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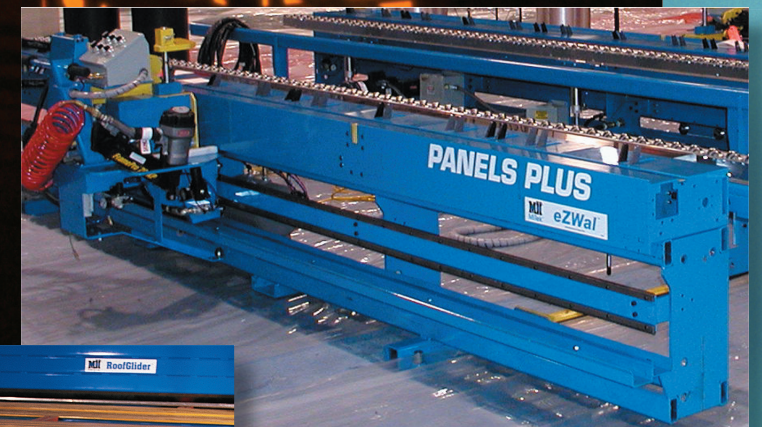
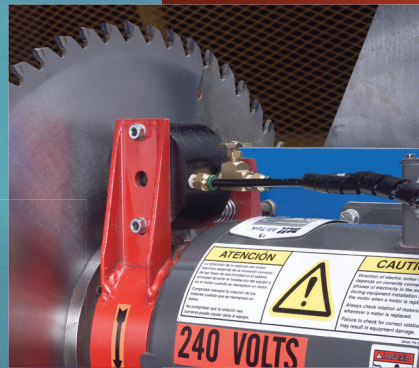
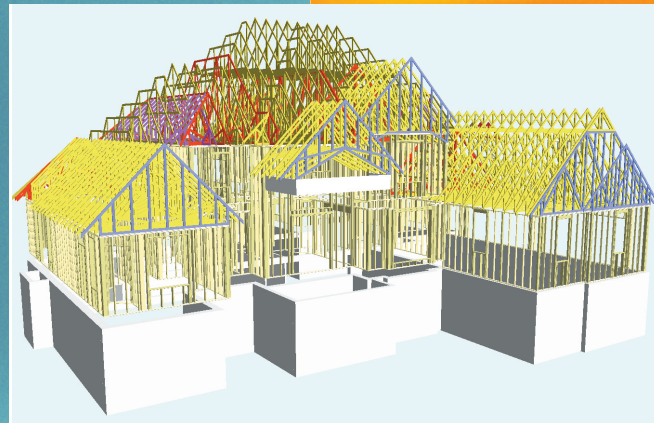
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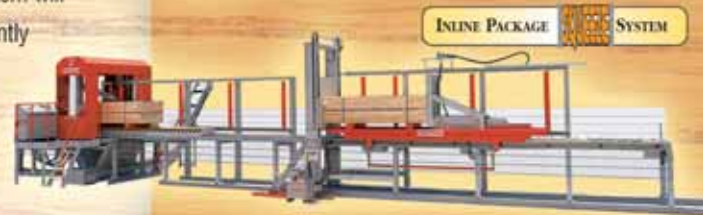
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Editor's Message

Wanted: One Long-term Negotiated Settlement

by Kendall Hoyd

"It is difficult to say what is impossible, for the dream of yesterday is the hope of today and the reality of tomorrow."

—Robert H. Goddard, U.S. physicist & pioneer rocket engineer (1882-1945)

So this issue is devoted to materials handling and automation. I read somewhere once that a writer should write only about things that they know about. As I have discussed in some previous columns, that leaves me precious few options. What does material handling equipment in a truss plant handle? Softwood lumber, right? I know little about softwood lumber in terms of how it is handled in the truss plant, but softwood lumber trade and the current dispute with Canada is another matter. So while the softwood lumber dispute stands with about six degrees of separation from materials handling in the truss plant, I will use this space to share some thoughts on the dispute.

To say that the U.S. and Canadian sides of this issue have been deadlocked for two years would perhaps imply more action than there actually has been, so I will just say that we have made very little progress. For much of this time, the two sides have just not been talking because of various reasons on both sides of the border. There is a long (and I mean LONG) history to this dispute. By some accounts, the dispute can be traced back two centuries. I have been told by a source who does know what he is talking about that the second trade dispute ever recorded in our history as a country involved lumber trade with Canada! I'm not going to get into all that history here, but I have some observations from recent meetings and conversations on this subject. (You can learn more about the history of the dispute in an article in the December 2003 issue of **SBC**: "The Dispute That Refuses to Die" by FLC Les Reed.)

It is important that when we have opportunities to talk with our elected federal representatives, that they also hear from "our side" of this issue.

First, the two sides are currently talking. There is reason to be mildly optimistic that they will make progress and perhaps even reach an agreement this year. This is important news because a long-term, negotiated settlement that both parties feel brings equity to the cross-border lumber trade is extremely important to companies in our industry, and for those in all other value-added wood products businesses.

Second, in the several conversations others and I have had over the last couple of years with elected officials and federal government officers, we often hear that the only "side" that they hear from regularly is the Coalition for Fair Lumber Imports (aka "the Coalition"). The Coalition is a group of lumber companies that brought the anti-dumping action against Canadian lumber companies upon the expiration of the previous lumber agreement that expired on 2003. Since 1982, Canada and the U.S. have been involved in three lumber trade disputes (widely called Lumber I, II and III). The Softwood Lumber Agreement avoided a fourth dispute for five years until the latest dispute (Lumber IV). Following the expiration of the Softwood Lumber Agreement on April 2, 2001, the U.S. Coalition filed a countervailing duty petition and its first anti-dumping petition against Canadian softwood lumber. These companies represent a little over half (54 percent) of the U.S. lumber industry, and this anti-dumping case is what has led to the countervailing duties and the anti-dumping charges that have been attached to Canadian lumber sold into the U.S. market.

Continued on page 8

at a glance

- ❑ The Canadian-U.S. softwood lumber dispute causes business uncertainty and lumber cost volatility.
- ❑ Congress needs to hear from our industry every chance we get that we are in favor of an enduring negotiated trade agreement.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Yearly Avg
1995	387	389	366	342	322	298	337	333	352	326	330	338	343
1996	334	353	359	372	422	415	408	448	449	427	465	434	407
1997	442	449	439	463	450	433	435	419	399	384	385	375	423
1998	365	381	374	374	336	337	351	361	332	337	346	356	354
1999	379	391	398	401	428	465	487	411	395	364	391	390	408
2000	393	392	387	361	333	337	310	293	297	283	289	278	329
2001	271	292	307	330	408	371	331	340	315	281	291	284	318
2002	303	323	345	330	319	308	314	298	285	281	271	276	304
2003	284	300	284	283	279	303	302	336	375	325	338	327	311
2004	341	376	382	431	456	423	426	473	432	373	355	376	404
2005	382	420	422	404	386	401							

Figure 1. Random Lengths Framing Lumber Composite Price - by Month, 1995-2005. Prices are \$ per thousand board feet. Used by permission of Random Lengths, www.randomlengths.com.

Editor’s Message

Continued from page 7

These duties and charges have in turn led to a “two-tiered” lumber market, where Canadian lumber bought north of the border is at a materially lower cost than Canadian lumber bought south of the border. As we all know, non-U.S. lumber is necessary to serve the demand in the U.S. market due to the dramatic reductions in the U.S. timber harvest over the past two decades. According to the U.S. International Trade Commission’s “Conditions of Competition in the U.S. Market for Wood Structural Building Components,” Canadian softwood lumber imports account for about 36 percent of the total supply available in the U.S. This is a threat to our industry because value-added products like wood trusses and wall panels are not subject to either duty when they cross the border, so we find that when competing against Canadian truss manufacturers, we are at a significant disadvantage due to differences in material costs.

Because of this, we, as an industry, are negatively affected by what amounts to a tax on the lumber we purchase that is used as a price support for the U.S. lumber industry, and are consequently not well served by the continued existence of these conditions. It is important that when we have opportunities to talk with our elected federal representatives, that they also hear from “our side” of this issue. We are in favor of a long-term negotiated settlement so that we can get past this two-tiered market for lumber and have a somewhat more stable market for softwood lumber.

This stability is important for a reason that may be subtle to the outside observer, but is not subtle for anyone that has a million dollars or so invested in softwood lumber inventory like many component manufacturers do. In the run-up to the expiration of the last Softwood Lumber Agreement in spring of 2001, through today, the coefficient of variation on the *Random Lengths* Framing Lumber Composite Price is up 20 percent over what it averaged in the previous five years. This kind of volatility increase complicates the task of managing any

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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 structural building components. Further, *SBC* strives to ensure growth, continuity and increased professionalism in our industry, and to be the information conduit by staying abreast of leading-edge issues. *SBC's* editorial focus is geared toward the entire structural building component industry, which includes the membership of the Wood Truss Council of America (WTCA), the Steel Truss and Component Association (STCA) and the Structural Component Distributors Association (SCDA). These associations make up an industry strategic planning committee called the Structural Building Components Council (SBCC). The opinions expressed in *SBC* are those of the authors and those quoted, and are not necessarily the opinions of the associations listed above.

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Distinction between anti-dumping and countervailing duties:

Under U.S. trade law, a countervailing duty case is an investigation of an alleged subsidy that provides an importer with an advantage in the U.S. market. For example, with lumber the U.S. contends that provincial stumpage and, more recently, British Columbia's log export restrictions, provide a subsidy to lumber producers. An anti-dumping case is an investigation on whether an importer is selling goods in the U.S. at prices lower than in the home market or is selling goods at prices below cost.

lumber related business (see Figure 1).

If you have some sales agreements with customers that hold you to a price for six months or a year, and you are now subject to potential changes in material costs of up to 60 or 70 percent within that timeframe, you are in a world of hurt. Many component manufacturers in our industry are trying to figure out how to deal with this problem.

If you get a chance to have a conversation or exchange correspondence with your elected officials in Washington, make sure that they are hearing something from “our side” too. The more that those officials know about the ten billion board feet of lumber we purchase annually and the hundred and fifty thousand or so jobs that our industry represents, and the more that they know we are in favor of an enduring negotiated softwood lumber trade agreement, the better. **SBC**

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Publisher's Message

Manufacturers Combine Old & New Automation for Best Results

by SBC Staff

An overwhelming majority of component manufacturers employ old and new automation and equipment to "get the job done."

Out with the old, in with the new." We've all heard that at one point or another. Or how about "everything old is new again"? With this issue of **SBC Magazine**, we build off that theme to rediscover equipment and materials handling—the old, the new and everything in between.

One indication of how the building components industry has combined old and new was evident to **SBC** staff in compiling recent One Minute Poll (OMP) data. Sixty-two percent of component manufacturer respondents feel they strike a delicate balance between high and low levels of automation in their manufacturing facilities.

Our cover story is a nod to new: new everything. WTCA member Shelter Systems Limited in Westminster, MD opened a new truss plant in January 2005 that houses cutting-edge materials handling equipment to maximize capacity, efficiency and productivity. As Shelter's proud Joe Hikel commented, pictures and words don't do his new facility justice. But we've tried our very best to convey the "larger than life" presence of Shelter's new facility in "Building a Bigger Shelter" on page 40.

An issue devoted to automation and materials handling wouldn't be complete without the perspective of those who are producing the equipment. In a special segment beginning on page 52, the technologies behind automation are revealed by two suppliers who have their fingers on the pulse of component manufacturer production needs.

Switching gears completely, we explore topics in bankruptcy in the second installment of Trussway's "Perfect Storm." In the June/July issue, Libby Maurer outlined the company's downward spiral to financial demise. In "The Calm after the Perfect Storm," she tells of the company's journey through the Chapter 11 process and hopes to dispel some of the many misconceptions about bankruptcy. As Maurer explains, Trussway is back, better than ever, and enjoying great financial health for the first time in many years. You can find the full story on page 58.

It's time to test your memory. Some of you may remember that ages ago when the industry-specific Koskovich cartoon ran in each issue. The last cartoon appeared in the December 2000 issue. In those days, **SBC Magazine** was still *WOODWORDS*, a gallon of gas cost just \$1.46, and the world was up in arms about Y2K. After five long years of searching for a suitable replacement, we're pleased to welcome the cartoon back to **SBC**. It's almost as if it's never been gone. Enjoy!

The concept of relishing both new and old things hasn't been lost on the staff here at **SBC**. To fulfill the notion of "new," we debut a special column this month called **Reading the PE Palm**. It is meant to cover technical and design issues in more depth than ever before. Appropriately, each column will be written by a professional engineer from the industry. Thanks to Joe Heinsman, P.E., of Davidson Industries for volunteering to be the first to step up to the plate. If you have a story (or even an engineer!) to share, pass it on to **SBC** staff at newcolumn@sbcmag.info.

Finally, you'll find a little surprise in **Parting Shots**. If you've ever aspired to sport a style we call Component Manufacturer Casual, you don't want to miss it. **SBC**

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Technical Q & A

Bevel Cuts on Valley Sets

To bevel or not to bevel valley sets...that is the question!

by WTCA Staff

A truss manufacturer recently called about the practice of beveling the bottom chords of valley sets to match the slope of the supporting roof. His production personnel were using a table saw to make the cuts, but found they had to remove the blade guard in order to make the cut properly on long boards. Clearly, he was not satisfied with this solution. He wondered how to do this more safely and what other manufacturers were doing. We took the opportunity to pose this question to the membership in **SBC's** popular "One Minute Poll" format.

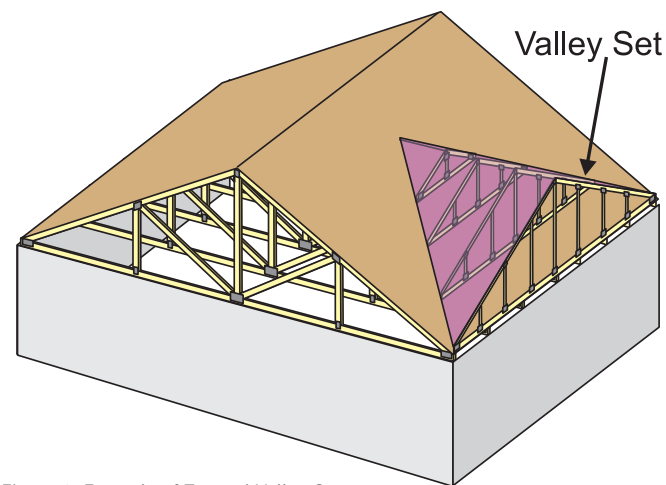


Figure 1. Example of Trussed Valley Set

Question

Do you bevel the bottom edge of valley sets to match the roof slope?

Answer

The 81 manufacturers who responded to this poll were almost evenly split on beveling of valley sets—44 percent bevel, 48 percent do not bevel, and seven percent said they bevel only by request or for certain customers. Of the 39 manufacturers who do not bevel, eight said they did at one time but stopped because it could be cumbersome, time consuming, costly, prone to errors and unsafe.

