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Editor's Message

How to Empower Your Team

by Barry Dixon

Everyone benefits when employees feel like part of a team.

Empowering your team is a concept that we often hear, but turning that concept into reality at your company can be a bit of a mystery. Think about it...come up with an idea, share it with your team and *voilà*—your staff takes the ball and runs with it—goal accomplished! Easier said than done, right? Seriously though, with indications that the market will begin to rebound later this year, now is the time to prepare your employees and get your operation in top form so your company is ready for the increase in sales and production. What better way to accomplish these objectives than by empowering your team and seeing the benefits in your bottom line and the more intangible bonuses like staff loyalty. Here are a few ways that True House has tried to empower employees by taking a look at: (a) company structure, (b) our hiring/training approach, (c) our incentive/benefit plans, and (d) our QC/safety program implementation.

In today's workforce, "empowering" employees by simply granting them authority is often not enough to motivate them to implement company goals and initiatives. In my experience, the best way to empower team members isn't to grant authority but to create a workplace that allows employees to empower themselves! The first step to successfully empowering your team is to develop the framework to communicate to everyone. In our company, we have a senior management team that consists of our COO, VP of Engineering, VP of Sales/Marketing, Director of Purchasing, VP of Manufacturing, President of Turnkey Operations, and Customer Service Manager. This team receives goals and objectives in their rawest form from our company's Executive Committee and Board of Directors. The senior management team then streamlines these goals, and effectively delegates them to team members throughout the company. The management team drives these goals because they are the ones who best know the abilities of employees in their department or area. This structure and workflow ensures that expertise is applied in all the right areas and that accountability is enforced and support is available.

Forming the senior management team and its method for delegation was one of the most significant developments we made in order to successfully implement our initiatives. Giving this team broad goals and empowering them to refine the plan created instant buy-in at the highest level of management. Furthermore, members of the management team empower each other by providing peer-level feedback as they implement our plan with their teams.

at a glance

- Empower your team by establishing good communication.
- Consider forming a senior management team to set goals, implement initiatives and delegate tasks.
- Establishing a safety committee is a great way to begin the path toward empowering a team.
- Retain good employees by offering benefits, especially health insurance.

When it comes to hiring and training production employees, our company leaves these tasks totally up to the VP of Manufacturing's management team. The company shares its financial and overall performance goals with this team and gives it the directive to find the solution and make these goals a reality. With the ability to set their staff and assess where more training is needed, the VP of Manufacturing's management team can implement and share these goals on the production level with their staff. Everyone knows the important part they play in meeting the company's goals, and we post all of our production numbers so everyone can see our progress. This buy-in from employees creates loyalty that flows in both directions, not to mention some healthy competition from line to line, shift to shift and plant to plant. The manufacturing team develops a plan that is consistent with company

Continued on page 8

Editor's Message

Continued from page 7

objectives while paying close attention to productivity output as well as financial expectations. The beauty of this approach is that staff is empowered and given the independence they need to get their jobs done.

Our safety committee is probably one of the most important groups in our organization. Consisting of staff from the saw department to the delivery department, the committee brings together the people who have first-hand, day-to-day knowledge of our equipment. With the support of the entire organization, this committee takes ownership of the equipment and operating it with all the proper safeguards in place. Since this committee is made up of operators, we become aware of problems more quickly and therefore have safer equipment with less down time for malfunctions and repairs. Our employees can work safely with better maintained equipment, which will in turn produce higher quality products more profitably. I recommend forming a safety team that crosses all functional areas to any manufacturer as a great way to begin the path toward empowering a team.

We at True House believe the best hiring practice is to retain employees and an ideal way to do that is to invest in their growth by supplying ongoing training and education. From Truss Technician Training for designers to ORisk for sales staff and employees dealing with contract review, WTCA offers many programs that can foster growth for your staff. No matter what programs you use, keep in mind that your management team can be an important vehicle to carry these programs out and ensure that employees get the full benefits of training.

Another key to keeping employees is offering good benefits, especially health insurance. Ever-increasing insurance costs have been a major thorn in our side. Our company's employee demographic (largely made up of young males, 18-25 years old) and level of participation (relatively low and predominately employees with families) resulted in high insurance costs that increased at an unpredictable rate from year to year. Like many manufacturers, we found it can be an uphill struggle to provide an affordable health care plan for employees while meeting the company's ROI goals. Our COO, with the help of our accounting group, worked with our insurance agents to revise our health insurance plan. Together, this group created a plan that could cover all of our employees. Especially noteworthy is that our new plan offers an option (low monthly fee with a high deductible) attractive to our younger male employees, a demographic that traditionally hasn't participated in our health insurance program. The new plan increased participation and stabilized our participation rate, which lowered monthly insurance premiums for employees and helped lock in rates in the future, ending the cycle of steep rate hikes. This rate stabilization gave our executive team a consistent number to use when forecasting financial plans because we can now bank on not having to revisit rates every year. With that initial hurdle surmounted, the team can now focus on creating other benefit programs—including disability, life insurance and a 401(k)—that will benefit our entire group.

Along with benefits, a surefire way to empower and retain employees is to provide a work environment that allows them to perform their

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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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very best on the job. In my book, safety and quality go hand in hand when talking about a good workplace. Likewise, producing a quality product in a safe work environment can provide countless benefits in terms of employee job satisfaction, not to mention your bottom line. We all know the key to providing a safe environment while delivering a quality product is consistency. The **WTCA In-Plant QC** program gives component manufacturers the tools they need to consistently manufacture their products to the highest standards. True House uses the program and is on target to earn certification later this year, which will also fulfill our requirements to be SCORE Achiever (Level I) certified (turn to page 31 to learn more about SCORE). **WTCA In-Plant QC** educates employees on proper manufacturing procedures and allows manufacturers to show customers, the engineering community and underwriters that their plant has a documented, third-party inspected daily QC program in place and the data to stand behind their work.

When you empower your team, or better yet when they empower themselves, the results can amaze you, not to mention make your job much easier. Like I said ... come up with an idea, share it with your team and *voilà*—goal accomplished! **SBC**

SBC Magazine encourages the participation of its readers in developing content for future issues. 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@sbcsmag.info.



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Publisher's Message

Death, Taxes & Difficult People

by Libby Maurer

This issue deals with how to work with your employees and maintain a safe plant.

Managing personnel issues may or may not be your cup of tea. But chances are, you are in a position where you don't have a choice. Even in the age of technology, you still need raw manpower to operate saws, drive forklifts, answer phones, place orders with vendors, sit down with customers and respond to email. And this means you have to deal with people, and lots of them.

One of my favorite episodes of *Seinfeld* is when Jerry and George are talking about being forced to deal with difficult people. (Not that the two of them aren't difficult, but that's for a different issue.) Jerry says, "People: they're the worst." There's a message for us in their ridiculous exchange: no matter who you are or what position you hold, you will encounter "difficult" people in your daily life who think, act and work differently than you. It's as certain as death and taxes! And it's probably not the best idea to adopt the *Seinfeld* approach to dealing with them. So that's how we arrived at this issue's common thread: examples of people and companies taking small steps to address workforce and safety challenges. Here's a preview.

Remember: small steps yield big results.



Ron Coons, safety director at Northeast Panel & Truss, traveled to Washington, DC in November 2006 to meet with OSHA and give a presentation about the company's success with safety.

Northeast Panel and Truss isn't afraid of OSHA. In fact, they've built quite a relationship with their state inspectors in the last few years, and even sent safety manager Ron Coons (pictured left) to Washington, DC to meet with federal OSHA officials in December. After being placed on OSHA's "bad boy" list a few years ago, Northeast began a long and involved process to rectify its patchy safety record. Turn to page 50 for the full story. Remember: small steps yield big results.

In line with the safety theme, in this issue we bring you an article that considers how much the industry's automated equipment has been designed and re-designed with not only efficiency in mind, but operator safety too. Don't miss an article by Jerry Koskovich on page 38.

What more can you say about fire safety? Check your alarms and extinguishers every month and communicate the evacuation plan to every employee, right? Take it from Scott Arquilla of Best Homes whose plant was destroyed by a fire in 2003...there's a lot more to protecting your facility and employees from fire than that! Take 15 minutes to check out Part 2 of Safety Scene and commentary from Arquilla on pages 14 and 16. Someday, you may be glad you did.

Finally, we turn the spotlight on a workforce development program that is benefiting one community and our industry at the same time. Last summer, Molly Butz visited ISUS (Improved Solutions for Urban Systems High School) in Dayton, OH, to learn about the program that is taking misguided kids off the streets and teaching them a whole lot about building components. Again, progress in cultivating a skilled workforce for the industry is not immediate, but sometimes the biggest changes occur in small increments.

I think they're called baby steps. **SBC**

The Dawn of a New Age for the Structural Building Components Industry

Construction is progressing at a steady pace on WTCA's SBC Research Institute, the structural building component industry's research and testing facility in Madison, WI. The 5,730 square-foot facility is scheduled to officially open later this year and advance the industry's goal of developing a fresh body of knowledge that will add new value to the industry and lead the next generation of growth.

The SBC Research Institute will give the industry the ability to test:

- Individual components from 8' to 90' long
- Component systems from 8' to 90' long, 2' to 20' wide, and up to 20' high
- Loading applied in 3 axes simultaneously, to simulate both construction and environmental loads
- Standard design and drag or shear loads on a single component
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Thank you to our SBC Research Institute sponsors for helping foster this new age for the industry.

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by Ryan J. Dexter, P.E.

Make sure you know how to proceed in the event of a truss collapse.

Metal plate connected wood trusses are designed and manufactured to handle a given design load. In order for the trusses to properly do their job, it is essential that the contractor installs and braces them according to the industry guidelines outlined in the *Building Component Safety Information* (BCSI) booklet jointly produced by WTCA and the Truss Plate Institute (TPI). BCSI is referenced by the International Residential Code (IRC) in Sections R502.11.2, R802.10.3 and Chapter 43. What can happen if trusses are not handled, installed, braced and restrained according to BCSI?

Question

My company is a component manufacturer that has recently been contacted by a customer that reported their trusses fell during installation. How should we instruct the customer to proceed? What are the next steps?

Answer

It is often very difficult to determine the extent of damage caused to the trusses when they topple and fall, because breaks in the lumber or damage to the plates and/or plate contact areas may not be readily apparent. If trusses collapse during installation, the Truss Manufacturer, Truss Designer or Building Designer will need to assess the damage to the trusses at the onset. If the trusses have sustained any structural damage, an engineer must design the repairs. BCSI contains a chapter (BCSI-B5) entitled, "Truss Damage, Jobsite Modifications & Installation Errors." BCSI-B5 includes the following language:

Metal plate connected wood trusses are pre-fabricated structural components, assembled with wood members and metal connector plates and designed to carry superimposed loads. Damage, jobsite modifications or improper installation will reduce the strength of a truss. Seek professional assistance from the Building Designer, Truss Designer or Truss Manufacturer to remedy the condition.

History has proven that the variety of potential consequences associated with trusses' natural lack of stability is typically the direct result of improper handling, installing, restraining and bracing. In certain cases, the trusses can be repaired, but many times the best structural and economic solution is to replace them. Unfortunately, there is not a "one-size-fits-all" solution and it is necessary to carefully assess the situation and consider the specific circumstances before choosing a repair strategy. The majority of cases will require a professional engineer to be involved in the decision-making process.

The 3rd Edition of the *Metal Plate Connected Wood Truss Handbook*, Section 20.3,

If trusses collapse during installation, the Truss Manufacturer, Truss Designer or Building Designer will need to assess the damage to the trusses at the onset. If the trusses have sustained any structural damage, an engineer must design the repairs.

also warns about trusses falling and striking wall plates or other surfaces:

Trusses "domino" when they "roll over" toward one end of the building, each truss falling against the next. Hairline cracks, difficult to detect, frequently occur when trusses domino and strike wall plates or other surfaces. This type of damage may be extensive, and is nearly impossible to repair. Therefore, dominoed trusses need to be replaced.

If your customer decides to ignore your suggestions and/or those of a Truss Designer or Building Designer and uses trusses that have been involved in a collapse, we strongly recommend that you document how this is inappropriate and will void any warranty made by your company. Strong consideration should also be given to covering this type of problem in the contract you have with your customer on the front-end. **SBC**

To pose a question for this column, call the WTCA technical department at 608/274-4849 or email technicalqa@sbcmag.info.



at a glance

- ❑ Contractors should install and brace trusses according to the *Building Component Safety Information* (BCSI) booklet.
- ❑ History has proven that truss instability and the variety of potential consequences due to this is typically the direct result of improper handling, installing, restraining and bracing of trusses.
- ❑ Most collapses will require a separate assessment by a professional engineer to determine the correct course of action.

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Safety Scene

Fire Safety in a Component Manufacturing Facility: Part 2

by Molly E. Butz

Follow these preventative measures to reduce your chances of falling victim to a fire.

In Part I of this series, we discovered the causes of fire in a component manufacturing facility and covered the basics of fire prevention, from good housekeeping to well-maintained electrical systems. Now it's time to examine a few other preventative measures you can take to safeguard your employees and protect your property from the siege of fire.

Resisting

Fire-resistant materials encompass a wide range of products that can help you reduce damage to your facility should a fire break out. Specifically consider fire-resistant doors designed to contain the spread of fire when closed. And, if you're starting from scratch on a new building, consider developing a comprehensive fire-resistance plan that takes into account all of the new products that have become available in the last few years.

Warning

One critical key to safety in your facility is to provide a good fire alarm system. This will help you with two safety issues: evacuation of the building and firefighter response time. The alarm system should be both audio (e.g., bells, horns or sirens) and visual (e.g., flashing/steady lights or strobes). Make sure the sound of the alarm is different from the typical background noise and emergency alarms in your plant, and ensure that the lights used make your alarm as easy to see as it is to hear. In addition, be sure to test your system often and perform maintenance on it when necessary.

Evacuating

In case of a fire, immediate evacuation is critical to avoid injury and illness. Begin by keeping your shop tidy and organized which will help define and maintain unobstructed walkways. Furthermore, clearly-marked, well-lit and easily accessible exits are a vital (and simple) component of preparing your plant for evacuation if needed. OSHA defines clearly-marked as "not less than six inches high, with the principal strokes of the letters in the word 'Exit' not less than three-fourths of an inch wide." It's also important to provide thorough training and perform periodic fire drills. Remember how fun that was in grade school?

Fighting

Fire can catastrophically damage a facility in a very short amount of time. There are, however, a couple of preventative measures you can take to minimize the damage if a fire starts unexpectedly. You need to have portable fire extinguishers that your employees can use to fight a small fire. Be sure to re-

Continued on page 16



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at a glance

- ❑ Take preventative measures to safeguard your employees and protect your property from fire, like installing fire-resistant materials.
- ❑ A good fire alarm system is crucial for timely evacuation and accelerating firefighter response time.
- ❑ Good housekeeping practices, clearly marked exits and periodic fire drills will ensure an orderly evacuation.



Safety Scene

Continued from page 14

member that "it is the employer's responsibility to educate employees on the principles and practices of using a fire extinguisher and the hazards associated with fighting small or developing fires." (See OSHA Evacuation Plans and Procedures eTools: www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/evacuation/index.html for more information.) This means you'll need to provide training for your employees. In addition, an automatic sprinkler system can save you from a worst-case scenario. Under nearly all normal circumstances, properly installed systems will extinguish a fire before the fire department's arrival.

It's probably safe to say that no fire is good fire...*unless you're putting on a barbeque bash in your parking lot for your employees.* But as is the case with so many safety issues, just a handful of simple and generally economical practices can help to keep your facility running (and flame free) year-round. And if something unfortunate like a fire does occur, the most important thing is to be prepared. Take the time, work with your insurance company, assess your risks, spend money and make the decisions *before* it's an emergency. Safety first! **SBC**

Rebuilding After a Devastating Fire

By Scott Arquilla, Best Homes Inc.

The fire that destroyed our plant in March 2003 was an unusual event for sure. Our building was of masonry construction and had a wood truss roof. We had a no smoking policy in place, we had fire extinguishers, and like most truss plants, we did not have a lot of lumber inventory inside the building. Basically, the only combustibles were our work in progress.



But our building was built within eight feet of our next door neighbor's building, which was within a few feet of our property line. When the fire broke out in their building causing explosions of propane tanks, lubricating oils and solvents, the back windows of their one story building blew out and the flames quickly reached the overhang of our roof. When the fire service arrived (10-15 minutes after the call), they mistakenly connected to the wrong, very low-pressure fire hydrants. By the time they changed to the high-pressure hydrants, most of our plant was gone and the fire was too intense to douse. From start to finish, our plant was gone in 70 minutes.

In industrial buildings, fire code ratings are dictated by building codes, most of which have all become stricter over the years. In reality, our only real options for reconstruction were either steel or concrete/masonry. To expedite construction time, we used pre-cast concrete walls and a steel roof. Another decision we had to make was where do we locate the new building; on the existing pad or away from the property line to prevent a possible recurrence? We chose to build somewhat on the existing pad, but since the building was 13 feet less wide it was further away from our property line. Fortunately,

our next door neighbor's new building is no longer adjacent to ours.

