

# STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE

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## BCSI 1-03: Changing Minds & Statistics by Carren Koebke

*Now one year old, BCSI 1-03 continues to make impressions on the building industry, especially when it comes to safety on the jobsite.*

Frank Subzda, President of CEUs Inc., a safety training and consulting firm in Fort Myers, FL, realized a need for an educational safety seminar when he learned of a fatality due to reckless jobsite behavior. "After casualty investigations by engineers and OSHA determined the death was from improper bracing, I realized that a lot of people on the job[site] don't know the safety requirements so I said 'let's do something about it,'" he recalls.

Frank knew just who to call. He dialed Raymond Building Supply Corporation and asked for Mike Nilles.

Frank was familiar with Mike Nilles' involvement with Southwest Florida Truss Manufacturers Association (SWFTMA). Mike served as secretary of the chapter for a year and moved on to be the chapter's president for seven years. Mike remembers that initial call from Frank, "He called and said he was looking for someone to give a presentation with the goal of educating those in the field about truss safety requirements and who better to call for help than the local truss association."

Mike had done seminars like this before and at times faced low attendance. He remembers, "Five years ago we hosted a safety seminar where we had more educators on hand than students." As you can imagine, he was leery about embracing this presenter role again, but Frank assured him he would take care of the logistics like location and attendance; all Mike had to prepare was the presentation. Frank contacted Apprenticeship Academy and asked them to donate the space and luckily they agreed. He explains, "It was important to get the space free so we could offer the seminar free of charge. Apprenticeship Academy even threw in free coffee. This enabled us to invite attendees to a free seminar—one that they would be more likely to attend."

While Frank hammered out the details, Mike took charge of the material. He, too, knew just who to call for the latest safety information. With one call he learned that WTCA had already created a Truss Technology Workshop (TTW) dedicated to the new Building Component Safety Information (BCSI) 1-03 documents. The TTW focused on the entire BCSI B-Series outlining all the Summary Sheets within the BCSI 1-03 Booklet, "A Guide to Good Practice for Handling, Installing & Bracing of Metal Plate Connected Wood Trusses." Each of the individual eleven sections occupied its own portion of the TTW presentation. This PowerPoint® program was the perfect thing to use for educating Florida's industry representatives on the most current and comprehensive jobsite safety regulations.

On Tuesday, April 27, 2004, Mike Nilles found a packed classroom with more than 65 engineers, jobsite workers, supervisors and project owners in attendance. Obviously, Frank's realization of the need for jobsite safety education in the state was not an overestimation, and low attendance was a thing of the past. In an hour-and-a-half, Mike led participants through the BCSI TTW's first three sections: B1-Guide for Handling, Installing and Bracing of Wood Trusses; B2-Truss Installation and Temporary Bracing; and B3-Web Member Permanent Bracing/Web Reinforcement. Throughout the presentation he addressed correct bracing, installing and handling, explained and critiqued accompanying photos and answered specific questions from participants along the way. (Visit [www.wtcatko.com](http://www.wtcatko.com) for training info and [www.woodtruss.com](http://www.woodtruss.com) for publications info.)

Mike handed out a complimentary BCSI 1-03 booklet so that all in attendance could easily follow along with the presentation, thanks to the generosity of Bob Sims of USP Structural Connectors, who donated the 70 booklets. It was obvious to Mike that those in attendance listened carefully and plan to apply their new-found comprehension of safety information in the field.

"At the very least Frank and I wanted to present the material to show attendees the guidelines," Mike stated. "Too many in our industry have never seen these materials or examined the new Summary Sheets. This presentation was a good way to facilitate that and get good exposure. Hopefully those who came to the seminar will take their booklets back to their companies and spread the word."

Mike was truly impressed with the BCSI TTW. "This is a terrific tool full of excellent educational material. It made giving this presentation so easy, I didn't even have to adapt it to Florida's building issues like wind application because it already dealt with temporary bracing and stability. It is a clear, comprehensive presentation," he commented. This was extremely helpful to him because it relieved him from having to do a tedious chore of the past: researching, writing and creating. To put it in his words, "[the presentation] was packaged and ready to go."

The BCSI TTW contains the latest recommendations for safety on and around the jobsite. All of the bracing methods are laid out with concise bullet points and explanatory color-coded photos, diagrams and drawings, which make it easy for all in the audience to follow, even non-English speakers.

Mike said, "I have seen generations of safety products come and go over my 23 years in the business, and I can honestly say that this is a vast improvement. WTCA and TPI set a goal to make comprehensive, joint publications that are easy to understand. That is exactly what was accomplished in the BCSI B-Series. These publications are understandable, explicit documents that offer more pictures and drawings and fewer words. The creation of the BCSI and its supporting TTW was right on the money."

Mike knows the benefits of the new BCSI B-Summary Sheets firsthand. Raymond Building Supply Corporation uses the B1 and B2 Summary Sheets as their jobsite safety documents. He sees the new publications and the joint publications agreement as "WTCA and TPI taking the meat of their documents and combining it to make the best ever safety guide."

The April presentation went so well that Mike and Frank are currently planning to hold sequel seminars to overview the BCSI TTW sections B4 - B11. Mike says, "I would love to finish it by introducing the remaining chapters. There is an interest there like there never has been before."

Frank had only good things to say about Mike and the BCSI TTW: "Seminars like this will go a long way toward changing the perception of Florida's builders. When I attend safety meetings, attendees from other states view those of us from Florida as cowboys who attempt to get away with things." At present, Florida has the worst safety record in the U.S. with the highest on-the-job death rating. Frank and Mike are working to change those statistics and stop reckless fatalities by "doing something about it."

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[SBC HOME PAGE](#)

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