Question

If you bevel, what type (not brand) of saw do you use? Is it difficult to maintain safe sawing techniques while cutting them?

Answer

Of the 36 respondents who cut bevels for valley sets, close to 90 percent use a table saw. Several people said that safety is always a concern with table saws. Some use table saws with auto-feeders, which they say greatly improve safety. Others said the safest method for any saw is a well-trained opera-

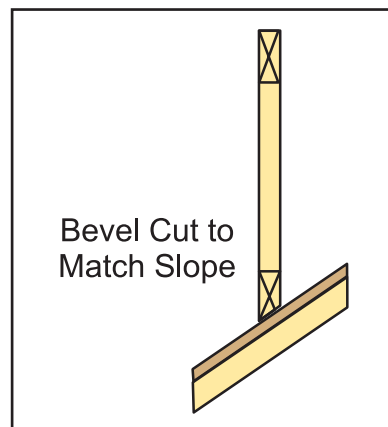


Figure 2. Cross Section of Valley Set

tor. A couple of respondents said they see beveling as a two person job. One respondent said they manufactured their own special blade guard just for beveling on the table saw. Five respondents said they use a CNC (computer numerical control) linear saw for cutting bevels, which they said are very safe. Another respondent said they use a panel saw.

Question

If no, what recommendations would you give to the customer for proper installation of valley sets?

Answer

Most respondents said the framers can simply toe-nail the valley set to the supporting truss below or use a special clip like the Simpson VTC to make the attachment from valley set to base truss. Others recommended adding blocking along the bottom chord of the valley set to prevent it from sliding down the slope, while others felt that the toe-nailing was sufficient to resist this movement. Other recommendations included ripping the valley bevel on site, adding a beveled nailer to create a vertical surface for the valley set or adding a wedge or shim to create a horizontal surface for the valley set so it is continuously supported. In areas where high wind is a concern this connection has to be engineered to account for potentially high uplift forces.

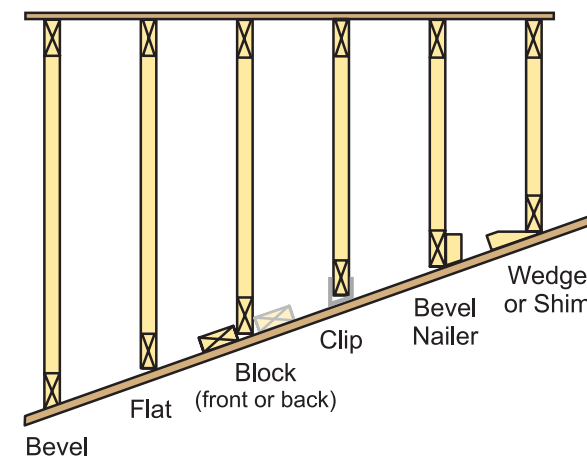


Figure 3. Methods of Attaching Valley Sets

If you have any concerns about the correct method of attachment, plate suppliers often have standard details for trussed valley sets including fastener requirements and wind ratings. Alpine and MiTek offer their standard details on their respective web sites. See **Support Docs** at www.sbcmag.info for links to these pages.

For information on correct bracing of trusses supporting valley sets, go to **Support Docs** at www.sbcmag.info for two Technical Q&A articles published in the April and May 2003 issues of **SBC**.

To pose a question for this column, call the WTCA technical department at 608/274-4849 or email technicalqa@sbcmag.info.

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Safety Scene

Use Narrative Teaching Techniques to Promote Safety

Narrative teaching is a great way to make sure your students remember what they've been learning.



by Molly E. Butz

Tired of toolbox talks? Safety seminars got you snoring? You're probably not alone. Let's face it, safety training is not necessarily fun, but it's definitely the law. OSHA requires that you have ongoing safety training at your facility.

So now for the good news: it doesn't have to be that way! I know what you're thinking: "If I give the machine guarding bullet points one more time, I'm through! They're not even paying attention anymore!" Maybe its time to try something new and spice up your safety presentation with a technique called "narrative teaching."

Narrative teaching can be described more generally as storytelling. And you know as well as I do that everyone has a story to tell. As a matter of fact, your employees probably teach each other every day using storytelling. Can you hear it? "Ya know, I stuck my hand in that vending machine once too, and by gosh could not get the candy for free and it just plain hurt! So you can put your hand up in there if you want to, but I'm telling ya, it's just not worth it for a \$.75 Snickers bar!"

So... maybe it doesn't sound quite like that, but you can liven up safety instruction by throwing in a story or two that pertain to the topic of the day. Telling a story to make a point can help your audience relate to the topic by making it more personal. The list of bullet points is still important, but personalizing it makes it stick. According to Hank Payne, Ph.D., director of the Office of Training and Education at OSHA, "You need a mixed approach to training. There is no silver bullet to solve all your training challenges." It's also a great way to add humor to an often dry subject matter. If you can come up with a funny story, it can help grab attention and get your audience tuned in.

When combined with traditional classroom and hands-on training, narrative teaching adds the personal touch that will help you keep your class engaged and ensure they remember the things they need to keep them safe!

You might also consider asking your "students" if they have any stories to tell. Oftentimes they can offer a perspective or experience you might not have, especially if they've been in an accident or been injured on the job. If your 20-year veteran gives a great example about plate cuts and hand protection, it's likely the rest of the group will listen and learn, and wear their gloves tomorrow. But (there's always a but), be cautious when you open the floor for employees to share their stories; "war stories" can take up a lot of time you need to share the rest of the information, and occasionally you may run into someone that shares an experience you and they both wish they hadn't. The goal is to provide a more interesting learning environment, not to make people in the "class" feel uncomfortable or pressured.

If you ask for a story and heaven forbid no one has anything to share, you can ask questions to get the discussion started or spark a person's memory. While general questions can lead to answers that are completely contrary to the training you are trying to provide, formatting your questions to retrieve a specific answer can be easy. Modifying a question like "what are the safety precautions you take when driving a forklift?" to "do you know someone who avoided a serious injury because he was wearing a safety belt while driving a forklift?" will be more likely to elicit a

at a glance

- ☐ Telling a good story, a technique called narrative teaching, can make your safety training meeting come to life.
- ☐ Look for interesting "props" that can drive home points in both a humorous and graphic manner.
- ☐ Always ask specific questions to get training interaction started. Avoid "war stories."

Richard says: I was once involved in a safety meeting where the discussion turned to saw safety. The speaker reached into his bag and pulled out a "Halloween-type," realistic looking severed rubber hand and tossed it on the table. Before the initial shock wore off and while he still had everyone's attention he talked about how quickly one of them could be severely hurt. He related a story of an employee at a different company who lost a hand in a saw accident and stated he wanted each of them to keep both of their hands so they could hold on to the ones they loved. Then he discussed the saw safety guidelines. I'd be willing to bet that everyone who attended that meeting still remembers the rubber hand, the story and the guidelines for safe saw practices, and has a renewed determination to keep both their hands safe and intact.

case study

response in line with your training.

Right about now the "Case Study" box might be grabbing your attention. If so, you're probably also thinking, ah-ha, this is an example of narrative teaching, and you'd be right. It's a pleasure to be working with WTCA Insurance Expert Partner Rich Langton of Bowermaster & Associates. From time to time he and WTCA's other insurance broker partners will be injecting structural building component industry case studies that pertain to the topic for the column. They will work as a teaching tool because you will be able to see how incidents affect other people in our industry and also learn about their resolution to the situation.

As you can see, storytelling and using props as described in the Case Study above can be an extremely useful teaching tool. It can be used to capture attention; it can be used to mentor; and it can even be used to fetch a laugh. Most importantly, it's a great way to make sure your students remember what they've been learning. A story will remain with your employees long after the textbook training is over. Stories touch the mind and the heart.

Make sure your next training session isn't "just another safety lecture" from the safety police. When combined with traditional classroom and hands-on training, narrative teaching adds the personal touch that will help you keep your class engaged and ensure they remember the things they need to keep them safe! **SBC**

To pose a question for this column or to learn more about WTCA's Operation Safety Program, contact WTCA Staff at 608/274-4849, email wtca@woodtruss.com, or view the Operation Safety demonstration online at www.wtcatko.com.

tips for effective narrative teaching:

1. Avoid stories that "require" offensive language.
2. Political or religious issues are off-limits.
3. Be conscious of content that may be interpreted as sexual harassment.
4. Be sensitive to issues related to weight and age.
5. End on a positive note.
6. Make sure your stories relate to the topic.
7. Ask specific rather than general questions.
8. Use humor where appropriate.
9. Be careful not to belittle or embarrass anyone.

[SOURCE: *Occupational Hazards*, April 2005, by Occupational Safety and Health Educator Marcie Thobaben]

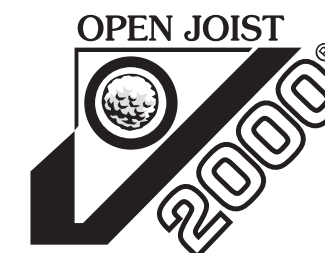
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Bcmc 2005

Focus on Manufacturing Costs

Do you need tips on how to nail down manufacturing costs? Seek counsel from your peers at this educational session at BCMC 2005!



at a glance

- ☐ Do you have a handle on the costs of operating your plant? Discover some of your peers' methods with the Ideas for Understanding Your Manufacturing Costs track at BCMC 2005.
- ☐ Make sure your manufacturing staff doesn't miss the Quick Response Manufacturing session, which will explain how to push product through your plant more efficiently.

by Don Groom, BCMC 2005 Chair

By now you've read about two of the educational tracks at BCMC 2005. The last, but certainly not the least, *Ideas for Understanding Your Manufacturing Costs*, may be one of the most important topics facing our industry.

Jim Finkenhoefer, Vice President of Truss Systems, will inform you on the "Importance of Knowing YOUR Costs." With more than 28 years of experience, Finkenhoefer will kick off the track's first session and will expand on the value and significance of knowing your market, defining the costing method that fits you, as well as knowing the details of your manufacturing process and plant equipment.



Jim Finkenhoefer

Kendall Hoyd, President of Idaho Truss & Component Company, will host the second session of the track. He will discuss "Developing a Costing Framework that Fits Your Plant." Hoyd brings eight years of experience in the industry and a background in finance that will allow him to communicate the importance of direct costs, driven costs, attributable costs, overhead costs and profit contribution.



Kendall Hoyd

Scott Arquilla, Vice President of Best Homes, Inc., will close the line-up with the third and final session, "A Real World Application of a Costing Method." With his 16 years of experience, Arquilla will explain how truss design time relates to build time, the importance of keeping track of time, and why Best Homes, Inc. arrived at the method they are using.



Scott Arquilla

The two additional tracks scheduled to be presented by component manufacturers at the show are:

Building Relationships for Business Growth

- Intra-Company Communication & Relationships: Mike Ruede, California Truss Co.
- Customer Relationships and Communication: Joe Hikel, Shelter Systems Limited
- Managing Change in Your Organization - Craig Plummer, Huskey Truss & Building Supply

Quick Response Manufacturing

- Frank Rath, The Center for Quick Response Manufacturing (University of Wisconsin Department of Engineering), with Rick Parrino of Plum Building Systems and Steve Stroder of Carter Lee Lumber Co.

Don't miss your chance to hear these speakers and more at BCMC 2005 in Milwaukee, October 12-14. Register to attend BCMC online! Visit www.bcmcshow.com for details about the educational sessions, exhibitors, lodging, registration, tours and much more. Join us in celebrating BCMC's 25th year. **SBC**



re: BCMC 2005 Attendance • MILWAUKEE, WI • October 12-14

Thanks for reviewing my recommendations AND HIGHLIGHTS FROM BCMC 2004. all of us WHO ATTENDED AGREE — we really learned a lot! The sessions provided us with several new ideas that **WE HAVE applied at our plant.**

2005 looks like another fantastic year! Please review the enclosed materials and note: the sessions were created and gathered from successful industry businesses — just like ours.

- Track 1: Building Relationships for Business Growth
- Track 2: Ideas for Understanding Your Manufacturing Costs
- Track 3: quick Response Manufacturing (QRM)

"One of the session's best features was the depth of the information given. The speaker provided me with a number of points that my business needs to understand better to succeed. GREAT SESSION!"
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Economic Environment

Reading the Tea Leaves: A Regional Focus

Get regional—find out where you can look to find economic and industry-specific information on a regional level.

by Al Schuler

In the November 2004 issue of *SBC*, we discussed where to look on the Internet to find free and reliable economic information with a focus on locating national data. In this article, we will focus on the same parameters—GDP, employment, residential and nonresidential construction—but the emphasis will be on how and where to find accurate regional, state and metro information sources. The objective—to show where you can find information that may be affecting your business—will be the same. There can be differences between economic conditions at the national level and those at the local or regional level due to a number of reasons. Demographics and weather are two such factors. Of course, some economic variables don't have a regional counterpart (the exchange rate is one example), while some variables such as interest rates and inflation have only small differences between the regional and national numbers. Many Internet sources offer both national and regional/state/metro, and perhaps even county-level information.

There are numerous sources for regional economic information of interest to component manufacturers. The information is out there—you just need to look for “your information.”

As is the case with national data, regional historical data are more readily available than regional forecasts and analyses. Therefore, many regional forecasts and analyses are available only under a fee-based service. However, there are excellent free sources for regional and state information, including analyses and forecasts. One example is the state planning offices (they might go by different names in different states). Various associations, such as National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB) and National Association of Realtors (NAR), provide both national and regional/metro information on residential markets while the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) covers national and regional/metro business conditions. These associations have subscription services for certain types of information while other information is provided free.

at a glance

- ❑ The focus of this article is to direct component manufacturers where to find accurate regional, state and metro information sources for crucial economic data and analysis.
- ❑ Economic conditions at the national level and local/regional level may be likely to exist due to factors such as demographics and weather.
- ❑ Regional economies and their trends can differ dramatically. Component manufacturers may find it necessary to adjust their business strategies from region to region.

[Editor's Note: For easy access, links to all of the web sites mentioned in this article have been posted in **Support Docs** at www.sbcmag.info.]

The Economy

Regional economies can differ dramatically. For example, the South and West have been growing more rapidly than the Northeast and Midwest for the past decade in part due to demographic movements. As people move to the South and the West, jobs, business investment and residential construction activity will follow. So, if your business and customers are located in an economic “hot spot,” prognosis may be better than that of a company located in slower growth areas. In either case, appropriate business strategies may differ depending on the state of the local economy. Economagic.com offers GDP, employment and unemployment, income, building permits (value and number), wages and salaries, and population information at the state, metro, and in some instances, the county level. Other sources include U.S. Department of Labor for employment, hours and earnings by state and metro area. The Bureau of Economic analysis also provides links to regional, metro areas

Continued on page 22

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Economic Environment

Continued from page 20

and state information on GDP, per capita incomes and spending patterns. Census's "Fact Finder" web site offers a fun site for locating all kinds of economic facts by state or county, and you have the option of displaying most of this information on a map.