As for preventative measures we took to warn and protect ourselves from future fires, the local fire department and current building codes required some very sophisticated alarm and sprinkler systems. Our old building was built in 1962, with an addition in 1967, when sprinklers were not required. Our new fire alarm system (door panic pulls, flashing lights, and noise alerts) has both phone and (an extra cost) wireless alerting systems should the alarm trigger. Of course, we also have a multitude of fire extinguishers on every wall. Water is now supplied via an eight-inch water line off of a 24-inch water main. But the pressure in that main is adequate at best; to have required a pump sprinkler would not have done much (except to burn up the pump), due to the inadequate water pressure. Fortunately, we were not required to add that \$125,000 additional option.

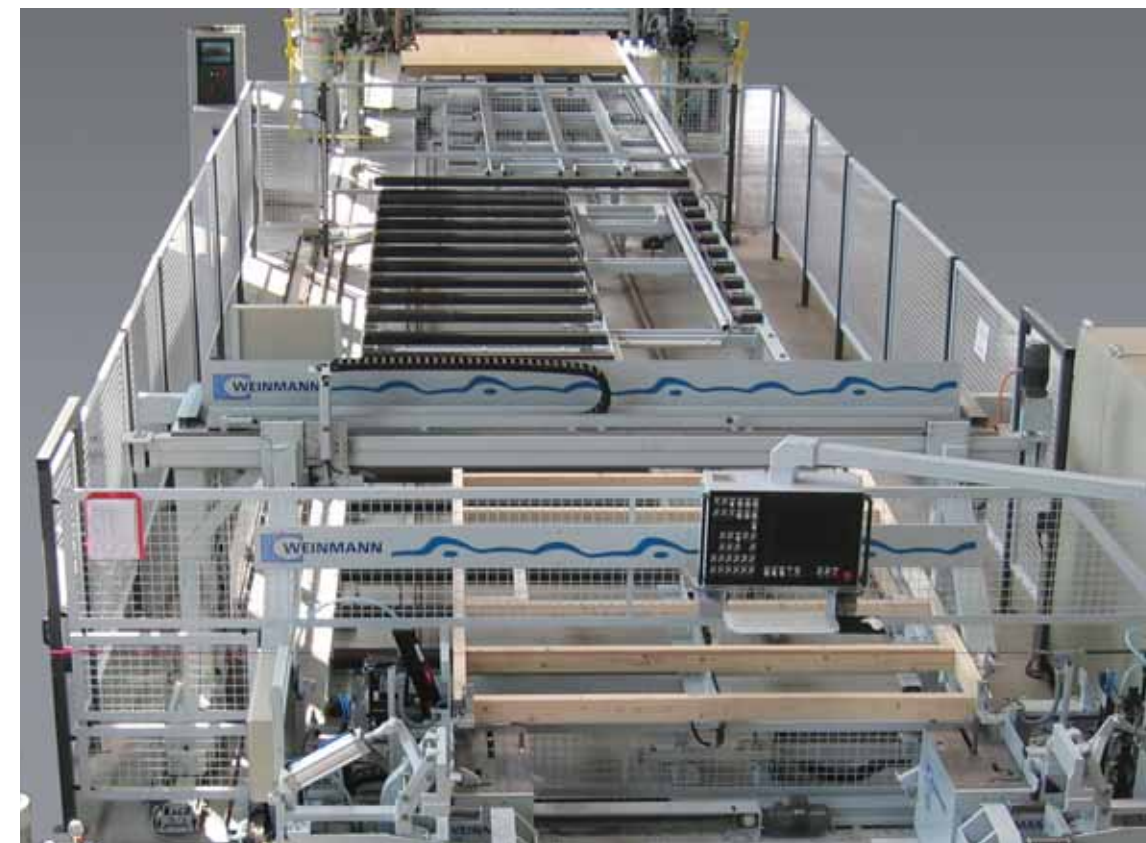
When evaluating your facility for the amount of fire protection you should have, keep in mind that in reality, it is a question of plant location (rural or city/suburban), current building codes, the requirements of the local fire service, proximity to the fire station, type of operation (inside vs. outside lumber storage), and control/storage of flammable products, including cigarettes, propane and maintenance torches, etc. in your plant. I hope you've learned from my experience and will be able to prevent the devastating effects of a fire. If you have additional questions, feel free to email me at s.arquilla@besthomesinc.com. **SBC**

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Bcmc 2007

Destination BCMC: Plan Team Meetings to Achieve Maximum Value

by Ben Hershey & Emmy Thorson-Hanson

Get the most out of your BCMC experience!

Are you making the most out of your three days of information gathering, connection making and equipment shopping at BCMC? With the wealth of knowledge that is at your fingertips at BCMC, it might be difficult to retain all of the information you have acquired. By the time you and your staff get back to the office, you may have forgotten much of what you learned at the show.

One of the easiest ways to help preserve the information you gathered at BCMC is to hold company meetings during the week of the show. They can be as informal as holding a breakfast meeting each day to discuss a divide and conquer "the-knowledge-to-be-gained-at-BCMC" approach. Prepare for the day ahead by deciding who will attend specific educational sessions and which booths to make sure to hit on the show floor.

You can adopt this same approach for a daily "what-was-learned" debrief with your staff. Schedule a dinner with your employees and use the time to share information from educational sessions or interesting discussions that took place on the show floor. Ask employees to bring at least one new idea to this meeting, and start a list. This will help you jump start the implementation of ideas when you get back.

If you prefer a more formal approach, consider scheduling company meetings to discuss company issues such as past and future goals, strategic planning, production planning, company growth, and equipment purchases. Combining this with a recap of new ideas gathered at the show will allow you to maximize your attendance dollar. And depending on your company's needs, the BCMC Committee may be able to help you to reserve meeting space this year at one of the hotels or the Columbus Convention Center.

SBC recently polled BCMC attendees to share their thoughts on what they thought the benefits would be from holding meetings with their teams during the week of BCMC. We were pleased to hear their responses in favor of scheduling staff meetings to coincide with BCMC. From timing to atmosphere to location, here's why they think it would be worthwhile.

at a glance

- There is so much knowledge to absorb at BCMC that it can be a challenge to retain it all.
- BCMC is the ideal venue to regroup with your team, discuss future goals, and share new ideas learned during the show.
- Information learned at BCMC is most valuable when you are able to bring it back to your operation for immediate use.
- BCMC is a good environment for meetings because it is free of office distractions.

Timing Is Everything

What could be a better time to discuss ideas and share information than at the biggest show of the year? Often attendees are energized and excited by the abundance of information and ideas that they pick up at BCMC. But somewhere between leaving the show floor and walking back into their office much of that information and inspiration is lost. Think about holding meetings at the end of the day with your team to review the various ideas and concepts you learned throughout the day...before it is forgotten.

One attendee responded, "By [meeting at BCMC] we can get all our info out on the table for everyone to hear before we have time to lose it. This will help us be more reactive on what we have seen and how we can put it into play." And after all, isn't that why you go to the show? The information is most valuable when you are able to bring it back and put it to immediate use back at your plant.

Another manufacturer commented, "BCMC is a time when we have representa-

Continued on page 22



Loyal Attendee*: Steve Guynes

Company: Honsador Lumber Corporation, Kapolei, HI

SBC: When was the first BCMC that you attended?

S.G.: The first BCMC I attended was in Louisville, KY in 2001. I try to attend every year.

SBC: What is the value of attending BCMC?

S.G.: We attend the show for two main reasons. The first reason we attend is for the exposure that BCMC gives us to new technology and new equipment. If you are in the market you can do all your shopping and browsing under one roof. The second major reason we attend is the seminars. I attend as many as possible, and encourage everyone I bring to the show to attend them as well. No matter what you will always pick up at least one or two fresh ideas, which is more than you came to BCMC with.

SBC: How do you prepare for the show?

S.G.: We prepare by reading about the speakers and topics and we try and get familiar with what is going on. I pre-plan what sessions I will attend and if there are any specific vendors that I want to spend time with I call them ahead of time and schedule an appointment to meet at the show.

SBC: What is your favorite part of BCMC?

S.G.: My favorite part overall is that it is the only time of the year that I get to network with people that I never get the chance to see otherwise.

SBC: Why do you make the trip all the way from Hawaii?

S.G.: One of the biggest benefits is that we get exposed to other market areas, which helps us to understand trends. It is interesting to talk about different markets while having a drink. You go, "Hmmm, they are slow in the Northeast or Midwest, how/when is this going to affect me?" and you can start to see trends as to where the market is going. This is especially informative to us, because being in Hawaii we are last in the food chain, and once the wave goes through the mainland then we can expect it, we are on the tail end when it comes to receiving the trends.

SBC: Why is the show a part of your annual planning? Why should other component manufacturers attend?

S.G.: We plan on attending the show every year because of the networking that goes on. But we also go because we see it as an educational investment; if it wasn't informative we wouldn't waste our time. We view attending BCMC as a perk for the employees who get to go. It is an opportunity to invest in our people and help give them that exposure to the industry, especially for us being from Hawaii. We are so isolated that they don't get the opportunity to see other truss plants and equipment. We feel our employees benefit from this exposure.

SBC: What would you want fellow CMs that have never attended BCMC to know about the show?

S.G.: When I talk to people who have never attended BCMC, I tell them that they should go at least one time to find out whether or not they feel it is valuable to them. Because if they don't go, they can't understand what it is. They think it is just another tradeshow, and they don't realize the magnitude of what is there.

*The BCMC Loyal Attendee Program rewards attendees and their companies for supporting the show. 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, and 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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tives from all our divisions in one place." Which reminds us that not only is it the perfect time to hold meetings, but the perfect place.

Location, Location, Location

It is often hard to find time at home when everyone is available to meet, and it's even harder to meet without distractions from customers, staff and the pressure of daily business. "[BCMC] is time away from the office and may be a good opportunity to discuss issues without interruption," was another response to the poll. Not only is it uninterrupted time, but it is also enjoyable, and many attendees think of it as a welcome getaway from the daily business pressures at home.

Although the show is centered around business, it is a social environment, where excitement and invigoration linger in the air. Without the typical stresses and distractions that are present at the plant, you can focus on absorbing as much information as possible while enjoying the more relaxed atmosphere.

If you are part of a larger company, you know about the challenge of gathering employees from multiple locations to collaborate. Often, staff from various locations attend BCMC, so it's the perfect time and place to get together. One poll respondent commented on this. "With all of the consolidating

going on in the industry, more companies have coverage in larger geographies. The show is an opportunity to get everyone together at one location. And it is a good forum because often the ideas gleaned from the show floor or educational sessions, can then be shared with a larger group."

Motivate

There are many other benefits to holding meetings at the show like invigorating your staff. "Attending the show would help stimulate employees by seeing the latest in technology and new manufacturing processes and techniques. It would motivate them and renew their passion for the industry, plus it may spark some new ideas on how to improve their existing company operations," commented an attendee.

With so much value to be gained simply from interacting with your staff at the show, it just makes sense to hold a meeting. One response summed it up, "[BCMC] provides a good environment, away from office distractions, with plenty of information to promote effective discussions. Having meetings at BCMC would help eliminate the situation where you see and learn lots of good stuff at the show and by the time you get back to the office and find time to gather everyone together, the excitement and importance of what you learned has faded, or has been forgotten entirely." Don't make this mistake; make room on your itinerary for a key team member meeting(s) and planning session(s) during BCMC week. **SBC**

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Build Strong Relationships

Two: Not a Lonely Number

When two associations team up, the possibilities are endless.

by Sean D. Shields

I don't know about you, but in most cases, I can accomplish more than twice as much with two of something than with just one. I see a lot better with two eyes, I hold things better with two hands, and I certainly run and walk better with two feet. Applying that logic to your company, it is likely you can accept more jobs if you have two designers instead of one, cut more lumber if you have two truss saws not just one, and make more deliveries if you buy a second truck. It stands to reason, then, that more good can be accomplished having two well-focused trade associations working on your behalf than just one.

That's what component manufacturers in Florida are discovering as WTCA and the Florida Building Materials Association (FBMA) are partnering together to host a Joint Legislative Conference at the Florida Capitol in Tallahassee. Scheduled for March 27-28, this significant event will bring the structural building components and building material supply industries together to meet with state lawmakers and advocate issues important to both groups: property and casualty insurance; property taxes; workers' compensation insurance; and, impact fees and their effect on affordable housing.

"We're bringing together two groups of well-intentioned people. I can only believe positive things will come from it."

For certain, their collective membership will reap the benefits of this cooperation, but much can also be learned from what made it possible—strong relationships. "I see the relationship between FBMA and WTCA as one that is continually spiraling upward in a positive direction," says Bill Tucker, FBMA's Executive Director, "but it took time to develop."

In his 22 years of association work, Tucker said the thing he has enjoyed most is watching these kinds of relationships develop. "Almost all relationships in this business start as professional relationships, but over years of interaction, mutual respect and trust can turn them into personal relationships. That's fun to watch," says Tucker.

Apparently, it's also quite a journey, as Tucker and Kirk Grundahl, WTCA's Executive Director, have discovered over the past 15 years. For example, recently the Pennsylvania Lumberman's Insurance Company invited a group of people, including Grundahl and Tucker, to the 2005 PGA Championship. As they watched Phil Mickelson win the tournament at a Monday play-off round, there were a number of valuable conversations between the two. Not long after that event, Grundahl and Tucker held meetings with Ralph Del Valle of 41 Truss and Rick Cashman of Florida Forest Products that laid a foundation for collaboration.

"The relationship-building we did at that golf tournament was not only very fun, it has proven to be extremely valuable," says Grundahl. "Our partnership is bringing together individuals in the closely-aligned building material supply industry, so we can take our varied experiences, and develop closer relationships. It will make our collective industry much stronger."

Continued on page 26

Read this closely. There's going to be a test.

O.K., maybe not a test like what you think. But if you manufacture wood components, you WILL BE TESTED.

Right now at least a thousand plants are cutting components with manual or "semi-automated" saws. Most are wondering whether they should bring in a fully automated saw. But what kind – a conventional automated component saw or one of the new linear feed automated saws? How much do they cost? Do they have the right kind and size operation? How in the world will they pay for it? Exactly what will it do for their production? Which manufacturer's saw should they go with? And, all critically, exactly how would it impact their bottom line?

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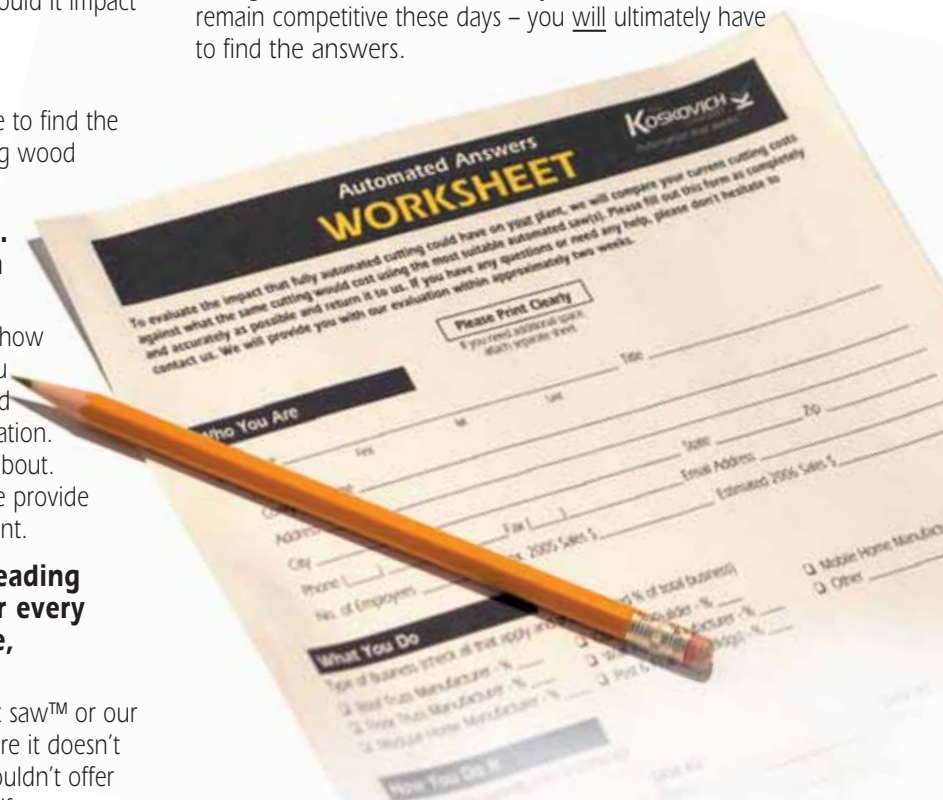
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at a glance

- ❑ The collaboration of FBMA and WTCA creates greater influence when advocating for legislative solutions.
- ❑ The associations' scopes of work have been clearly defined as to not duplicate efforts.
- ❑ The relationship allows each organization to provide more value to their members without additional investment.

Build Strong Relationships

Continued from page 24

That last statement will be carried out as members of both trade groups address mutual issues with their state lawmakers. Collectively, they present a louder voice and greater influence in advocating for legislative solutions that are to their benefit. "We're bringing together two groups of well-intentioned people," explains Tucker, "I can only believe positive things will come from it."

