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April 2012

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RAMPING IT UP...

Things to
Consider
Entering a
Better Market

Plus...

QC Top 10
Green Building
...and more!

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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 the Structural Building Components Association (SBCA). The opinions expressed in *SBC* are those of the authors and those quoted, and are not necessarily the opinions of Truss Publications or SBCA.



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Not Again, Dad! – How to Find Great Employees

Keep your eyes open, and you just might find your next great employee at a restaurant or the local business down the street.

As we begin to move into what is typically our busy season, I thought it would be good to discuss a topic that is one of the most challenging issues for component manufacturers: finding good employees. In a recent One Minute Poll on the **SBC** website, respondents said finding and retaining good employees is one of their top obstacles to overcome as business ramps up. We're all familiar with the common hiring concerns:

- Good people are hard to find.
- Young people today just don't seem to have the same work ethic they did in years past.
- How do you find people who can pass a drug test?
- We hire 10 people and only one or two make the cut.



The breakfast crew that sparked the idea for ProBuild's part-time escort drivers. Back row (left to right): Michael McClanahan, retired teacher; and Tony Schwab, local business owner. Front row (left to right): John Blickenstaff, retired teacher; John Cox, current teacher; Bill Tedrow, retired teacher; and Dave Dillow, retired teacher.

Component manufacturing is a rewarding profession. Most of the people I know truly love the industry, but those working in component manufacturing aren't your average run-of-the-mill people. Finding good ones like them is difficult, to say the least.

My company has all the hiring processes and procedures you might expect a large and established company to have. We have position postings online, corporate recruiters, a detailed policy for finding good people, background check policies, detailed job descriptions for every position, a physical test a candidate must pass to even get in the door, and an aptitude test for our technical positions. Without a doubt, these methods work and I appreciate all of the tools available to help our managers find the right people. That being said, I still believe that implementing recruiting strategies in and around your community will produce the best results. I've worked on this issue my entire career. While I still face the same challenges that we all do, I have found some methods for finding good people close to home that I'd like to share.

at a glance

- According to an *SBC* One Minute Poll, CMs name finding and retaining good employees as one of their top challenges as business picks up.
- Good workers are all around us and a lot of them are still looking for a job that is worthy of their devotion and work ethic.
- Implementing recruiting strategies in and around your community can produce some of the best results with great, long-term employees.

First of all, I am always on the hunt for good people and I look for them in my everyday life. My wife and kids have seen this first hand and get a kick out of my recruiting methods. A few times (okay, my family might say many times) I have received outstanding service from our waiter or waitress at our family's restaurant of choice. This person has been courteous, energetic and really gone above and beyond in the area of quality service. I try to observe how a person carries themselves, works with others, and relates to the management of their current workplace. When I notice these things, I tend to mention it to my family. This is usually when they roll their eyes and say, "not again, Dad!" I strike up a conversation with our server and ask about his or her interests (this is usually when my kids warn them they are being recruited). I'll ask if they have any interest in the work we do. If they'd like to learn more, I give them my card with an encouraging note about their performance and an invite to come see us for a career opportunity.

I follow this logic in all kinds of day-to-day situations. Good workers are all around us and a lot of them are still looking for a job that is worthy of their devotion and

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Editor's Message

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work ethic. The key is weeding them out from all the others.

Recently while traveling to a customer meeting, I noticed a particularly energetic gentleman in a Statue of Liberty costume in front of the local Liberty Tax Service. He was dancing and flipping a tax return sign like he was as happy as could be doing his job. I figured he must have just gotten started for the day or it was his first day on the job, but during my return trip four hours later, he was still there going just as strong as before. That night, I told a couple of friends about Lady Liberty's work ethic. My friends said he had been working outside that office for about two weeks and he was like that day in and day out. The next time I was in the area, I purposely drove by to see for myself. Sure enough, he was still hitting it with the same steadfast enthusiasm. I was convinced. I pulled over and told the gentleman that anyone who could work that hard in 30-degree weather and stay that energetic was the sort of employee we were looking for. I left him my card and invited him to stop by the plant to fill out an application. A little later, I checked with our production manager to see if someone had come in and presented my card asking for an application. The production manager answered my question with a big smile and told me the guy did come in and his formal interview is scheduled for next week. I have no idea if he will make the cut, but the production manager's comments were favorable after the first contact interview.

Keeping my eyes open all the time for good people has been helpful, but some other great successes have come from building strong relationships with local educators to help us locate desirable employees. When recruiting potential technicians, we work with local colleges and vocational institutes in the area. Many times, construction management, architectural and engineering students start down the path of a four-year degree, but change their minds a year or two in. These students sometimes find the idea of working as a truss or wall panel technician a desirable alternative. They can also pursue their education with our company's assistance as they work in these positions. I have seen several solid long-term employees develop using this method.

We have also formed relationships with coaches, guidance counselors and vocational educators at local high schools. They can be very helpful finding solid kids just coming out of school who are ready to join the workforce. These educators send us kids that have a strong work ethic and solid attendance in school, two great recommendations.

