

August 2001

"Engineering Review Committee Update" by Rachel Smith

The Engineering Review Committee (ERC) met in Chicago on May 23. Attendees included representatives from component manufacturers, truss plate and connector manufacturers, lumber suppliers and associations, and independent engineering consultants. Committee vice-chair Joe Michels of Brunsell Lumber, assumed the duties of chair in the absence of Kevin Eaton of Wood Structures. Joe led the group through discussion in several areas, including:

TPI's ANSI Standards: The ERC meeting followed two days of productive project committee meetings on TPI 1 and TPI 4. Enough members were present to achieve a quorum and consensus was reached on some important points relating to the quality section of the TPI 1 standard and on design responsibilities in the new TPI 4 standard. TPI intends to have TPI 1 completed by the November 1, 2001 deadline.

Building Codes Development: WTCA staff discussed some upcoming deadlines with respect to revisions to the IBC 2000 and their intention to oppose an approved modification to a section that would put permanent bracing design responsibilities in conflict with ANSI/TPI 1-1995. Staff also discussed the development of NFPA 5000, a new national model code from the National Fire Protection Association that would be in direct competition with the I-codes (IBC, IRC, etc.) NFPA 5000 information is available on-line at www.nfpa.org. WTCA staff is currently monitoring two proposed items for the NFPA code. One is a proposal to have automatic sprinklers for all buildings other than one and two family dwellings. The second is a proposal to specify sprinklers for all buildings.

Electronic Submittals: Kirk Grundahl briefed the group on the issue of electronic submittals. Last fall, the Federal Government legislated that it was possible to use electronic signatures. The National Council of Engineering Examiners got together and drafted model legislation for implementing electronic seals. Twenty-six states are looking at this kind of legislation and as many as thirteen already have it. Soon fax signatures may be acceptable. The Florida DOT has a downloadable program called Professional Electronic Data Delivery System (PEDDS). WTCA will continue to monitor developments in this area.

Finger-Joined Lumber Guideline for Trusses Update: Rachel Smith attended an industry advisory group meeting in Vancouver to guide the Forintek study on the effects of finger-joined lumber in trusses. As a result, some specific areas of research for the study will be the effects of finger-joining on plated joints, investigating the effects of over pressing, and how well finger-joined materials hold up during handling. Helen Griffin of Weyerhaeuser said that this meeting was an attempt to be proactive and solve problems before finger-joined lumber becomes widely used in the market.

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