



# Live & In-Person

## Part 1 of 3

by Emily Patterson

Learn more about educating construction industry professionals with live Truss Technology Workshops.

**S**tand up and be heard—that's what many WTCA chapters and members across the country are doing by sponsoring live presentations using WTCA's Truss Technology Workshops (TTWs). Targeting building officials, inspectors, contractors, firefighters and other construction industry professionals, members are teaching their markets about structural building components with TTWs and deepening their involvement in the communities they serve. The first in a three-part series on TTWs, this article takes a look at how some chapters used live TTWs to reach out to professionals in their marketplaces.

### Tailoring a Presentation for Your Market

Many chapters have found that presenting live TTWs can be useful in informing construction industry professionals about components and building lasting relationships with these folks. The Missouri Truss Manufacturers Association (MTFA) has hit the nail on the head in its market by working with local officials to develop customized curriculum for target audiences.

Whether it's taking part in a presentation given to the Missouri Association of Building Officials and Inspectors (MABOI) in October 2007, passing out 250 copies of BCSI to building inspectors last year, or working with local officials when an issue arises on a jobsite, MTFA takes advantage of all opportunities to educate the marketplace.

Through these efforts, MTFA member Jasper Diedericks of Heartland Truss, Inc. befriended Sean Reid, a Johnson County city manager, while working to resolve the issue of sealed truss placement diagrams in their market, and Diedericks offered the chapter's assistance in component-related issues. "I brought my expertise to the table on bracing and many other aspects of the industry," said Diedericks. The offer paid off and he was asked to assist in the continuing education of contractors.

Diedericks teamed up with fellow chapter member John Hogan of J & D Lumber, Inc., Vivco Components, along with WTCA staff, to develop a proposal on how MTFA could supplement the county's curriculum with information about building components. "John and I spoke to Sean Reid and brought to him different topics we could help with—reading of placement diagrams, truss design drawings, temporary bracing, permanent bracing, etc.," said Diedericks. The county accepted the proposal and MTFA, along with WTCA staff, most recently developed three two-hour presentations entitled *Truss 101*, *Cutting Edge Design* and *QC from a WTCA Viewpoint* as part of this new curriculum. WTCA staff presented all three courses to the county in February.

Building off of these successes, MTFA continued to work with the county. Johnson County asked Diedericks and Hogan to lead a subcommittee on truss related issues. This gave chapter members yet another opportunity to meet and work with local officials while resolving matters affecting manufacturers.

Along with building relationships and addressing these issues, Hogan sees MTFA's educational efforts strengthening the chapter. "I think it has maintained the focus of the chapter and it energizes the group," said Hogan. "It gives the chapter a purpose."

### Distributing Industry Materials

Along with educating a group in person, live TTWs are also a good opportunity

## What Are Live TTWs?

Live TTWs are PowerPoint presentations (including slides and a script) presented in person to an audience of construction industry professionals. These face-to-face presentations offer a great opportunity to meet industry professionals and educate them about component construction. Here are some of the basics of live TTWs:

- TTWs cover a wide range of topics. Choose from topics such as: Overview of BCSI, 4 Steps to Safe Truss Installations, Mold, Code Issues and many more!
- TTW PowerPoint files are available online ([ttw.sbcindustry.com](http://ttw.sbcindustry.com)).
  - WTCA members can purchase one-year's access to download TTW PowerPoint files for \$50.
  - Chapters can receive access to PowerPoint files for free. Contact WTCA staff for more information or to obtain access for your chapter.
- WTCA staff is here to help. Whether you need a little help or assistance developing and presenting a new presentation from scratch, WTCA can help with all aspects of your live TTW including:
  - Planning/organizing the event
  - Recommending a course and handouts
  - Providing invitations, sign-in sheets, signs, thank you notes, etc.
  - Qualifying a course for CEU credit
  - Presenting a live TTW for your event

to get industry materials in the hands of target audiences. With the help of Tom Zraggen of Aries Engineering, Inc., the Georgia Component Manufacturers Association (GCMA) sponsored a presentation for the Georgia Association of Home Inspectors (GAHI). Using portions of several TTWs including *Design Responsibilities*, *Bracing*, *How to Read a Truss Design Drawing*, *How to Read a Truss Placement Diagram* and *BCSI*, Zraggen spoke to the group in October 2007; GCMA supplemented his presentation by sponsoring handouts like the BCSI booklet, *Design Responsibilities TTB*, *How to Read a Truss Design Drawing TTB*, and *How to Read a Truss Placement Diagram TTB*.

Zraggen says that offering handouts is a good way to provide more detailed information within the presentation's limited timeframe. "I told the group, 'Listen to what I say and get the logic of it. You don't have to take detailed notes. Then refer to the [BCSI] booklet and its chapters for more information,'" said Zraggen.

The handouts, and BCSI in particular, were well received at the presentation. "It's a professional document that's easy to follow. People can't help but like it," said Zraggen. "This group and any group in general loves real pictures of things. That type of thing they just eat up big time," he added.

Zraggen said the presentation not only benefited the target audience, but also the chapter by building relationships and getting critical industry information in the hands of inspectors. "It's a win-win-win for all parties," he said, noting he hopes to make a repeat performance with GAHI in the future.

## Making Connections in Your Marketplace

Delivering effective education requires reaching your target audience. WTCA – Northeast has focused on this point by contacting decision makers within building official and fire service organizations. "Over the past year or so, we've been making contacts and trying to get the attention of the right people. What we're finding is that they want more information," said Brad Ferris of S. R. Sloan, Inc.

Ferris admits that establishing the chapter's credibility with local officials didn't happen overnight, but it's been well worth the effort. WTCA – Northeast started getting involved in local events, which included sponsoring presentations for the Structural Engineers Association of New Hampshire (SEANH) in May 2006 and the Southeastern Building Officials Association (SEBOA) in October 2007. While he says it took a while to pull off a "command performance" that got building officials' attention, they are now taking notice. "Now we're getting called back," he said. "The ball is starting to roll downhill."

That momentum continues to build. In November 2007, Ferris gave a TTW presentation, *A Metal Plate Connected Wood Truss Inspection Checklist*, to the Eastern States Building Officials Association; the event sparked opportunities for the chapter to provide even more education. "Some of the building officials were senior officials from Massachusetts and Rhode Island and are requesting more presentations for building officials at more meetings," said Ferris. Officials expressed interest in incorporating content similar to Ferris' presentation into local departments' training as well as larger regional meetings, which would help spread industry information to a much larger audience.

### TTW Materials Available to Members

While the chapters and individuals highlighted above have their own unique approach to educating and working with industry professionals, each shares a common trait in using TTW PowerPoint files to develop course content. In an effort to support those who want to educate their market, WTCA has developed a series of TTW PowerPoint files on popular industry topics (see sidebar above).

All three presenters featured above had positive things to say about the TTW resources from WTCA. "I've been very impressed with the presentations," said Hogan. Ferris noted that for his presentation, he downloaded a file from WTCA directly to his computer, which he could then modify to suit his course. "The PowerPoint was put together and easy to download. I did very little customizing beforehand," he said. For his presentation, Zraggen said he found the process so user friendly that he's likely to become a repeat user of TTWs, noting, "This was the first PowerPoint I've given in my life. It went so well, I'll do it again." **SBC**

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### at a glance

- ❑ Members are teaching their markets about structural building components with TTWs.
- ❑ One WTCA chapter—with WTCA staff—connected with a county building department to add building component training to its curriculum.
- ❑ Many options are available for members and chapters that want to educate their markets using TTWs.

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