When working with educators, SBCA's WorkForce Development (WFD) promotion binder is an excellent tool for providing background on the industry. The binder includes an introduction on the structural building components industry, as well as career brochures and SBCA publications to hand out. The WFD website, wfd.sbcindustry.com, is also jam-packed with information about the industry and training resources.

While it's understandable to focus on the younger generation, don't forget about more seasoned and even retired workers. A few months ago, our shipping manager was having trouble finding good escort drivers. Many people had poor driving records and the varying schedule of receiving a few hours one day and then working all day the next



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didn't appeal to others. We didn't want to give up current workers to jump in an escort truck for a few hours because we needed sawyers and builders on the shop floor. Our shipping manager couldn't seem to find good employees who were reliable and that would stick with him. I put some thought into it, talked with some of my retired teacher friends from the local coffee shop, and we struck a deal (see photo on page 7). The retired educators hired on as escort drivers and we put them on a call list. When we need a driver, we simply call down the list until we find a driver who isn't busy that day. With a number of possible candidates, there is always someone willing to fill the position for that day. This gives our company very reliable (Master's degree educated, no less) escort drivers, and it gives the breakfast crew a nice part-time job that doesn't interfere with too many of their fishing days. Everyone wins!

So keep your eyes peeled. The person who serves you breakfast, or the person who eats breakfast with you, could be your next superstar employee. **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@sbcmag.info.

SBCA Legal & Technical Fund



In preparation for the June 1 deadline for the design value change of No. 2 2x4 Southern Pine, SBCA is developing recommendations for truss and component manufacturers. Due to the additional resources used for the unexpected Southern Pine lumber issue, SBCA has started a legal and technical fund to help offset the costs. Support from donors helps the association move forward and continue to advocate for the structural building components industry on this and future potential changes to design values. **SBC**

To view a list of donors or to make a contribution to this fund, visit:

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Quality Control Top 10

Put QC front and center on the plant floor with a QC board.

Along with helping a plant meet building code and industry standard quality control (QC) requirements, a well-managed QC program gives component manufacturers an objective tool to evaluate quality plant-wide. The more QC becomes part of a plant's culture, the more benefits a company will reap from its QC program. The following question from a plant manager addresses how to help all staff get engaged in the plant's QC mission.

Question

Our plant wants to put more of an emphasis on QC. Do you have any suggestions of how to alert workers to common QC errors they should catch?

Answer

It helps everyone when QC becomes second nature in the plant. Analyzing QC data and related information gathered from the shop floor to spot trends in your manufacturing are critical steps to strategically improving your quality. Another good way to increase awareness of the importance of QC is to create QC boards or posters strategically located throughout the plant. This can serve as a quick reminder and valuable resource on key QC issues.

The board can be created any number of ways. It can show real examples of good quality and bad quality so workers can clearly see what is expected versus problems that have occurred due to carelessness or working too fast. For instance, you can include sample joints on your board showing rolled teeth, damaged lumber and other conditions. You could also take pictures and put those on your board. Here are our top 10 QC issues to consider when assembling a QC board.



Implementing a QC Program

The In-Plant WTCA QC program helps manufacturers monitor the quality of trusses they manufacture and provides the plant with a data management system. The program requires regularly inspecting trusses and entering the data into the software program, allowing staff to store data and create reports to assess in-plant quality. This program also offers an official In-Plant WTCA QC 100% voluntary certification. For more information, visit sbcindustry.com/wtcaqc.php.

at a glance

- In addition to implementing a QC program and training staff, another good way to increase awareness of quality control issues is by creating QC posters strategically placed throughout the shop floor.
- A QC board can use photos or actual material examples to illustrate common QC dos and don'ts.
- Work is underway to revise and reaffirm Chapter 3 of the ANSI/TPI 1 standard on quality control.

1. Overall Dimensions.

Height and span should be within tolerance. Most plants establish 1/4" manufacturing tolerances for both height and span.



Photo 1.

2. Lumber Type. Confirm that the actual size/species/grade of webs and chords are the same as specified on the truss design drawing.

3. Lumber Condition. Condition of overall board must be acceptable—no web and chord items such as checks, splits, cracks, large knots, lots of wane, etc. in the plate area, and no broken members post plating. (See Photo 1.)



Photo 2.

4. Plate Size and Gauge. Actual plate size in the X and Y direction need to be the same size or greater than what is specified on the truss design drawing. High strength plates cannot necessarily be swapped for regular strength plates and vice versa. (See Photo 2.)

5. Plate Placement. For critical joints with Joint QC Details, placement must be within the tolerance polygon and members must be within the defect tolerance. If there is no Joint QC Detail, each member must have enough teeth and be within a 1/2" tolerance from the specified placement in any direction. (See Photo 3.)

6. Rotation. Rotation should meet the requirements set according to the design software (typically +/-10°). Watch out for plates mistakenly rotated 90°. (See Photo 4.)

