of Home Builders

## Success Is What You Make It



**Name:**  
Damon Hughes

**Hometown:**  
Columbus, OH

**Started working in the industry:**  
2000

**Current company & position:**  
Stark Truss Company,  
truss technician in Hearne, TX

**Favorite hobby:**  
working out at the gym

**Favorite food:**  
Fish and rice



Sometimes success comes as the result of a second chance. About a year ago, Damon Hughes was released from Marion Correctional Institute (MCI) in Marion, OH after serving a 13-year prison sentence. Damon has made the most of his second chance.

Stark Truss Company teamed up with Ohio Penal Industries (OPI) in 1996 to help inmates change their lives and destinies. OPI and Stark created a design office to train inmates to become truss technicians at MCI in Marion.

Damon is one of seven inmates trained at Marion to have been hired by the company. Because he excelled in his design work at Marion and demonstrated the will to change, Stark offered Damon a position when he was released. By July 2006, Damon had relocated to Texas and reported to work as a truss technician at Stark's location in Hearne (northwest of Houston).

"One of the things that impresses me about Damon is not just that he's great at what he does, but he always strives to find a better way to do it," says Tim Willett, manager of the Hearne plant.

Tim developed a relationship with Damon by corresponding via phone about multi-family jobs he was designing in Marion. "We became very comfortable with each other, and he really wanted to come to Texas when he was released," says Tim.

Clearly an asset to the team, Damon's transition into his new environment was seamless. "He fits into the local community and our operation really well. You would have never known that he was in prison a year ago," says Tim, adding that the staff looks up to him. The management at Hearne appreciates Damon's willingness to pitch in wherever there's a need. "He has been very helpful to us," notes Tim.

Tim praises Damon for making the most of his second chance. "He's an example of the success you can achieve even if you've been stuck behind bars for 13 years," says Tim. "I'm so impressed with his skill, work ethic and determination to be a good citizen." **SBC**

## In Memoriam

### Ted Watkins



Theodore (Ted) Watkins, 63, of Longs, VA, passed away on Dec. 5, 2006. He was born on April 18, 1943 in New Brunswick, NJ. He was a founding member of the Wood Truss Council of the Capital Area and served as president.

After attending accounting school in Baltimore, MD, Ted got his start in the truss industry by becoming the accountant for a fledgling company, Ryland Homes in Columbia, MD. Ted then spent several years as a manager for Shelter Systems both in Fredericksburg, VA and Houston, working with Lenny Sylk, where computer-aided job costing and innovative material handling systems were pioneered.

Dwight Hikel of Shelter Systems Limited recalls what made Ted such an asset to the industry: "Ted was very committed to the industry. He was interested in pursuing new ideas and was a very practical and sincere person."

Later in his career, Ted took a job at Blue Ridge Truss, a rather remote truss plant in the mountains of Virginia, where he would spend the next 15 years. There he distinguished himself as one of the finest managers in the truss business, according to owners Mr. and Mrs. Willard Fansler. Ted displayed a "minute-by-minute" attention to both sales and profitability—pricing literally every job in a \$1 million per month facility.

During his employment at Blue Ridge Truss, Ted worked with Daren Lam, then design department manager. Lam remembers Ted for "taking a small company and turning it into what it is today. He loved chess and he applied his winning strategy to business. He knew numbers better than anyone I've ever worked with in the industry."

Ted encouraged his peers in the truss business to get together and form an association, which became the Capital Area Chapter of WTCA. After training his successor for a full year, Ted enjoyed a very short retirement, working in the library at James Madison University.

During a personnel drain at a neighboring plant from 2001 to 2002, Ted came back to the industry as President of Glaize Components in Winchester, VA. He successfully rebuilt the staff, and prepared the three-plant operation for record growth.

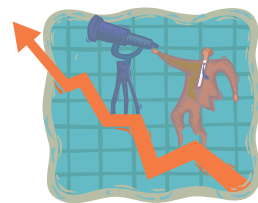
Lam recalls that Ted was known to be unwavering when he believed in something: "One of the funniest things I remember about him was his reaction in sales meetings. Every time a salesman would complain about prices being too high, Ted stuck his fingers in his ears and shut his eyes as if to say 'I'm not listening.'" Lam says that was just Ted's style: "He was a very stubborn guy, and when he knew what he wanted, he wouldn't relent."

In 2002, Ted retired to Myrtle Beach, SC where he enjoyed playing chess and taking walks on the beach. Ted is survived by his wife of 40 years, Christina, his two sons, Theodore Watkins III and Brian Scott Watkins, and seven grandchildren. He will be remembered for the trust he earned from several prominent truss plant owners, and the high praise he received from them. **SBC**

Thanks to Joe Kannappell of MiTek Industries, Wilson Ryman and Scott Garber of Glaize Components and Dwight Hikel of Shelter Systems Limited for contributing to this piece.

