

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE

January/February 2003

Carbeck Structural Components Institute Acquires 501(c)3 Classification by Libby Maurer

Tom Carbeck would have been proud. [The Carbeck Structural Components Institute \(CSCI\)](#) has hit the ground and is running. Thanks to the recent IRS approval, CSCI is now officially classified under Section 501(c)(3). According to the IRS, "the organizations described in IRC Section 501(c)(3) are commonly referred to under the general heading of 'charitable organizations.'" Established in 2001, CSCI is just that: a charitable organization dedicated to promoting research and education focused on structural framing of residential housing and commercial buildings.

Gary Sartor of Stone Truss Company in Oceanside, CA, has been supportive of Carbeck's recent efforts to provide research and education to the wood truss industry and the fire service. Why does Sartor show such enthusiasm for CSCI? In September 2002, CSCI introduced its first project, an educational program, to the public and the membership of the structural components industry. The program, called The Fire Performance of Wood Trusses, was created from a collaborative effort between the Houston Fire Department (HFD) and WTCA to come up with a means to educate both industries about the facts and myths of wood truss fire performance and the needs of the fire service.

Sartor recently spoke with SBC staff, explaining his loyalty to CSCI:

LM: What has caused you to be so supportive of CSCI?

GS: Well, CSCI is doing a wonderful service to the truss industry and I recognize that by supporting them in any way I can.

LM: Is there a problem in your region of the country that you know of where the fire service has been negative towards the use of wood trusses in residential or commercial construction applications?

GS: Not that I am aware of. But I have heard of the problems they are having in New York lately. The fact that trusses should not have the reputation they do in some jurisdictions is enough for me to encourage an organization to keep up the work they are doing to try to reverse that reputation.

LM: You've recently delivered The Fire Performance of Wood Trusses to a friend in the local fire service. What did you hope to achieve by doing this?

GS: I hope he will give me some feedback on what he thinks of the program and maybe he'll even share it with some of his colleagues. I'm curious to see what he has to say.

LM: Are you looking at the Fire CD as a way to prevent that issue from invading your area?

GS: Yes, I think we can prevent that type of negative attitude from spreading any further than it already has. I see using the resources Carbeck provides as a preventative measure instead of a reaction to a serious image problem.

Sartor is not alone recognizing the value of CSCI's mission to provide research and education to the industry. In fact, nearly thirty companies have made a commitment to pledge \$500 or more annually to CSCI. It is with these contributions that Carbeck was able to fund the research and production of The Fire Performance of Wood Trusses. Your continued generous support of CSCI will allow further funding of these types of projects on behalf of the structural framing industry. Annual contributions to CSCI can be tacked onto your company's WTCA dues billing each May. All contributions to CSCI are tax-deductible as the IRS has reported that: "organizations described in IRC Section 501(c)(3), other than testing for public safety organizations, are eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions in accordance with IRC Section 170."

Allen Erickson of Cal-Asia Truss in Concord, CA represents one such company who has opted to include their annual contribution to CSCI on their WTCA dues billing. Erickson indicated that Cal-Asia has not had a problem with their local fire service or had to deal with negativism towards wood truss performance, although Erickson said he recognizes there is "enormous potential for what could be catastrophic decisions made by CM's if bad information gets out in the community."

Erickson noted that the information in the program was presented in such a way that the fire service and officials should find it credible:

LM: How successful was the approach taken to conduct research for this project with respected members of the fire service and the wood truss industry?

AE: The Fire Performance of Wood Trusses was made using the best approach possible; the most effective way this could have been done was to bring fire officials together and have them come forward to do research in alignment with the wood truss industry. That's what you see when you watch this presentation.

LM: Will this presentation have a positive impact on the portion of the fire service that views it?

AE: The guys who took the time to participate in this have standing among the fire service and that's what is going to make people accept this information as truth and fact. You can see a ton of paper in front of you, and try to get the facts that way, but this presentation goes a long way to dispel the misinformation that is circulating.

LM: There is a fine line between creating an issue unnecessarily and presenting the right information too late in the game. What side of the issue do you fall on in relation to how this presentation should be used?

AE: You can wait for things to get really bad, and then you are using this program as a way to

change existing prejudices by replacing them with facts. I think the way to go about it is to follow those little newspaper clippings and watch a potential issue as it grows. You need to realize when it is time to get involved and then present the appropriate information.

You can be certain that there are many other projects in Carbeck's midst. We can expect to see more programs that provide invaluable factual content for the benefit of the residential and commercial building industries (which includes the wood truss industry), similar to The Fire Performance of Wood Trusses, in the near future. Just ask Richard Brown, president of Truss Systems in Oxford, GA and Director of CSCI.

What should people know about the value that CSCI provides to the structural building components industry?

RB: The institute's ultimate goal is to help the construction industry undertake certain research projects that wouldn't get done ordinarily. The Fire Performance of Wood Trusses is a perfect example: Carbeck was able to create that program and move it forward in a efficient and effective way that is very beneficial to the industry overall.

LM: So those who have a deep-rooted, long-term interest in the future and advancement of the structural components industry can view CSCI as an organization that will work side by side with other industries to establish a support network?

RB: If individuals see that value in CSCI and decide to make the effort to support it, we've got a chance to channel that energy and research back to the industry.

CONCLUSION

So what direction is Carbeck going next? Broad distribution of the educational CD to the fire service is its top priority. Future plans include continued work with the Houston Fire Department to do additional testing and specific case studies on actual fire events. This will aid in reaching the goal of a better understanding of the fire performance of structural components, as well as continue to enhance fire service education and safety. From there, with the support of industry leaders like those we spoke to for this article, there is no telling the capacity for what can be accomplished with CSCI.

To make a contribution to CSCI and receive a copy of The Fire Performance of Wood Trusses, or to sign up to receive CSCI's quarterly newsletter, contact CSCI staff at 608/274-4849, ext. 24. For information about upcoming CSCI projects, visit www.carbeck.org.

Copyright © 2003 by Truss Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. For permission to reprint materials from SBC Magazine, call 608/310-6706 or email 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).