

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE

May 2002

BCMC 2002

www.bcmshow.com

Making BCMC the Best It Can Be: Bringing Technology Home by Carl Schoening

Throughout the years, the structural building component industry has continued to evolve. This industry is still very young compared to many in the building sector, yet it has outperformed most other areas in technical advancement and increased sophistication. The component industry is becoming the standard by which all others are judged. This advancement is due in large part to the equipment suppliers, plate manufacturers, software developers and other vendors. Once a year these suppliers to the industry gather together to demonstrate their latest innovations. This gathering is the [Building Component Manufacturers Conference. BCMC!](#)

BCMC is not only a trade show, but also the best method of information transfer in the component industry. Each year we have the opportunity to see the latest innovations to improve design, production, management and value-added customer service. Industry suppliers are provided with the opportunity to engage customers and business partners face-to-face. Customers challenge their suppliers with problems, urging them forward to the next industry-changing discovery. Quite possibly the best feature of BCMC is that it affords suppliers to the component manufacturing marketplace a venue to compile some direct market research that will advance their proprietary interests. Where else can one company reach as many as 400 potential customer companies and ask questions that will take us to the next level of service, product development and profitable performance?

I know you must be thinking, "What new discovery can be out there?" When I look back to the not so distant past, I have seen many revolutionary strides. Layout programs have quickly become very professional tools for sales, production and installation. BCMC 2001 attendees witnessed exhibitors displaying the future of truss software. One exhibitor introduced "Whole House Design" software while another unveiled palm computing technology that will enable the use of truss design software in the field.

With great improvement to design capability, manufacturing processes became the focus. It wasn't long ago that most trusses were produced on wooden tables or in jigs on the ground. Many of us thought the state of the art had reached its height with the invention of the Mark V press. We were wrong. New systems continue to be invented and improved, reducing manufacturing times and labor costs. Having witnessed the advent of the roller gantry and the production improvement realized was amazing. Truss stackers that reduced injury and labor costs made us all look for the next new product to improve profitability. More recently, power measuring devices for cut-off saws, cartridge feed material handling equipment and specialized double-cheek cut saws have found their way into the truss industry at BCMC.

Now that component manufacturers can build more efficiently, the bottleneck moved to other areas. The component saw has undergone vast changes since the early days of the industry. It wasn't too many years ago that power angulations were a dream. The addition of touch screens and computer control has improved saw output and accuracy, while reducing training time. Along with the many specialty saws available, cutting has allowed manufacturers to focus on other areas of business. Now we are seeing auto feed systems and the automated marking of pieces incorporated into component saws. Most recently we have seen exhibits featuring the automatic capture of saw data transferred to production management software.

BCMC has been the venue for bringing all of this new technology into focus. Demonstrations of equipment and software allow manufacturer attendees to make comparisons that may alter the direction of their business. BCMC also provides this opportunity in a single location. Rather than traveling to many areas to view new technology, decision costs are reduced by coming to the one place each year where industry leaders gather to see the latest improvements in goods related to the component industry.

This year, as in the past, BCMC will host industry suppliers. The number of new exhibitors has increased over the years, which provides component manufacturer attendees a greater value. The exhibitors that display new technology aren't limited to software and equipment any longer. Customer service and value-added products have become a much greater focus. These innovations help manufacturers build stronger relationships with customers by providing labor savings and cycle time improvement through additional products and services. In addition, new materials are becoming important along with connectors, bracing, handling equipment, shipping equipment and tracking tools. These are all areas in which new technology will help move this industry to another level. BCMC brings all of these technologies together under one roof with knowledgeable exhibitors to answer all your product and service questions.

BCMC brings primary market research opportunities to each supplier company that attends, and transfers new technology home to each person who attends. Please join us in Columbus, OH for BCMC 2002. The technology is waiting.

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