Submissions to "In Memoriam" can be emailed to [editor@sbcmag.info](mailto:editor@sbcmag.info). Photos are encouraged and will run as space allows. Submissions may be edited for grammar, length and clarity.





# Industry News & Data

Visit [www.sbcmag.info](http://www.sbcmag.info) for additional industry news & announcements!

## Consumer Price Index

[an index measuring the change in the cost of typical wage-earner purchases of goods and services expressed as a percentage of the cost of these same goods and services in some base period - called also cost-of-living index]

Expenditure Category	Changes from Preceding Mo.			Compound annual rate 3-mo. ended Nov 06
	Sept	Oct	Nov	
All Items	-0.5	-0.5	0	-3.9
All Items Less Food & Energy	.2	.1	0	1.6

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Unemployment Rate

Aug	4.7%
Sept	4.6%
Oct	4.4%
Nov	4.5%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Producer Price Index - Customized Industry Data

An inflationary indicator published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to evaluate wholesale price levels in the economy.

Engineered Wood Mem. (exc. truss) Mfg.	Sept	Oct	Nov	Truss Mfg.	Sept	Oct	Nov
Eng. Wood Mem.	117.8(P)	116.1(P)	115.9(P)	Truss Mfg.	118.0(P)	115.7(P)	113.7(P)
LVL	126.4(P)	126.4(P)	126.4(P)	Wood Trusses	115.5(P)	113.0(P)	110.8(P)
Other	118.6(P)	116.1(P)	116.3(P)	Primary Products	115.5(P)	113.0(P)	110.8(P)
		(P) = preliminary		Secondary Products	101.6(P)	98.3(P)	98.4(P)

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Producer Price Index General

% changes in selected stage-of-processing price indexes

Month	Total	Ex. Food & Energy
Aug	0.2(r)	0.1(r)
Sept	-1.3	0.6
Oct	-1.6	-0.9
Nov	2.0	1.3

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Consumer Confidence Index

The Consumer Confidence Index is a measure of consumer optimism toward current economic conditions. The consumer confidence index was arbitrarily set at 100 in 1985 and is adjusted monthly on the basis of a survey of consumers.

The index considers consumer opinion on both current conditions (40%) and future expectations (60%).

Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	% +/-
107.5	109.6	104.7	105.4	106.5	100.2	105.9	105.1(r)	102.9	-2.1%

Source: [www.consumerresearchcenter.org](http://www.consumerresearchcenter.org)

## NOVEMBER 2006 ISM BUSINESS SURVEY AT A GLANCE

	Series Index	Direction Nov vs Oct	Rate of Change Nov vs Oct
ISM Manufacturing Index (formerly PMI)	49.5	Contracting	From Growing
New Orders	48.7	Contracting	From Growing
Production	48.5	Contracting	From Growing
Employment	49.2	Contracting	From Growing
Supplier Deliveries	52.8	Slowing	Faster
Inventories	49.7	Contracting	Slower
Customers' Inventories	50.5	Too High	Slower
Prices	53.5	Increasing	From Decreasing
Backlog of Orders	46.5	Contracting	Slower
Exports	56.9	Growing	Slower
Imports	56.5	Growing	Slower

For an in-depth explanation of this summary, go to <https://ism.ws/ISMReport>.

## Industrial Production Index

The industrial production (IP) index measures the change in output in U.S. manufacturing, mining, and electric and gas utilities. Output refers to the physical quantity of items produced, unlike sales value which combines quantity and price. The index covers the production of goods and power for domestic sales in the United States and for export. It excludes production in the agriculture, construction, transportation, communication, trade, finance, and service industries; government output, and imports. The IP index is developed by weighting each component according to its relative importance in the base period. The information for weights is obtained from the value added measures of production in the economic censuses of manufacturer and minerals industries, and from value added information for the utility industries in Internal Revenue Service statistics of income data. The weights are updated at five-year intervals to coincide with the economic censuses. The current index base year is 1992. (r=revised)

	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Industrial Production Total Index (% change)	0.2(r)	-0.4(r)	0(r)	0.2
Capacity Utilization Total Industry (%)	82.4(r)	82.0(r)	82.0(r)	81.8

Source: Federal Reserve Board

## Component Manufacturer News

### VICWEST INCOME FUND TO ACQUIRE VALLEY TRUSS & METALS LTD.

Vicwest Income Fund recently announced that it has acquired Valley Truss & Metals Ltd. of Kensington, Prince Edward Island for approximately \$7 million cash. The strategic investment is being financed with the Fund's credit facilities. The acquisition is expected to be immediately accretive to the Fund's earnings—generating distributable cash of approximately \$0.10 per unit in 2007.

