

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE

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President's Message



Working Together to Face Legislative Challenges by Michael Ruede, 2002 WTCA President

As we charge into the New Year, WTCA has many priorities. This issue of SBC Magazine will focus on the legislative and legal issues our businesses and our industry face today and will face in the future.

In my home state of Florida we are facing many new legislative challenges, including a new statewide building code which will be implemented on March 1, 2002. There has been much time, effort, money and manpower given to the development and implementation of this new code and there are still several areas where we couldn't get it right. Everyone seems to have their own agenda when it comes to these sorts of things so no one pulls in the same direction, and no one considers what will happen to the industry when s/he pulls in the direction that is best for an individual company or related industry association(s). The component industry in Florida is caught in this type of tug-of-war. WTCA's Florida Chapters had to pick up the pieces in the High Velocity Hurricane Zones (HVHZ) portion of the Florida Building Code (FBC) on behalf of the industry and were forced into a reactive instead of a proactive position. Now we are faced with compliance. This section is specific to only two counties, Dade and Broward, but they are two big counties. More importantly, the fear is that, at some point in time, other counties will adopt these sections of the code because they are also coastal and face similar conditions. As everyone knows, once momentum gets going in a direction it becomes very hard to make a course correction.

Here are a few examples of what has been identified as the component manufacturer's responsibility under the truss portion of the High Velocity Hurricane Zone Code. Of specific concern is the unclear language that is used that could potentially be subject to a wide range of interpretations.

§2319.17.2.1.1 Prefabricated wood trusses shall be designed by a Registered Professional Engineer (delegated engineer) and fabricated in accordance with the National Design Standard for Metal Plate Connected Wood Truss Construction of the Truss Plate Institute (TPI-95). The truss system designer (delegated engineer) shall prepare the truss system shop drawings. Such shop drawings shall be submitted to the building official for review and approval. The shop drawings shall meet the following requirements:

1.
2. The delegated engineering documents shall show all permanent bracing as defined on the

Architect or Engineer of Record plans along with individual bracing required to secure the entire system under all design conditions noted on the architect or engineer plans.

3. Permanent bracing of individual truss members may be required on certain members of the trusses to prevent the members from buckling in the plane normal to the trusses (buckling in the narrow direction). This bracing shall be designed for both upward and downward loads and shall be shown on the individual truss drawings (truss engineering usually shown on 8-1/2 x 11 inch sheets ("A" size drawings). The design of this bracing shall be the responsibility of the delegated engineer. The contractor shall be responsible for seeing that this bracing is properly installed. This bracing may be in the form of (but not limited) to "T" bracing of an individual member, or lateral bracing of a series of members common to a number of trusses. Where lateral bracing is used, this bracing shall be restrained against lateral movement, in accordance with details provided by the delegated Engineer or by the Architect or Professional Engineer of Record. All details and sections required to show the size and connections of all secondary members will be supplied on the delegated engineering plans and shall show all framing, connections and bracing on one or more primary plans of minimum size 24 x 36 inches.....

7. Truss design drawings shall indicate the support and minimum bearing of the roof structural system, the permanent cross/lateral bracing, bracing to transfer member buckling forces to the structure and all bracing and anchorage required to resist uplift and lateral forces.....

§2319.17.2.3.3 Multiple member girder trusses shall be pre-drilled at the truss plant for connection bolts only. Hanger bolt holes shall be drilled on-site on location indicated on approved drawings.

§2319.17.2.4.2 For trusses having an overall length of the bottom chord in excess of 35 feet (10.7 m) or 6 feet (1829 mm) overall height erection shall be supervised by either a Registered Professional Engineer or Registered Architect retained by the contractor. A retainer letter from the Registered Professional Engineer or Registered Architect shall be submitted along with the shop drawings as part of the permit document.

As I'm sure you'll understand, when you think about our traditional scope of work, we as component manufacturers do not want to be responsible for the items in these examples. Thus began the building of what we call the "Florida War Chest" and the formation of the Florida Executive Committee. This committee is made up of the presidents from all five WTCA Chapters in Florida as well as three people representing the southern, central and northern regions of the state. We began by meeting with local officials in charge of the FBC structural committees to gather information on how to aggressively take action and change this portion of the code, or at least rewrite those portions that did not adequately state the component manufacturer's scope of responsibility. After several meetings with FBC Officials to get direction, the Florida Executive Committee began to rewrite the section. We then worked on the rewrite at the Florida Chapter summit in January of 2001 so that statewide, the component industry would come to a consensus on the verbiage used and speak with one voice. We completed the rewrite, which was submitted to a newly formed subcommittee on

our behalf. There has been one meeting with the subcommittee since its formation last September in which progress was made, including the approval of our group to write a commentary for this section of the code.

During this time, we challenged each WTCA Chapter to raise money for the Florida War Chest. The goal was to raise \$20,000 to help fight the code change. Many chapters held golf tournaments and through their efforts and those of members like Bob Becht, Brad Cooke and John Herring, who called manufacturers for in-kind contributions, to date we've raised \$10,400. We will use this money to help change the truss portion of the Florida Building Code.

This is truly a grassroots effort by many in Florida to make a legislative change, and though we are not finished, it's a great example of what teamwork (WTCA Chapters with support from WTCA staff) can accomplish by putting our personal agendas aside and placing our industry's agenda at the forefront. You and your chapter members can make a significant impact by getting involved in local industry issues and utilizing WTCA staff to help you mobilize an action plan. You'll be amazed at what you can positively and proactively change.

I hope you enjoy the pages of this issue of SBC Magazine. It's our hope to inform our readers as well as educate them. Drop us a line and let us know how we're doing.

Finally, be sure to mark your calendars and make plans to attend the WTCA Legislative Conference in Washington D.C., May 8-11. It's an action-packed group of meetings that you'll never forget, which will have a lasting impact on behalf of our industry.

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