One of those well-intentioned people is Barry Dixon, True House, who has witnessed first-hand the positive work these two organizations have done separately in Florida over the years. "I think that both of these organizations have unique strengths. I am excited to think about what can now be accomplished through WTCA and FBMA bringing those complementary strengths together," says Dixon.

Dixon, Del Valle, Cashman and Doug LaChapelle of West Coast Truss have played an integral role in establishing a comprehensive cooperative agreement between FBMA and WTCA to help guide the two organization's collective efforts. This agreement has also served to broaden the reach of their "upward spiraling" relationship, for it was used as a template to forge a similar partnership between WTCA and the Lumberman's Association of Texas and Louisiana (LAT). In turn, WTCA and LAT will host two Joint Legislative Conferences in Austin and Baton Rouge later this year.

"Developing cooperative relationships on the state level with these organizations also provides strong support for our efforts to collaborate on a nationwide basis with the National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association (NLBMDA)," says Grundahl. "It builds awareness of the differences and similarities between our two industries, and generates momentum toward greater collaboration for the benefit of our members."

As an example, WTCA and NLBMDA recently announced they are partnering together during their annual Legislative Conferences in Washington, DC, April 16-18. By holding their conferences simultaneously, WTCA and NLBMDA will be helping their combined membership lobby Congress effectively on burning issues in 2007.

"By bringing our members to Capitol Hill at the same time, NLBMDA and WTCA's partnership will allow us to cover more ground in the new landscape of the 110th Congress," said Shawn Conrad, NLBMDA President. "Working together, we will increase our industry's impact on legislation critical to the building supply channel."

Members of each organization will continue to visit their lawmakers separately, to maximize the quantity of meetings held with Congressional delegates. However, WTCA and NLBMDA will work together to coordinate the analysis and messaging on each issue so that members of these two organizations will present a united front.

At the end of the day, these cooperative relationships based on trust and professional respect allow each organization to provide significantly more value to their members without additional investment. If it works so well on a national and state level, just imagine what benefits these kinds of relationships can hold for your company. All it takes is a little effort. Consider participating in the national legislative conference in Washington, DC this year, or one of the state-level legislative conferences in Florida, Texas or Louisiana. You'll begin building relationships that will serve you and your business for years to come.

For more information and to register for the SBC Legislative Conference and the various state legislative conferences, please go to www.sbcleg.com, or contact Sean Shields at 608-310/6728 or by email at: legislative@sbclg.com. **SBC**



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—Scott Ward,
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The Big Picture

The Best Economic Solution Requires Diversification

by Kirk Grundahl

Take some time to reflect on where your business is going!

It is always valuable to take time on a periodic basis to evaluate your business plans and ensure that your company's vision is in line with marketplace realities. Whether business is good or bad, I know it can be a struggle to find the time to execute this reality check. With the high pace of construction over the last few years, many companies in our industry found themselves reacting to their markets instead of ensuring that their activities matched up with the corporate vision. On the other hand, since some point in 2006, some of us have found ourselves in a very different place—construction is down, so we are so busy drumming up sales to pay for our overhead that we don't take the time to ensure that the path we're taking is optimal. While you may identify with one or both of the above scenarios, all of us in business should commit to continually reviewing our teams' visions and refining them.

If this is an exercise you've neglected lately, a good place to begin the evaluation process is to take a good look at the optimal economic solution for the marketplace. I've talked about this a lot in the past because I believe it is an important topic for us to debate. In our industry, the best economic solution is generally defined by the following model.

The challenge to design and frame quickly (and thus efficiently), ultimately leads to increased pressure on the suppliers of building design, material supply and installation labor. That's you.

Builders and developers desire to convert the land they are developing into cash as quickly as they can. Any question as to why this is the case can be easily traced to return on investment. Focusing their resources on development gives them the greatest return on the dollars they invest. Accordingly, efficiently designing and framing the houses they build becomes an important aspect of their overall vision and strategy. The challenge to design and frame quickly (and thus efficiently), ultimately leads to increased pressure on the suppliers of building design, material supply and installation labor. That's you.

Based on this model, you should ask yourself how you can derive optimum value for your customers. One answer may be to take on the role of a building designer, component manufacturer and framer. This way, you can offer a value proposition that allows you to embrace efficiently designing, supplying materials for and framing the development. The key is to perceive what the market around you desires and identify a niche that you can fulfill better than your competitors. And best of all it is not a zero sum game.

Stop for a moment and ask whether this model of the development/construction market makes sense to you. The way I see it, the most efficiently designed, manufactured and installed framing system is provided when the structural building component supplier and framer work together as part of the same company with the same vision. But it's not up to me to decide what is best for the industry. If we collectively determine that this business model makes sense, component manu-

Continued on page 30

at a glance

- ❑ The best economic solution is achieved when builders focus on developing land and component manufacturers design buildings, supply material and provide installation labor.
- ❑ In order for this model to thrive in the marketplace, CMs and builders must work together and share the same vision.
- ❑ CMs may want to consider providing concrete, framing materials, building design services and framing labor to their traditional product offerings.



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SOUTHERN PINE: YOUR CHOICE FOR COMPONENTS

The Big Picture

Continued from page 28

facturers need to decide how to fully exploit the opportunity to build a better business for their customers. One thing is certain; if this model is deemed the best solution for the industry, it is crucial to intimately understand the needs of our customers. Business is always easier when you are listening and filling a need versus trying to force your way of doing business onto someone else.

For the sake of argument, let's assume that the majority of your customers believe that their business interests are best served by working with a supplier that can efficiently design, supply and frame structures so they can minimize cycle time and maximize return on invested capital (land). For component manufacturers, here's how I see the practical application of this concept.

Step 1: Concrete

From a material supply perspective, the first consideration is whether you want to be in the concrete business in some manner as an owner or joint venture partner. This makes sense since the foundation is very closely tied to installing components in a smooth process. It seems that wall panels or trusses are often blamed for an imperfection in the foundation. Then, what about supplying the sill plates?

Step 2: Framing Materials & Components

Next consider the addition of these framing products, some of which are components you already design and build:

- A full line of floor framing products: steel or wood joists, steel or wood trusses, I-joists, trimmable end floor trusses
- Wall panels, headers, beams, shear wall panels, wood and/or steel studs, exterior wall sheathing and gypsum
- Roof trusses, stick framing roof solutions, I-joists or steel joists in roof applications where they make the best economic sense
- All the connectors that it takes to put together a structure

Step 3: Building Design

Focusing on building design and ensuring that the flow of loads through the building is optimal is the next step. The structural elements resisting this flow of loads are designed

for easy manufacturing and installation, and all the temporary and permanent bracing is designed to reduce the number of pieces used. This means incorporating compatible truss and wall panel designs, with the goal of manufacturing components that can be framed using the most efficient framing techniques with the least material possible. Buying and reselling specialty connectors can speed up the installation of temporary and permanent bracing.

Step 4: Jobsite Framing

Looking at the framing process to ensure that the material designations, the stacking of the material, the flow of material to the jobsite and the design of all interconnected elements allow the framing process to become a well-oiled machine. The business focus should be on the entire process of design, manufacturing, delivery, handling and installation so that implementation becomes a "no-brainer" on the jobsite. You could supply all the miscellaneous framing lumber and other "accessories" needed by the framing crew to progress through the construction process without delay.

When the market drives economic efficiency, each structural component, connection, installation and framing detail is optimized. The end result is to effectively encourage everyone in the construction process to figure out how to be most efficient. This ultimately should lead to the best economic framing solution for each project.

You may say to yourself, man, expanding our business in this manner is way too much for us to undertake, so it cannot be done. Or maybe you feel strongly that "we're not designers or framers and have never wanted to be, but we are great component manufacturers." If you believe (as I do) that the scenario presented above is the optimum economic and business model, then it is only a matter of time until this approach to the construction business will be the norm. The market and economics are usually pretty unbiased and expedient about determining what the best and most competitive business solution will be.

Given this, the question that remains is how the vision that you have for your business fits into the optimum economic and business model in the near- and long-term. This is not a zero sum game—it often is a game of inches that requires consistent persistent forward progress. **SBC**



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— Steven L. Stroder
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Wtca Update

Stress in the Workplace

Identifying the causes of employees' stress can minimize burnout in your business.

by WTCA Staff

No matter the time of year or pace of work flowing through your operation, it seems as though stress is often hanging in the air. A little healthy stress in a workplace can be a positive, motivating factor. However, too many people allow stress to go beyond an acceptable level and reach a point where it causes burnout.

Stress can result from many things, and each of us has a different tolerance threshold. Some of us—you know who you are—bring stress from our personal lives into the workplace. Another cause of stress is simply feeling overwhelmed by the amount of work on our plates. Working on a team with people of varying personalities and opinions is another potential source of stress in the workplace. When these stresses are internalized or left to fester without resolution, burnout can often result.

Burnout is a response to high levels of negative stress that results in exhaustion and unhappiness. The symptoms of burnout vary and, sometimes even affect people's physical health. Often, people that are burned out feel no satisfaction from the work they do, are visibly unhappy and seem to worry more than usual. It is important to identify these symptoms and alleviate them before they affect you.

Burnout is a response to high levels of negative stress that results in exhaustion and unhappiness. The symptoms vary, and sometimes affect people's physical health.

Check for these signs if you suspect that you or an employee may be experiencing burnout: (Gerald Corey, *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*)

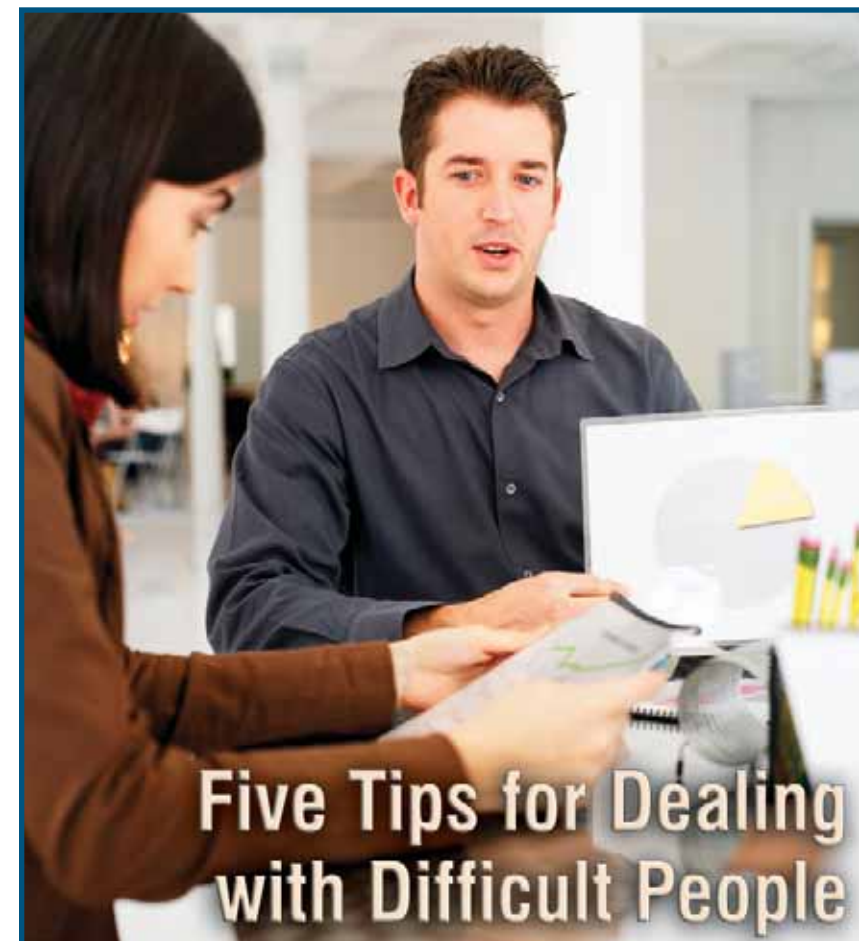
- lack of positive feedback
- tension with other employees
- the pressure to meet unrealistic deadlines
- monotonous workload
- not having the opportunity to progress or advance in the workplace
- personal problems beyond the job sphere

The Simple Things

Burnout can be contagious and spread like wildfire through a work environment. To rid yourself of burnout and prevent its spread, try changing the little aspects of your life. The website www.inc.com offers the following tips to get started:

- **Monitor what you put into your body.** Don't skip meals or live on fast food. You may be amazed at how much eating a balanced diet and drinking plenty of water will energize you and improve your mood.
- **Look for natural ways to energize.** Something as simple as taking a walk can keep you in shape and clear your mind. And try to clear your mind at the end of the day, by winding down with a relaxing, quiet activity.
- **Don't forget to breathe.** Take a few deep breaths and loosen up by stretching. This is also a helpful exercise when you feel sluggish at work.

Continued on page 34



Five Tips for Dealing with Difficult People

You can eliminate a common and often frustrating source of stress in the workplace by learning how to effectively handle difficult people. Some talk constantly and never listen. Others must always have the last word. Some co-workers fail to keep commitments. Others criticize anything that they did not create. Below are five productive ways to deal with difficult co-workers.

1. **Examine yourself.** Always start with self-examination to determine that the object of your attention really is a difficult person's actions. Are you overreacting? Have you always experienced difficulty with the same type of person or actions?
2. **Explore what you are experiencing with a trusted friend or colleague.** Brainstorm ways to address the situation. When you are the object of an attack, you tend to feel emotions like anger, humiliation, fear or concern that makes objectively assessing your options a challenge.
3. **Approach the person with whom you are having the problem for a private discussion.** Talk to them about what you are experiencing in "I" messages. This approach focuses on your experience of the situation rather than attacking or accusing the other person. It may also be effective to explain to your co-worker the impact their actions had on you. During the discussion, attempt to reach agreement about positive and supportive actions going forward.
4. **Follow up.** Determine whether a follow-up discussion is needed or if it will have any impact. Decide if you want to continue to confront the difficult person by yourself.
5. **Tactfully confront your difficult co-worker's behavior.** Deal with the person with gentle humor or slight sarcasm. Employ more positive confrontational tactics. Not all of us are spur-of-the-moment funny, but if you are, humor can work well with difficult coworkers.

[Source: Susan Heathfield, www.humanresources.com]

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- **Manage your time well.** Don't take on too much too quickly and learn to delegate your responsibilities. You don't have to do it all.
- **Don't be afraid to have a little fun.** Laugh often and keep light-hearted momentos in your office. Also, make some time to separate yourself from work. For instance, reenergize yourself by using your lunch hour to go for a walk.

Prevention

If you are responsible for managing a department, keep these tips in mind to prevent burnout within your team.

- **Add diversity.** Most people enjoy variety in their jobs, so keep this in mind when delegating tasks to your team.
- **Change your approach.** Instead of stressing about the bigger picture of finishing a project, take it bit by bit and designate time to complete each task. Adopt the "one thing at a time" mantra. Discourage your team from using negative words when approaching a stressful event or project.
- **Take advantage of your creativity.** Examine your work and continue to look for creative ways to improve it.
- **Have fun.** This doesn't mean all play and no work, but something as simple as chatting with an employee can decrease stress. Play music in your office, or just make sure you are doing some tasks you truly enjoy.

It is important to catch burnout or prevent it from happening at all. Burnout affects individuals, but it can also affect everyone on the team by slowing down the completion of tasks, causing bottlenecks and exacerbating mistakes. Watch for the signs, and strive to make your workplace experience a happy, healthy one. **SBC**

Adapted from "Avoiding Burnout" by Krista Reisdorf, Professional Roofing Magazine, March 2004.

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at a glance

- Almost without exception, each of these automated devices or improvements have been designed to make the truss or wall building process more convenient, faster, more productive, more accurate, of better quality, and less costly.
- One of the virtues of automated saws is their ability to set themselves up without intervention by the operator.
- Is your insurance provider aware of the improved safety that certain types of automation brings to your plant? If he isn't, you should be leaning on him to give you a break! It could be significant.

Reducing Risk with Automation

by Jerry Koskovich, P.E.

Improved safety is yet another perk to automation.

For a couple of decades now, I and a few others have been preaching the virtues of automation. Since the introduction of the first automated component saw, we've seen an evolution in machine design and development that has affected virtually every piece of hardware utilized to fabricate a truss or wall frame.

Stop and think about it. Today we have automated component saws instead of the manual hand crank varieties, automated radial arm type saws, automated linear feed saws that cut and mark components, automated material handling systems that take the raw lumber to the saws, crooked lumber sensors that position saws to make good parts from crooked stock, automated conveyances that move the cut components from the saws to the truss assembly stations, automated jiggling systems that position pucks to properly outline the truss

perimeter, laser projection systems that confirm the location of components and plates on trusses, ejectors to move the truss from the pressing table, automated conveyances that move the partially pressed truss through a finished roller press, automated inspection devices that detect incorrectly positioned or missing nail plates on truss joints, and automated stackers to arrange the truss pile for proper banding and further handling.

Even the most conscientious employee can occasionally fall victim due to lack of attention...especially when he's doing something he's done a thousand times before.