State planning offices also provide useful information on their state's economy. Maine is a good example. Information on that site includes an overview of the Maine economy: cost of living, inflation and CPI data, gross state product, household income, SF and MF housing permits, existing home sales, retail sales, and other economic and demographic data with forecasts to 2009. West Virginia posts a monthly economic summary, which had 1.3 million "hits" in 2004. The West Virginia site also lists CPI, PPI, per capita income and the largest employers for the state and counties.

Virginia has some excellent county web sites for economic information related to that county/region. Fairfax County, one of the richest (personal income basis) counties in the U.S., has a web site that provides a wealth of information, including employment, income including a median household income, business investment, population and growth forecasts, housing forecasts to 2025 by planning unit, and lots more. And,

large metro areas like Atlanta, Chicago and Philadelphia have excellent free sites for economic information.

Finally, a great source of mostly free economic information is the regional Federal Reserve. There are 12 Federal Reserve districts; each has a web site offering free information on the economy (micro and macro) and business conditions relevant to their region. One example is the Chicago district, which covers northern Illinois, most of Wisconsin, Iowa and Michigan. A good (and not too expensive) fee-based service for regional GDP, per capita income growth and forecasts, and state employment forecasts is the Dismal Scientist web site.

To gauge business confidence, the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) publishes a monthly report for a number of metro areas to complement their national "Report on Business." There are nine reports covering Arizona, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Denver, New York, NW Ohio and Western Washington, focusing on topics such as manufacturing production, new orders, employment, inventories, current product prices and a 90-day forecast.

Construction Activity

The most comprehensive free source for regional and national information on construction activity—historical trends and analysis with forecasts for both residential and nonresidential markets—is Ken Simonson, Chief Economist for the Associ-

ated General Contractors of America. Simonson writes a weekly one-page summary of economic news that highlights national items relevant to construction, called the "Data DIGest." He also maintains 51 state-specific lists for regional construction information that is tied to the relevant Federal Reserve Districts. For example, if you are interested in construction employment and expenditures, housing starts, resale activity, cost of materials or industrial production in the region covered by the San Francisco Federal Reserve (AK, AZ, CA, HI, ID, NV, OR, UT and WA), you can ask Simonson to be added to his distribution list for that district.

For a recent comprehensive long-term analysis, including forecasts through 2030 of state and metropolitan areas throughout the U.S.—residential, commercial, institutional and industrial—see "Toward a New Metropolis: the Opportunity to Rebuild America," by the Brookings Institute's Arthur Nelson. Here are some of his conclusions:

- Because many of the older buildings built from the early U.S. through 2000 have been torn down or replaced due to



age, by 2030, over half of the buildings in which Americans live, work and shop will have been built after 2000.

- Most of the space built between 2000 and 2030 will be residential.
- Overall, most new growth will occur in the South and West.

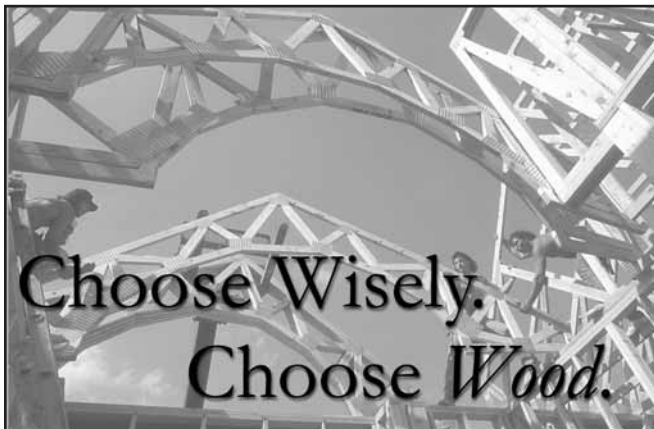
Another great source, albeit fee-based, is McGraw Hill construction, formally called the F.W. Dodge Company. They offer con-

struction analysis, forecasts, and U.S. market trends for commercial, residential and nonbuilding activity each month—for national, metro areas, regional and even foreign construction activity.

Housing Activity

A source I often use to keep abreast of housing activity is the organization that has 75,000 or more of America's builders as members—the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). Most of this organization's state and metro region forecasts for single-family and multifamily starts and permits, mortgage rates, and new and existing home sales is provided on a fee basis. Housing Economics Online is a subscription service available at levels

Continued on page 24



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Economic Environment

Continued from page 23

starting at \$200 annually.

There are also plenty of free sources that provide less analyses and forecasts, but plenty of historical data that are current. Your state planning office web site (see "Economy" section) is one, and don't forget Ken Simonson. Builderonline often has free articles on regional housing markets and other items of interest (new construction techniques, hot topics such as mold, and new products) to building material suppliers to the housing industry. Another free source on regional starts and permits (no forecasts) is the federal government's Bureau of Census. A convenient source for regional and metro mortgage rates is HSH Associates. The National Association of Realtors (NAR) is unique in providing economic analysis and regional information focusing on the sale of existing single family homes, a market about five times the size of the "new home sales" market.

Industry News

There are numerous trade journals that cover merger and acquisition activity, plant closures and additions, and personnel news (see the November 2004 issue of SBC for a listing). Trade associations, such as APA - the Engineered Wood Association, Southern Forest Products Association (SFPA), and Western Wood Products Association (WWPA) also provide good information on panel and lumber production, trade flows, consumption forecasts, and even housing forecasts. Some of the associations are region specific—WWPA represents the western lumber industry, while SFPA represents the southern pine industry, and APA represents structural panels and EWPs in the North America and offshore markets. Random Lengths, Crow's and Madison's provide excellent coverage of regional lumber and panel prices.

Finally, your industry's source of information, **SBC Magazine**, and the Wood Truss Council of America (WTCA) provide national and regional coverage for news on the structural building components industry.

Conclusions

There are numerous sources for regional economic information of interest to component manufacturers. When I started researching this article, I assumed that regional information would not be as easy to locate as national information. I found that was not the case. There is actually more information available at the regional and state level. The information is out there—you just need to look for "your information." Although most sites are free, there are good sites that charge a subscriber fee, often at a low rate (less than \$500 per year). Generally, I have found that fee-based sites offer more analysis. Hopefully, I have pointed you in the right direction to start your search. I urge you to check the web sites of your own state planning and labor departments for data trends and analysis on housing starts, demographics, income and spending patterns, employment and even business conditions for specific industries. If there are questions, please contact me and I'll be happy to help you find what you're looking for. As with the November article, the sources listed in the regional version are not meant to be exhaustive. These are sources that I have found useful in my professional career. Any mention of web sites in this article does not constitute an endorsement nor does exclusion mean they are not useful. **SBC**

Al Schuler works for Forestry Sciences Lab in Princeton, WV. Please note that the economic information/opinions contained in this article are not necessarily those of the USDA Forest Service. Dr. Schuler can be reached at 304/431-2727 or aschuler@fs.fed.us. His economic information can also be found online at www.sbcmag.info.



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Wtca Update

Introduction to The Load Guide (TLG) – Part 2

As you become more familiar with The Load Guide, follow this step-by-step procedure to consider design loads for roof trusses.

by WTCA Staff

Section 106 and R106 of the International Building Code and International Residential Code respectively require that structural loading information be provided as part of the construction documents to show that the work proposed will conform to the provisions of this code and relevant laws, ordinances, rules and regulations. Trusses and structural building components (SBC) require a clear presentation of design loads and their application on the structure as detailed by the building designer, defined as the owner of the building or the individual or organization (including either an architect or engineer or the contractor) that contracts with the owner for the design of the building structural system and/or who produces the structural design documents.

WTCA, in cooperation with the Truss Plate Institute (TPI), has created a comprehensive **LOAD CALCULATOR**, intended to help with developing the proper loading for roof and floor structural building components. The GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE FOR SPECIFYING & APPLYING LOADS TO STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS is freely available for download from the WTCA web site (www.woodtruss.com/loads.php).

The positions, interpretations, comparisons and commentary included in TLG are intended to assist anyone using it with specifying and applying loads on trusses and other structural building components.

WTCA's **The Load Guide** (TLG) is intended to be used by building designers (architects, engineers, etc.), building code officials, component manufacturers, truss designers and truss technicians, in a manner similar to that of a calculator, with the goal of helping everyone that uses it to more easily understand, define and specify all the loads that should be applied to the design of each structural building component used to resist these loads.

The positions, interpretations, comparisons and commentary included in **TLG** are intended to assist with specifying and applying loads on trusses and other structural building components. They are intended to aid in the consistent interpretation and application of loads, yet are not intended to supersede an architect or engineer's judgment and design specification for the loads that should be applied to a specific building.

TLG provides summary sheets for roof truss and floor truss live and environmental loads and load design parameters, as well as a calculator for dead loads commonly used in light frame construction, all in a Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet. These summary sheets are linked to commentary pages that include code interpretation, examples and discussion regarding application of loads. The 2003 International Building Code (IBC) and the International Residential Code (IRC), as well as SEI/ASCE 7-02, Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures, are the basis for the discussions. Although local code variations may be mentioned, **TLG** does not include a discussion of all local amendments.

Continued on page 28

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at a glance

- ❑ The primary goal of **The Load Guide** is to provide a design load calculator for each uniquely loaded roof and floor structural component that anyone involved in designing a building can use as the basis of their design.
- ❑ A secondary goal is to help ensure that everyone involved in a construction project agrees on the applied loads.
- ❑ It is important to have the person responsible for determining the loads to agree to and sign off on the loads to be applied to each uniquely loaded roof or floor component. **TLG** makes it easy.

The step-by-step procedure below presents a simplification of the process of selecting the design loads for a common roof truss. For those less familiar with the loading concepts, following the hyperlinks to the definitions, examples and discussions will be essential.

STEP 1
A. Open the Roof Loads worksheet.



Note that input fields are color coded as follows:

- User input cells are shaded with a yellow background.
- Dropdown list box selections are shaded with a blue background.
- Calculated or auto-filled cells are shaded with a gray background.

Additional information is available in a number of ways:

- Concepts are coded to indicate that a choice is based upon one or more of the following:
 - Code requirement
 - Engineering decision
 - Field evaluation of the site where the structure is to be located
- Cells that include short comments have a small red triangle in the upper right corner. Hover over a cell with your mouse to display the comment.
- Text that is a hyperlink to commentary or additional information is blue and underscored. Since this is a spreadsheet, there is no back button. One can follow appropriate hyperlinks to a subject and back again.

B. Describe the general roof area under consideration. This example will use a 36 foot common roof truss.

ROOF TRUSS: (all roof areas or similar trusses may not have the same specifications so one or more worksheet may be required.)
Describe Roof Area or similar trusses: (All Roof Common Truss)

STEP 2
Residential roof loads are typically controlled by either roof live or snow loads. In areas of the country where snow is a consideration, to verify which controls, enter the roof live load parameters (see below). The code default roof live load is 20 pounds per square foot (PSF). Trusses are typically spaced 24 inches on-center, so the tributary area of a 36 foot truss is 72 square feet (SF). The Rise for our example is 6 inches per foot of run.

DETAILED LIVE & ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN LOAD INFORMATION:				
TC Uniform Roof Live Load (L _r):				
C	L _r =	20	PSF	Default Roof Live Load
E	A _r =	72	SF	Tributary area in ft ²
E	R =	6	IN	Rise per ft.

Based on the inputs the calculated results are given in the worksheet (see below). The tributary area is not large enough to have an effect (the reduction factor is 1.0), but the slope reduction factor reduces the 20 PSF default load to 18 PSF. Note that the minimum allowable reduction is to 12 PSF.

Calculated Results:	
1.00	R1 Tributary Reduction Factor
0.90	R2 Slope Reduction Factor
18.00	L _r = 20R ₁ R ₂ , where 12 ≤ L _r ≤ 20

STEP 3
Where snow is a consideration, snow load design parameters are required. The absolute minimum information required is the PSF value for Ground Snow (see below).

For additional information regarding snow load design issues, follow the hyperlink to Ground Snow.

TC Uniform Snow Load (S):			
C	P _g =	30	PSF Ground Snow
F		B	Terrain Category
F		Fully	Exposure
	C _e =	0.90	Exposure Factor
C		II	Building Category
	I _f =	1.00	Importance Factor
E		Cold/Vented	Thermal Condition
	C _t =	1.10	Thermal Factor
E		Not Slippery	Roofing Type
E		Hip/Gable	Roof Type (ASCE 7, 7.3)
	W =	18	FT Eave to ridge
	R =	6	IN Rise per ft.
	C _s =	1.00	Slope Factor

A. To adequately take snow loads into account on a structure, all the snow parameters need to be filled in. The calculated design snow loads are displayed. In this case, the ground snow load of 30 PSF is adjusted by the design parameters to a roof uniform snow load of 20.79 PSF.

Calculated Results:	
20.79	p _r = 0.7C _s C _t I _p s _g
N/A	Low-slope Minimum Value
N/A	Rain-on-Snow Surcharge
20.79	p _s = C _s (p _r)

B. Since roof shape and structural concerns can influence the distribution of snow, additional evaluations may be required. In order to consider some of these options, additional input may be required.

(Details of design considerations must be provided by the Building Designer)	
	Y/N Consider Unbalanced Snow
	Y/N Consider Drifting Snow
	Y/N Consider Sliding Snow
	Y/N Consider Partial Loading
	Y/N Consider Ice Dam Loading

Examples are provided in the Commentary on Snow (C-Snow) of each of the snow load considerations and can be accessed by clicking a hyperlink.

STEP 4
Loading requirements on the bottom chord of a truss, inside the roof, must also be considered (see below). Loading conditions are based upon use and include the consideration of construction loading (non-storage), storage loading or occupancy loading (in the case of an attic frame).

BC Uniform Live Load (L):		Reduction	
The higher value will be used for design		Area Use	Factor
E		PSF	0
E	0	PSF	0

Consideration of these loads has often been confusing. Detailed information on these considerations is included in the Commentary on Live Loads (C-Live). The text of the accepted IBC/IRC code change that clarifies these load considerations is also included.

STEP 5
The effect of wind forces on a building and the individual structural members or assemblies that make up the structure are to be considered. The evaluation of these effects appears complex, but the accompanying Commentary on Wind (C-Wind) includes discussions of each of the design parameters.

