

### President's Message



#### Technology in the Truss Plan by Michael Ruede, 2002 WTCA President

The technology surrounding our businesses today is amazing to say the least. I'm sure that all of you have looked back in time to when you first started your business or came into the component industry and thought, like the old ad used to say, "You've Come a Long Way Baby!"

When you think about how young our industry really is at just over 50 years old, we're babies. The leaps that have been made in just the past 15 short years in the technology that helps run our day-to-day operations is unbelievable.

Computers have simplified and streamlined the component design process. CAD systems and truss layout programs have enabled us to cut weeks off of design time. Those same programs now generate the cutting bills and can be downloaded directly to computerized saws that track how many pieces have been cut, how long they were, at what angles, how quickly it was done, and how long it took to move onto the next one. If that isn't enough, you can mark the piece with a laser using just about any sort of identification you can imagine!

Oh, but it doesn't stop there. The computer has also greatly enhanced what we do and how we do it on the assembly side as well. You can set up an entire truss with the touch of your finger on a touch screen. It's true artwork when you see a plant with this kind of automation in action. Did I mention that while all this is going on in your manufacturing facility that, on the same computer network, truss technicians are downloading these cuts directly to the saws and the assembly tables from the server. In addition, the plant manager and/or the scheduling coordinator is scheduling what will be cut next, built next, and most importantly, delivered next. This is all being done "Just In Time" and virtually paper free. Did you catch that last part? I said VIRTUALLY PAPER FREE!

As always, we look forward to the sharing of your ideas and experiences with our readers, so fire up that computer on your desk and email us at [editor@sbcmag.info](mailto:editor@sbcmag.info). I'll leave you with this final thought from Oliver Wendell Holmes: "The great thing in this world is not so much where we are, but in what direction we are moving."

Copyright © 2002 by Truss Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. For permission to reprint materials from SBC Magazine, call 608/310-6706 or email [editor@sbcmag.info](mailto:editor@sbcmag.info).

The mission of Structural Building Components Magazine (SBC) is to increase the knowledge of and to promote the common interests of those engaged in manufacturing and distributing of structural building components to ensure growth and continuity, and to be the information conduit by staying abreast of leading-edge issues. SBC will take a leadership role on behalf of the component industry in disseminating technical and marketplace information, and will maintain advisory committees consisting of the most knowledgeable professionals in the industry. The opinions expressed in SBC are those of the authors and those quoted solely, and are not necessarily the opinions of any of the affiliated associations (SBCC, WTCA, SCDA & STCA).