That turned out to be longest paragraph I've ever written and that you'll ever see me write. Frankly there just wasn't a good place to stop and I'm sure I probably overlooked an item or two! As the saying goes, "We've come a long way, Baby!" Almost all of the above has taken place in the past twenty years!

Almost without exception, each of these automated devices or improvements have been designed to make the truss or wall building process more convenient, faster, more productive, more accurate, of better quality, and less costly; plus, of course, provide a better bottom line for the truss or wall fabricator. But automated devices have had a few other effects that are often overlooked, yet those oversights could be among the most important of all!

I can't remember when I first heard about OSHA, but it definitely came into being during the middle of my first career. We're all familiar with some of the vagaries in interpretation or enforcement in its myriad of rules. I remember the OSHA cowboy as depicted in a cartoon many years ago. It was good for a serious belly laugh! But OSHA was no laughing matter.

While we all can take issue with some of those vagaries I alluded to earlier, we must also recognize that the underlying intent of the OSHA regulations had merit. And, further, there were teeth in the rules as repeatedly demonstrated by the fines levied during enforcement by governing agencies.

In addition to the penalties occasionally administered by OSHA, there is the additional cost burden brought on by workers' compensation administration, injury claims and insurance. All of these costs have a negative impact on the bottom line, to say nothing of the injuries and pain that may have been or will be born by the injured employee.

So what's my point? How can the fabricator relieve some of the cost-burden and liability of being in the truss or wall business?

Automation—that's how!!! Bet you're surprised, considering who it's coming from! Let me explain.

Everyone knows that saws are inherently dangerous. Let's face it—they're designed to quickly cut objects, wood in this case. Fingers and other bodily appendages can be cut even easier!

Having grown up in a construction family, I've always been around saws of some kind. So had my dad. But I can remember when he accidentally stuck his hand into the knives of a jointer. Was he a novice? Anything but!

Continued on page 40

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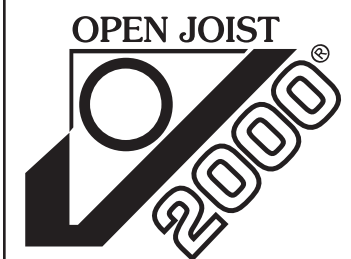
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In my own experience I needed a few stitches when a board kicked back on my hand while using a table saw. Another time I found out a chain saw will easily go through jeans and into the soft flesh of a thigh without putting a strain on the motor! Was I a novice or inexperienced? Heck no!

My point is, even the most conscientious employee can occasionally fall victim due to lack of attention...especially when he's doing something he's done a thousand times before. Truth is, a novice may be more cautious when working around a saw...unless he's just plain stupid! Present company included!

Manual component saws historically have the appearance (and, in some cases, the potential) to be dangerous—especially if the operator is overconfident. These early saws adjusted blade position with hand cranks. Most of them didn't have brakes on the saw blades, which meant the blades were often free spinning when the last piece of the wood left the saw. It wasn't uncommon to see an operator use a 2x4 as a pry to wedge between the blade and motor to stop the spinning prior to beginning the blade adjustment process.

Worse yet, he might not use the pry and just go for the cranks and levers while the blade was still spinning. In my pre-automation days, we actually had a sawyer reach out and grab a free spinning blade in a moment of thoughtlessness. Fortunately he didn't lose any fingers, but did cut himself pretty good.

One of the virtues of automated saws is their ability to set themselves up without intervention by the operator. With most automated saws, there should be no reason for the operator to put himself in harm's way during the setup process.

All of the automated component saws currently on the market have powered lumber feeding systems that require the individual 2x stock pieces to be fed to the saw by the operator. Some require more interaction by the operator to put the raw stock into the conveyor and cutting process, while others basically feed themselves. In either type, the operator should have minimal exposure to the saw blades. (However, it wouldn't be a bad idea to have your safety director, or some other management type, take a look at how the operator is doing things down at the saw. Bad habits have a way of creeping in to even the best of operations.)

The newer linear feed saws take things even further in terms of minimizing sawyer exposure to potentially hazardous functions. Most all of the ones I'm familiar with have totally enclosed single blade saws. Short of the operator intentionally sticking a hand or arm into the enclosure, there should be virtually no chance of the operator being cut by the saw. So there's no more trying to cut very small, intricate parts with

Take a look at how the operator is doing things down at the saw.

Bad habits have a way of creeping in to even the best of operations.

a chop saw...or make long scarf cuts with a radial arm saw... or rip bevels with a table saw.

If the linear feed saw also has an automated material handling system on its in-feed side, you have eliminated the prospect of the operator shoving the trailing end of the lumber stock into the cutting chamber.

Not all of the hazards of truss plants center around saws. Truss builders are occasional victims when jumping up and down off of the press tables or shooting themselves with nail guns. Both of these potential hazards can be minimized to some extent by the use of walk through tables and automated jiggling systems. With their use, there is simply less reason to be on the table...and less time spent jumping up and down on them.

I'm sure I could go on and itemize the safety advantages that most any of the machines or devices I've mentioned above bring to the table (pardon the pun). You likely know their virtues better than I do since you deal with them every day. My point is you may have made your operation very much safer by making use of all of the machines mentioned above, but is your insurance provider aware of this? If he isn't, you should be leaning on him to give you a break! It could be significant.

Probably the biggest "unsung" safety virtue of automated equipment is that it reduces "soft risks" down to the nub. I'm talking about bodily wear and tear...which all but certainly costs you more in workers' compensation administration, insurance claims and premiums, and sick days than out-and-out machine related injuries do. Back injuries are probably the number one offender.

Part of it is all the lifting inherent in any fabricating plant. Lumber gets heavy...even a 12-foot 2x4 can be very heavy, especially when you're holding it from one end. If you have an automated feed system on your saw that is forklift-loaded a bunk at a time, that's several hundred less pieces someone has to lift and position manually. Multiply that by three or four hundred bunks a year—probably well over 100,000 pieces—and you've saved some backs.

If that same saw is marking the parts it's cutting, you've saved another operator on the back side of the saw from having to

Probably the biggest "unsung" safety virtue of automated equipment is that it reduces "soft risks" down to the nub.

lift and jockey lumber around as he marks. A small thing in and by itself, yes, but all those added repetitive movements add up. (Practically speaking, automated saws produce components so fast these days that it would be near impossible for an operator hand-marking components to keep up.)

Another healthy wear and tear offender is the truss assembly operation. Watch how many times a truss builder jumps on and off the table during the course of his shift. That's not just an injury risk, it's a lot of wear on body parts. Now watch how much time he spends stooped over or on his knees, getting the jiggling in place. Watch the number of repetitive motions he makes hammering down jiggling blocks on a wood or soft-top table, or hand cranking down pucks on a steel slotted-top. Automated jiggling does away with probably 90 percent of all this.

At the start of this dissertation I mentioned beneficial "oversights" that may have been brought on by the development and use of automated machines in our industry. I've tried to list a few of the safety virtues accrued by their use.

Those of you who purchase and make available the use of such machines by your employees have a right to take some credit and pride in the fact that workers who may use these tools are probably safer and healthier than they've been in the past while performing their jobs. And are probably incurring a lot less bodily wear and tear. Take a bow.

Another benefactor of the other "oversight" I mentioned is the consumer...the family who buys your products for his home or business. He doesn't realize the quality of the product he's buying or how much you've saved him in the cost of the engineered trusses and walls you supplied. Maybe you ought to bring it to his attention through your marketing efforts. Imagine what the product would cost if you, the fabricator, hadn't chosen to automate the many processes involved!

We who develop these machines take some pride in the above as well. Forgive us for smiling a bit. **SBC**

Jerry Koskovich is President of The Koskovich Company in Rochester, MN.

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Urban Rehabilitation

More than Meets the Eye

by Molly E. Butz

The story of how building components are rehabilitating troubled kids in Ohio.

at a glance

- ❑ ISUS is a charter high school for troubled teens in Dayton, OH.
- ❑ The students learn traditional subjects as well as career skills they can use when they graduate.
- ❑ ISUS students are taught how to design and build wall panels, and also participate in on-site construction.

To the unknowing passerby, areas of downtown Dayton, OH, such as Frank Street and the Wolf Creek Neighborhood (north of West Third Street) look just like the houses in any new construction development: spacious floor plans, crisp vinyl siding and inviting white porches. A gazebo park and children's playground have even turned one corner into a friendly meeting spot for neighbors. However, if you look a little more closely and ask a few more questions, you will learn that these houses tell a captivating story about more than just rehabilitating urban housing. They'll teach you about triumphs for troubled kids, run-down neighborhoods and an industry struggling with increasing labor demands. Follow me on my journey through their tale....

With some help from an industry insider, I found myself invited to a gala event in Dayton, OH at the Improved Solutions for Urban Systems High School (ISUS), a last chance program for kids that had dropped out or been kicked out of school and labeled "at risk." Some of them had been tangled up with the court systems and all of them seemed to be headed nowhere quickly. I had previous knowledge of ISUS and was pleased to have the opportunity to visit the area, attend the gala and meet with Ann Higdon, the President and founder of the school.

When Ann founded ISUS in the early 1990s, her mission was simple: provoke change in both the kids and the community. "I was concerned," Ann told me. "There were a lot of kids dropping out [of school]. In high school, I was one of those kids getting mostly Ds and I didn't attend classes regularly. I was fortunate, however, and someone took an interest in me my senior year. Without that, I'm not sure where I would be today."

Ann's vision for ISUS was to teach more than just the fundamentals of math and science; she wanted the students to graduate with the fundamentals of life, from responsibility to respect. So, in addition to learning the standard reading, writing and arithmetic (which they do, and at an accelerated pace), the students also learn career skills they can use immediately when they graduate.

It made sense, from Ann's perspective, to teach the students career skills in professions that were lacking in skilled labor supply. Therefore, by training students in areas like construction, manufacturing, healthcare and computer technology, she would be positioning them for employment opportunities immediately after graduation. In turn, everyone would benefit and ISUS would be creating an efficient and effective workforce development program, a subject that touches the building components industry very deeply.

Ann's "typical" student likely lacked the know-how or where-withal to look for a place that could help them develop any of these technical skill sets. Yet these were the jobs that would be the easiest to secure, the surplus of open positions a solid indicator, if you were a trained employee. The construction and building components industries, Ann's first focus, gave her the opportunity to make sure her students didn't end up on the streets or worse, behind bars, and give back to the community and an industry starved for prepared, talented employees. Ann had arrived at her strategy, and I arrived at ISUS.

I arrived, unfortunately, just in time to catch Ann on her way out the door, however. She was heading home to freshen up for the evening's events and was kind enough to offer me the few moments of time that she had, so I grabbed my luggage and rode home with her. A round of questions, a snack with

Frank Street About-Face

Ann's first project for the students at ISUS included the purchase of 13 houses on Frank Street in Dayton, OH. The total cost for the houses was \$50,000, exactly half of her initial \$100,000 loan. In 2001, ISUS sold the first new single-family home for \$79,000. As ISUS worked in the area the drug dealers and prostitutes began to scatter and long-term residents started paying more attention to their property. The community called it "The Miracle on Frank Street" and the work the ISUS students did transformed the neighborhood and set the stage for the entire area's subsequent development. Today, the homes the ISUS students have built in other areas sell for upwards of \$150,000, which helps the school continue to fund its programs.



her family and a quick change into my party dress, and we were back on the road again.

In our time together, Ann told me in her own words many of the things I had heard about ISUS, from the variety of career programs to the daily "family meetings" between the students and their instructors. I was already familiar with her brave beginnings (see sidebar above) and it was refreshing to hear the optimism in her voice as she talked about her students.

Once a student has been expelled from school, most people won't even give them the time of day. Ann decided to go the other direction and challenge her students to live up to their potential, a potential in many cases they themselves weren't even aware of. "We expect our students to work harder than 'normal' students," Ann said. "And we have a zero tolerance policy on drugs, violence and the like." Plus, she puts responsibility on each student the moment they walk in the door. "It's simple,"

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Urban Rehabilitation

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she continued, "You want change? You change first." You can see it in her eyes, each one of those students means something to her.

Before heading back to the school, I got my first glimpse of the students' work on the jobsite and I was immediately impressed (see photo above). One of the programs ISUS offers includes learning to design and build wall panels with further classes in on-site construction. The gala that evening was being held to raise funds and honor a prominent private donor who we met in the Wolf Creek Neighborhood in downtown Dayton, so that he and his family could see one of the current ISUS student projects. It was late enough in the day that the students were finished up and gone from the jobsite, so the reality of this school's programs hadn't really had a chance to sink in for me.

(Please note that here I might usually tell you a little about the donor for the evening, but the family prefers to remain anonymous. However, what I can tell you is that in 1992 ISUS began with a \$100,000 loan that Ann persuaded a local bank to lend to her on her word alone. Over time, ISUS has continued to create a successful return on investment and its programs thrive because of local and national donations and grants, including contributions from the Rotary Club of Dayton, an enthusiastic and major supporter.)

After a short caravan back to the school, the gala went off without a hitch. It was my first exposure to the students and I was moved as they shared their stories, each of them hav-

**"You want change?
You change first."**

ing overcome very different, but equally disturbing obstacles. One nice young man even came in his Army dress greens to share his triumph: achieving his dreams of becoming a paratrooper.

The next morning I was scheduled to tour the ISUS facility and jobsites with John Seebock, one of the numerous ISUS counselors. He graciously drove me all around town to visit the various places touched by the ISUS students. It was an amazing, if not emotional, experience as we passed house after house created with craftsman-like skills. One home, still under construction, allowed me the opportunity to meet some of the students (ages 16-21) and marvel at their handiwork and courteous behavior. Some of them ex-drug users or dealers, some high school drop-outs and yet others tossed out on the streets by their own parents, each gave a yes ma'am in response. I was proud to imagine any of these students obtaining jobs with any of the manufacturers in our industry.

Here was a group of kids, and I mean kids, out in the field putting every ounce of their effort into these homes literally from the foundation up. Back on campus, another group of students was training to use the design software and newly installed automated wall panel equipment (which took Ann years and even a trip to Japan to research.) Each student was working hard at learning useful skills, appreciating their responsibilities and loving every minute of it.

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Urban Rehabilitation

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Talk about a feel-good day. I had just witnessed the ultimate win-win situation. Not only were the ISUS programs rehabilitating urban housing, they were rehabilitating the students as well. And it was certainly no secret that the ISUS students were perfectly primed to enter "my" industry, designing and manufacturing structural building components.

Now, twice a year, ISUS students graduate, each with a high school diploma, not a G.E.D., and have the life and jobs skills they need to be granted employment opportunities and meaningful jobs most of them never thought, or in some cases even cared, about. Each of them will be filling another much needed position in their field, from nurses to truss technicians.

As my trip came to a close and I headed for the airport, I realized that it would have been easy for people to turn Ann away when she came to them asking for help, financially or otherwise. I mean, who wants to throw a bunch of money at kids that had essentially failed at every other opportunity given to them? But she persevered by knocking on the right doors and showing the community how much they could save

in court and jail costs by spending money on the front end to help save these kids from "the system." Because of that, her students continue to thrive year after year. It wasn't easy, but Ann and her wonderful staff have combined youth development, economic development, community development and workforce development and they did it all in an old plumbing supply warehouse in downtown Dayton, OH.

Her students call themselves "transcenders" because they've found a way to rise above the odds and succeed. It's cliché, but it was inspirational and I walked away from those houses with a challenge, a challenge to provoke change.

Do you want change? You know what to do. **SBC**

Wright Brothers Home Replica

In 2003 Dayton, OH celebrated the 100th anniversary of powered flight by dedicating a new national park (Aviation Trail Interpretive Center) and inviting builders to refurbish homes in the Wright Dunbar community for "Citirama." When ISUS students were invited to participate in Citirama, they wanted to build something significant that would draw on the important history of the neighborhood. The result: an exact replica of the original Wright brothers home. [Source: www.isusinc.com]





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OSHA

A Welcome Visitor

by Marisa Hirsch

Northeast Panel & Truss opened their doors to OSHA and became SHARP.



Ed Jerome, area director of OSHA, presented SHARP certificate to Mike Hogancamp, Northeast Panel & Truss Safety Committee chairman.

A visit from OSHA is not something that most companies in any industry look forward to. It almost certainly means stress, and in some cases can lead to hefty fines. Therefore, the idea of inviting OSHA to visit can seem like a strange concept that may equal inviting trouble. But that's just what the people at Northeast Panel & Truss, LLC decided to do, and they're glad they did.

The company, operating in Kingston, NY, chose to open its doors and invite OSHA in. And not just once or twice, but as many times as it took to accomplish its goal. That magic number turned out to be seven—seven visits from OSHA. And the goal was to become a certified SHARP (Safety & Health Achievement Recognition Program) site. Northeast Panel & Truss achieved this goal in May 2006, and celebrated with an awards ceremony, a barbecue and t-shirts for all employees.

SHARP is a free program that, according to OSHA's website (www.osha.gov), "recognizes small employers who operate an exemplary safety and health management system." In the state of New York alone, there are over 70 SHARP sites from many different industries, all of whom opened their doors to OSHA.