Wind Design Parameters (W): (All required for IBC)	
(To assist in providing wind design parameters.)	
C	V = MPH Wind Velocity (3 second gust)
F	Exposure Category
C	Hurricane Zone
C	Building Category
	Importance Factor
E	Mean Roof Height
E	Structure Width
E	Structure Length
E	C&C Velocity Pressure Exposure Coefficient (ASCE 7, Table 6-3)
E	MWFRS Velocity Pressure Exposure Coefficient (ASCE 7, Table 6-3)
E	Topographic Factor (ASCE 7, Figure 6-4)
E	Directionality Factor (ASCE 7, Table 6-4)
E	Enclosure Category (ASCE 7)
E	Interior or End Zone
E	Load Duration Factor

For most residential construction, a minimum of three wind design parameters are required (the rest are typically assumed):

- Wind Velocity (V)
- Exposure Category (B, C, or D)
- Mean Roof Height (h)

Wind Velocity (3 second gust)	IRC	IBC 2308	Minimum Required
Exposure Category	<110	<100	
Hurricane Zone	B	A-D	
Building Category	No	No	
Importance Factor	II	Any	
Mean Roof Height	1.00	Any	
Structure Width	>60	3 stories	
Structure Length	n/a	n/a	
C&C Velocity Pressure Exposure Coefficient (ASCE 7, Table 6-3)	n/a	n/a	
MWFRS Velocity Pressure Exposure Coefficient (ASCE 7, Table 6-3)	0.85	0.85	
Topographic Factor (ASCE 7, Figure 6-4)	0.85	0.85	
Directionality Factor (ASCE 7, Table 6-4)	1.00	1.00	
Enclosure Category (ASCE 7)	0.85	0.85	
Interior or End Zone	Enclosed	Enclosed	
Load Duration Factor	varies	varies	

For accuracy in design, all the design parameters must be indicated and will be entered into the truss design software to evaluate the effect of wind on each individual truss and to calculate the expected uplift.

The calculated value is the design Velocity Pressure (see below). This base value is used to determine the impact of wind on the various roof wind zones of the individual trusses.

Velocity Pressure:		C&C	MWFRS	
q _s = 0.00256(K _z)(K _{dt})(K _e)(V ²)(I) =		0.00	0.00	psf

STEP 6
Any special loading considerations for the building need to be indicated. Details are required on the construction documents.

Special Loading Considerations:		Describe:
(Must be detailed on construction documents)		
Y/N	Consider Pattern Loading	
Y/N	Include Mechanical Loads	
Y/N	Consider Impact Loads	
LB	Special Concentrated Loads	
LB	Concentrated load (over 2.5 square foot area)	
PLF	Drags/Shed Load - Wind	
PLF	Drags/Shed Load - Seismic	
Y/N	Sprinkler Header Check	(Sprinkler system load is included with Dead Load)
Y/N	Consider Gamber	

STEP 7
Define the dead loads that the roof truss must be designed to carry. Dead loads are included on a separate worksheet, since in many cases the materials for roof and floor trusses could be the same. In addition to the input section of the worksheet, the representative loads are listed for reference.

Note that some selections require a unit of measure in addition to a material specification.

Detailed Dead Loads for Assemblies:				
Description		Unit		PSF
Roof:	C/E Roofing & Reroofing:	2x	Light asphalt shingles (220 lb)	4.40
TC:	Felt:	15 lb	Felt	0.15
	C/E Sheathing		19/32" OSB or Com-Ply	2.00
	C/E Insulation (in inches)			0.00
	E Truss (not a spec)		Roof (2x4 TC or BC, 24" o.c.)	1.10
	E Over-framing or purlins			0.00
	E Other (enter PSF)			
	SUBTOTAL TC = DL on horizontal projection			7.65
	E Slope (inches)	6	Correction Factor for Slope	1.12
	TOTAL Roof Truss TC = TC DL Corrected for Slope			8.55
BC:	E Truss (not a spec)		Roof (2x4 TC or BC, 24" o.c.)	1.10
	C/E Insulation (in inches)	12	Batt/Blown (0.1 PSF per 1" of thickness)	1.20
	E Mechanical		Minimum for misc. (1.5 PSF)	1.50
	E Sprinkler System			0.00
	C/E Ceiling (layers)	1	5/8" gypsum	2.80
	E Other (enter PSF)			
	SUBTOTAL BC = DL on horizontal projection			6.60
	E Slope (inches)		Correction Factor for Sloped Ceiling	1.00
	TOTAL Roof Truss BC = BCDL Corrected for Slope			6.60

Continued on page 30



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WTCA Update

Continued from page 29

The dead load calculator also includes the ability to adjust dead loads for slope on either the top or bottom chords. The total PSF dead load values from the Dead Load worksheet are also included in the Roof Loads summary table.

STEP 8

Evaluate the calculated loads. In this example, the calculated snow load controls over roof live load.

By Calculation:	Roof Live	Snow	Rain
TCLL	18.00	20.79	0.00
TCDL	9.00	(Dead Loads)	C-Dead
BCLL	0.00		
BCDL	7.00	(Dead Loads)	C-Dead

The person responsible for the construction project (owner, builder, building designer) is to enter the load design values, select the controlling loads, and sign off on the design information.

SPECIFIED DESIGN LOADS:			
User specified Design Values:			
E	TCLL =	21	PSF Snow Controlling Load
E	TCDL =	9	PSF
E	BCLL =	0	PSF Controlling Load
E	BCDL =	7	PSF
I, the undersigned, accept the above roof loads and design information.			
Project Name:			Date: (MM/DD/YY)
Located at:			
Design Per:			

The worksheets can be printed and submitted with the construction documents for plan approval as well as submitted with the construction documents to the truss manufacturer to be used in the design process.

If an electronic copy of the worksheets is desired, we suggest printing to an electronic format (like Adobe Acrobat) rather than saving a copy of the entire TLG for each roof area or job. **SBC**

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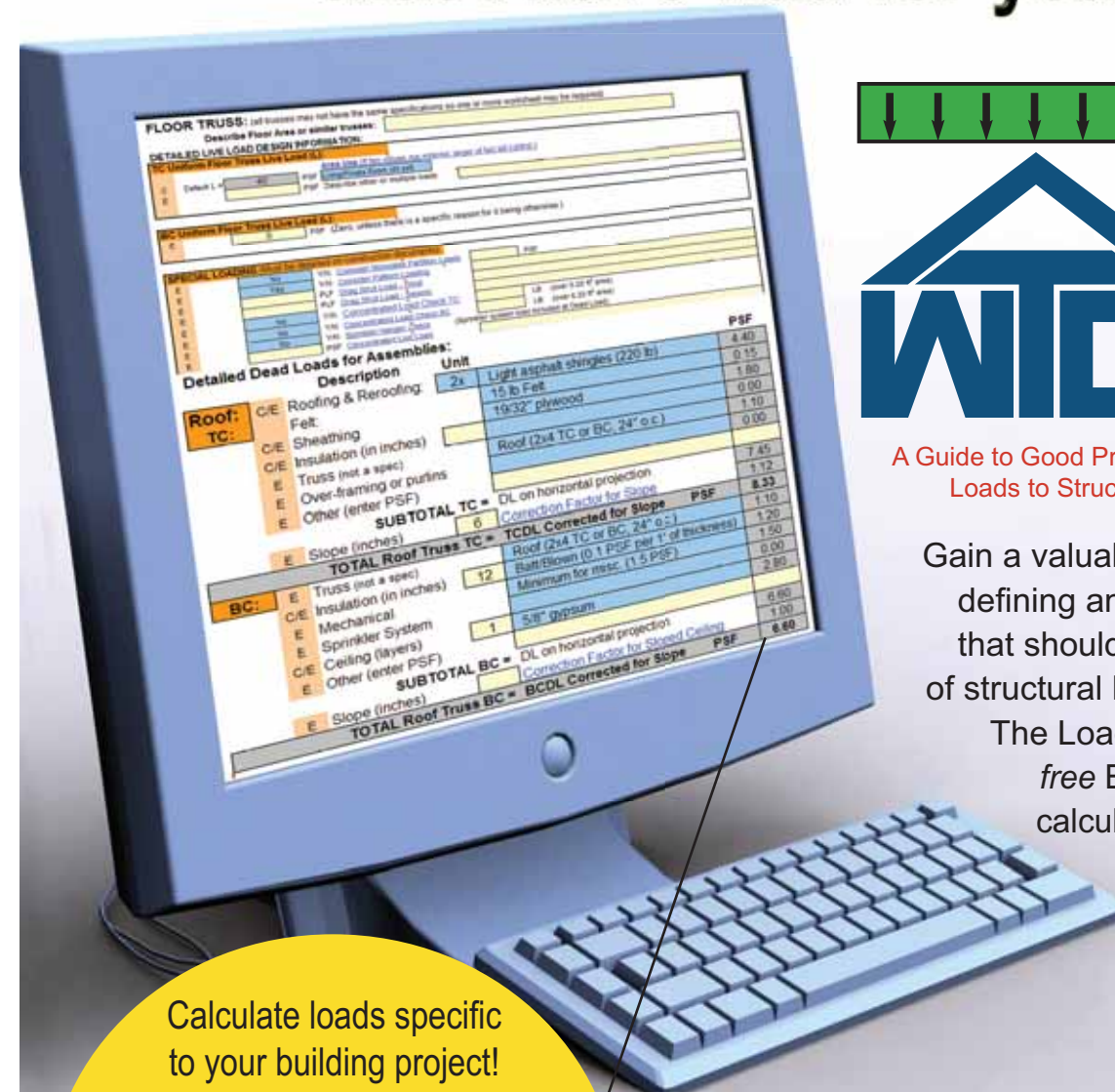


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Detailed Dead Loads for Assemblies:				
	Description	Unit		PSF
Roof:	C/E Roofing & Reroofing:	2x	Light asphalt shingles (220 lb)	4.40
TC:	Felt:		15 lb Felt	0.15
	C/E Sheathing		19/32" plywood	1.80
	C/E Insulation (in inches)			0.00
	E Truss (not a spec)		Roof (2x4 TC or BC, 24" o.c.)	1.10
	E Over-framing or purlins			0.00
	E Other (enter PSF)			
	SUBTOTAL TC = DL on horizontal projection			7.45
	E Slope (inches)	6	Correction Factor for Slope	1.12
	TOTAL Roof Truss TC = TCDL Corrected for Slope			PSF 8.33
BC:	E Truss (not a spec)		Roof (2x4 TC or BC, 24" o.c.)	1.10
	C/E Insulation (in inches)	12	Batt/Blown (0.1 PSF per 1" of thickness)	1.20
	E Mechanical		Minimum for misc. (1.5 PSF)	1.50
	E Sprinkler System			0.00
	C/E Ceiling (layers)	1	5/8" gypsum	2.80
	E Other (enter PSF)			
	SUBTOTAL BC = DL on horizontal projection			6.60
	E Slope (inches)		Correction Factor for Sloped Ceiling	1.00
	TOTAL Roof Truss BC = BCDL Corrected for Slope			PSF 6.60

* To use TLG you must have Microsoft® Excel (Excel 97 or higher).

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Find out what component manufacturers want from lumber suppliers and the results of a survey distributed to almost 1,000 CMs.

WTCA staff attended the 11th Annual MSR Lumber Producers Council Workshop on June 8 at the Marriott Grand Hotel in Point Clear, AL. Two presentations were of particular interest to the building components manufacturing industry. The first session featured an industry panel including Randy Graham (I-joist producer), Ken Kellums, (post frame builder and truss manufacturer), Dennis Fahey (wholesale distributor), Craig Steele (residential truss manufacturer), Don Scott, P.E. (truss plate engineer), Brad Douglas (AF&PA/AWC Regional Engineer) and Kerlin Drake (glulam manufacturer). The following are key points that emerged from the panel session:

- Labor is a critical concern for the entire building community and is affecting the componentization of framing.
- There is a need in the market for more grade stamps on a stick of lumber.
- Currently the premium is in shorter lengths, so manufacturers are buying longer lengths and cutting them into shorter lengths to meet their needs.
- Customers have a low tolerance for mold.



Craig Steele discusses the needs of the residential component manufacturing market.



Don Scott provides the truss plate supplier and MSR lumber user perspective.



Francois Robichaud of Forintek East Canada.

at a glance

- ❑ The 11th Annual MSR Lumber Producers Council held a workshop in early June.
- ❑ In one session, an industry panel discussed topics on labor, grade stamps, mold, the availability of 2x3 lumber and ANSI/TPI 1's new repetitive member factor.
- ❑ In another session, Francois Robichaud of Forintek East Canada, highlighted the results of a lumber usage survey distributed to component manufacturers.

- Lumber drying is still big issue particularly for those re-manufacturers that have gluing operations.
- There is a limited amount of 2x3 lumber, which is used heavily in I-joist applications.
- The ANSI/TPI 1 standard has just introduced the repetitive member factor for tension and compression and this could be an advantage for MSR lumber use.
- The key benefit of using MSR lumber continues to be its higher quality and lower cull rates.
- The MSR group could really help its customer base by doing more work in the following key areas: making recommendations on the best ways to wrap and ship lumber, improving the consistency of moisture content, providing more finger jointed 2x3 product, promoting MSR for non-truss uses like tall walls, and defining more specifically the value proposition for using MSR.

Continued on page 34

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CM Lumber Usage Stats Revealed...

Continued from page 32

The second session, "What Component Manufacturers Want from Lumber Suppliers," was presented by Francois Robichaud of Forintek East Canada. Key points from this session include:

- A survey distributed to 937 component manufacturers yielded a response rate of just over 20 percent.
- 37 percent of respondents are manufacturing wall panels. About 30 percent of those not making wall panels are considering manufacturing wall panels in the future.
- 65 percent of the lumber used in wall panel manufacturing was SPF and 15 percent was SYP.
- 55 percent of respondents said they use visually graded lumber in roof truss production. Another 33 percent use MSR.
- 55 percent of component manufacturers report buying their lumber from wholesalers while 30 percent buy directly from a mill.
- Key component manufacturer concerns about lumber include:
 - Price volatility (trumps all other concerns)
 - Straightness and wane (close second)
 - Availability and shipping problems **SBC**



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Reading the PE Palm

Snow Damage Analyzed, Repaired

by Joe Heinsman, P.E., Davidson Lumber Company

Spend some time with this new column and learn from one P.E.'s experience with unbalanced snow loads.



Figure 1.

at a glance

- ❑ A December 2004 snow storm caused damage to one of Davidson Lumber Company's umbrella shed.
- ❑ Trusses were bolted to both sides of round poles. Due to the shed's unbalanced snow load, several kingposts split along the bolts holding the trusses.
- ❑ It is clear from this example that unbalanced snow loads are capable of creating significant tension perpendicular to the grain loads in the bolt joints of the trusses and supporting posts.
- ❑ Consideration of unbalanced snow loads should be given in any building design or lumber shed that uses the same principles.

Introduction & Analysis

The late December 2004 snow storm that hit the Midwest brought about 14" of snow to Johnson County, IN where Davidson Lumber Company is located (just south of Indianapolis). Part of the Davidson Lumber facility consists of six identical umbrella sheds built in 1973. Each shed measures 150' x 36'. The ridge of the shed runs due east and west. A 36' 4/12 single ply truss is bolted to each side of treated 9.5" diameter timber poles, with each pole placed at 12' on-center. (See Figures 1-7. To view drawing go to **Support Docs** at www.sbcmag.info.)



Figure 2. The trusses are a double Pratt design with 2x6 top chords and 2x4 bottom chords constructed of Southern Pine. The chords are all #1 grade and the truss plates 20 gauge. The distance from the concrete slab to the bottom of the trusses measures 15.5'. The 2x8 kingposts extend 14" through and below the bottom chord to allow for more bolts. Each pair of trusses is bolted to their pole with eight 3/4" diameter bolts more or less evenly spaced down the kingpost.

