

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE

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WTCA Update

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Membership — More Than Paying Dues by Carl Schoening, WTCA Membership Committee Chair

Just when you thought it was safe to begin reading SBC Magazine again, here I am with more extolling from the "Soap Box." I know you all thought that once my term as BCMC Committee Chair was over you would never again have to hear me rant. Well, I have been asked and accepted the role of WTCA Membership Chair and now have new issues to tackle. This position gives me a chance to focus on some of the real challenges facing our industry and our association.

As I travel the country, visiting component manufacturers, I keep running across the same issues time after time. There are four primary issues that I want to discuss in this installment. Each is equally important as the next and all need attention.

WIN NEW MEMBERS

First of all, let me say that I am thankful that we have a solid percentage of component manufacturers that are members of WTCA. The problem here is that ALL component manufacturers should be members. I know many of you believe that the role of the membership committee is to seek out and provide compelling arguments that will win new members. That is true...well, sort of. While that is the mission of the membership committee, most of you don't realize that ALL WTCA members should consider themselves members of this committee. I know you are probably thinking, "I didn't sign up for that." You're right. You didn't officially sign up, but by being a component manufacturer in today's market you should know that the more component manufacturers that become WTCA members, the stronger our collective voice will be. Each WTCA member should have a goal to find one potential member in your area, approach him or her and recruit them. You know component manufacturers in your area better than anyone else and you should be able to provide that single compelling reason that you belong. I am awed by those few individuals that are trying to establish chapters in their areas. It is a thankless job that these people have undertaken and it benefits all component manufacturers. These few see the advantage of greater representation and the increased power our industry can have. You must be able to see other component manufacturers as more than competitors. You must see them as a valuable asset, a resource for furthering our interests and as a member of the fraternity of component manufacturers.

DON'T BE COMPLACENT

My second Soapbox topic is complacency. I was recently speaking to a component manufacturer in California (you know who you are). He is a member of WTCA and asked me about the

California Chapter, CALESCA. I told him the name of the proper contact person and told him we really needed him to become more involved. He said, "No, no...I just want to keep a finger on what's going on." Does that sound familiar? Do you have members in your chapter that pay the dues and only occasionally attend meetings? Are you one of those members? WTCA needs everyone to get involved! WTCA wants and needs active membership. When we speak as an association, we need everyone to understand the issues and offer help in sculpting WTCA positions. This ensures that the interests of component manufacturers in your area are represented and that concerns are addressed in a manner that benefits all component manufacturers. I know my buddy in Guadeloupe never thought our discussion would lead to this. This is one of our industry's true problems. Participate! Be a part of the solutions for our industry. The one absolute is that our desire at WTCA is to work on real day-in day-out challenges in our business. If you have an issue it is likely another member does as well. By working on it collectively it is much less costly to solve and will get solved much faster than each individual member plant doing the identical work 1099 times. For instance, think about the value of Truss Technician Training Online. If each individual member plant had done that work, the collective investment would have been over \$300 million.

ENCOURAGE VENDOR INVOLVEMENT

This next one is something you have heard me preach before. Get your vendors involved! You probably think that most of your vendors aren't directly a part of the component industry. Most of you feel that plate suppliers, equipment dealers and hanger manufacturers are the only vendors that need to be associate members. That, to coin a phrase, is WRONG! Many of you have a lot of vendors that you do significant business with. I would venture to say that some of your other vendors are intimately involved in your everyday business. Tire companies, bulk fuel companies, fork lift and truck dealers and lumber brokers play a very significant role in your business and yet, very few are members of your association. You support these companies and their industries every day.

Are they supporting your industry or association through membership, advertising in SBC Magazine and attending BCMC? Have you asked them to participate? These are valuable associate members. They can offer business perspective and perhaps offer solutions to problems that may be common to other component manufacturers. Recruit them and ask them to participate. They can serve well on committees and if nothing else, give you the chance to strengthen that relationship. As a good example, have you been asked by your customers to support the local/regional Home Builders Association?