Committing & Participating

Ron Coons, safety director at Northeast Panel & Truss, says being part of this program can bring many benefits to companies. (One of these is that a site is exempt from normal OSHA inspections while its SHARP certification is valid.) However, deciding to become a SHARP participant is a commitment, and everyone needs to be on board for it to work.

In May 2004, before Coons was working at Northeast, the company received notice from OSHA that its injury rates were high and it was going to be placed on the Site Specific Targeting (SST) List. "That list identifies a little bit more than 900 of the most unsafe companies in the state of New York to work for, and 13,000 of the most dangerous companies in the United States," said Coons.

When Coons began working at Northeast in June 2004, Bruce Hutchins, president, was ready to commit himself and his company to being the best at safety. In fact, from Northeast's beginning, Hutchins always intended to focus on safety.

Steps to SHARP Certification

According to the SHARP Program's web page (www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/sharp.html), the following are the basic steps to becoming a SHARP site:

- Request a consultation visit that involves a complete hazard identification survey;
- Involve employees in the consultation process;
- Correct all hazards identified by the consultant;
- Implement and maintain a safety and health management system that, at a minimum, addresses OSHA's 1989 Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines;
- Lower your company's Lost-Workday Injury and Illness rate (LWDII) and Total Recordable Case Rate (TRCR) below the national average; and
- Agree to notify your state Consultation Project Office prior to making any changes in the working conditions or introducing new hazards into the workplace.

"I made it very clear to all employees...that there were not to be any exceptions made to safety rule violations, including loss of production time," he said. "It took time; a few people lost their jobs. We had to change a culture. I still knew that I couldn't do it all myself, and was at a bit of a loss on how to manage a program actively while managing the overall operation."

Coons' resume landed on Hutchins' desk right around this time, and he was quickly hired. Having been previously involved in getting a lumber retail site SHARP-certified, Coons was ready to help get Northeast Panel & Truss to the same level. Hutchins and Coons discussed the SHARP program, and got right to work at improving Northeast's safety practices. They formed a safety committee and a safety and health program, and amped up employee safety training.

Being on the SST List meant that Northeast Panel & Truss knew an OSHA inspection was coming sometime soon. Sure enough, OSHA showed up unannounced in September 2004 and spent an entire day at the facility. They found four violations, three of which Northeast fixed right away. However, the fourth required some parts being ordered (new flame arrestors and other parts for their torch kit) and the development of a welding program to train employees on the proper use of such equipment. This violation resulted in one citation, but no fine because they had been working so hard at safety improvement.

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Northeast Panel & Truss shop employees on the day of the SHARP certification awards ceremony and barbecue.

After this initial inspection, a formal report is sent to the recently-inspected company. Coons said this report references every OSHA regulation that was found to be in violation. Included with it is a document called Form 33, which lists 58 items divided into seven categories. Examples of categories are Safety and Health Training, Employee Participation, and Hazard Anticipation and Detection.

Specific items under the seven categories involve such things as emergency preparedness, preventative maintenance tactics, whether or not workplace injury data are effectively analyzed, and whether or not feasible engineering controls are in place. For each of the 58 items, companies receive a one, two or three as a ranking, with three being the best.

Coons said that in order to be a SHARP site, a company must get at least a two for each of the 58 items. After their first consultation visit, Northeast received several ones and a couple of twos. Their safety committee then used the evaluation to identify and work on what areas needed help in their facility. One thing they were required to work on was establishing an effective procedure for tracking hazard correction. Coons chose to address this by creating a database to track all reported hazards. The system tracks areas hazards were found, the types of hazards they were, and whether or not they were fixed.

"From this, I can query areas of the shop that show the highest frequency of hazards," said Coons. "I can pinpoint what areas have the poorest housekeeping and so on.... I can also tell who reports the most hazards and perhaps reward them accordingly."

After each subsequent visit from OSHA, Northeast received another form updating them on their progress until they met their goal of at least a two in each category.

Coons said that through this consultation process and reaching the required rankings, other steps to becoming SHARP follow naturally—such as lowering Lost-Workday Injury and Illness rates (LWDII) and Total Recordable Case Rates (TRCR) to below the national averages.

During the last inspection before Northeast achieved certification, the inspectors spent most of the time interviewing employees to test their knowledge of the SHARP program and therefore gauging their participation in the program. This is because it's considered very important to have all employees involved in the program, and not just management.

"[The U.S. Department of Labor] doesn't want it to be management-run," said Coons. "SHARP has to start with the employees."

Coons said this worked well at Northeast Panel & Truss. The employees enjoyed being part of the process and program, and worked hard to reach the goal of certification. Production in the plant would stop one or two times a week and they would work on employee training. If there was a minor incident, everyone would gather wherever it occurred and discuss how to prevent it from happening again. Employees trained one another, reported hazards, did inspections and contributed to suggestion boxes.

"For the guys to become part of something special...I think it was important to them," said Coons. "It really worked out well."

Benefits Abound

Things like lowered accident rates and higher employee morale are only a couple of the benefits that Coons believes come from working with OSHA and SHARP. In fact, Coons said he can't name anything negative about participating in the program. "There are really no drawbacks," he said. "It's a great process. The people that you meet, the things that you learn.... It's very good even if somebody doesn't want to be a SHARP site. But why wouldn't you want to? It's free and a good all-around thing."

Hutchins said he was willing to work with OSHA because doing so was good motivation to make the company safer.

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OSHA: A Welcome Visitor

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"We basically got a pat on the back and it was turned over to the New York state consultation service to follow up and make sure we got the last problem fixed," said Coons. When the consultation service came in to do so, Northeast stated its interest in becoming a SHARP site.

Steps to SHARP

SHARP's web page (www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/sharp.html) states that the first step to becoming a certified site is to request a consultation visit, which includes a hazard identification survey. Employee participation in the visit is part of the requirement.

Coons said that Northeast's onsite consultation was the same as a regular OSHA inspection. Their inspector began by spending a few hours reviewing the company's programs, looking at documentation like injury logs and accident reports, and asking questions about things such as best practices. Next, there was a walk-through of the entire facility, including break rooms and offices. During the walk-through, the inspector noted violations and made recommendations. The last part of the consultation was the closing conference, which is when the inspector reviews everything he noted throughout the day. Coons said he used this time to make his own list of areas in need of improvement, drawn from the inspector's observations.

"I can query areas of the shop that show the highest frequency of hazards. I can pinpoint what areas have the poorest housekeeping and so on.... I can also tell who reports the most hazards and perhaps reward them accordingly."

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OSHA: A Welcome Visitor

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"Like a looming deadline, it helps motivate you," he said. "And if you achieve the rating, OSHA actually stays away and concentrates where they should—on the unsafe work places."

By inviting state consultation offices in, companies can receive help in developing programs and organizing training on such things as accident investigation and job safety analysis. Additionally, Coons said that working with state offices means not being inspected by federal OSHA. He said this is because OSHA resources are already being used, and the

appeared the other way."

There is an official way that companies aiming for SHARP can prevent federal OSHA inspections. It's called an inspection deferral, and participants can request one lasting up to 18 months from their Consultation Project Manager. Coons said Northeast Panel & Truss got one about eight months after they began working towards SHARP. He said the deferral was a letter from the state that the company posted. The letter said that Northeast Panel & Truss was in pursuit of becoming a New York state SHARP site, was working with

Northeast Panel & Truss employees attend a barbecue celebrating the company's SHARP certification in May 2006. Each employee received a t-shirt to commemorate the company's SHARP certification.



consensus is that a company working with the state does not need to take up federal OSHA's time as well.

Obtaining Inspection Deferral

However, representatives from another company requesting not to be named said they were inspected by federal OSHA at two different locations—at the same time they were in contact with state consultation offices. They were not working toward SHARP certification, but had invited state OSHA in to evaluate their situation and were working on improvements. While the company found the evaluation to be mostly helpful, they also found it unsettling that federal inspections occurred within a year after the state consultations took place.

"When [state inspectors] came in and presented their scope of work, they were very adamant about having no contact, no communication whatsoever with [federal OSHA]," the company's safety director said. "Except for, as it played out, it just

the state, and that there was no need to inspect the facility at that time.

Federal OSHA did approach Northeast for an inspection about two months after they began working with the state—before they had the inspection deferral. "In November of 2004, federal OSHA came back for the second time," Coons said. "When they came in, they turned around and left because we were already working with the state."

Officially Certified

In May 2006, Northeast Panel & Truss became an official SHARP site. As is customary, both the state and federal OSHA recognized the achievement in an awards ceremony. Northeast chose to combine this with a barbecue, a couple hours off in the afternoon for everyone and t-shirts all around. The company also received, as do all SHARP sites, a one-year exemption from OSHA's scheduled inspections.

When Northeast's one year is up in May 2007, the company will have its recertification visit. This time, they will have to receive all threes on their evaluation form. If they do, they

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"Like a looming deadline, it helps motivate you. And if you achieve the rating, OSHA actually stays away and concentrates where they should—on the unsafe work places."

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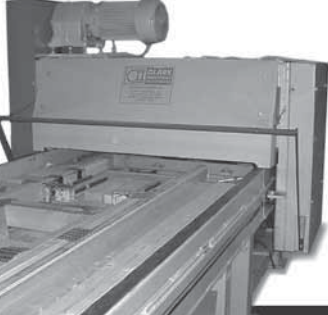


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"Inspiration, motivation, and a sense of empowerment can be obtained from participation in the SHARP program. Turnover and injuries will decrease, and production, morale, and trust in the company will increase."



Northeast Panel & Truss receives SHARP certification. Left to right: Ron Coons, Northeast's safety director; John McCarthy, loss control consultant at NY State Insurance Fund; Mike Hogancamp, Northeast Panel & Truss employee and Safety Committee chairman; Tonya Ross, industrial hygienist and SHARP coordinator at New York State Department of Labor; Ed Jerome, area director of OSHA; and Bruce Hutchins, president of Northeast Panel & Truss.

OSHA: A Welcome Visitor

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may follow guidelines to request renewal for either one or two years.

"The idea behind it is that you're always looking to make continuous improvement," Coons said. "A lot of SHARP companies become [certified] and kind of sit back and relax. But this is a way to keep pushing and making your programs better."

Coons said he thinks it's in component manufacturers' best interest to get involved with SHARP. He acknowledged that some people believe inviting Department of Labor in sets their companies up for trouble, but he said he thinks that is a misconception.

"The benefits of establishing a relationship with them (Department of Labor workers) in the way of SHARP and consultation is a lot better than waiting for them to knock on your door for an inspection," said Coons. "Or worse, responding to your company to investigate a fatality."

Participating in SHARP and other similar programs certainly takes commitment and effort, and there are some things that Northeast Panel & Truss is still actively working on—such as integrating safety into their production process. That was and is the most difficult part for them, but they continue to compromise and make it a priority. And, for Northeast Panel & Truss, difficulties like that are worth being involved in SHARP.

"Inspiration, motivation, and a sense of empowerment can be obtained from participation in the SHARP program," said Coons. "Turnover and injuries will decrease, and production, morale, and trust in the company will increase." **SBC**

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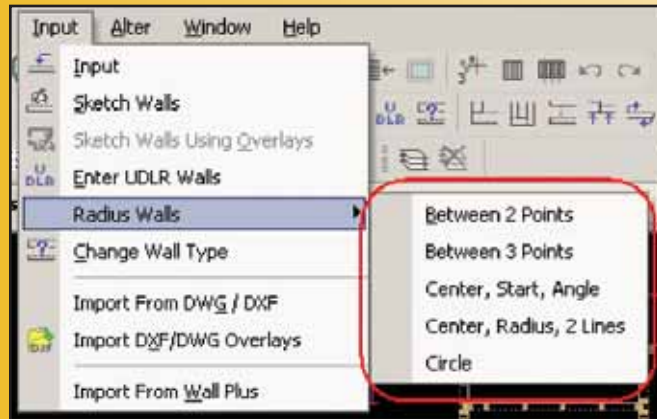
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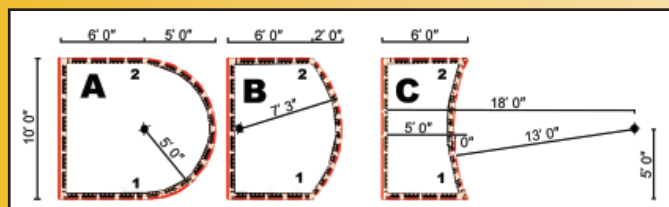


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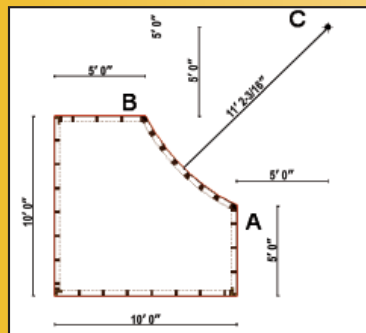


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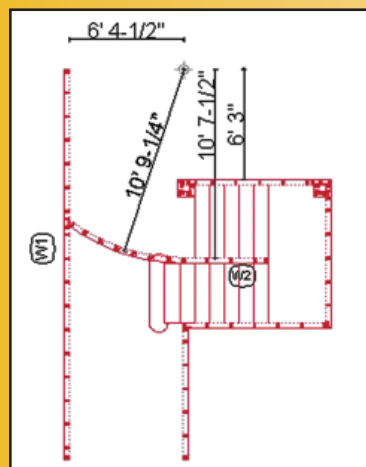
Truswal's cutting-edge features offer far more design flexibility than with any other component design software.



Between 2 Points

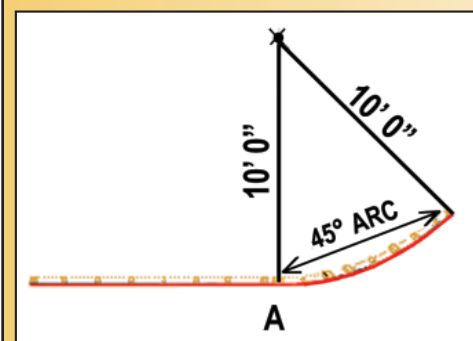


Between 3 Points

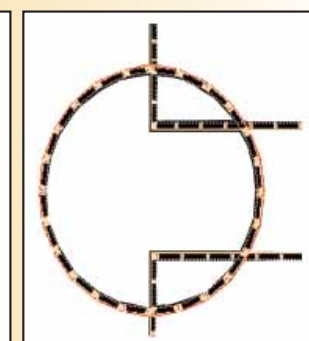


Center, Radius, 2 Lines

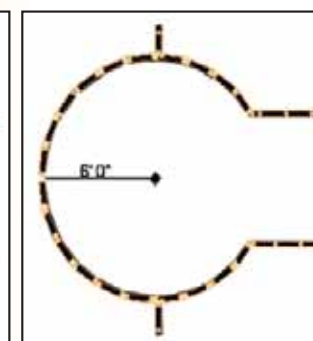
- ▶ **FIVE NEW radius wall input methods**—Input walls using radius dimensions specified by architects with any of these methods.
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 - Center, Radius, 2 Lines • Circle
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Circle: Step 1



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Carter-Lee Opens Plant to Jumpstart Chapter

by Libby Maurer & Emmy Thorson-Hanson

This chapter used the appeal of plant tours to get the chapter ball rolling.

So far in this series, we've covered tours of component manufacturing plants geared toward educating groups such as firefighters and fire inspectors, building officials and elected officials. In this installment, we're spotlighting a group that you are most familiar with: component manufacturers. They are your neighbors, your competitors, your peers, and maybe even your biggest allies. That's according to Steve Stroder.

When the Indiana Chapter of WTCA had an organizing committee in 1998, Stroder was excited about getting to know his competitors. "The question I always got was 'why would I want to meet with guys I'm competing against?' It's a very common misconception that you shouldn't commiserate with your competitors," says Stroder.

By getting a group of people together that genuinely want to grow the market, they can begin to develop relationships with building inspectors, who need to know how effective structural building components can be for all types of framing applications.

After several attempts, the chapter never got very far off the ground and remained stagnant. Until now.

On January 11, Stroder hosted 30 WTCA members for a tour of Carter-Lee in Mooresville, IN. He hoped welcoming his competitors to the plant would show them that joining forces with fellow CMs is in their best interests.

As chapter president since that first meeting in 1998, Stroder says now is as good a time as any to unite, and the primary reason, he says, boils down to creating higher industry-wide market share. "I feel as an industry we desperately need to grow our markets. 2006 was a tough year, and we're all fighting pretty hard to grow our piece of the pie." Stroder believes that by getting a group of people together that genuinely want to grow the market, they can begin to develop relationships with building inspectors, who need to know how effective structural building components can be for all types of framing applications. "We haven't educated them about our products. If we go after this as a team, and we educate them on this product, then hopefully they'll encourage builders and contractors to use our product more," he says. And that means a bigger pie for everyone.

Continued on page 62

at a glance

- ❑ Carter-Lee Building Components hosted WTCA-IN for a plant tour, showing them that joining forces is in everyone's best interest.
- ❑ Steve Stroder thinks the downturn in 2006 woke some people up to the value of chapter participation.
- ❑ The chapter plans to focus on marketing their products and clarifying design responsibilities to building inspectors.