Figure 4. While five of the sheds were undamaged in the storm, the sixth received extensive damage. Major damage to the trusses was at the fifth, sixth and seventh poles from the east end of the shed. The seventh pole was split along the bolt holes (see also Figure 3). The sole witness to see the roof with the snow on it said the north side of the roof was clean while the south side had a drift that was 4.5' to 5' high at the eave. Where the eave was lowest he could jump up and touch it. He said the undamaged poles were bowed in the plane of the trusses toward the eave with the snow drift. There was about 18" of horizontal displacement at the top. The trusses on each side of the fifth and sixth poles and one side of the seventh pole had the kingposts split. The kingposts split at the bolt holes at the top but the split did not necessarily follow the bolt holes down.



Figure 3. Sections of OSB sheathing between the members of the trusses on each side of a pole have been used as bracing for the bottom chords and webs.



Figure 5.



Figure 6.



Figure 7.

The loaded part of the kingposts was broken off at or near the bottom of the peak truss plate (Figure 5). On some trusses, the kingpost was split below the bottom of the bottom chord where two of the eight bolts were located (Figure 6). In no case did the splits or damage to the wood extend past the first row of teeth into the plate area. All wood in the plate areas was intact and undamaged (Figure 7). The one damaged round pole was split at the bolt holes at the top and followed the bolt holes most of the way down the truss depth where it began tapering to one side of the post. The split ended about 4' below the bottom of the truss where it was getting close to one edge of the pole.

Repair

In designing the repair, no attempt was made to analyze the structure as a whole to see if it was adequate for current code requirements. The repair was intended to be equal or better than the pre-damaged condition. The truss was analyzed to get member forces for the repair design only. (To view the drawing, go to **Support Docs** at www.sbcmag.info.)

Repair of the trusses entailed cutting out the existing kingposts at the bottom edge of the peak plate and replacing them with a new posts. A 4'x8' gusset of 7/8" sheathing was used on one side of the truss at the peak and a 2x12 scab was used along the bottom chords on one side also (see Figure 8).

The old bolt holes were used to attach the repaired trusses to the posts again. Screws rather than nails were used for all plywood gussets and scabs in attempt to draw the connections tight in a situation where the construction was especially rough.

The split round pole was assumed to be Southern Pine. Only Pacific Coast Douglas-Fir has higher design values of the pole values currently listed in the NDS. The pole was about 9.25" in diameter. A 5.25" x 9.25" parallel strand lumber (PSL) post was applied to each side of the round pole. Wood was used because of the cost and length of time needed to fabricate steel to match the width and strength of the pole. Some decisions about materials used were based on what was available locally. A 7" wide steel C channel was applied to the outside of each PSL post because of edge distance concerns with the bolts and to act as a load distributing element below the truss.



Figure 8.



Figure 9.

A wider PSL post would have eliminated bolt edge distance concerns. However, it was not readily available. After reinforcing the split pole, the trusses at this pole were repaired in a similar manner to the others except a side-by-side double 2x12 kingpost was used. The new kingpost was then bolted to the PSL posts (see Figure 9). No attempt was made to take advantage of any spaced column effect.

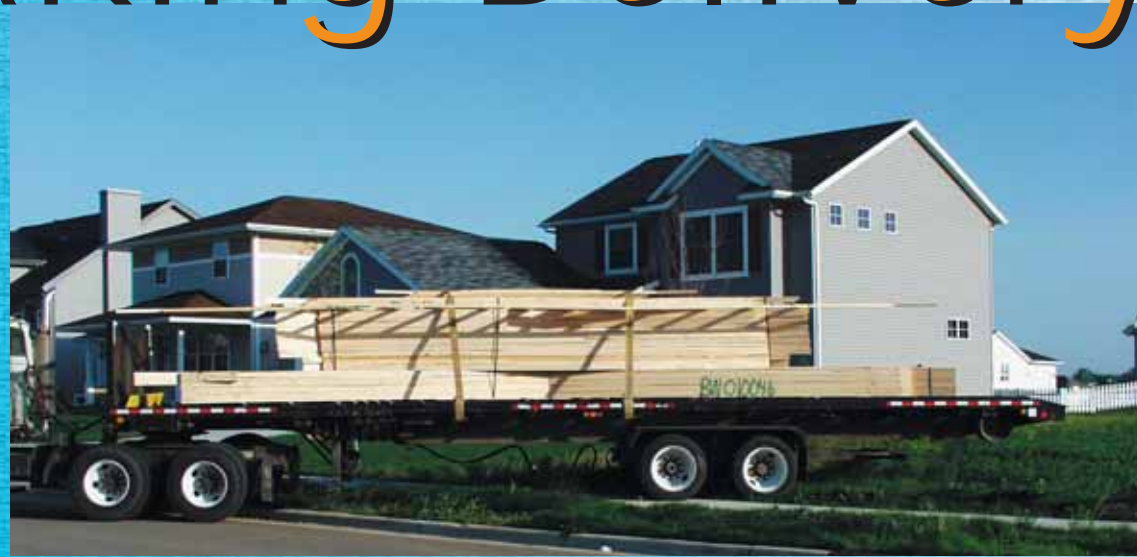
In retrospect it is clear that in umbrella sheds like this, unbalanced snow loads are capable of creating significant tension perpendicular to the grain loads in the bolt joints of the trusses and supporting poles. Consideration of these types of loads should be given in any building design that uses the same principles. The ability of truss plates to reinforce lumber and resist the loads due to the extreme bending of the kingpost was also clearly shown.

The type of bracing used on the trusses would seem inadequate by any analysis and yet there was no buckling of the compression bottom chord mentioned by the witness. The difficulty of knowing exactly what design loads should be expected and used in calculations—or predict nature's activities—was also reemphasized by the fact that out of six identical sheds in a relatively open area, five had much less total snow on them including those with what would seem like virtually identical exposure. **SBC**

Joe Heinsman has worked in the structural components industry since 1985. He has been the design department manager at Davidson Lumber Co. since 1992 and is a Registered Professional Engineer. He has contributed to WTCA projects such as the development of BCS1 1-03 and The Load Guide (TLG).

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Building a Bigger Shelter



When the time came to expand their business, the folks at Shelter Systems Limited redefined the term “smart growth.”

by Sean D. Shields

You may not find yourself doing this very often, but picture yourself as a stick of lumber. Better yet, imagine that you are a stick of lumber in the new Shelter Systems Limited plant in Westminster, MD.

First of all, when you arrive at this manufacturing plant, you don't have to spend a moment exposed to the cold or wet elements. Your “chauffer” delivers you inside the facility like a rock star, where you're stacked indoors along with a few hundred thousand of your buddies. Here you rest peacefully until you're needed at the Lumber Storage and Retrieval System (LSRS), a state-of-the-art stacking and sorting system designed to deliver the exact quantity, dimension and grade of lumber on time to the truss saw for each roof and floor truss.

Once it's your turn to be cut to size, you find yourself navigating the LSRS hydraulic lift and conveyer rollers to one of seven saws on the Shelter Systems plant floor. Once cut, you're labeled and banded for a short journey to one of four floor truss machines or one of the nine roof truss assembly stations. Within minutes, you're skillfully put into place by one of Shelter's 140 production experts, affixed with a plate and loaded on a cart for delivery to the yard.

at a glance

- ❑ This plant can store 103 trucks of material indoors.
- ❑ Can cut 35,000 pieces (165,000 board-feet) of lumber each day.
- ❑ In the future, Shelter's goal is to be able to hire 315 full time employees with annual sales topping \$110 million.



1



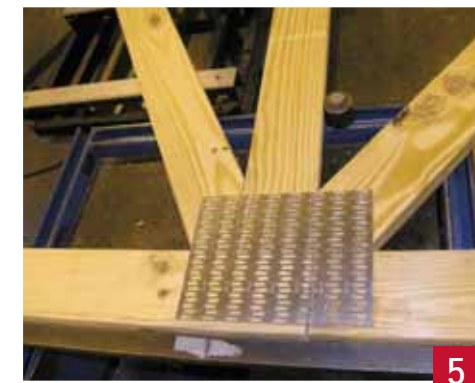
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8

The new plant took years of planning, careful execution and three generations of the Hikel family to pull it off.

Your first exposure to the elements is more pleasant than you would think. Thanks to a unique porous-paved surface, there is never a drop of standing water throughout the entire area. You'll never have to sit in water as you wait for a different “chauffer” to pick you up and deliver you to your final destination at the dream house of some fortunate new home owner.

Now, if you're happy being a stick of lumber, just think how Shelter's employees feel! The new plant didn't happen overnight, however. It took years of planning, careful execution and three generations of the Hikel family to pull it off.

A Family Affair

Let's begin at the beginning. Shelter Systems was started by the Hikel family—Dwight, his wife Linda and their son Joe—and a partner in 1976. Starting small, the original plant had a little over 14,000 square feet of production space, five employees, a saw and three truss assembly stations. In the early 1980s, the Hikels added an additional 18,000 square feet to their manufacturing facility, and eventually bought out their partner in 1993. By 2003, Shelter Systems was prospering, and it was evident that their existing plant could no longer handle the work orders coming in. It was clear that a new facility was needed.

Today, with a regional market extending virtually 250 miles in every direction, they are well situated to not only run their new facility at full capacity, but they envision a need for further expansion (we'll get to that a little later)! Dwight serves as President and CEO, Joe serves as COO, and Linda is the company's CFO. Joe's son, Jason, joined their information technology team in 2003, bringing yet another generation into the business.

Inside-Out Design

When it became evident Shelter's manufacturing facility could no longer keep up with the demands of its customers, Dwight and Joe were sent packing—literally. For two years, father and son, along with key team leaders, traveled the world, from their own back yard in the Mid-Atlantic, to Florida, Minnesota, Mississippi, Ohio, California and Germany. They looked at how 25 other companies manufactured components, in an effort to gather innovative industry practices. At the end of the road, they found a number of good ideas, but nothing in their opinion significantly better than what Shelter was already doing. The Hikels then went back to the drawing board, calling in their manufacturing team leaders and designing each manufacturing area from scratch. Joe said, “We basically asked them, if you could lay this out in any way you wanted, what would it look like. We then took all those suggestions and created an overall layout.”

Continued on page 42

- 1 80 percent of all the lumber stored at Shelter is no more than 25 feet from the saw where it is cut.
- 2 The Lumber Storage and Retrieval System (LSRS) allows lumber to be stored, sorted and accessed in a horizontal and vertical space.
- 3 Once the lumber is cut, it's labeled and banded for a short journey...
- 4 ...to one of four floor truss machines or one of the nine roof truss assembly stations.
- 5 Within minutes, it's skillfully affixed with a plate...
- 6 ...by one of Shelter's 140 production experts using a hand-held hydraulic press...
- 7 ...and loaded on a cart for delivery to the yard.
- 8 Thanks to a unique porous-paved surface, there is never a drop of standing water throughout the entire yard.

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Building a Bigger Shelter

Continued from page 41

Thus, the new facility was truly designed from the inside out. Each aspect of the manufacturing process was analyzed by the guys who were doing it every day. That sort of introspection brought out ideas for efficient design and layout, as well as new approaches to old problems. In the end, for the workers out on the manufacturing floor, it was like Christmas, checking items off their wish list. (See photo 9.)

Once the manufacturing processes were laid out, the Hikels went to a local design-build general contractor, and asked them to design a building around it. Instead of trying to fit a square peg in a round hole, they simply made the hole a perfect square to fit. Once the footprint of the building was established, the only thing left was finding a place to put it.



9

**Instead of trying to fit
a square peg in a round
hole, they simply made
the hole a perfect
square to fit.**

Eventually, they decided on an area adjacent to Westminster Regional Airport, and then construction began. (See photo 10.)

It took seven months from ground breaking to Shelter's first day of operation on January 31, 2005. Amazingly, Shelter did not have even one day of business interruption during the move from the old to the new facility. Most of the production crew simply left the old site on Friday and arrived at the new facility the following Monday. The facility they showed up to makes you weak in the knees!

Competitive Edge

The sheer size of the plant is impossible to convey in words or pictures, you need to stand in its presence to get a real sense. But the numbers don't lie: 120,000 square feet of plant operations, another 11,000 square feet of office space, eight acres of EWP storage and transportation yard, and another 13 acres for future expansion. Even the ceilings are a whopping 34 feet tall!

What is even more impressive than a lack of business interruption is the fact they never posted a losing quarter—not even the first—in the new facility. While some re-training was inevitable, the redesigned plant layout was intuitive, and therefore took minimal time to adjust to. The new plant also moved over 30 component jobs inside the plant, out of those

Continued on page 44



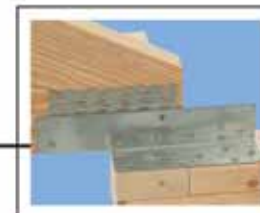
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11



12



13

Building a Bigger Shelter

Continued from page 42

often cruel Mid-Atlantic winters and humid summers—just one aspect of how the new plant created an improved workplace for Shelter's employees. In the end, a happier worker is a more productive one.

The new manufacturing layout is also more efficient, thereby increasing responsiveness through quicker cycle times and decreased movement. Within the plant, lumber moves in only one direction, and it travels in straight lines. In virtually every case, once the lumber reaches the LSRS, it travels from saw to assembly, out the door and on to a truck without ever crossing a different job.

The increased capacity also allowed the company to shed its need to outsource production, one of the most significant drains on their overall profitability. In recent years, Shelter's business exceeded their plant's production capacity, and they had been relying on other regional component manufacturers to help them fill their orders. The new plant brings Shelter to the next level, and prepares it for whatever the future may bring.

LSRS

There are two Lumber Storage and Retrieval System (LSRS) units at the new Shelter facility, which also happens to be the total number of LSRS machines in the world. In short, these babies utilize what Joe affectionately refers to as "cube space." They allow lumber to be stored, sorted and accessed in a horizontal and vertical space, ensuring that 80 percent of all the lumber stored at Shelter is no more than 25 feet



15

from the saw it will be cut at, maximizing storage space while minimizing travel time and wasted movement. (See also photo 2 on page 40.)

Their ergonomic design allows a one-man crew to operate each machine, and enables him to retrieve lumber without ever having to lift a single piece. At peak, Shelter has been able to attain through-put rates of over 5,000 sticks of lumber per shift!

Production Payoff

If you were paying close attention while pretending to be a stick of lumber, you would have noticed that Shelter manufactures two main products: roof trusses and floor trusses. They also have a custom-cut EWP product line located outdoors on the east side of the plant.

The lumber for the roof trusses travels through one of Shelter's two truss saws. The saw they are cut by determines which of the two lines of three 70-foot mono press stations they get delivered to—all in an effort to increase efficiency and eliminate the cross-over of lumber. Each of the mono press stations are manned by a crew of at least two, and once the cut lumber is laid out, one places the plates, the other follows behind with a hand-held hydraulic press to imbed the plates.