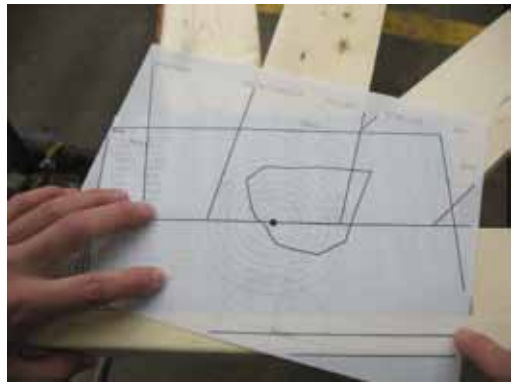


Photo 3.

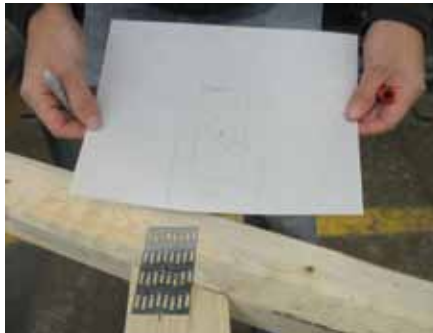


Photo 4.

7. Embedment. A 1/32" tolerance is allowed around the perimeter of the plate except for areas 1" or closer to where members intersect. (See Photo 5.)



Photo 5.

8. Member Gaps. Up to a 1/8" gap tolerance is allowed in the plate area except for floor truss chord splices (for these, up to a 1/32" gap is allowed). (See Photo 6.)



Photo 6.

9. Defective Teeth in Plate Area. Check for lumber issues such as excessive wane, pitch, loose knots, or anything that creates a void. (See Photo 7.)



Photo 7.

10. Rolled Teeth in Plate Area. Inspect plate for rolled teeth due to over hammering. (See Photo 8.) **SBC**



Photo 8.

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

updates to QC standard:

Work is underway by the TPI 1 Project Committee to revise and reaffirm the ANSI/TPI 1 standard and Chapter 3: Quality Criteria for the Manufacture of Metal Plate Connected Wood Trusses. Chapter 3 addresses quality control requirements including:

- Implementing a quality control manual
- Inspection frequency
- Inspecting trusses for quality criteria
- Third-party inspections

The 2012 standard is expected to be finalized next year.





RAMPING IT UP...

Things to Consider Entering a Better Market

by Sean D. Shields

Housing starts are not going to reach one million new units in 2012. However, most economic and real estate indicators seem to be pointing in the right direction. Okay, yes, you've heard this before, but sentiment seems different this year, from the large increase in builder confidence, to stronger and steadier SBCA publication sales that actually prove houses are being built. Sure, there's still a lot of work to be done, whether it's foreclosures or loosening lending requirements, but so far so good. With NAHB's Improving Market Index¹ reaching nearly 100 metro areas last month, we at **SBC** felt it was a good time to look at what component manufacturers should be thinking about as they begin to make decisions about increasing production.

To help, we contacted a few component manufacturers in markets identified by several sources as leading the way into 2012. Walking a mile in their shoes, we looked at what they learned as they increased production in the current market. What we learned will likely not surprise you, but it's still good advice as the residential construction industry picks up steam. From cash flow to personnel, we look at the top concerns you will likely face while ramping up.

¹ nahb.org/reference_list.aspx?sectionID=2223

Markets Showing Strength

In a recent industry survey conducted by **SBC**, five out of six respondents felt that 2012 was going to be a better year than 2011. There appear to be plenty of experts willing to support their optimism. According to multiple sources, including the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), Fiserv, the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB), the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Wells Fargo, the country's economic and housing indicators point toward a 14-20 percent increase in housing starts for 2012.

While some economists may paint such an increase as "moderate" or "slow," the overwhelming feedback from the component manufacturers we spoke with said that incremental growth is much better than a swift uptick. To understand why, we talked to component manufacturers about managing cash flow, hiring personnel, bolstering sales and tricks for riding the wave of growth without drowning.

Cash Is King

"It takes a lot of cash to increase production," said Rick Cashman (Florida Forest Products) in Tampa, FL. "Cash takes a dive when you first start out." Cashman and others point to the fact that the money you have to outlay for raw materials, hiring and equipment can take a while to recoup through cash received from sales.

"With receivables being 60-90 days out, it can be a real challenge to cover the cash shortfall between the increased costs you incur as part of increasing production, and when the cash finally comes back in the door," agreed Ray Noonan (Cascade Manufacturing) in Cascade, IA.

And while some component manufacturers have had some success working with their local banks at securing short-term loans to cover shortfalls, Cashman pointed out that many banks across the country (including theirs) are not as friendly as they once were. "In most cases, you're best off just having the cash you need," said Mike Higgins, (Higgins & Sons) in Tecumseh, OK. "That's how we try to do it."