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Terry Murphy, Dura Panel Truss

"I was at the original meeting in '98, and it just wasn't the right time to get a chapter off the ground. This time around, a lot was accomplished at the meeting. It was excellent to get in the same room with so many manufacturers and suppliers. There is strength in numbers, especially when we are dealing with problem code language and design responsibility issues with municipalities throughout the state. [At the meeting] we talked about several different issues like how building inspectors look at components as compared to stick framing. For instance, they expect more information from us like sealed layouts for roof systems. They seem to think that you can stick frame a roof and not have to provide any documentation, so therefore stick framing is preferable. We would like to see them look at components the same, so it'll take some education on our part."

One Tour at a Time

Continued from page 60

For WTCA-IN, Stroder thinks this time around he has a few more supporters. "The downturn in 2006 woke some people up and they realized maybe we do need to get together," he says. "I think people are excited about it."

So what's next for the chapter? Stroder hopes to present training programs to local building inspectors. "Hopefully they will start to see the advantages of using building components," he says. He also thinks another good area to focus on is developing a training course for contractors. "I envision us putting on a day-long seminar for as many contractors as possible. We could teach them how to read the documents in our jobsite packages and convey to them how to properly use our products," Stroder says.



Carter-Lee Building Components General Manager and WTCA-IN Chapter President Steve Stroder tells the group about the manufacturing portion of the facility.

Craig Wagner, Stark Truss Co.

How did it benefit the CMs who attended the tour?

"It seemed like everyone was involved and interested. It is always interesting to see someone else's style. The value of a plant tour is in looking at different equipment, how it is set up, observing the flow through the plant."

Why do you think it is valuable for the chapter to start meeting again?

"There are a lot of issues that could use some help. If each individual has to address their problems alone it won't be as effective, but as a group we can get a lot more done."

Do you think that Carter-Lee opening up their plant for a tour was a good way to jumpstart the chapter?

"Yes, a lot of people came who wouldn't have come otherwise."



Steve Stroder explains the flow of materials through the saw shop while chapter meeting attendees listen in.



Attendees head toward the north side of the building where wall panels from the exterior line are pulled out of the open door.

A WTCA QC tag is fastened to each inspected roof component at Carter-Lee. The operation, now part of the Pro-Build Corporation, has been certified since 2004.



David Spooner from BlueLinx Corporation and Tom Kopydlowski from MiTek Industries, Inc. talk shop.



Tom Kopydlowski, MiTek

Why do you think it is valuable for the chapter to start meeting again?

"It gives a professional look to our industry to have organization like [the chapter] on a local level; if we address an issue as a group, we come across as a more professional industry. It's great to promote our industry as a group, because when you hold something like a plant tour as a group as opposed to individually, it gives it more validity and a better view in the public eye."

Do you think that Carter-Lee opening up their plant for a tour was a good way to jumpstart the chapter?

"Plant tours are a great way to generate interest in starting up a chapter. It was gratifying to see such a great turnout. It was a great start and I hope it will continue... everyone who attended the meeting came to the plant tour, and it brought people out that wouldn't have come otherwise. It has already been decided that the next meeting will have a plant tour as well, and someone has already offered to use their plant for the tour."



Chris Weintraut from Truss Manufacturing Company, Casey Carey from Stock Components and Jerry Harvey from Contract Lumber talk in the reception area.



The entire tour group gathered for one last shot outside.



WTCA currently has 32 chapters in 37 states. WTCA Chapters play a key role in the future of the structural building components industry. For an industry to be successful, it must have full participation of all members. Local chapters provide the opportunity for all those associated with the structural building components industry to actively participate and shape its future. From the sharing of ideas at the local level to bringing these ideas together at the national level, members serve as the catalyst for a strong, unified, prosperous industry. For more information, contact us at chapters@sbcindustry.com.

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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@qualtim.com) or Danielle Bothun (608/310-6735 or dbothun@qualtim.com). Contributions to Chapter Corner, including pictures, are encouraged. Submissions may be edited for grammar, length and clarity.



Chapter Spotlight

Reaching the Marketplace with BCSI

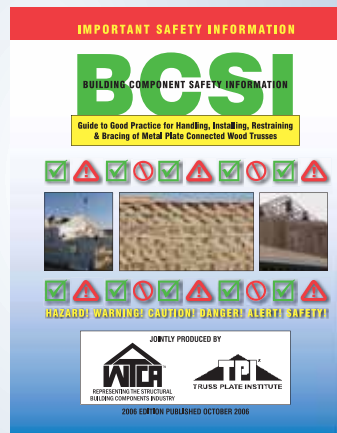
by Sean D. Shields

Only a few months after the release of its 2006 edition, the chapters are again recognizing the value of *BCSI, Building Component Safety Information: Guide to Good Practice for Handling, Installing, Restraining & Bracing of Metal Plate Connected Wood Trusses*. This important safety information now comes in an 8½" by 11", spiral-bound book complete with updated information, industry best practices and graphics. The Wood Truss Council of the Capital Area (WTCCA) in particular is hoping to capitalize on what a powerful tool this document is in the hands of builders, framers and building officials.

At its January meeting, Capital Area Chapter members unanimously approved a motion to purchase 25 BCSI books for each of their component manufacturer members and challenged those members to get the BCSI into the hands of their customers. Additionally, the chapter pledged to purchase enough BCSI books to give one to every building inspector official in their marketplace. This represents a significant investment by the chapter to educate and inform those who handle, install and inspect its members' products, a decision that will likely earn a rich return!

"The BCSI is the most comprehensive tool we have to tell our customers how they should handle and install our products," stated chapter member and board representative Joe Hikel of Shelter Systems Limited in Westminster, MD. "We can save ourselves a lot of heartache and follow-up repairs, not to mention jobsite accidents, by getting this into their hands and making them read it."

For more information on the BCSI or to start a similar educational effort in your area, contact WTCA staff. **SBC**



Chapter Highlights

Iowa Truss Manufacturers Association

Following the approval of the previous meeting minutes and the treasurer's report, the Iowa meeting commenced with the WTCA update. The truss plant tour and dealing with the media resolutions from the WTCA October Board meeting, the top projects from 2006 and updates to BCSI were discussed. The automation of the chapter member publications cooperative was explained, where each member will no longer need to ask that their orders be held for the ITMA co-op to receive possible quantity discounts each month.

The Education Committee Report followed. Its recent activities and plans included: providing a Carbeck Binder to the Fire Service Training Bureau in Ames, IA; presenting a Fire Performance of Wood Trusses workshop to the Solon, IA volunteer Fire Department in November; planning truss plant tours in February for the Solon Fire Department and for Senator Tom Hancock; sending invitations to 12 HBA local chapters to co-sponsor TTWs for Builders; preparing for the January TTW for the Iowa City Area and Cedar Rapids HBAs. It was decided that invitations to sponsor TTWs would be sent to the Iowa Association of Building Officials. A hearty thank you was extended to this year's Education Committee members: Ray Noonan, Jr., Andy Green and Craig Thier of Cascade Mfg Co; Alan Esch of Lumber Specialties; Bruce Kinney and Scott Baker of Timber Roots New Hampton; Dave Mitchell of EBD; Jim Gach and Rick Parrino of Plum Building Systems; Tod Hennessy of Alpine Engineered Products; Tom Lambert of Roberts & Dybdahl; and Wes Parker of Christensen Lumber Co.



The meeting's guest speaker was Steve Cabler, PE., VP of Engineering and Technical Services, MiTek Industries. Steve gave a two-part presentation on "Truss Collapse Investigations, Construction Loads and Effects." Truss Collapse Investigations consisted of a presentation of recommendations to consider before, the day of and the day after a collapse. Construction Loads and Effects utilized data from BCSI 2006, Section B4. The attendees thanked Steve for his very informative presentation.

In other business, the members again pledged \$1,500 to the Carbeck Structural Components Institute and re-issued their challenge to other local chapters to support this important research and education initiative.

Missouri Truss Fabricators Association

The Missouri Chapter welcomed Joe Hikel of Shelter Systems Limited, Westminster, MD, as its guest speaker in December. Joe was a featured speaker at BCMC 2006 and has delivered presentations for his chapter in the Capital Area. For the Missouri meeting, his presentation focused on truss shop costing. Especially in light of current economic conditions, the meeting emphasized the importance of knowing your costs. Joe spoke on his methods of capturing costs as well as how to position your company given the market situation. Chapter members were encouraged to share their ideas on costing during the ensuing roundtable discussion, too. The chapter thanked Joe for his great presentation.

At the meeting, the Missouri members also discussed their plans for 2007. Once again, they planned to work with the Johnson County Contractor Licensing Educational Program and offer courses. The chapter has had much success offering Truss Technology Workshop programs in the past and planned to continue doing so in the coming year. They will also make an effort to deliver more educational programs on the eastern side of the Missouri, not just in the Kansas City area.

Another issue addressed at the meeting was the possibility of officially expanding the chapter to cover Kansas as well as Missouri. This idea of a "Mo-Kan" Chapter brought out several attendees from Kansas. Because many members feel the chapter is representing both states already, the name will not be changed at this time. The members will continue to consider this option, however, and may make a change if any legislative issues arise in Kansas for which an expanded name would carry more recognition and clout.

Southern Nevada Component Manufacturers Association

At the January Southern Nevada Chapter meeting, several updates were given by the chapter's Code Committee. A listing of useful city and county links was distributed for members' reference. It was also confirmed that current Nevada law requires that engineers must "wet seal" all documents and that sealing only index sheets is not allowed. Electronic sealing is being considered by the Nevada Board of Professional Engineers but has not been approved yet.

Copies of the chapter's letter to the Clark County Department of Development Services – Building Division were circulated. The letter opposes the proposed new policy on allowing deferred submittals on commercial projects. No response to the letter has been received yet from Clark County on this Policy & Procedure No. 85.1.8.

It was reported that the latest edition of the Clark County Technical Guideline, TG-12, *Manufactured Engineered Metal Plate Connected Wood Truss Submittal and Review Requirements for Structures That Have a Licensed Building Designer*, is now available for download on the Clark County website (www.co.clark.nv.us/development_services/index.htm). Very similar to the last version, there was some question concerning how concentrated loads can best be shown on the Truss Design Drawings, but the code committee in concert with WTCA technical staff will work with the County to clarify the best procedure.

A memo was distributed indicating that the Clark County Board of County Commissioners adopted the 2006 IBC with the Southern Nevada Amendments to the 2006 IBC, and the 2006 IRC with the Southern Nevada Amendments to the 2006 IRC. Plans submitted after April 30, 2007 must conform to these new codes. The chapter members will send a letter to the Southern Nevada Home Builders Association (SNHBA) indicating their support for adopting the 2006 codes as soon as possible and urging the SNHBA's support as well.

The Code Committee also reported that the document entitled, *Metal Plate Connected Wood Truss Design, Specification and Commentary, Recommendations and Commentary from the Truss Committee of the Structural Engineers Association of Southern Nevada*, has been finalized but not yet published. The recommendations proposed by JCI Engineering that would have required the "Truss Specialty Engineer" to seal the Truss Placement Diagrams and design and specify all truss connection hardware, including truss-to-wall, truss-to-beam, truss-to-ledger, etc., were denied. Notification will be sent to the chapter members as soon as the document is posted.

Continued on page 68





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Chapter Corner

Continued from page 67

The chapter's Activities Committee reported on its spring plans. The annual golf tournament will be held on May 31. Additionally, the chapter is sponsoring a luncheon and presentation for the Framing Contractors Association (FCA) on May 10 at the Orleans Hotel & Casino. The BCSI 2006 books will be distributed to all attendees and there will be an open forum discussion following the presentation.

Truss Manufacturers Association of Texas

Despite the ice, many members traveled to Retama Park in Selma, TX for the Texas Chapter's January membership meeting. Due to flight delays, the guest speaker for the evening, WTCA President Barry Dixon, was unable to attend, so he will be asked back for the June membership meeting. In his absence, the meeting program featured updates on WTCA and chapter activities. In particular, the chapter's upcoming educational plans were reviewed, including several seminars for building officials. The chapter will sponsor the handouts for all of these events.



TMAT Board Meeting (left to right): Ming Zhu, Jack Dermer, Ben Doyle, Carl Schoening, Gary Weaver, Shaun Allen, Donald McDavid, David Marquez, Paul Johnson, Gary Walls, Frank Klingner, Ron Reid, Norm McKenna and Garry Tebbens.

The members were also encouraged to reach out to local legislators and offer plant tours, and the chapter's work with the Lumberman's Association of Texas and Louisiana (LAT) was discussed. The two groups are co-hosting a state-level legislative conference in Texas on May 8-10. In addition, at the board meeting preceding the general meeting, the board approved its annual donation of \$1,000 to the Carbeck Structural Components Institute.

Wood Truss Council of the Capital Area

The topic of the Capital Area Chapter's January meeting was "Building Code Developments in Virginia." The guest speaker was Eric Mays, Chief Building Official for Prince William County, VA. Prince William County has been one of the fastest growing counties in the United States, and the chapter has worked well with Mr. Mays in the past to resolve placement plans issues. Since a clear understanding of the building codes is critical to our jobs, all members were urged to attend this meeting. Mr. Mays discussed the impending 2006 Code adoption, Prince William

County's recent moratorium, and other issues driving building trends in 2007. At this meeting, the chapter also made a substantial commitment to use the BCSI 2006 to educate its marketplace (see **Chapter Spotlight** on page 66).

Wood Truss Council of Michigan

The Michigan Chapter held its December meeting in Grand Rapids and discussed several matters of chapter business. The new draft bylaws were distributed for review by the members. The 2007 officers were confirmed. Remaining in their positions were Larry Wainright of Trussway as President, Eric Lundquist of Allwood Building Components as Vice President and Marjorie Schaaf of Schaaf Lumber as Treasurer. Rick Harb of Timber Roots Grand Rapids accepted the job of Secretary.

The Education Committee update was provided by Rick Wyble of Heart Truss & Engineering. In January, the chapter was scheduled to deliver a presentation on snow loading and BCSI at the Michigan Post-Frame Expo in Mt. Pleasant, MI. In February, the chapter agreed to present for the Western Michigan Codes Commission. The chapter was also considering a January presentation for the National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association convention.

In addition to formal presentations, the chapter is also working to educate the marketplace with other tools. Several WTCA *Technical Notes* have been drafted on



Paul Johnson presents Ben Doyle with a plaque in honor of his service as 2006 TMAT Chapter President.



Eric Mays, Chief Building Official for Prince William County, VA, was the guest speaker at the January WTCCA meeting.

Michigan issues including design responsibilities, special inspections for trusses, permanent bracing, live load considerations and architectural specifications. Chapter members are contributing their thoughts and information on the Jobsite Packages that are typically distributed. The goal is to create a standard JOBSITE PACKAGE that all Michigan component manufacturers would use in the market, so that there is continuity in the information provided and better education because of it. Furthermore, the chapter is planning to mail a package of technical information to the building designer community. Members have been asked to compile a list of architects, engineers and specifiers to whom a mailing of *Tech Notes*, WTCA publications and other information from the chapter will be sent.

WTCA-Arizona

At its January meeting, the Arizona Chapter agreed upon a \$2500 donation to Carbeck to receive Fire Performance of Wood Trusses CDs to distribute to fire departments throughout the state. The members intend to use their time during the current economic downturn to step up their contact with fire departments. Yuma, Drexel, Flagstaff and Tucson have all requested additional CDs and a seminar is being planned for Flagstaff.

Among the other current marketplace issues addressed, immigration was touched upon as was plant safety. The chapter's interaction with the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT) was recounted. Though the representative from EVIT was unable to attend the meeting, the group discussed ways to assist the school's program on the construction trades. They will offer to teach one or two classes on our industry and provide a truss plant tour. The chapter will also consider sponsoring WTCA's Technical Assessment Online Tests (TATO) for interested students to measure their aptitude at the end of the semester.

The date for this year's chapter golf tournament was set for April 6. As an incentive to encourage more component manufacturers to join the Arizona Chapter, a free one-year chapter membership will be included with a nonmember's golf registration fee. The next chapter meeting will be held after the golf tournament on April 24.

WTCA-Indiana

Following a long absence, the Indiana Chapter returned to the scene with a bang in January. Though it had not met in quite some time, twenty-nine potential members turned out for the chapter meeting and tour of Carter-Lee Building Components in Mooresville, IN (see feature

article on page 60). The meeting, over lunch, focused on the need for an active chapter in Indiana. The meeting's organizer, Steve Stroder of Carter-Lee, emphasized the need to educate the marketplace. By working collectively, each person's voice is stronger and the group has more clout. This is particularly important when dealing with legislative and code issues, too. Among the items on the list of chapter priorities drafted at the meeting, most focused on education, including: educating the market about rafters; educating building officials on trusses, codes, engineering seals and the differences between truss bracing and stick-frame bracing; educating the market on the advantages of components compared to stick framing; educating fire officials and providing plant tours; educating architects and providing literature from WTCA; and educating fellow component manufacturers on the current code.