Continued on page 46



14

- 11 Within the plant, lumber moves in only one direction and in straight lines.
- 12 In virtually every case, once the lumber reaches the LSRS, it travels from saw to assembly...
- 13 ...out the door and on to a truck without ever crossing a different job.
- 14 Innovation is the key. The "Shelter System Management and Reporting Tool (SMART)" software allows the Hikels to monitor everything from pricing and inventory to real-time workflow, job status and job costing. (See also photo 16 on page 46.)
- 15 And it's all monitored from "Truss Traffic Control" perched high above the manufacturing floor.

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Instead of a bonus program based on "slicing the pie" proportionate to an individual's effort, Shelter's system gives out equal slices and aims to bake a bigger pie.



Building a Bigger Shelter

Continued from page 45

The lumber for the floor trusses and the webs are cut on two additional saws, and delivered to one of four floor truss machines. Shelter also has one 75-foot hydraulic table press, and two tables fed by a linear saw for work on specialized components and unusually sized or shaped trusses.

Innovation

In addition to their innovative production line designs and the LSRS, Shelter has also made a significant investment in utilizing cutting-edge technology throughout the manufacturing facility. They have a staff of three IT specialists that help run the "Shelter System Management and Reporting

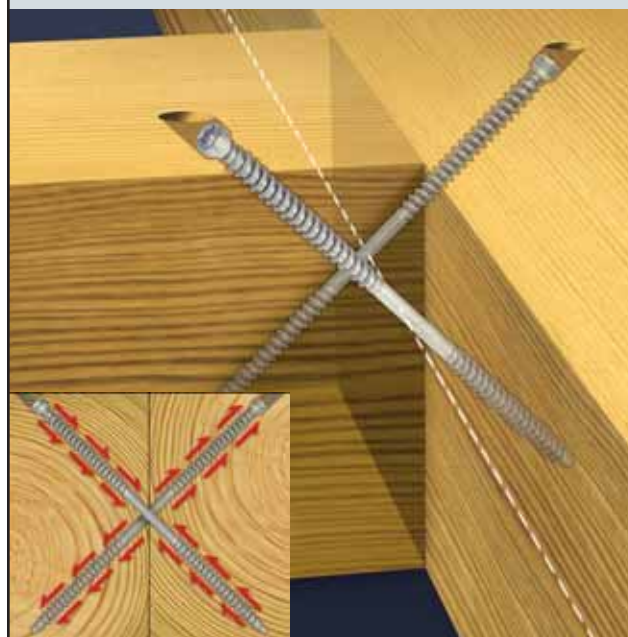
Tool (SMART)," software that allows the Hikels to monitor everything from pricing and inventory to real-time workflow, job status and job costing. (See photo 16.)

Not only does this help them keep track of their ongoing costs and overhead, it allows them the ability to institute a revolutionary work incentive program. Instead of a bonus program based on "slicing the pie" proportionate to an individual's effort, Shelter's system gives out equal slices and aims to bake a bigger pie. In Joe's words, "By tracking the jobs occurring on the plant floor in real-time, and providing that information to the work crews, employees encourage each other to work smarter to maximize overall through-put."

For example, each job is tracked by the SMART system as it passes through each station along a manufacturing line. Each line is recorded separately, and each production team remains on a designated line. So, if at lunch all the employees enter Shelter's cafeteria and see on the monitors that Line 3 is producing significantly less product than the other lines, the other production teams can

Continued on page 48

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Building a Bigger Shelter

Continued from page 46

encourage the Line 3 team to pick up the pace. In the end, every employee receives the same bonus per hour worked, so it is dependent on the overall total product sent out the door.

Think back to being a stick of lumber: remember how dry you stayed not only in the plant, but out in the yard waiting for delivery? It's made possible though a revolutionary porous-paved concrete surface that wicks up to 79 inches of water per hour! As a consequence, puddles never form in the yard, and Shelter didn't have to devote any land to storm water management.

Expanding Capacity

Here are some additional numbers for you to salivate over. At Shelter's current capacity, they can store 103 truckloads of material indoors at any given time. At peak operation, they can cut 35,000 pieces of lumber each day, or approximately 165,000 board-feet. But wait, there's more!

The Hikels were thinking beyond the next horizon when they built this facility, not about where they wanted to be today, but where they will need to be tomorrow and beyond. First, the production area: three walls of the plant are precast panelized concrete construction, and the fourth wall is made of steel, designed to be moved. The office area is built using the

- 17 Not only do jobs stay dry thanks to the porous-paved surface, they're always ready to go when a truck comes in. The Shelter yard has truck-trailer-sized staging areas for job assembly prior to truck loading.
- 18 Three walls of the plant are precast panelized concrete construction, and the fourth wall is made of steel, designed to be moved.
- 19 The office area is built using the same concept, three walls are permanent, one is meant to move. Why? For capacity that will be needed in the future.

same concept, three walls are permanent, one is meant to move. Why? For capacity that will be needed at some point in the future.

They've already designed the manufacturing line layout for an additional 60,000 square feet of plant area, the layout for 3,000 square feet of offices and an additional 13 acres of yard space. With that additional capacity, Shelter would have the ability to hire 315 full time employees and see their annual sales top \$110 million.

Commitment

In this article, there are many aspects of the new Shelter Systems facility that have been discussed. Yes, it's big and it can store and process a lot of wood. Yes, it's designed well and runs with frightening efficiency.

Yes, it intelligently combines technology and innovation to not only create an outstanding product, but to also increase buy-in by employees. The most impressive aspect of this company, however, is not the plant, but the individuals running it.

The Hikels have shown a commitment to excellence, not only to their employees and community, but the industry as a whole. Shelter was the second truss plant in the nation to be certified in **In-Plant WTCA QC**, and Joe is the current chair of the WTCA Quality Control Committee. The Hikels have provided valuable feedback to improve the content and materials of the **In-Plant WTCA QC** program.

In addition, Bob Dayhoff, Shelter's Director of Technical Operations, has exhibited a strong commitment to WTCA's Truss Technician Training (TTT). Fifteen of Shelter's truss technicians are TTT certified, and three of their design team leaders have achieved Level III certification. Dwight, Joe and Bob have also provided valuable leadership with the WTCA Capitol Area Chapter, the WTCA Board of Directors and the WTCA Engineering and Technology Committee.

The design of the new facility with expansion in mind is yet another example of their commitment to build things to last, whether it's a solitary roof truss, or a multi-million dollar business. **SBC**

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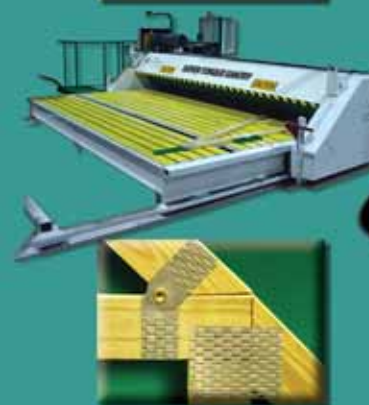
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One Minute Poll

Reveals Mix of Old School/Cutting Edge

Participants in a recent One Minute Poll confirmed that the vast majority of component manufacturers combine both hi-tech and old school automation to accommodate their production needs. Take a look at the results and some of our favorite responses.

- A. We're on the cutting edge of automation: **21%**
- B. We combine high and low automation in order to meet the varying materials handling needs in our plant: **62%**
- C. Automation...I'm not familiar with that term: **18%**

"We are on the cutting edge of automation and have been for the past three years. We developed a Just-in-Time cutting, assembly, packaging and delivery system before we knew the term 'automation' existed." —Gary Sartor, Stone Truss Company, Inc.

"I work with people whose favorite saying is 'we've been doing it this way for 25 years and it has worked just fine. If it ain't broke don't fix it.' They're the same people who play checkers waiting for material to be cut." —Harlee Thompson, Kenyon Noble Truss

"I believe we are on the cutting edge of automation in relation to the rest of the CMs in the industry, but nowhere close to what true 'automation' should be for this industry." —Ken Cloyd, California Truss Company

"I believe we are on the cutting edge, but more in terms of communication than materials handling, which could be viewed as 'automation.' In areas like paper flow (we are paperless), using the Internet heavily, NEXTEL phones, computerized saws and set-ups, we are very advanced." —Marshall McCarty, Automated Building Components

Perspectives: Advancement & Enhancement

by Carl Schoening, Truswal Systems Corporation

As in all things, change is inevitable. The building components industry has been about change since its beginnings; in fact it came into being in order to change the construction industry. That early challenge is one that is still being fought today, but hopefully less as each day passes. That challenge was (and continues to be) convincing builders and framing contractors that components provide a cost effective way to erect a structure with greater structural integrity and decreased cycle time. Of course, the builder/contractor argument is "we have been doing it our way for 30 years." But, as I said we have mostly overcome these unsupported arguments and have captured significant market share for our products. So, what is the next challenge?

Over the last fifty years we have seen great improvement in manufacturing. Automation has been the battle cry of suppliers to the component industry. Connector plates have changed, equipment has changed and certainly methods of manufacturing have changed. We have focused our attention on productivity, whether in layouts and truss design or production and shipping. Taking our product from raw material to finished product has become faster, easier and better than ever. Not all of the new has been good and not everything old was bad. The blending of old and new equipment seems to be an approach most manufacturers have taken. The result of combining old and new often leads to other startling new improvements or in some cases a rediscovery.

In my travels across the land visiting component manufacturers I hear many opinions, some ideas, and I get asked a lot of questions. One of the opinions I hear fre-

The blending of old and new equipment seems to be an approach most manufacturers have taken.

quently is that the time of the big multi-blade component saw has past. Buildings have increasingly complicated roof lines, causing more and different truss types that require more and more set-ups. (See following article by Steve Shrader on the emergence of linear saws in the industry.) Component manufacturers tell me that an average of four or fewer trusses will have the same configurations on any given structure and then change to another truss type or configuration. That means more set-ups. More and more manufacturers are moving toward inline saws or computerized pull saws. This is an illustration of blending old and new technology to meet the changing needs of component manufacturers. Basic pull saw technology combined with computerized set-up for angle and length offers a relatively inexpensive option in cutting technology. Output rates for these inexpensive saws are not dissimilar from the larger and much more expensive component saws and do not require any additional labor. Even inline saws are an elegant blending of single blade technology. They are a pull saw with servos and motors spinning and moving to precise angles and cutting to length. They too are a blend of old and new technology.

Other automation has centered on jig set-up. Lasers have become an almost integral part of component manufacturing. There are those of the opinion that replacing a set-up man with a laser "dumbs down" our industry, but no one discounts the speed and accuracy of laser set-ups. We also see mechanical auto jigging. This is more limited to specific types of manufacturing equipment and also requires some additional maintenance.

Gantry lines have become the tried and true production method that most component manufacturers gravitate toward when looking for improvement in productivity. However, there are some hydraulic press holdouts and they have automated other systems to improve speed. I believe the next big thing is out there and that in a short amount of time our industry will go through another production equipment revolution. Those things being said, most manufacturers are looking very closely at material handling. The fewer times the cut member is touched, the faster production is and the lower labor costs are. A whole industry has risen from the need to handle lumber more efficiently. Unfortunately, once again it comes at a price that not all manufacturers can afford. If return on investment is analyzed, improved materi-

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al handling will pay for itself more quickly than adding another piece of equipment. In many cases, improving material handling requires rethinking several other areas of production to take full advantage of front end efficiency. It is not something to be taken lightly and has created a secondary industry: consulting.

Software is the industry's final big area that is in a constant state of evolution. Each year component manufacturers get a chance to test drive the latest and greatest from all suppliers. Whole house technology has taken the driver's seat in software development. This year component manufacturers will see some big developments. Not only will whole house software reach new heights, but enhancements to core programs will be a focus for many providers. Software providers are applying a new kind of litmus test. They are beginning to look at the intimate needs of component manufacturers. Things that were previously a programming focus are being weighed against enhancements that will improve productivity or cycle time. Automating software features will speed design, improve novice learning and offer greater employee deployment flexibility. These things will mean improved profits and greater capacity and will broaden the design staff labor pool.

I am a firm believer in change. Not just for the sake of change, but for true improvement and innovation in the industry. We are manufacturing better building components today than ever before, at a rate industry founders would think unbelievable. The next big thing is out there. Be ready to embrace the change and always look to the future. **SBC**

Carl Schoening is Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Truswal Systems Corporation in Arlington, TX.

at a glance

- ❑ One concept fosters a progressive view of the future of component manufacturing: If it ain't broke don't fix it.
- ❑ This industry is nowhere as close as it should be to achieving a true state of "automation."
- ❑ Things that were previously a component manufacturing focus are being weighed against enhancements that will improve productivity or cycle time in all areas of plant operations: billing to design to manufacturing to shipping.

Servo Technology & Linear Saws Offer "Limitless" Production Capacity

by Steve Shrader, Hundegger USA LC

"The factory of the future will have only two employees, a man and a dog. The man will be there to feed the dog. The dog will be there to keep the man from touching the equipment."

—Warren G. Bennis

Every time the term "technology" comes up in an issue of *SBC* my heart starts to beat faster. Could it be? Is this the issue that reveals the latest advancements in saw technology? No! It's just another column about a new engineering application of the International Residence Code (IRC) or another prescriptive requirement in the International Building Code (IBC). Don't get me wrong: it's not that I don't love a good column that cross references the WFCM, IBC and ANSI/TPI, but I have been dying to read an article about servo technology and CNC control!

Allow me to give credit where credit is due. *SBC* does a fantastic job bringing issues like code updates to the industry's attention. Articles regularly educate the readers on Just-In-Time (JIT) or Quick Response Manufacturing (QRM). All of the issues relating to component manufacturer business practices are presented to *SBC* readers accurately and in great detail. But I have never read about the latest advancements in saw technology. I might be totally alone here, but I have been fortunate to be riding the current automation wave spreading across the industry—linear saws.

Linear Saw Market Explosion

It was almost three years ago in Phoenix, AZ at the BCMC show that the linear saw made its presence known. That year there were four linear saws that I remember on the show floor. Twelve months later at the 2004 BCMC show in Charlotte, NC there were nine! If you have not heard of these saws by now you really need to get out more.

From my perspective and that of many component manufacturers, it is safe to say that the industry had to see it coming. In the past 12 years, truss manufacturers have been introduced to "curb appeal," the non-symmetrical, cut-up roofs that are just plain nasty. The days of common gable end runs, same sized trusses are long gone. Most truss plants are lucky if there are even two trusses that are "similar" to one another. The harsh reality is today's cut-up onesie-twowie packages require more set-ups than there are truss parts in one job.

The "first generation" of component saws required manual set-ups. They were proficient regardless of the fact that they required time to set up the length and angles manually. With the introduction of servo technology, these saws advanced. But what exactly is servo technology?

A servo is a small electronic device or an electrical encoder used to give feedback on mechanical motion. This device reads and sends electronic signals giving constant feedback on bigger motors. Servos can control one or a combination of positions, velocity, direction, angles and bevels. As the electronic signals change, the position of the servo shaft changes, which in turn controls the bigger motors. Servos are used in radio-controlled toys like airplanes to position control the elevators and rudders. They are also the standard of modern production factories.