Hiring & Retaining Designers

In the industry study conducted by **SBC**, most respondents indicated that hiring and retaining new designers was their biggest concern heading in to 2012. According to the manufacturers we talked to, these are two separate and distinct challenges. Hiring designers at the moment is likely not going to be the most difficult aspect of increasing production early on. "We held on to many of our designers through the past few years by asking some of them to work on the production line," said Mark Smith (Trus-Way, Inc.) in Portland, OR. "They started out there, so they already had the skillset."

Cashman also pointed out that there are individuals with design experience in your market likely still looking for work. "We ended up hiring back one former employee, and another from a long-time competitor who recently went out of

business," he said.

However, other manufacturers are concerned the pool of available designers may dry up quickly. "The concern is that our industry typically lags behind other industries," said Noonan. "It is possible others may be able to offer a lot of promising designers good jobs before we are ready to hire them." In this regard, retention of current designers may become a bigger challenge as other employers in other industries look for individuals with technical experience.

"Fortunately, one thing that is going our way is the apparent reduction in large homes with complex roof layouts," said Noonan. "Hopefully, that will translate to less design headaches for the designers we have, and probably better margins as well."

"Our sales department leads the way for our entire company. Their success translates into our success. So while we have to ensure we have good designers who can get the job done and a competent production line, none of it matters if the jobs aren't coming in the door."

—Mike Higgins

In other words, lower design complexity will likely mean less experienced designers can be utilized more easily.

Finding Production Employees

"Like most truss plants, we currently aren't running close to full capacity," says Higgins. "As a result, we don't worry nearly as much about purchasing new equipment as we do finding the right employees to man it." This comment seems in line with the roughly 50 percent of survey respondents who indicated hiring, training and retaining production employees was their biggest concern looking ahead.

Again, in the short term, there may be a pool of unemployed (or underemployed), experienced production workers in your market from which to hire. "In a down economy, we've seen there are plenty of laid off production workers to choose from in our market," said Smith. Cashman agreed, "We've been able to hire back former employees as we've increased production."

An additional option is relying on temporary employment agencies to fill the void. "We have become increasingly reliant on temporary agencies to augment our search for production employees," said Noonan. His company works with a temp company on a "90-day-to-hire" system, where the agency provides workman's compensation insurance for the first 90 days as they train and learn their job duties. "The biggest challenge has been to offer a high enough wage so that the temporary employees we hire think of the job as a possible career as opposed to a stop-gap job until something better comes along."

While Cashman agrees that their relationship with their temp agency has made hiring easy and cost effective, Smith observes,

Continued on page 14



"This period of increasing production has been stressful. But really, it's been an overall stress reducer because it's a lot more fun than dealing with the downturn and trying to make payroll while retaining your business viability and good employees. I don't mind it at all." —Rick Cashman

Ramping It Up...

Continued from page 13

"Temporary agency employees are far more expensive than traditional employees. As the market improves and the hiring market tightens up, that premium probably becomes worth paying."

Managing Your Sales Force

As you are keenly aware, the ability to cash in on an increase in building

construction in your market is going to rest squarely on the shoulders of your sales staff. "While I am hesitant to accept that the current surge in the Tampa market is going to last, we have hired more sales staff to try to sustain the current level of production as long as possible," said Cashman.

"Our sales department leads the way for our entire company," echoed Higgins. "Their success translates into our success. So while we have to ensure we have good designers who can get the job done and a competent production line, none of it matters if the jobs aren't coming in the door."

For those component manufacturers who already have a competent sales staff, Noonan again points to the component industry's growth lag as a potential area of concern. "Sales is filled with highly motivated individuals, and the better they are at their job, the more attractive they will be to opportunities in other industries." Noonan offers a suggestion that is probably applicable to both sales and design staff: "Talk to them regularly and make sure their needs are being met. The happier they are, the more likely it is they will stay."

Think the Turtle, Not the Hare

While economists and homebuilders may label the projected 14-20 percent increase in housing starts as "slow," it is likely a very good thing for the component manufacturing industry. "In an ideal market, our current level of production would double over a period

of the next five years," said Smith. Why is that ideal? "A quick increase equals false inflation," explains Smith.

"As I look ahead, the thing that I worry about most is cash flow and the rising cost of raw materials and fuel," agreed Cashman. "So far, our mills have indicated they can produce what we need, but I'm concerned about when that might not be the case and lumber prices begin to increase dramatically and perhaps unexpectedly."

Noonan also expressed concern over the idea of a rapid increase in production. "Slow and steady growth has really helped us keep control of our cash flow so far," he said. "But if we get to the point where we are seeing rapid or variable changes in raw material costs due to demand quickly outstripping supply, it will be very difficult to operate profitably."

Another way to think about it is that slow growth is more apt to be sustainable growth for the industry, giving you time to find and train employees, all the while increasing production at a pace that allows you to remain in a relatively healthy cash position. The hard part is that the pace of residential construction growth is largely out of our industry's hands, and the last time it happened, lumber costs spiked and several component manufacturing companies went out of business.