Valley is Atlantic Canada's only manufacturer of metal cladding and roofing, and PEI's leading supplier of engineered wood trusses with a significant market share in its core product categories. The acquired business will operate under its existing brand as a division of the Fund's Vicwest business unit. All existing Valley employees are being offered continued employment.

The Fund's Chair, Bryan Held, said, "We are pleased with this acquisition, which represents our fourth major investment in the Fund's growth strategy. The addition of Valley further broadens our geographic reach as Canada's only national manufacturer of metal roof, wall and deck systems and will allow us to improve service levels to our customers in the Atlantic provinces. As well as being accretive to distributable cash available to our unitholders, this acquisition will further diversify our product offering, allow the Fund to benefit from operating synergies with its Québec-based operations and become even more price competitive. In addition, the Valley facility can serve as a platform for increased shipments to neighboring Atlantic provinces."

Earlier this year, the Fund acquired two other companies in its core business for \$21 million—one in British Columbia and one in Saskatchewan—and invested \$6 million in a new, assembly line fabricating foam-insulated metal panels in Hamilton, Ontario. [Source: [www.newswire.ca](http://www.newswire.ca), 12/7/06]

### SPENARD BUILDERS SUPPLY BUYS ARCTIC BUILDERS SOURCE

Spenard Builders Supply, Denver, CO, has acquired Arctic Builders Source. Arctic Builders Source operates stores in Anchorage and Wasilla, AK.

## Clark Industries, Inc.

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Are you needing to offer a new profitable product line with a minimal investment?

**New!**  
**The "Tri-Axis" Wall Panel Sub-Component Press**

If so, we're pleased to introduce our new Tri-Axis Wall Panel Sub-Component Press! Offer your customers labor savings by providing them with pre-fabricated wall sub-components. You can build & stock all standard size openings or make them per order. In addition, rather than using expensive solid, glue-lam, or engineered headers you can utilize your floor truss machine to build webbed ones. Please inquire today!

Toll Free: 800-743-9727 Visit our new site @ [www.clark-ind.com](http://www.clark-ind.com)

For reader service, go to [www.sbcmag.info/clark.htm](http://www.sbcmag.info/clark.htm). See additional ad on page 23.

The Anchorage location will operate much as they have in the past. They will cater to the needs of residential builders and retail customers and be identified as Spenard Builders Supply, Lake Otis branch. The Wasilla location will operate as a branch of Galco Building Products, a specialized SBS facility serving applicator contractors, with an emphasis on vinyl siding, roofing, gypsum and insulation products. The Wasilla location will also facilitate internal distribution for the Mat-Su Valley Spenard Builders Supply branches.

Mark Habermann, original owner and founder of Arctic Builders Source Inc. will join Spenard Builders Supply and manage the Lake Otis branch. Habermann started Arctic Builders Source in 1991 as a one-man operation; delivering materials out of a blue Ford pick-up truck. "The acquisition of Arctic Builders Source by SBS needed to be a win-win-win situation—good for me and my family, our employees and Spenard Builders Supply. We achieved that goal and are confident that we will continue to offer our customers top notch service and value as Spenard Builders Supply."

A division of Pro-Build, Inc., Spenard Builders Supply is Alaska's largest building materials supplier, operating 18 stores, four truss manufacturing facilities, one wall panel fabrication plant, four window and door shops and four distribution centers throughout the state, from Barrow to Sitka.

## Announcements

### KUEHN NAMED VP OF SALES - ITW BUILDING COMPONENTS GROUP

ITW Building Components Group named Kenneth D. Kuehn, to the newly created position of Vice President of Sales, according to Jim James of ITW - Illinois Tool Works Inc., Vice President in charge of the group. "Ken will report directly to Chris Cronje, President of ITW Building Components Group," said Mr. James.

"...Ken's extensive building products industry experience and contacts with key industry executives makes him ideal for this new position. Mr. Kuehn will be responsible for planning, implementing and managing our expanded activities, along with sales for the group. He is an important addition to our team," stated James. [Source: News Release, 12/8/06, [www.itw.com](http://www.itw.com)]

Continued on page 86

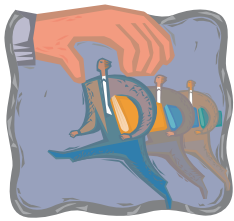


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## Classified Ads

### Senior Truss Designers & Estimators

We are looking for people who rank among the highest caliber truss designers and estimators, people who will positively impact our growing team. We have been a dynamic leader in the structural building components industry since 1991, with plants in Oregon and Virginia. We are committed to the growth and care of our employees and are dedicated to providing a great working environment, great compensation, and room for advancement. We believe in rewarding good work.