MONITOR THE ISSUES THAT AFFECT THE INDUSTRY

The last one is the tough one. Many component manufacturers are also lumber or building material dealers. That is a very good thing. It gives you diversification and a broader audience. You also belong to a number of trade associations. Those of you that do belong to other industry associations should be monitoring the policies and positions these other organizations take on issues related to the component industry. If these positions are in conflict with WTCA policies, you need to inform WTCA so they can begin to contact them and begin to reach understanding on the issue. You should also contact the association and tell them they are in conflict with WTCA and may potentially be harming a key part of your business. Most times they are not aware

of the damage they can do to the component industry.

It is our responsibility as WTCA members to educate the uninformed. We cannot let these uninformed positions erode the value of the component industry. Our mission as members is to promote the component industry and to positively represent it. When we hear disparaging information or statements, regardless of the source, we need to correct it. The disruption and distraction that occurs only hurts our industry and its position of strength. We are one of the most sophisticated parts of the construction industry. If there are component manufacturers with opposing views, we need to reach out to them, get all the facts on the table, find the common ground and reach a solution. We need to stand united in order to win the battles facing our industry.

Okay, here's your chance to help. Join, find new members, PARTICIPATE, recruit vendors and stand united. No problem. Nothing to it, nothing to it at all.

WTCA Past President's Meeting Report

WTCA Past Presidents met in Dallas on January 15, 2003 for their annual committee meeting. Past presidents in attendance were: Mike Ruede, Bob Ward, Don Hershey, Gary Sweatt, John Herring, Lenny Sylk, Mary Pat Keller, Merle Nett, Rip Rogers, Roger Gibbs and Staton Douthit. Also in attendance were 2003 Executive Committee members Scott Arquilla, Dan Holland and Kendall Hoyd, WTCA legal counsel Kent Pagel, as well as WTCA staff members Kirk and Suzi Grundahl.

The most notable item of discussion was the TPI/WTCA relationship in serving the structural building components industry. The groups agreed that the litmus test has created a mechanism for more clearly defining the work efforts and responsibilities of both groups and that continuing down the path that has been created will have long-term, industry-wide benefits. As a result, WTCA/TPI will be in a stronger position to effectively serve their respective memberships.

Other items discussed at this meeting included:

- Monitoring future trends in the component manufacturing business, such as consolidation, building material supply relationships and builder relations, with the focus on how best to serve our membership.
- WTCA chapters and the hope of the Past Presidents that the association as a whole will gain the benefits of a strong chapter structure in the next few years.
- The beneficial relationships coming out of the work going on with the U.S. Value-Added Wood Products Alliance.
- An historical review of where we have been and where we are going.
- The value of the Carbeck Structural Components Institute and its potential to help our industry.
- The role of the Past President's committee and how it can best assist the WTCA Executive Committee by providing perspective on the issues the organization faces.

There was an excellent exchange of ideas throughout the day that will serve to help our association continue to grow and get much stronger.

New From WTCA

WTCA staff is constantly listening to members' concerns and suggestions for ways to improve and advance the level of education in the structural building components industry. For instance, WTCA staff was made aware of a problem with drywall cracking and crowning in the Southwest. In the months following the alert, staff worked diligently to create a new publication in the Truss Technology in Building series called "Drywall Cracking and Crowning Problems in Arid Environments." This document explains the mechanism by which drywall cracking and crowning occurs, how seasonal lumber movement is not the culprit, and how correct gypsum board installation practices avoid the problem.

Susan Harrelson of James Truss Co. in North Las Vegas, NV, responded to the new document with the following comments via email: "We in the truss industry here try very hard to take a leadership role among our customers and related businesses in solving problems common to the construction community, and WTCA helps us do that. The responsiveness WTCA has shown to specific problems, such as the Drywall Cracking and Crowning (DCC) issue, has been invaluable to us. Thanks again for your help."

This is just one example that demonstrates precisely why good and open communication between WTCA staff and the entire membership creates strength and unity within our association that is reflected throughout the entire commercial and residential building industry.

For more information on this new addition to the TTB series or any of WTCA products and services, contact WTCA Staff.

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