The bottom line is that many of you can be glad there will not be one million housing starts this year, but watch the marketplace indicators closely. If they point toward a swift uptick, it will directly affect many of your costs!

"This period of increasing production has been stressful," admitted Cashman. "But really, it's been an overall stress reducer because it's a lot more fun than dealing with the downturn and trying to make payroll while retaining your business viability and good employees. I don't mind it at all." **SBC**

For more information on the growth of residential construction, go to SBC Magazine's Industry News section at sbcmag.info/news and click on the Housing & Construction feed.



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The Blooming of Green Homes

by Sean D. Shields



An Opportunity Ripe for the Picking

In February, McGraw-Hill Construction released findings from a new *Green Home Builders and Remodelers Study* that found “green” homes comprised 17 percent of overall residential construction in 2011, or roughly \$17 billion in the market. Even more astonishing, the builders surveyed indicated they expected green construction to grow to between 29 percent and 38 percent of the market by 2016. Based on current predictions on residential construction, this increase will represent \$87-\$114 billion of business in 2016 (see Chart 1).¹

The increase in “green” home building provides an opportunity for component manufacturers to work with builders to arrive at a win-win scenario. In order to capitalize, it’s important to understand how green home standards work, why certified lumber is not a good answer/solution for either the component manufacturer or the builder, and ultimately, how the manufacturer can utilize the strengths of components to ensure builders capitalize on all their options to go “green.”

The Growth of Green

The McGraw-Hill study further indicates that by 2016, one out of every three builders anticipate they will be dedicated to green building work on over 90 percent of residential projects, up from 17 percent in 2011. Why are so many builders anticipating such a dramatic increase in green homes? The study results indicate builders see many business benefits afforded by green building, such as a competitive marketing advantage. Of those surveyed, 46 percent of all builders and remodelers find that building “green” makes it easier to market themselves in the present economy and 71 percent of dedicated green builders report the same.

As market differentiation is driving the builder, it appears the motivation for buyers is changing. While “green” homes may have originally been built and purchased by primarily environmentally conscious buyers, this recent study indicates the top factors driving “green” construction now are “higher quality” and “increases in energy costs.” This suggests that today’s

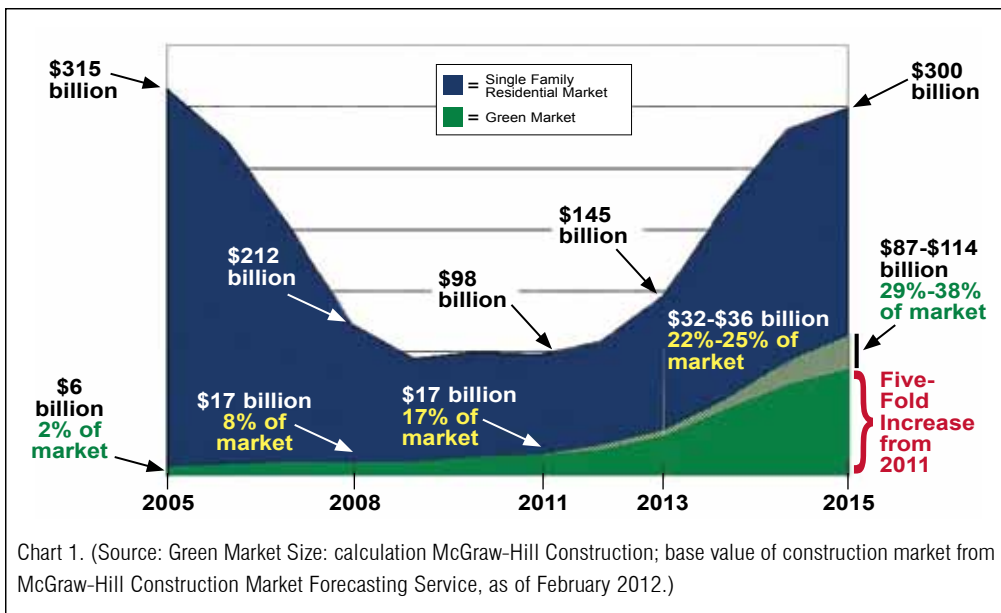


Chart 1. (Source: Green Market Size: calculation McGraw-Hill Construction; base value of construction market from McGraw-Hill Construction Market Forecasting Service, as of February 2012.)

and tomorrow's home buyers are looking for lower energy bills due to higher building performance (see sidebar on page 18).

Finally, the study points out that, while "green" is growing across the U.S., three regions are seeing higher than average growth. The West Coast has seen the highest green growth; the Midwest's northern region, west of the Mississippi, is second highest; and New England ranks third. As "green" homes continue to sprout up, this growing market presents challenges and great opportunities for component manufacturers.