Soon after the servo revolution, component saws had data entry points, or keyboards, into which the operator could input data that would automate the set-up. But set-ups still required time.

Industrial servo technology has advanced considerably over the past several years. The largest advances have been in the area of digital control algorithms. In the past, servo drives were predominately analog (think cell phone). Today, digital servo drives provide numerous opportunities to improve the performance of a truss or wall panel saw.

Servo Technology Facilitates Speed & Precision

Due to the advances in servo technology, today's saws are very flexible, very fast and very productive. The single-bladed servo linear saws on the market today use the technology like a pizza cutter, providing high-speed precision of the saw blade and positioning of the wood as well. With a zero set-up time, a linear saw can constantly cut different (onesie-twowie) parts from one piece of stock material. One proud linear saw owner was bragging how his saw was making 3,000 - 3,500 set-ups and cutting 8,000 - 10,000 parts in a 40-hour week. These are custom parts, compound cuts, hip and valley parts.

This technology means that all the custom parts, once time-consuming, inefficient and labor-consuming, can now be done safely and automatically by a saw. Parts that used to take hours and require double handling and unsafe tools can

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at a glance


- ❑ In the last several years, linear saws have become quite popular with component manufacturers by offering greater flexibility than traditional component saws.
- ❑ Servo-driven motors are the technology behind linear saws. Servo technology continues to advance at a rapid pace in the building components industry.
- ❑ While linear saws are ideal for onesie-twowie set-ups, the standard component saw is the best type of saw for producing multiple accurate parts produced very quickly.

now be cut in seconds—automatically and safely.

Component Saws Obsolete?

This does not mean that the component saws are obsolete. I was recently asked by a truss plant manager how a linear saw would take the place of his component saws. It seemed he was under the impression that the linear saw would—at some point in the future—completely replace the component saw. I do not believe this will ever happen. The traditional component saw can serve a need that the linear saw cannot when it comes to multiple repeat parts produced very quickly. On the other hand, there are things that the component saw cannot do when it comes to multiple set-ups and compound angles. Both saws have a valuable contribution to

Continued on page 56



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Servo Technology & Linear Saws...

Continued from page 55

the industry and today they work to complement each other.

Who Buys Linear Saws

Most companies that buy linear saws do so because of the machine's flexibility. One owner has acknowledged that the "hot" jobs go to the linear saw because all of the parts come from one saw and the turn around is much shorter than if a traditional component saw had been used. Additionally, the disruption to the linear saw is very minimal, if any at all, because the set-up takes no time. A linear servo saw should be able to take material of different sizes and lengths without skipping a beat—even if inserted in the middle of a run.

One of the areas to watch is the software interface. In the past, saws only required length, angle and quantity information from design software. Now information like bevel, compound and special tool control is also needed by today's saw. The saw's mechanical technology has advanced faster than design software, in most cases. The manufacturing industry is trending toward a model of full automation from design down to delivery. The power of design/production software in combination with the right machine can mean almost limitless possibilities in production, increasing quality, safety and the bottom line. For this to happen, the software-to-machine interface needs to keep in pace with the mechanical advancements of linear saws. Most software companies realize this and have been developing solutions to keep up with the increased saw technology. These software companies are the ones who exhibit each year at BCMC and have not only seen the popularity of the linear saw grow, but they have heard about them from their customers as well.

Widespread Education Necessary for Most Efficient Use of Servo Technology

It is very exciting for me to visit component shops all over the country. It is very interesting to observe a manufacturer who is going through the equipment implementation process. As they get acquainted with their new saw, they always seem to think of new areas where a linear saw might help cut costs and increase production. Inevitably, there is a learning curve and a transition period in implementing a new piece of equipment. As with any new technology or equipment, the purchase of a linear saw will change the way fabricators look at the entire manufacturing process. This is where technology becomes fascinating: technology that enables the brain to re-think and improve the process!

Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer sums it up best: "The number one benefit of [information] technology is that it empowers people to do what they want to do. It lets people be creative. It lets people be productive. It lets people learn things they didn't think they could learn before, and so in a sense it is all about potential."

I like to emphasize the basic education process to manufacturers who are considering a linear saw. The production personnel need to understand the technology so that they can make realistic production schedules. Managers and foremen need to understand the technology so that they can communicate intelligently with designers, maintenance people, operators, and others working directly with the saw. Companies need to have a decent understanding of this technology in order to work effectively with their new saw.

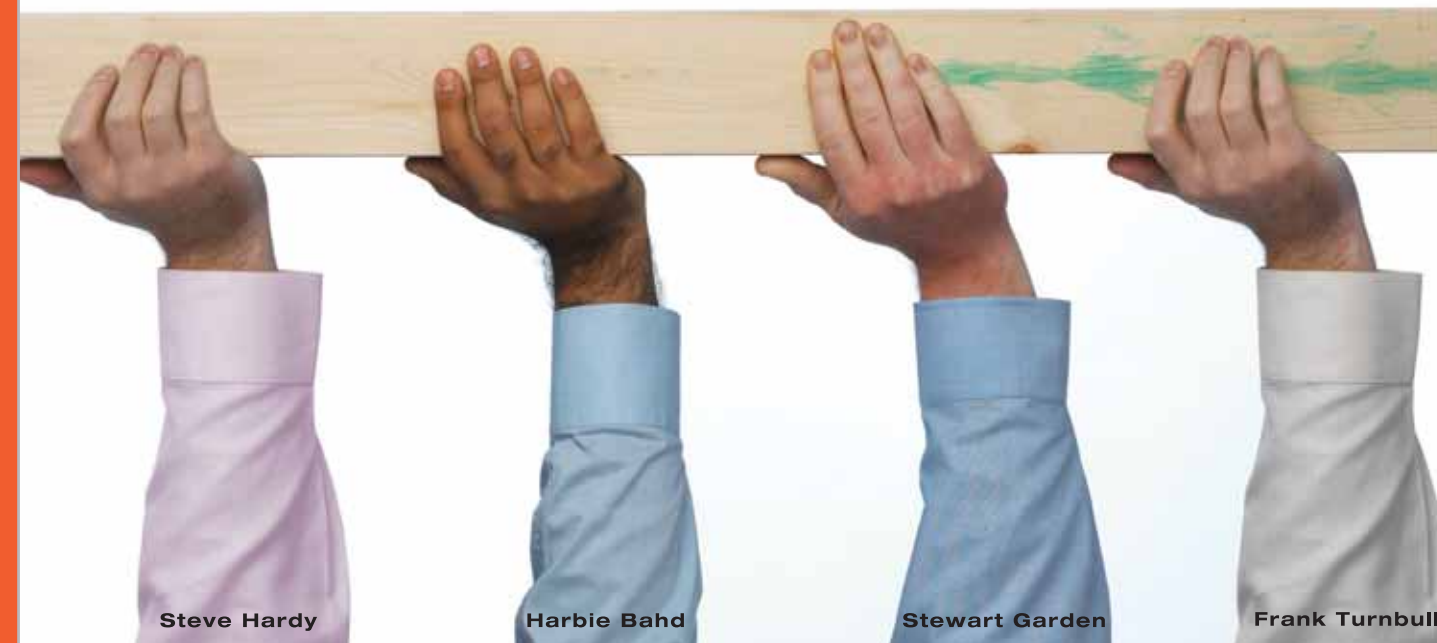
Most companies I work with quickly come to rely on their linear saw more than they ever thought they would. It changes them and they experience added success. Maybe now you can see why I long to read more about servo linear saw technology!

I cannot predict how many linear servo saws will be at BCMC 2005 in Milwaukee, WI. I do know that there will be fabricators who will look, but are waiting until they are "forced" to buy. There will be those who come to decide which one to buy, and there will also be those that have implemented the technology and want to talk about what it has done for their business and possibly order another one. Whatever the reason, they will be talking about saw technology. That's always a good thing. **SBC**

Steve Shrader is Sales Manager for Hundegger USA LC in Charleston, UT. If you have comments on automation & materials handling trends in the industry, email editor@sbcmag.info.

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The Calm after the Perfect Storm

by Libby Maurer & SBC Staff

A pre-packaged Chapter 11 filing like Trussway's can be both straightforward and legitimate, and not a messy amalgam of lay-offs, closings or the unveiling of a scandalous management plot as you may think thanks to the folks of Enron, WorldCom and Tyco.

at a glance

- ❑ After a long struggle to keep in compliance with covenants in their credit agreement and a failed recapitalization attempt, Trussway's only option was to restructure the company financially.
- ❑ Their financial restructuring was completely via a five-month pre-packaged Chapter 11 filing process.
- ❑ Trussway's financial storm dating back to 1998 has finally blown over, and the company is enjoying financial health, prosperity and growth in its core multi-family segment.

Ever bear the wrath of a perfect storm? A perfect financial storm, that is. As reported in the June/July issue of **SBC Magazine**, Trussway Ltd. of Houston, TX has spent the last six years standing directly in the eye of its own financial storm. In the previous article, we outlined the elements of Trussway's perfect storm, which included a combination of economic and market-driven circumstances: declining consumer confidence following the terror of 9/11, lower interest rates that boosted single-family home construction to the detriment of multi-family housing starts, and rising and volatile lumber costs. Rounding out the storm were certain seemingly prudent decisions made by Trussway management: multiple geographic diverse acquisitions that increased debt load virtually overnight and the centralization of sales and design staff. The compounding nature of these factors left the company ill-prepared for the devastating storm on the horizon.

The previous article took you on the journey through Trussway's multiple acquisitions and resulting increased debt, operational changes, and a formula for failed customer service. The journey ended with an account of the company's operational turnaround and improved customer service. This article will walk you through their remarkable financial recovery process, albeit involving a Chapter 11 filing. Trussway has weathered its storm with strength and grace. Not only have they survived, they've thrived

This article contains many important financial terms, many of which will help better explain Trussway's Chapter 11 reorganization. You will find these terms throughout the text in bold and defined in a mini-glossary on page 66. We have also posted an expanded financial glossary in the **Support Docs** at www.sbcmag.info.

Threatening Skies

Beginning in the third quarter of 2001, Trussway found itself in violation of certain financial covenants imposed by its bank group under the company's existing **credit agreement**. "[We] were making money at the time," explained CEO Bill Adams, "but not enough given the debt levels that existed. Our bank debt exceeded what was viewed as acceptable for a company producing the sales and earnings that we were, ultimately causing us to violate our covenants." Though the company first tripped its covenants after 9/11, we will see that recurring covenant defaults plagued them for more than three years. "You could think of it as running a marathon dragging an anchor behind you," explained CFO David Tighe.

Late 2001: Decision to Close Divisions

"We did a lot of things along the way to appease our bank group and become covenant compliant," said Adams. Having joined the company in March 2002, Adams addressed one significant measure to regain compliance. "For example, the previous management team initiated a winding down of the company's Dallas lumber and Houston-based multi-family lumber divisions during the fourth quarter of 2001. Both of these operations were profitable, but were underperforming and their working capital requirements were significant. The plan was to reduce debt and hopefully in exchange enjoy some wiggle room from the bank group," he explained. As we undertook various changes, we were able to show the banks that we were actively trying to reduce our **leverage**," explained Tighe.

During this timeframe, the Trussway Board of Directors decided it was necessary to engage the first of two financial advisory firms. Enter New York City-based Alvarez & Marsal LLC (A&M), an international consulting firm specializing in **debtor** management and advisory services to financially troubled companies. "Hiring A&M turned out to be a very good decision for the company. Over the years they have provided wise counsel as we've dealt with some very difficult issues," Adams explained.

August 2002: Recapitalization

While adjusting to the closure of the Texas lumber operations, both the newly hired Adams and A&M went to work on an updated business plan to present to the bank group. "The idea was to take the initiative to propose some realistic means to the bank group to reduce our debt level. It wasn't as easy as we anticipated because each option we considered presented a host of new threats and circumstances," explained Adams. In the company's current distressed condition, selling the business or seeking an outside capital infusion were not likely to occur in an acceptable time frame. Bankruptcy was viewed at that time as putting the company at significant market risk from which it may not have the capability to recover. Trussway elected perhaps the safest option: to proceed with injecting additional capital with the assistance of its largest shareholder. In August 2002, a mini-recapitalization provided the bank group with additional **collateral** in the form of a \$7.5 million letter of credit which would be used as equity under worsening circumstances, but which at the same time would **dilute** the company's other shareholders. "We were hopeful at the time that this recap would put us on future firm financial ground with the banks," said Adams.

When It Rains, It Pours

Storm clouds followed Trussway into 2003 as months after the summer of 2002 recapitalization, the company was again out of financial covenant compliance. Just as before, the bank group began clamping down, this time reducing their exposure by decreasing the company's revolving working capital line of credit. Soon thereafter, Trussway's working capital requirements became even greater as lumber prices rose sharply. The reduced availability of working capital borrowings made "managing the rising lumber prices we were experiencing at the time difficult if not impossible," Adams lamented.

With rising lumber pricing squeezing margins, Trussway management continued to look for ways to reduce its leverage. The casualties this time were additional plant closings: the Buckner, KY wall panel facility and single-family manufacturing operations in North Carolina. The proceeds from the liquidation of plants, equipment and working capital were used to pay down debt. However, the reduction in leverage was still not adequate.

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Raining Buckets

In the summer of 2003 the need to take more substantial measures to reduce leverage became increasingly apparent to Trussway management. With the help of a second financial advisor, a company profile was prepared to identify prospective investors or purchasers. While out of compliance and during periods with no **forbearance agreements** in place, the question as to when or if the lenders would impose their **foreclosure rights** on company assets was ever-present. The fact that they were exploring restructuring, recapitalization or selling options brought little comfort to Trussway's management. "At this time we were essentially acting as crisis managers," said Adams. "It seemed we were

Continued on page 60

spending more of our time dealing with the compounding financial issues rather than running the company," recalled Adams.

**Financially Underwater:
Failed Recapitalization Attempt**

Following the recommendations of its financial advisors, in the fall of 2003 Trussway embarked on a targeted auction process. "Our goal at the time," said Tighe, "was to either sell the entire company or sell a controlling stake to a financial or strategic investor. The lenders were keeping us on a very short leash by this point," he added.

"We marketed ourselves," said Adams, "as a company that was out of financial covenant compliance, and whose financial and operational flexibility was restricted due to significant leverage but whose performance was improving rapidly. We told all who were interested that we were showing signs of a turnaround in our core [multi-family] business and that our margins would be improving as we worked our way through recent sharp increases in lumber costs. At the time, and this has proven true, I firmly believed our multi-family building segment had substantial upside."

Adams talked about the bank group's criteria for accepting a recapitalization proposal. "There were between ten and 15 different lenders within our bank group. Each lender regardless of the amount of debt it carried could veto any deal under the terms of the Credit Agreement. It was like chasing ten cats around a room to get them to agree on anything," said Adams. Further, Trussway management was told that if they didn't find a company who would pay 100 cents on every dollar of the company's debt, the bank group as a whole wouldn't accept it. "They gave us some time to get a deal done but their reluctance to discount their debt or provide a buyer with 'below market' financing made the restructuring even more of a challenge," Tighe noted.