The meeting attendees also elected officers. Steve Stroder was formalized as President, Casey Carey of Stock Components accepted the role of Vice President, Dwain Pitzer of Truss Manufacturing Company became Treasurer and Tim Boone of Timberland Lumber Company agreed to be Secretary. Also elected to the Chapter Board of Directors were Tom Kopydlowski of MiTek Industries and Craig Wagner of Stark Truss Company. Chapter dues were set at \$150 for regular and associate members, \$50 for professional members. The chapter's draft bylaws were approved unanimously.

WTCA-Northeast

The January Northeast Chapter meeting kicked off with elections. Voted to stay in their jobs for another year were: John Goodrich of Truss Engineering Corporation as President, Brad Ferris of Romaro Structures as Treasurer and John Jacksics of Universal Component Corporation as Secretary. Chapter members also discussed a revision to their bylaws to expand the category of regular member to include more than just wood truss manufacturers. They intend to explore how other chapters and WTCA are incorporating cold formed steel manufacturers and engineered wood products companies into the definition of regular members and return to this issue at the April 18 chapter meeting.

On the educational front, an update was given on the chapter's very successful November presentation for the Ascutney, VT fire department. Chris Smith of LaValley Building Supply conducted the presentation, plant tour and a live fire test. Given the excellent feedback from the event, the chapter expects to schedule programs for additional fire departments in the northeast. Members reviewed their plans to be involved in various tradeshow this year, too. These events include the Southeastern Massachusetts Building Officials Conference, the Northeast Retail Lumber Association show and the annual building officials event at UMass—Amherst. Truss plant tours were endorsed as another great way for any chapter member to become more involved. The chapter will provide monetary assistance to any member needing help with an educational program or tour. To launch its 2007 educational efforts, the members decided to purchase 500 copies of the new BCSI 2006. Furthermore, the chapter voted to make a \$4,000 contribution to the Carbeck Structural Components Institute, for which they will receive 500 CDs on the Fire Performance of Wood Trusses. **SBC**

For more information, about WTCA Chapters, contact Anna L. Stamm (608/310-6719 or astamm@qaltim.com) or Danielle Bothun (608/310-6735 or dbothun@qaltim.com). Contributions to Chapter Corner, including pictures, are encouraged. Submissions may be edited for grammar, length and clarity.



Calendar of Events

Check out WTCA's web site at www.sbcindustry.com for the most current calendar information.

March

- **13:** California Engineered Structural Components Association, Southern Region (CalESCA-South) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qualtim.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@qualtim.com.
- **14:** South Florida WTCA (SFWTCA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qualtim.com.
- **17:** Georgia Component Manufacturers Association (GCMA) Chapter Meeting & Driver Training Workshop. For more information, contact Mike Fowler at 770/787-7875 or fowler@trussystemsinc.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@qualtim.com.
- **27:** Central Florida Component Manufacturers Association (CFCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qualtim.com.
- **28-29:** FBMA/WTCA Joint Florida Legislative Conference. For details, contact Sean at WTCA, 608/310-6728 or sshields@qualtim.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@qualtim.com.
- **12:** Alabama Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qualtim.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@qualtim.com) or Stephanie (608/310-6721 or swatrud@qualtim.com).
- **19:** Truss Manufacturers Association of Texas (TMAT) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qualtim.com.
- **24:** Mid South Component Manufacturers Association (MSCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qualtim.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@qualtim.com.
- **24:** Tennessee Truss Manufacturers Association (TTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Ted Kolanko at 615/287-0184 or kolankot@84lumber.com.
- **25:** Georgia Component Manufacturers Association (GCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Jim Finkenhoefer at 770/787-8715 or jf8515@trussystemsinc.com.
- **25:** WTCA-Arizona Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Chad Lilleberg at 623/931-3661 or clilleberg@schuckaz.com.
- **25:** WTCA-Northeast Chapter Meeting, Worcester Hotel & Conference Center, Worcester, MA. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qualtim.com.
- **26:** North Florida Component Manufacturers Association (NFCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qualtim.com.
- **26:** Southern Nevada Component Manufacturers Association (SNCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qualtim.com.
- **26:** WTCA-Indiana Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qualtim.com.
- **26:** WTCA-New York Chapter Meeting, NOLA Educational Center, Rensselaer, NY. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qualtim.com.

May

- **8:** California Engineered Structural Components Association, Southern Region (CalESCA-South) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qualtim.com.
- **9:** California Engineered Structural Components Association, Northern Region (CalESCA-North) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qualtim.com.
- **10:** Mid South Component Manufacturers Association (MSCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qualtim.com.
- **10:** Wisconsin Truss Manufacturers Association (WTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Gene Geurts at 920/336-9400 or ggeurts@richcostr.com.
- **15:** Central Florida Component Manufacturers Association (CFCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qualtim.com.
- **17:** Minnesota Truss Manufacturers Association (MTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Tom Nomeland, 507/872-5195 or tnomeland@ufpi.com.
- **17:** South Florida WTCA (SFWTCA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qualtim.com. **SBC**

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Housing Starts

January housing starts plunged 14.3%, to 1.408 million (SAAR). Single-family starts were down 11.2% to 1.108 million (SAAR), while the more volatile multi-family sector was down a whopping 24%. Permits, a good indicator of what may happen in the next two to three months, were down a more modest 2.8%.

U.S. Housing Starts			
Millions - Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rate (SAAR)			
U.S. Totals	Jan	Dec (rev.)	% Change
Starts	1.408	1.643	-14.3%
Permits	1.568	1.613	-2.8%
Single Family			
Starts	1.108	1.248	-11.2%
Permits	1.121	1.168	-4.0%
Multi Family			
Starts	0.300	0.395	-24.1%
Permits	0.447	0.445	0.4%
Starts and Permits By Region:			
NE			
Starts	0.196	0.180	8.9%
Permits	0.193	0.176	9.7%
MW			
Starts	0.195	0.230	-15.2%
Permits	0.260	0.236	10.2%
S			
Starts	0.716	0.812	-11.8%
Permits	0.739	0.819	-9.8%
W			
Starts	0.301	0.421	-28.5%
Permits	0.376	0.382	-1.6%

Analysis & Outlook: The market is still "adjusting" to the inventory overhang—still large by historical standards. New homes for sale in December totaled 537,000, a 5.9-month supply, while there were 3.5 million existing homes for sale (single-family plus condos), a 6.5-month supply. Builders will have to keep cutting back on starts to bring inventories in line while existing home owners will have to accept lower prices if they expect to sell their homes. Economic convention tells us that lower housing prices will follow, which in turn will increase demand from "conventional buyers," paving the way for the recovery. The National Association of Realtors (NAR) recently reported that the national median existing single-family home price was \$219,300 in the 4th qtr, down 2.7% from a year earlier when the median price was \$225,300. Median new home prices in December were \$235,000, down 1.2% from the median price one year ago.

The other part of the "affordability" equation is incomes and mortgage rates, both of which are in good shape. Mortgage rates remain at 6.3% for the fixed rate, while incomes are still growing faster than inflation. The good news is that the economy seems to be shrugging off the housing correction and the modest slowdown in manufacturing. The Fed remains concerned with inflation due to the strong job market and consumer spending. As consumer spending remains healthy, housing prices recede a bit, and mortgage rates remain "attractive," the recovery in housing should probably start later this year or in early 2008. One bit of bad news is the tightening of credit by the lending institutions as they attempt to control an increase in defaulting loans. The "junk" mortgage originators are being pressured by the big banks and Wall Street to buy back defaulting loans. This will result in insolvency for some of these companies, which could impact mortgage supply (The Dismal Scientist, 2/16). **SBC**

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



Builder Banter

Builders Embrace Green Building To Save Energy, Conserve Resources

On February 12, Alaska home builder Jack Hebert told Congress that the housing industry is committed to implementing green building techniques that reduce energy consumption in both new and existing homes, improve indoor and outdoor air quality and conserve water and natural resources. "Energy efficiency is the primary focus for many builders and home buyers," Hebert, president and CEO of Cold Climate Research Center based in Fairbanks, Alaska, told members of the Senate Subcommittee on Energy.

Hebert, who serves as a National Representative of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), said that the nation's home builders support green building and energy efficiency legislation that is voluntary, market-driven and cost-effective for builders and consumers."

Recognizing that approaches to green building need to distinguish among the regional differences around the U.S., NAHB in 2005 launched its Model Green Home Building Guidelines as an alternative to green building mandates. The guidelines were developed with input from more than 60 industry stakeholders—including builders, researchers, manufacturers, environmentalists and government agencies. "The guidelines embody the flexibility that builders need to achieve efficiency and conservation goals without meeting costly national or statewide mandates," said Hebert.

Local adoption of the guidelines allows builders to better address regional and local environmental concerns, to assess life-cycle costs based on local building codes and climate zones, and to encourage innovation to meet higher and broader energy efficiency objectives.

Stating that the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy Efficient Design certification pilot program for single-family homes (LEED-H) would have a drastic effect on the affordability of housing, Hebert noted that this program is "costly, requires many unnecessary mandatory provisions, offers little flexibility and contains extensive implementation fees that could cost a builder, and ultimately the home buyer, from \$12,000 to \$15,000 extra per home."

NAHB has submitted its guidelines to the American National Standards Institute's development process, with the goal of offering local jurisdictions an "off-the-shelf" green building program that is consensus-based and truly green, but flexible. Extending and expanding the tax incentives in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 would also help encourage energy efficiency in housing, he said. [Source: www.nahb.org, 2/12/07]

Builder Confidence on the Rise in February

Builder confidence continued to rise in February, according to the National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI), released February 15. The HMI increased from 35 in January to 40 in February, up from a low of 30 last September and the highest level since June of 2006.

Housing Market Index 2006-07 (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.

Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan07	Feb
54	51	46	42	39	33	30	31	33	33	35	40

Source: National Association of Home Builders

"Builders are still cautious as they continue to manage their inventory, but their assessments of the demand side of the single-family market are improving," said NAHB President Brian Catalde, a home builder from Playa del Rey, Calif. "Every component of the February HMI—present home sales, sales expectations for the next six months and buyer traffic—showed a significant positive uptick in February."

"The HMI results are consistent with Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke's assessment to Congress this week that there are signs of stabilization on the demand side of the housing market," said NAHB Chief Economist David Seiders.

Lower energy prices, favorable mortgage rates and solid growth in employment and household income have all contributed to the recent stabilization of home buyer demand, Seiders added. "In addition, builders continue to offer substantial sales incentives to move their product and limit cancellations, which has helped to firm up buyer demand."

"Builders are becoming increasingly convinced that the abrupt downside in home sales is in their rear view mirrors and they see better times as they look at the road ahead," said Seiders. [Source: www.nahb.org, 2/15/07]

Homebuilding Trends for the New Year

A survey of 923 real estate agents, brokers and industry executives conducted by Mark Nash, author of Real Estate A-Z for Buying and Selling a Home, revealed the following five up-and-coming trends in homebuilding and remodeling.

- **Upscale Garages:** Garages are no longer the messy storage space that they once were; they are increasingly becoming extensions and showplaces of the home. "Today's owners want [garages] decked out with cabinet and storage systems, matching refrigerators, air conditioning and residential looking flooring," said Nash.
- **Caving:** People are wanting more personal space where they can spend time alone, and according to Nash a cave is "a personal, dedicated space for one person in a household to go and work on projects, or simply 'chill,'" making it the perfect option.
- **Rejuvenation Rooms:** These rooms are made for it all...exercising, meditating, yoga, relaxation in saunas and fancy steam showers. "This is kind of a new age, serenity room where you do these quiet exercise things and then jump in the spa," said Nash.
- **Heated Patios:** Heated patios, walkways and driveways are a great way to reduce the hassle of shoveling snow. And according to Nash, the warmth radiating off these outdoor surfaces can also "add a couple of weeks of outdoor enjoyment in the spring and fall."
- **Snoring Rooms:** Instead of condemning snorers to a life on the couch, snoring rooms are allowing noisy sleepers to enjoy the comforts of their own bed in a separate quarter of the master suite.

The following trends are on the way out, says Nash: Spiral Staircases, Bamboo Floors, and Hardwood Laminate Flooring. [Source: CNNMoney.com]

California Cracks Down on Jobsite Theft

A nonprofit group called the Construction Industry Crime Prevention Program of Central California is cracking down on jobsite theft. It covers a ten-county region in California, and offers rewards of up to \$1,000 for information leading to arrest, restitution or recovery for thefts and vandalism of tools, equipment or property from construction sites. The organization also provides resources for crime prevention such as a hotline, help in marking equipment, tips on security, and a guide to finding and recording the serial numbers on equipment. George Brown, executive director of the program, said, "People need to realize that the market is not the only thing driving up prices for houses; theft and vandalism play a big part."

Thefts from construction sites nationwide are estimated to approach nearly \$1 billion a year, with 1,186 pieces of equipment reported stolen last year in California alone. Earl Gunnerson of the Southern California region of the Construction Crime Prevention Program, believes the amount of equipment stolen in 2006 is close to twice the amount of that reported. He also says that California, Texas and Florida top the list for construction site theft in the country. [Source: HousingZone.com by Dennis Pollock, The Fresno Bee] **SBC**

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Success Is What You Make It



Name:

Production employees of Casmin, Inc.

Hometown:

2 manufacturing facilities: Tavares and Lady Lake, Florida

Hot button safety topic:

Back injuries and lifting techniques

Favorite safety phrase:

"In Safety We Truss't"

As of February 14, Casmin's several hundred production employees had completed Day 315 without an OSHA reportable accident, a new company record (their previous record was 126 days). If they can make it until April 5, 2007 without a "recordable," the production employees will have met their goal of 365 days—and will be rewarded handsomely with a cash bonus.

The company's renewed emphasis on safety has also reflected on its experience modification rate, which dropped from a high of 1.47 to the current .71. Casmin Safety Coordinator Dan Kleczka said, "We went from being virtually uninsurable to where we are now. I'm extremely happy with it."

This milestone comes on the heels of a major acknowledgment from the company's insurer for the second straight year! Jack Fraley, loss prevention agent of Liberty Mutual Insurance Co., notified Kleczka in September 2006:

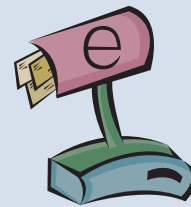
"Dan, congratulations! Casmin has again qualified for our top Gold Award! Perhaps our team could make the presentation to Mr. Casp and the Casmin staff the same day of your employee recognition lunch."

Casp and Kleczka presented the award to plant employees while everyone ate a complimentary steak dinner.

How'd they do it? Kleczka credits a safety culture woven into the fabric of Casmin like never before. "Basically, we put safety first," he said. Each week starts with safety, when one of 28 pre-set topics is discussed in Monday safety meetings led by supervisors. An incentive program called "Safety From the Crew" encourages shop employees to submit weekly safety tips. Managers vote on the best tip of the week and the submitter is rewarded with "vendor dollars"—money to be used in vending machines. What's more, employees have embraced a buddy system, take initiative to mentor new hires, and are motivated to help each other to become safer in the plant.

Kleczka is elated, and proud of the crew's true team effort. "I can't shout from the trees loud enough." **SBC**

Submissions to this department can be made to editor@sbcmag.info.



Readers Respond

In the January/February 2007 issue of **SBC Magazine** (page 74) Kirk Grundahl expressed his mild indignation at the possibility that ABC's TV show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* might be taking advantage of the structural building components industry. His reasons for feeling this way are due primarily to the fact that the use of structural building components technology helps makes the show as successful as it is, and some in the industry are starting to wonder why ABC has not returned the favor by contributing to the advancement or promotion of the structural building components industry. Here's what one reader had to say:

Kirk,

I just read your article on *Extreme Makeover* and could not be more in agreement. You are correct, they have developed a formula that not only provides a great deal of profit for ABC, but it is also one that sucks a lot of charity out of the community. In the project we (FBMA) supported, for little or no recognition, we had members donate 10's of thousands of dollars of time and materials. At the end of the day, the participating donors were "tapped" out. Sure one family benefited but there was nothing left for other worthy projects. They have used and abused the good hearts in the construction and building supply industry and soured many on contributing in the future.

—Bill Tucker, Florida Building Material Association **SBC**

Do you have feedback on this or another article in SBC? Send your comments and opinions to editor@sbcmag.info.

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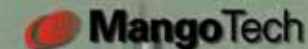
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In Memoriam

Robert L. French



Robert L. French, 86, passed away on January 4, 2007 in Fort Wayne, IN. He was born in Albany in 1920 and was a U.S. Army World War II veteran.

French started out in the construction industry as the owner of French Construction, where he remained for ten years. In 1973 he founded Engineered Truss Co. in Fort

Wayne. French worked there for over 30 years, up until his retirement in 2002.

French's long career in the industry yielded some humorous stories. "One of my grandfather's favorite stories was from the early days of Engineered Truss. It was back in the '70s when he received a contract to build 84' span trusses. It wasn't until after the first set of trusses was built that he realized they couldn't get them out of the building. They ended up having to cut a hole in the door in order to fit the peak and get the trusses out. We still laugh about that story to this day," shares grandson Bob Koorsen.

French will be remembered most for the unique relationship he shared with his employees. "His employees were family and that is how he treated them; he was just the kind of guy that would give you anything. One of the things he did each year was throw a holiday party and he was very generous with bonuses at Christmas," recalls Koorsen. When he retired there were four employees of over 20 years, and one of over 30 years. "He was very invested in his employees; he often hired relatives or friends of his employees."