LEED for Homes Certification Thresholds		
Certified	45-59	
Silver	60-74	
Gold	75-89	
Platinum	90-136	
LEED for Homes Rating System	Available Points per Section	Min. Required Points per Section
Innovation & Design Process (ID)	11	0
Locations & Linkages (LL)	10	0
Sustainable Sites (SS)	22	5
Water Efficiency (WE)	15	3
Energy & Atmosphere (EA)	38	0
Materials & Resources (MR)	16	2
Indoor Environmental Quality (EQ)	21	6
Awareness & Education (AE)	3	0
TOTAL Possible Points:	136	

Chart 2.

The Application of Standards

There are two primary standards currently in the U.S. used by builders in residential construction to designate a home "green": the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED for Homes (LEED Standard), and the National Association of Homebuilder's ANSI ICC 700-2008 National Green Building Standard (NAHB Standard). Both of these standards work by assigning point values to various aspects of the design and construction process.

The LEED Standard, for example, has eight categories, each with a maximum total point value, and, in some cases, a minimum required point total (see Chart 2). The NAHB Standard is very similar in its makeup with six categories for builders, and an additional category for site preparation (see Chart 3). However, while their arrangement is similar, each standard uses a very different system to allocate points and even the point criteria varies widely depending on the system.

One high-profile example where these two standards are very different is in the acceptance of certified wood programs. Currently, the LEED Standard only grants two points if 51 percent or more of the lumber used in the framing is certified by the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) program. The NAHB Standard, on the other hand, grants up to four points for lumber certified by one of five international forest management systems (including FSC).

Unfortunately, because lumber certified by a forest management system appears to be a simple case of choosing a preferential source for a raw material, many builders have mistakenly seen these points as low hanging fruit. To further complicate matters, the LEED Standard has a mandatory stipulation that, in order to qualify for a LEED designation, the builder has to certify that none of the wood used in construction

Continued on page 18

Threshold Point Ratings for Green Buildings					
Green Building Categories		Performance Point Levels (1) (2)			
		BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD	EMERALD
1.	Chapter 5 Lot Design, Preparation, and Development	39	66	93	119
2.	Chapter 6 Resource Efficiency	45	79	113	146
3.	Chapter 7 Energy Efficiency	30	60	100	120
4.	Chapter 8 Water Efficiency	14	26	41	60
5.	Chapter 9 Indoor Environmental Quality	36	65	100	140
6.	Chapter 10 Operation, Maintenance, and Building Owner Education	8	10	11	12
7.	Additional Points from any category	50	100	100	100
Total Points		222	406	558	697

(1) In addition to the threshold number of points in each category, all mandatory provisions of each category shall be implemented.

(2) For dwelling units greater than 4,000 square feet (372 square meters), the number of points in Category 7 (Additional Points from any category) shall be increased in accordance with Section 601.1. The "Total Points" shall be increased by the same number of points.

Chart 3.

¹ sbcmag.info/news/2012/feb/green-home-market-growing-rapidly

predictions realized

In a letter to the editor printed in the August 2011 issue of *SBC*, Norman Scheel, S.E., F SEAOC, F ASCE, LEED AP BD+C, LEED AP HOMES, made some predictions about the future of residential green building. Among his many prognostications, he anticipated that through the growth of "green" home construction, "successful fabricators will be involved in the design development phase." Further, he guessed that, "energy ratings on homes will become the norm, much like the mpg sticker on a car."

Scheel even went so far as to predict, "operating costs, such as energy and water costs that can be greatly reduced through proper design, will be part of the loan qualification process, along with taxes and insurance." Given the changes driven through the model energy code and the Department of Energy's research and funding for the development of "net-zero" homes, Scheel's crystal ball may be more clear than most.

Over the coming months, *SBC* will be looking at this increasing demand for energy-efficiency performance and changes to the energy code that can and will be a significant opportunity for the structural components industry.

For more information about green building trends, go to *SBC* Industry News at sbcmag.info/news and click on the Green Building news feed.

The Blooming of Green Homes

Continued from page 17

comes from a tropical source. This, too, has prompted many builders to make FSC-certified lumber a mandatory requirement.

The Challenge of Chain of Custody

The biggest problem with certified lumber, whether it is FSC, Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), or some other system, is the chain of custody (CoC) requirements. In order to provide components made with certified lumber, a component manufacturer has to become a certified link in the CoC. The CoC is a bureaucratic process that, in this case, documents the voyage of a stick of lumber from the moment the tree is cut down to the time when it arrives on the jobsite as part of a component. It provides reasonable assurance to the builder/customer that the wood in that component is indeed from a forest managed by the approved certification process.

All of the major forest certification programs contract with approved third-party agencies to monitor and preserve their CoC. For example, FSC uses a company called SmartWood to inspect and certify manufacturers using FSC-certified wood. If you want to become part of the FSC CoC, you hire SmartWood. SFI is very similar, although its list of approved third-party agencies is considerably longer.

Continued on page 20

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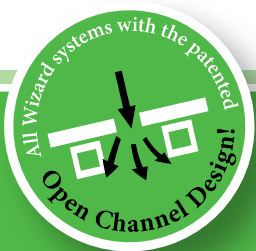
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By 2016, one out of every three builders anticipate they will be dedicated to green building work on over 90 percent of residential projects, up from 17 percent in 2011.

