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"Jobsite Submittal or Delivery Packages: Part 3" by Kent J. Pagel

Norman Cousins, a twentieth century American editor, writes: "History is a vast early warning system." I find this statement quite appropriate in the context of past truss and component collapses and accidents.

Experience has shown that most truss accidents could have been avoided. In almost every instance a collapse or accident seems to occur as a result of poor jobsite handling, installation and/or temporary bracing practices. On the other hand, there is a great deal of industry and individual company-prepared documentation that, if followed, would significantly reduce accidents. Simply stated, all the information exists within this documentation to enable qualified laborers to safely handle, erect and brace trusses.

- Why then do we not see a reduction in the frequency of collapses?
- Why are erectors so critical with respect to the jobsite documentation that is currently being provided?
- Should the truss manufacturer more carefully decide what is provided and the format and manner in which such information is provided?
- Should not the truss manufacturer develop a more consistent and reliable practice with respect to the documentation that is provided and how it is provided?
- Would not a more consistent and reliable process both reduce the number of collapses and provide the truss manufacturer with the "Cover Your Assets" protection that is desired?

In my opinion, the industry has done a good job preparing materials that set out how to effectively handle, install and brace trusses. Therefore, it only makes sense that truss manufacturers should work hard to make sure that such documentation reaches the erectors. While perhaps such documentation may not be required by the truss manufacturer's customer contract, good business strongly suggests otherwise. Should not the truss manufacturer provide adequate warnings and instructions with respect to the use of the products they manufacture and otherwise supply? For some of us this means doing a better job of warning, instructing and educating; for others this means beginning something that we have not done in the past.

MYTH: Since we are not responsible for erecting the trusses, we should not concern ourselves with supplying documentation to the erectors. Unfortunately we must admit that in the real world this is not good business. History has provided the industry and individual companies with sufficient notice that we must all act proactively to warn, instruct and educate. All too often, truss and component manufacturers are wrongly accused and it has become a reflex reaction for truss manufacturers to be named in each lawsuit where trusses hit the ground during or after erection.

MYTH: A "one size fits all" approach is the way to go. We need to recognize that each part of

the country is different. Some manufacturers deliver with cranes to the top plate while others only deliver to the jobsite and either unload themselves or require that their customers unload. Some truss and component manufacturers sell a great deal of engineered wood products in addition to products that they manufacture. In those circumstances, it is very important to forward as additional documentation to the jobsite the installation guide prepared by the engineered wood products manufacturer that relates to the safe and proper use of their products. One size does not fit all; although as you will see below I am suggesting that there are some materials that all manufacturers should consider supplying to the jobsite.

MYTH: A jobsite delivery package is no different than a standard design submittal package. From my perspective, the design submittal package is utilized to cause the building designer to review and approve truss design drawings and the proposed truss placement plan. The intent of the design submittals is to obtain a very important approval of the design assumptions made by the truss manufacturer and truss designer. The audience however is the building designer and contractor—not the erector. As such, with respect to design submittals, the truss manufacturer may consider enclosing the following documents in addition to the truss design drawings and the truss placement plan: WTCA 1-1995, Standard Responsibilities in the Design Process Involving Metal Plate Connected Wood Trusses; Commentary for Permanent Bracing of Metal Plate Connected Wood Trusses published by WTCA; or the Partition Separation Brochure which is part of WTCA's Truss Technology for Builders series.

Conversely, the jobsite delivery package is geared at an entirely different audience—the erector. As the concerns and needs are different, so should the submittals be different. The focus with the erector should be on providing necessary guidelines and other solid information relating to safe and proper use of trusses and components.

FACT: The WTCA Warning Poster EFFECTIVELY provides the do's and don'ts of jobsite handling, installation and bracing of trusses. Numerous topics are covered including temporary bracing, permanent bracing, unloading and lifting, hoisting, erection tolerances, and stacking. The Warning Poster comes in different sizes thereby enabling placement plans to be printed on the reverse side. This increases the likelihood that the erectors will consult the safe and proper use guidelines that are set forth in the Warning Poster. The truss manufacturer then knows that the warning poster is delivered to the jobsite and ends up in the hands of the erector, as it is unlikely that the trusses will be erected without the placement plan.

FACT: The WTCA Warning Tag is a very effective way of drawing attention to the erectors of the importance of proper temporary and permanent bracing required for the safe installation of trusses. This tag sets forth a good diagram depicting temporary bracing, refers the erector to the "job package" (which, as I have indicated above, would include the WTCA Warning Poster) for temporary bracing information and appropriately refers the erector to the building designer for permanent bracing information.

History is in fact a vast early warning system. Through an effective jobsite delivery package I am convinced that truss and component manufacturers will significantly improve the statistics with respect to truss collapses and accidents, reduce the risks that they face, and improve the professionalism of themselves and the industry.

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