Not only was French an avid Boston Red Sox and Indiana State University basketball fan, but he loved to spend time outside at his farm or in the garden. Koorsen recalls that "he would take off work at 3:30 every day to go home and tend to his farm, which was like a petting zoo with horses, dogs, cats, rabbits and chickens. We also used to make fun of him for how much he enjoyed mowing the lawn...he did it almost religiously, like he owned a golf course." He also loved spending quality time with his grandchildren.

French is survived by his wife of 63 years, Betty French; daughters, Jackie (Paul) Harmon, Vickie (Ron) Caccamo all of Fort Wayne; grandchildren, Debbie Harmon of Fort Wayne, Bob Koorsen of Grand Rapids, MI, Dan Harmon, Chris (Heidi) Caccamo, Kelly (Joe) Fyock, Erika (Andy) Adamonis all of Fort Wayne, Holly (Kris) Camarro of Honolulu, HI; eight great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. **SBC**

Thanks to Bob Koorsen and the Fort Wayne Newspapers for contributing to this piece.

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

Abraham Knepp



Abraham Knepp, 64, of Montgomery, IN, died January 2, 2007 in an airplane crash near the Daviess County Airport.

Knepp founded K & K Industries, a component manufacturing operation, 30 years ago with three employees, a small plant and one delivery truck. From the very beginning, he instilled a philosophy of honesty,

fairness and quality. K & K was named Daviess County's Business of the Year in 2000.

A Mennonite minister, Knepp's strong faith played a role in his business. Knepp once said his business is run by "myself, the bank and the Lord, and the Lord is the chairman of the board. God plays a big part in this business because of the adversity overcome without destroying the corporation." K&K vice president Jerry Stoll said Knepp hated the term "boss." "He wanted to be a friend to every employee. He was a fine man," said Stoll, who worked next to Knepp for 31 years.

Knepp was known to be both generous and resilient. Knepp was known by locals as the man willing to donate his time and considerable resources for anyone in need. Jerry Harbstreit, Former Daviess Co. Sheriff, comments, "He's donated anything you'd ask him or he'd thought of. A situation like today [Tuesday], he would've been here to help."

Knepp's resilience was tested first in 1980 when a major fire burned K & K Industries to the ground. Competitors rallied together and helped him every way they could, which made it possible for the plant to be back up and running only 90 days after the devastating fire. Tragedy struck again in November of 2005 when a tornado flattened K & K. This time not only did local competitors step in, but people from around the nation pitched in as well, allowing Knepp to rebuild his business for the second time. The kindness demonstrated by his competitors wasn't the only thing that K & K had to be thankful for. Knepp had made a decision to send all of his employees home only 30 minutes before the tornado struck. Had he not taken that precaution, Knepp might have lost more than his facility.

Although his death was tragic, friends say he died doing what was his greatest passion. "I can smile and say Abe went doing one of the greatest loves in his life, and that was flying," agreed longtime friend Glen Graber of Graber Post Buildings.

"Abe's love was flying, and he always said God was his copilot," said Daviess County Sheriff Steve Cox, who has worked alongside Knepp since he started as jail chaplain almost 28 years ago.

Stoll says, "The company will carry on his spirit of giving and integrity. He would certainly want things to go on." K&K sent out a letter to their customers addressing Knepp's passing. "We here

Continued on page 86



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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 Dec 06
	Oct	Nov	Dec	
All Items	-.5	0	.5	.2
All Items Less Food & Enery	.1	0	.2	1.4

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Unemployment Rate

Oct	4.4%
Nov	4.5%
Dec	4.5%
Jan07	4.6%

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.	Nov	Dec	Annual	Truss Mfg.	Nov	Dec	Annual
Eng. Wood Mem.	115.9(P)	115.9(P)	118.0(P)	Truss Mfg.	113.7(P)	113.5(P)	119.0(P)
LVL	126.4(P)	126.4(P)	126.4(P)	Wood Trusses	110.8(P)	110.6(P)	116.5(P)
Other	116.3(P)	116.3(P)	119.6(P)	Primary Products	110.8(P)	110.6(P)	116.5(P)
			(P) = preliminary	Secondary Products	98.4(P)	97.5(P)	104.1(P)

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Producer Price Index General

% changes in selected stage-of-processing price indexes

Month	Total	Ex. Food & Energy
Sept	-1.4(r)	0.3(r)
Oct	-1.6	-0.9
Nov	2.0	1.3
Dec	0.9	0.2

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

U.S. Prime Rate

Month	2007	2006	2005
Oct 1	-	8.25%	6.75%
Nov 1	-	8.25%	7.00%
Dec 1	-	8.25%	7.00%
Jan 1	8.25%	7.25%	5.25%
Feb 1	8.25%	7.50%	5.25%

Source: Federal Reserve Board

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%).

May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan07	% +/-
104.7	105.4	106.5	100.2	105.9	105.1	102.9	110.0	110.3	0.3%

Source: www.consumerresearchcenter.org

JANUARY 2007 ISM BUSINESS SURVEY AT A GLANCE

	Series Index	Direction Jan vs Dec	Rate of Change Jan vs Dec
ISM Manufacturing Index (formerly PMI)	49.3	Contracting	From Growing
New Orders	50.3	Growing	Slower
Production	49.6	Contracting	From Growing
Employment	49.5	Contracting	Slower
Supplier Deliveries	52.7	Slowing	Slower
Inventories	39.9	Contracting	Faster
Customers' Inventories	52.0	Too High	Faster
Prices	53.0	Increasing	From Decreasing
Backlog of Orders	43.5	Contracting	Faster
Exports	52.5	Growing	Slower
Imports	54.5	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)

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Industrial Production Total Index (% change)	-0.3(r)	-0.1(r)	-0.1(r)	0.4
Capacity Utilization Total Industry (%)	82.0	81.8 (r)	81.6 (r)	81.8

Source: Federal Reserve Board

Component Manufacturer News

UNIVERSAL FOREST PRODUCTS REPORTS RECORD YEAR

On February 5, Universal Forest Products, Inc. (Nasdaq:UFPI) reported a record year including 2006 net earnings of \$70.1 million, an increase of 4.1% over reported results for 2005. Net earnings for the quarter were \$9.2 million, down 42.9% from 2005. In the fourth quarter of 2006, the Company's income taxes were impacted by a federal research and development tax credit totaling \$4.5 million (for tax years 2001 to 2006) and an expense of \$1.1 million to record a valuation allowance against a deferred tax asset.

Net sales for the year were \$2.66 billion, a 1.0% decrease from net sales of \$2.69 billion for 2005. For the quarter, net sales were \$499.2 million, down 23.6% from the same period in 2005. Net sales for the year and quarter were impacted by lower lumber prices.

"This year's story is the story behind the numbers—the story of a motivated workforce focused on gaining market share, on continuous improvement, and on positioning Universal for the future," said President and CEO Michael B. Glenn.

Glenn noted that the company's performance reflects challenging market conditions including a 41% drop in single family housing starts for the quarter and an estimated 50% decrease in industry shipments of HUD-code manufactured housing for the quarter. He also noted that industry conditions in the fourth quarter of 2005 were extraordinarily strong due, in part, to demand associated with hurricanes Katrina and Rita. [Source: home.businesswire.com, 2/5/07]

News

PERFORMANCE OF FINGER-JOINTED LUMBER IN FIRE-RESISTANCE-RATED WALL ASSEMBLIES

The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) and its member companies have a long history of conducting research to ensure the safety of their products. In cooperation with the USDA Forest Products Laboratory and Forintek Canada Corporation, Canada's forest products laboratory, AF&PA initiated a research program to better understand the

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—Don Groom, V.P. Operations, Stark Truss Company, Inc.



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performance of adhesives used in end-jointed lumber in fire-resistance-rated assemblies.

As part of the research, the wood products industry conducted ASTM E119 fire-resistance tests on finger-jointed lumber wall assemblies in March 2006, August 2006, and December 2006, at NGC Testing in Buffalo, New York. In light of this research, it appears that adhesives used in end-jointed lumber should be evaluated for use in fire-resistance-rated assemblies. Across the industry, many different adhesives have been used in making end-jointed lumber and identification of the particular adhesive used is usually not available with the product.

To view a table that summarizes the full-scale fire-resistance test results, go to www.awc.org/HelpOutreach/faq/ICCAAdhesives.html. All fire tests were conducted on the wall assembly design specified in 2003 International Building Code Table 720.1(2), Item Number 15-1.14 (identical to 2006 International Building Code Table 720.1(2), Item Number 15-1.15). [Source: www.awc.org, 2007]

Announcements

SBMA HONORS TINDELL'S AS DEALER OF THE YEAR

Managing editor Katy Tomasulo was on site at the Southern Building Material Association Building Products Buying Show in High Point, N.C., where the association named Tindell's as its Dealer of the Year. Based in Knoxville, Tenn., Tindell's has several members—including Carl Tindell, Johan van Tilburg and Gene McKinney—actively involved in both SBMA and the National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association. Tindell's is known for its forward-thinking business practices, including industry-leading strides in technology and installed sales. [Source: ProSales Business Update, 2/1/07]

PRO-BUILD NAMES PAUL HYLBERT AS CEO

Pro-Build Holdings, the largest U.S. pro dealer, has promoted Paul Hylbert to the position of CEO. Hylbert succeeds Fred Marino, who will remain with the company as vice chairman while focusing on growing the company through acquisition and new business development, the company said.

Continued on page 82



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Industry News

Continued from page 81

"Paul Hylbert has more than 40 years of experience in this industry that will be invaluable as we develop and implement our strategic plan throughout our core business," said Paul Mucci, Pro-Build chairman. "Moving Paul from the chief operating to the chief executive role enables Fred to now use his enormous talent at developing business to uncover as well as create new opportunities for us to grow beyond what we are today."

In other moves, executive vp Ben Phillips has been named chief operating officer while an internal and external search was conducted for a permanent successor. Marino, Hylbert and Phillips will all remain as directors of Pro-Build.

Hylbert previously served as the CEO of Lanoga, which was purchased by Pro-Build in February 2006. Prior to Lanoga, he spent nine years as president of PrimeSource, one of the largest distributors of building materials in the United States.

Hylbert began his career in the lumber industry at Wickes, where, during his 21 years of service, he held a variety of positions from warehouseman to managing director of Wickes Europe, senior vp and general manager of Wickes Lumber. [Source: www.homechannelnews.com, January 30, 2007]

Trends

2007 PROJECTED AS ANOTHER STRONG YEAR FOR NONRESIDENTIAL PROJECTS

If you liked the nonresidential construction market last year, you'll probably love it this year. Building increased almost 6 percent in 2006 even after adjusting for inflation, and the pace of growth is expected to pick up a bit more this year, increasing by almost 7 percent across the nonresidential building category. Pacing the upturn is projected strong construction activity in office buildings (+9 percent), hotels (+13 percent), and hospitals and health care (+7 percent). These are some of the principal conclusions from the most recent AIA Consensus Construction Forecast, a semi-annual survey of the nation's leading construction forecasters. In the mid-year update published last June, this panel expected nonresidential activity to increase 6.3 percent in 2006 and 6.2 percent in 2007. Current estimates are that 2006 will come in just a little weaker than was expected last summer, and that this year will be a little stronger. If these forecasts prove to be accurate, 2006-2007 would be the best two-year period for the industry since the late 1990s. [Source: www.aia.org, January 26, 2007] **SBC**

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"Too many [component manufacturers] don't know what to ask for and what to expect of their insurance brokers. The component manufacturer/insurance broker relationship must go beyond price shopping and going to lunch. Component manufacturers must delineate what they want and expect of their insurance brokers and hold them accountable. Much of this has been done for component manufacturers already with the WTCA Insurance broker program."

—Kent Pagel, WTCA Legal Counsel

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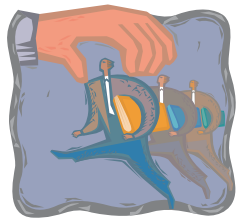
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In Memoriam • Continued from page 78

at K&K Industries have been greatly affected by the death of our founder, owner and friend, Abe A. Knepp...The family and all the employees at K&K will strive to carry out Abe's will and wishes. We will continue to provide to you the best possible service, quality products and integrity as Abe's life mentored to us."

He is survived by wife, Viola; mother, Elizabeth; daughters, Sharon Wittmer and Darla Yoder; sons, Gary and Nelson; sisters, Leah and Wilma Wagler, Katherine Lengacher and Lorene Knepp; brothers, Leroy, Henry, Amos Jr. and Alva; and 15 grandchildren.

In 1985 Knepp founded a non-profit organization, the Fresh Start Rehabilitation and Training Center, where men can come for assistance in finding answers to spiritual and emotional problems and are encouraged to be responsible citizens. Memorial contributions in Abe's honor can be made to Fresh Start, 113 N Industrial Park Rd, Washington, IN 47501 (812/524-3399). **SBC**

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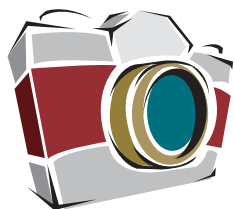
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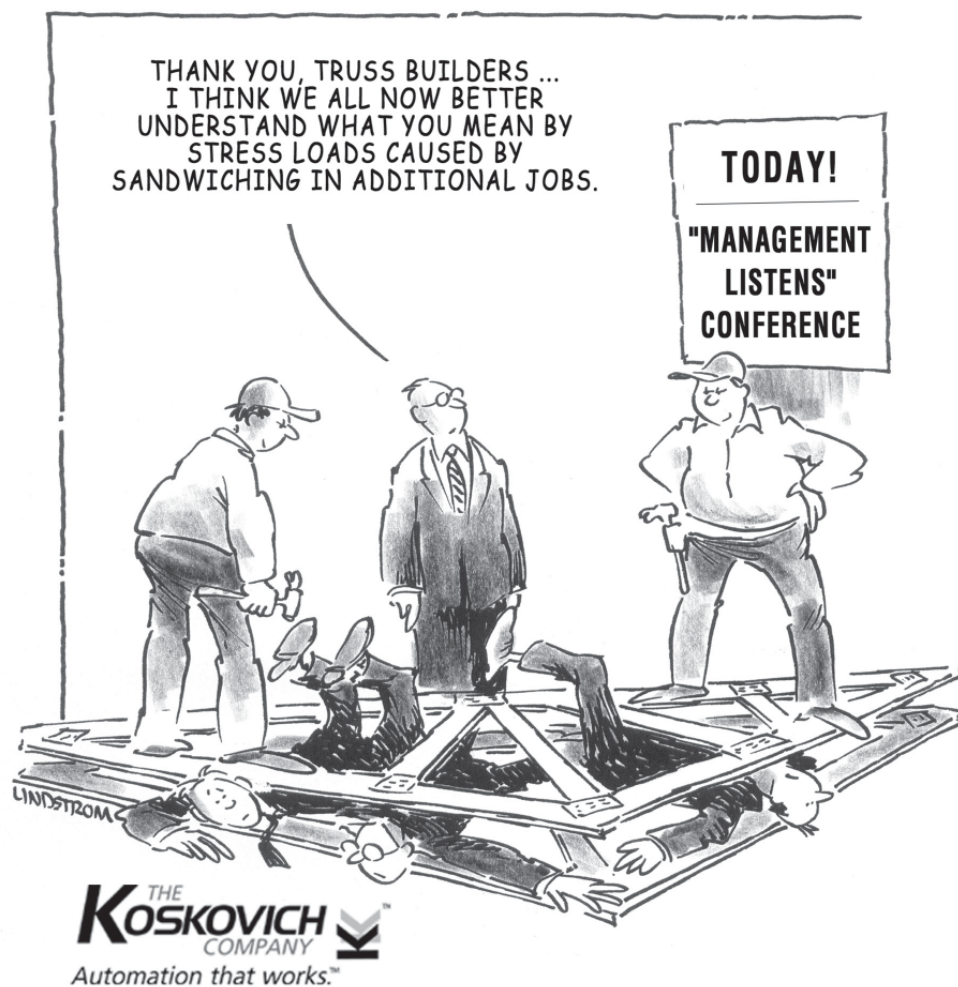
Parting Shots

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The Industry Gets Medieval

After the December 13, 2006 TPI 1 Project Committee meeting, members of the WTCA E&T Committee bellied up to the roundtable for a "sumptuous feast" of roast beast and chicken at Medieval Times in Schaumburg, IL. Led by an enthusiastic Ryan Dexter (WTCA staff), the group posed (some against their will) for the camera wearing gleaming replicas of King Arthur's crown of jewels (available at your local Burger King franchise). Pictured here are (left to right, bottom to top): Dave Wert, Bob Dayhoff, Dan Roig, Mike Magid, Gary Obudzinski, and Dave Motter; Bonnie Bartlett, Ryan Dexter, Don Scott, John Gruber, Art Hernandez, and Joe Heinsman; Clyde Bartlett, Jay Edgar, Dave Johnston, and Steve Cabler. Thankfully no one was injured during the jousting. But, we are sorry to report that the group's Green Knight was "killed" during the final swordfight. **SBC**



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