The Blooming of Green Homes

Continued from page 18

With any of the certification processes, you will be required to assess four main areas of your operations: proper identification of certified material, segregation of certified material, processing of certified material and thorough record-keeping. In other words, you will have to be able to adequately document how you will differentiate certified lumber from the rest of your stock from the time it arrives at your facility until it is delivered to the jobsite.

While these first two steps take considerable time, and potentially considerable financial investment, the most difficult hurdle may be actually finding a distributor or mill to provide the specific certified lumber requested for a particular job. In the case of FSC-certified Southern Pine, there is only one mill in North America that currently produces it.

The (Non)-Obvious Opportunity

For component manufacturers, one of the biggest challenges is getting builders to understand that they don't need certified lumber to build "green" homes, they simply need components, and the design expertise the component industry

brings to the table. This is not an opportunity to shy away from, but rather one to embrace, for it plays right into the strengths of this industry.

First, it's important to remember that, regardless of the green standard used, there are many, many points that can be earned (see Charts 2 and 3). Second, each standard awards several points for the use of structural components, as opposed to conventional framing. Finally, most "green" homes are high performing buildings that tend to need a lot of design work on the front end of the project, and consequently, collaboration between the builder and the supplier.

Under the LEED Standard, wood components can qualify for up to 9 points under the Materials & Resources section (without certified lumber, which earns 1-2 points). With the NAHB Standard, wood components can earn up to 47 points (certified lumber can earn an additional 4 points). So even without certified lumber, componentized framing can get a builder one-fifth (20%) of the way to a "green" home designation under either system. For more information on how components earn points under these standards, visit the Green Building section on SBCA's website, sbcindustry.com/green.php.

As most well know, one of the greatest strengths of componentized framing is its design flexibility. Component manufacturers have the ability to work with builders to design a high performance home from the initial stages, allowing the builder to capture points beyond those attached to raw materials used on the project.

For example, components can be designed to handle additional loading for solar panels and solar water heating systems. In addition, roof and floor trusses can be designed in concert with the HVAC system to allow the home's environmental ductwork to be placed in the "conditioned" space of the home (which earns points through the standards). Wall panels can also be designed using 2x6 studs at 24" on center to allow for additional insulation for a more energy efficient building envelope.

Conclusion

The "green" home trend appears to be gaining steam, and now is a perfect time for component manufacturers to take advantage. Regardless of the "green" home system used, components can earn a great deal of points without the burden of using certified wood. However, it is up to the component manufacturer to communicate with their builder customer on how a collaborative approach in design, and a creative use of components, can help them achieve a "green" home at the lowest cost. **SBC**

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In Memoriam

Douglas Robert "Doug" Bouford, age 43, son of Linda Bouford (retired from Finnforest USA), passed away on Saturday, March 3, 2012, from injuries sustained in a snowmobile accident. A resident of Roseville, MI, he was born February 18, 1969 in Detroit. He is survived by his parents, Linda and Bruce, three sisters and a nephew. Memorials appreciated to Children's Tumor Foundation ctf.org (in honor of Nicolas Cohoon). Please share a memory at sullivanfuneraldirectors.com.

BCMC 2012 to be Held in New Orleans

New Orleans will be the host city for this year's Building Component Manufacturers Conference (BCMC), October 17-19, 2012.

In addition to the venue change, BCMC is planning some significant changes to the conference schedule. This year's conference will feature a greater offering of workshops and business planning sessions to help component manufacturers enhance their business strategy and their operations as the housing market emerges.

"We wanted to add some more educational sessions to the BCMC line-up this year. Education is the meat on the bones of the conference and we want to make the conference as valuable as possible to the people attending," explained Jason Blenker, BCMC Educational Co-Chair (Blenker Building Systems, Inc.).

The BCMC Committee is currently finalizing new schedule changes that will embrace a more intimate space for exhibits in hopes it will allow for more interaction on the show floor. With a focus on "building a community" for our industry, this year's show will impact the business of every attendee.

Visit bcmcshow.com for more information as it becomes available.