#### ---Requirements---

- Character is absolutely essential:
  - Honesty • Integrity • Conscientiousness
  - Loyalty • Confidence • Humility • Dependability
- CAD architectural design experience
- 3-D conceptualization ability

#### ---Compensation & Benefits---

- Matching Retirement Plan
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### Industry News

Continued from page 85

#### On the Web

#### WTCA INTRODUCES UPDATED VERSION OF THE LOAD GUIDE FOR THE BUILDING INDUSTRY

On December 18, WTCA introduced **The Load Guide (TLG), v1.02 Beta, a Guide to Good Practice for Specifying & Applying Loads to Structural Building Components**. This update is a significant revision from past versions. In addition to a large number of general improvements, TLG v1.02 adds code requirements from the International Building Code (IBC) 2006 and International Residential Code (IRC) 2006, along with loading requirements from ASCE 7-05, Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures.

"The Load Guide is a great tool to help explain to customers or technical staff that trusses require more information than pitch, span and fascia details to design correctly," said Bob Dayhoff, Chair of WTCA's Engineering & Technology Committee and Director of Technical Operations at Shelter Systems Limited in Westminster, MD.

Focusing on floor, roof and dead loads, TLG is a series of Microsoft® Excel spreadsheets, free to the public, designed to help users understand, define and specify all the loads that should be applied to the design of structural building components. A cooperative development between the Truss Plate Institute (TPI) and WTCA, TLG is available at [www.sbcindustry.com/loads.php](http://www.sbcindustry.com/loads.php). **SBC**

**Correction:** Please note that in the November 2006 installment of Parting Shots, we mistakenly implied that the structural building components industry is only 20-25 years old. In fact, the industry dates back to the early 1950s, when A. Carroll Sanford invented the metal truss plate with teeth called the Gri-P-Late in 1952 and Cal Jureit created the Gang-Nail plate in 1955.

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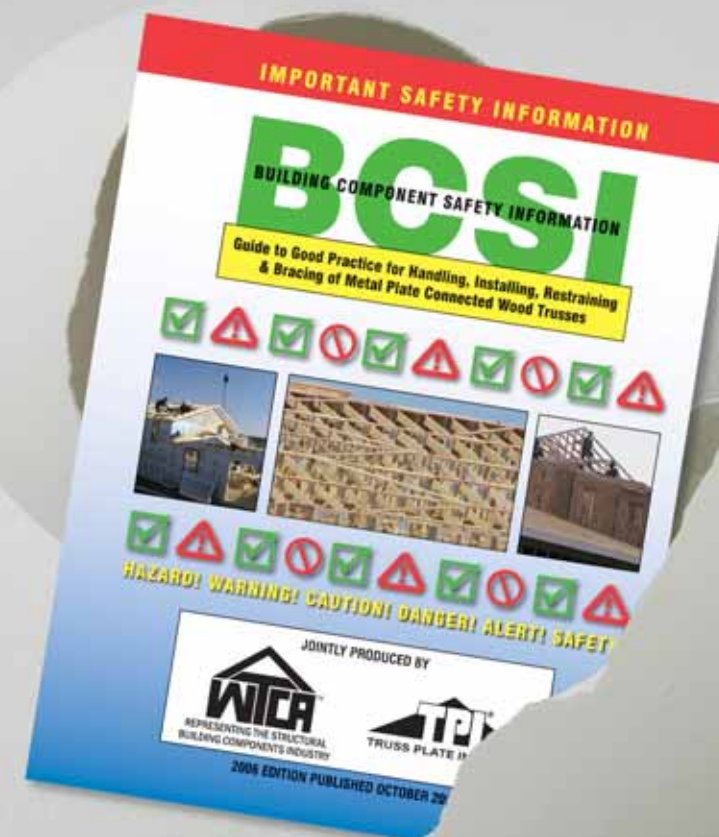
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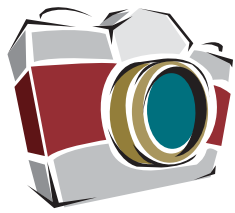
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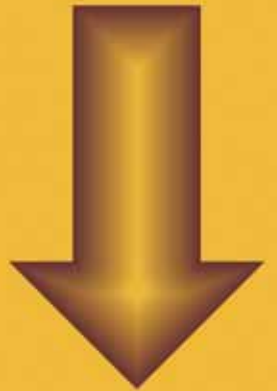
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