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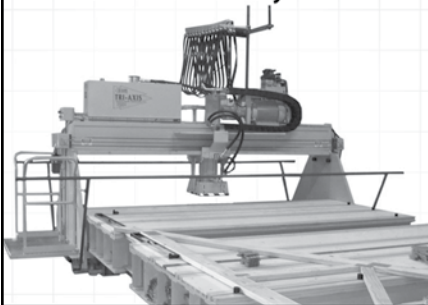
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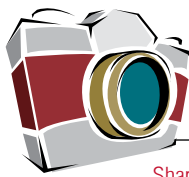
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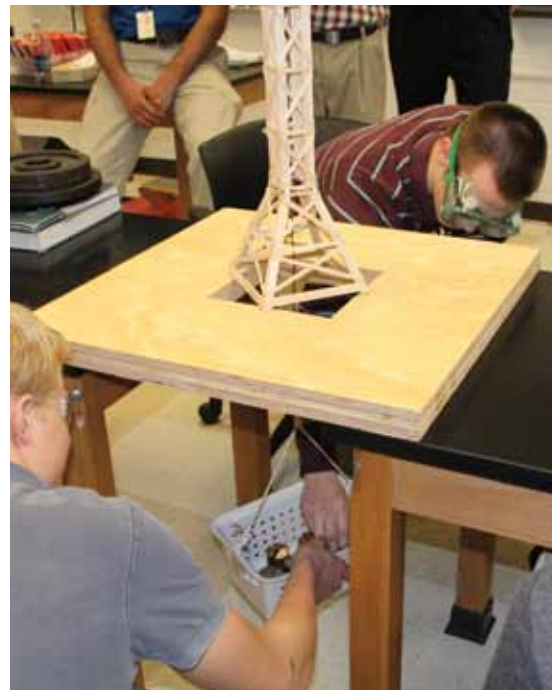


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You're never too young to start designing and engineering structures. John Gruber, PE. of Sheppard Engineering submitted this photo of his son Alex's wood tower for his high school physics class. The project, which called for students to construct a tower of balsa wood ($G=0.15$), limited the tower's height to 50 cm, with a maximum 8 cm diameter above 15 cm, and required the base to span a 20 cm opening with any orientation. The tower was loaded vertically from the top with both a hanging weight and weights applied to the top. While the tower only weighed 66.7 g (2.35 oz), it certainly stood up to the challenge, resisting 160 lb of applied load without failing—1,089 times its weight! **SBC**



SBC Online Photo Contest

The next online photo contest is underway, and the winner will be featured in an upcoming issue of *SBC*. Email your photos* (high resolution, 300 dpi, preferred) today, along with a brief description, to epatterson@sbcmag.info.

*Photos submitted may be used in *SBC Magazine* or other SBCA materials.

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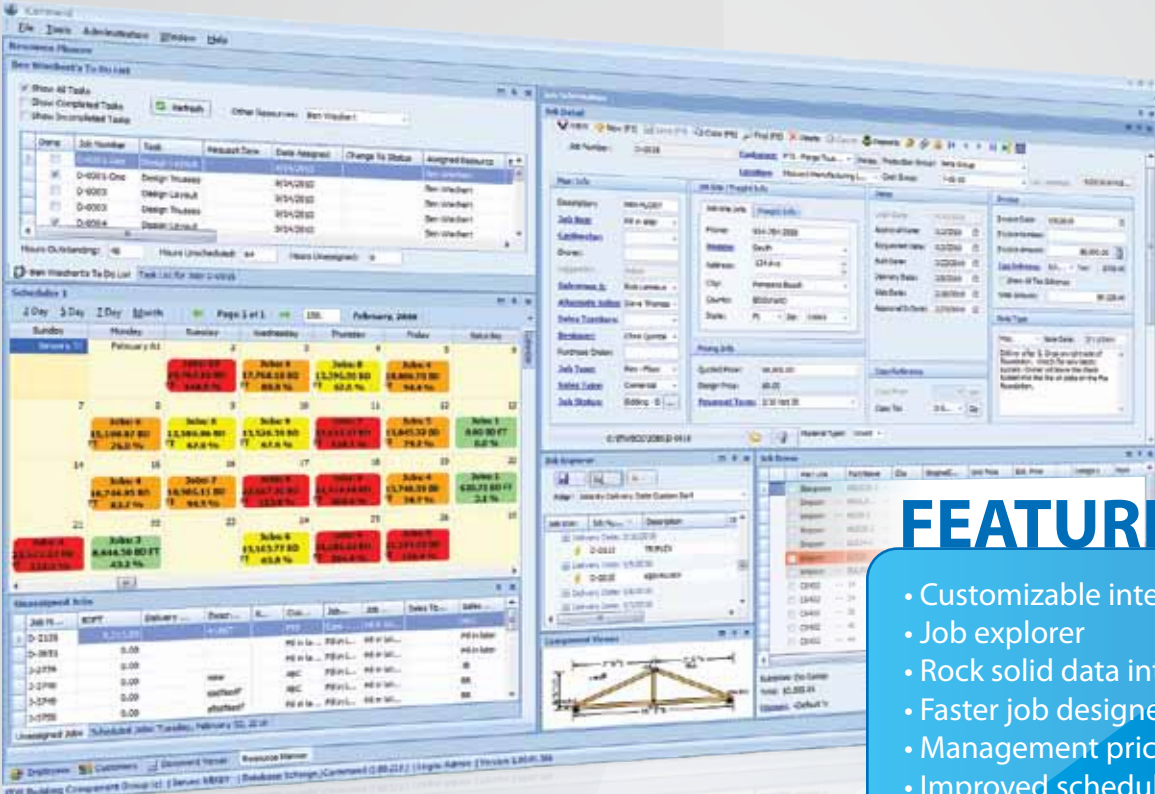
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