"Our financial advisors did a good job canvassing the market for potential investors or buyers," said Adams. "As it turned out, while [the financial advisors] sought a deal for over a year, no one made an offer that was acceptable to 100 percent of our bank group," Adams remarked. "We came close with one well known equity investment group, but they wanted the bank group to relax the terms of our loan agreement, which would have given the company more financial covenant and debt service leeway," he said. However, their offer was not satisfactory to the bank group.

Déjà Vu All Over Again

With the prospects all but gone for a sale or recapitalization transaction that would be acceptable to the bank group, Trussway's management, now three years after its initial default under the credit agreement, once again had to deal

with the reality it faced. Tighe addressed the ensuing cash flow trouble. "By the September/October 2004 timeframe, we were facing a liquidity crunch. Our working capital borrowing was restricted and we were also experiencing increased sales in a rising lumber market. This only added to our cash problems. Customers were also beginning to drag their feet on paying us sensing we may be having problems. Our liquidity crunch reached the point that for the first time we were now unable to make our principal and interest payments to the bank group, putting us now in payment default as well," he said. By this point, the threat of foreclosure by the lender group was never so real and the prospect of a Chapter 11 filing "was something our Board of Directors began to seriously consider," said Adams.

And then, a critical break in the clouds. "Fortunately for our employees, customers and vendors, about this time we learned that a small group within our bank group was interested in putting together a brand new deal to recapitalize the company once and for all," said Adams. Enter Dallas-based Highland Capital Management, one of the many bank group lenders. "In this same time frame we learned that Highland was acquiring a great deal of our bank debt from some of the other constituents within the group. Ultimately through their initial lending and by acquiring debt from others in the bank group, [Highland] by this time owned more than 70 percent of our debt," Tighe said. Although this did not give Highland voting control of the company, it did give them significant leverage in determining the final outcome of a restructuring.

Storm Clouds Burst

Despite steadily improving sales, customer satisfaction, and positive short-term projections, as you can see, the company needed to face reality of its high amount of leverage and liquidity crunch. Partnering with A&M and the financial restructuring law firm of Squire, Sanders & Dempsey, LLP, negotiations kicked off among Trussway, its largest shareholder, and its lenders, including Highland. The goal was to come up with a workable financial restructuring plan to significantly reduce the company's debt and to give it adequate working capital financing to allow them to effectively operate and grow their business. On the eve of the year-end of 2004, more than three years after its first covenant default, the Trussway Board of Directors reached a comprehensive agreement with Highland. It served as a major step in helping to chase the company's financial storm clouds away. To accomplish the agreement, the company would be required to proceed with a **prepackaged Chapter 11 filing**.

The agreement reached with Highland contemplated financing while the company operated under Chapter 11 [**Debtor In Possession (DIP) financing**], **exit financing**, and a conversion of a significant portion of Trussway's debt to equity. The company, post Chapter 11, would end up with its debt reduced by over \$30 million. "Operationally, we were turned around, so the banks [Highland] were amenable to an

Continued on page 62

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The Calm after the Perfect Storm

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agreement that would convert some of our debt to equity. This meant the banks would essentially own our company,” said Adams. He further explained how the tables suddenly turn when a suitable agreement to fix a major financial blunder has been struck. “Prior to the deal, we were held on a very short leash by our lenders. But the second those lenders are ‘in it with you’—that is, in a partnership—they want you to succeed. So they’ll increase your liquidity, and strongly encourage you to keep your customers and employees happy. The bank group suddenly becomes your friend instead of your adversary; that’s exactly what we experienced,” he said.

Refuge from the Storm

A pre-packaged Chapter 11 filing like Trussway’s can be both straightforward and legitimate, and not a messy amalgam of lay-offs, closings or the unveiling of a scandalous management plot as you may think thanks to the folks of Enron, WorldCom and Tyco. In fact, the entire process for Trussway, from filing to final **plan of reorganization confirmation**, lasted just over five months.

“Our Chapter 11 case was filed in December 2004 in the **Federal Bankruptcy Court** in Corpus Christi, TX. Our attorneys immediately went to work seeking **first day orders**,” Adams explained. These first day orders allowed the company to continue paying employees and vendors, and also allowed them to continue normal business operations as Debtor in Possession (DIP) without disruption while they reorganized. An essential part of this process was identifying Trussway’s **critical vendors**, those companies who would receive 100 cents on every dollar. To accomplish this, Adams said, “we filed a critical vendor motion and named the vendors we would need to continue doing business with in order to effectively maintain our operations.” The list included companies such as Trussway’s plate and software supplier, lumber mills and wholesalers and energy companies.

The next step in the process was for Trussway to prepare and file a proposed **Plan of Reorganization (POR)** and **Disclosure Statement**. “Because our filing was pre-packaged, we immediately filed the POR and Disclosure Statement, with the idea that we would exit bankruptcy within four or five months,” said Mike Estes, Trussway’s Vice President of Marketing. “This was no small task,” Adams remembered. “It was truly impressive to see the Trussway and Highland attorneys and A&M working day and night putting together the POR and Disclosure Statement, almost 500 pages setting forth our plan to exit Chapter 11 along with detailed financial analyses and projections,” said Adams. He further explained: “Our primary goal along the way was to communicate and educate our primary vendors and customers that this was simply a reorganization. All critical vendors would be paid in

full for current and future debt and our customers would not see disruption in our supply of products to them. Like any other company, our suppliers are a critical part of our success, now and in the future, and due to the relationships we have had for years almost 100 percent of our suppliers continued business as usual.”

Ultimately a court hearing was held to review and approve the Disclosure Statement; once approved, it enabled Trussway’s POR to be submitted for a review and vote procedure by all the company’s creditors. Not only was the plan easily confirmed, but it received overwhelming support by vote by creditors. After this voting process as well as final court approval, Trussway was given the green light to exit Chapter 11. “The process of Chapter 11 gave the [Federal Bankruptcy Court] the power to bind the banks in an agreement which was leverage we would not have had outside the Chapter 11 process. This advantage was the basic reason why we chose this path,” Adams explained.

Adams further emphasized his company’s strength during Chapter 11. “We were a financially viable company throughout the entire process. We’ve always been making money,” he said. “Highland Capital Management, A&M and all the attorneys worked together to make it come together,” Adams said.

The “B” Image

It’s clear the term “bankruptcy” and all it connotes has left a bitter taste in Adams’ mouth, despite the positive tone and brevity of Trussway’s bankruptcy process. “I feel that the term bankruptcy should never be used in this situation. Using the ‘B word’ in a financial restructuring situation like ours is not an accurate characterization,” he said.

“Under typical Chapter 11,” Adams explained, “all creditors are frozen.” Estes added, “But when you enter a pre-packaged deal, you have the advantage of making sure vendors are satisfied, as they have assurances via the court order,” he explained.

“We all got used to the typical response from vendors: ‘Chapter 11? We’re not going to get paid, are we?’ Thanks to the pre-pack, we could assure them that’s not the case at all,” Adams said. “The B word really did not apply to our filing,” he added. “This was not a case of liquidation but simply a legitimate process by which a company could fix its balance sheet.”

Exiting

On May 18, 2005, members of the Trussway management team, legal counsel and interested parties congregated in Corpus Christi for a final plan of reorganization confirmation hearing. As expected, the court approved the plan and Trussway officially exited Chapter 11. “The Trussway exit [financing] facility has funded and closed, the [DIP financing] has been paid off, and the new equity has been issued.

Thanks to all for their hard work in helping Trussway emerge from bankruptcy,” noted Chris Miner of Squire, Sanders & Dempsey LLP in an email dated May 31.

A Gale Force PR Effort

Tighe talked about customers’ support throughout the five month Chapter 11 time-frame. “Over time, we built credibility with our customer base and that proved valuable in the bankruptcy process,” he said. “It also helped that we had very good advisors throughout. In fact, the [U.S. trustee] said they quite frequently see a lot of ‘riff raff’ in the Chapter 11 process and they rarely see companies as organized and as cooperative as Trussway go through bankruptcy court. Operationally, we were doing fine, and not nose-diving to a crash landing like you might envision a company in bankruptcy,” he noted.

“During this process we had to be externally focused,” said Adams. “What I mean by that is we needed to shift far greater resources and attention to customers, competitors and other forces that are out in the marketplace,” explained Adams. “The effort paid off in spades,” Adams declared proudly. “If you ask our customers how we’re performing, they’ll say: ‘keep doing what you’re doing.’ We’re right back where we started. Customer confidence has risen, even through our Chapter 11 proceedings,” he added. Longtime customer and builder Bob Gaherty of The Douglas Group (Winter Park, FL) said, “Trussway has been my supplier for over ten years. The reasons are simple—they deliver quality products and superior service.”

“Maintaining a positive image with our employees and vendors in addition to our customers was also important,” said Adams. As word of their bankruptcy filing spread, Trussway management launched a public relations effort of heroic proportions. “Our primary goal through this restructuring was to keep our employees, customers and vendors from being put at risk,” Estes recalled. “We had their best interests at heart,” he said.

First, the staff had to be on board with the concept of bankruptcy. “We organized a communications meeting with all employees,” Adams said. Although Trussway’s post-operational restructuring morale was very good, management felt it was important to involve staff at the very beginning of

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the Chapter 11 process and get the facts on the table. “Our employees were a top priority in this process,” Adams noted. Employees were nervous and had plenty of questions for good reason. Adams found that over-communication was the right plan throughout the restructuring. “Our theory was to keep morale and performance up by answering all their questions. If we were going to truly take care of our customers, our employees needed to be focused on their work,” he said. Finally, regular internal communications meetings around the country allowed staff to focus on their work rather than the bankruptcy.

Keeping the loyal Trussway customer and vendor base

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The Calm after the Perfect Storm

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informed was the other top priority, according to Estes. The management team used a uniquely honest and forthright approach in apprising their customers of the Chapter 11 proceedings. "We kept in regular contact with customers and vendors. We even held face-to-face conferences with any customer who requested detailed information on the financial restructuring," Estes noted. Customers, vendors and creditors were sent web site links from which to access all the court orders and case documentation to date. "It was our way of assuring them that our intention was to serve and pro-

tect them," Adams pointed out. "We didn't want to lose a single customer. And we didn't," said Estes.

Their final communiqué to vendors, customers and employees before the scheduled May 18 plan confirmation hearing was distributed about one month earlier. In it, Adams provided an update on the company's bankruptcy status, reassuring that the company would emerge from Chapter 11 in excellent financial health. "After hitting the inevitable bump in the road, we are on track toward a successful and expeditious restructuring," he noted. In addition, Adams gave a timeline: "Trussway expects to emerge from bankruptcy the first or second week of June, approximately six months after filing. This aggressive restructuring timetable is a result of the significant support that we have received from not only our customers, but our vendors and 1,300 employees." Finally, he reaffirmed the company's ever-present commitment to quality and customer service. "I believe that this reorganization process has secured our long-term future and made us a better business partner for you going forward. We remain committed to exiting the process while ensuring that the process in no way interferes with our ability to provide a quality product and unparalleled service to our customers and continued partnership with our vendors," said Adams.

Bright & Sunny Forecast

According to Estes, the company's projections for the third and fourth quarter of 2005 and into 2006 look promising. When Trussway emerged from bankruptcy in May 2005, they were finally de-leveraged as a result of the conversion of debt to equity. Their liquidity is furthermore strong with a

more than adequate working capital line of credit in place. In addition, they have the benefit of a strong sponsor who now owns all of their stock and debt, and they happen to be very growth-oriented. Highland Capital Management manages over \$15 billion in assets, located in Dallas. Adams said, "Highland is in a position to help Trussway grow and reach our objectives. For instance, we will be in a position to consider acquisitions in the multi-family sector. We will also look at more internal growth, plant additions and ways to add products to our platform which are geared primarily toward our multi-family customer base. We have a lot to look forward to." Throughout the process, Trussway has actually expand-

Continued on page 67

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Mini-Glossary of Credit, Financial & Legal Terms

by Kent J. Pagel

Chapter 11: The reorganization chapter of the Bankruptcy Code in which a Debtor seeks to rehabilitate and reorganize its financial structure. The goal of Chapter 11 is to propose a Plan of Reorganization that is accepted by a vote of the creditors.

Collateral: Property such as the assets of a company, used as security for repayment of a bank loan. Collateral will usually include accounts receivable, inventory, equipment, vehicles and land.

Credit Agreement (also known as **Credit Facility**): A written agreement between a borrower and lender (or group of lenders) detailing the terms and conditions of the borrowing, remedies of the lender, and a description in detail of the Collateral.

Critical Vendors: Vendors and suppliers of the Debtor who are owed monies as of the date of the Bankruptcy Petition who are deemed by the Federal Bankruptcy Court as providing materials or services necessary for the Debtor to effectively reorganize its business. Critical vendors approved by the Federal Bankruptcy Court are entitled to be paid all monies due them in the ordinary course of the Debtor's business (including Pre-Petition debt) so long as they agree to maintain open credit terms with the Debtor similar to such credit terms as existed prior to the Debtor having filed its Bankruptcy Petition. Otherwise creditors are not entitled to payment of Pre-petition debt except through the Debtor's confirmed Plan of Reorganization.

Debtor: The company that files a Bankruptcy Petition under either Chapter 7 or 11 of the Bankruptcy Code.

Debtor in Possession (DIP): A Debtor that files a Bankruptcy Petition under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code is permitted to continue to operate its own business and in doing so, the Debtor is referred to as a Debtor in Possession.

Debtor in Possession Financing (DIP Financing): Financing provided to the Debtor in Possession by a lender or group of lenders, approved by order of the Federal Bankruptcy Court, after the Bankruptcy Petition is filed.

Dilute: The process by which new shares of stock are issued to new shareholders which reduces as a percentage the ownership interest of existing shareholders.

Disclosure Statement: An explanatory document which accompanies the Plan of Reorganization and the solicitation of votes in the Chapter 11 case. No one is allowed to solicit votes for a plan without there being an approved disclosure statement. After notice to all parties, the court holds a hearing to determine if the disclosure statement contains adequate information to allow a typical creditor to make an informed decision about the Plan of Reorganization.

Exit Financing: The financing (and terms and conditions thereof) that exists after Plan of Reorganization Confirmation between the lenders under a Credit Agreement and the Debtor.

Federal Bankruptcy Court: A unit of the United States District Court (federal court) specializing in the handling of bankruptcy cases.

First Day Orders: Orders entered by the Federal Bankruptcy Court early on after the Bankruptcy Petition for the purpose of minimizing the disruption the Bankruptcy Petition filing has on the business operation of the Debtor. The orders can include: retention of restructuring attorneys, the maintenance of the Debtor's bank accounts and cash management systems, the continuation of utility services, the payment of employees' wages both Pre-Petition and Post-Petition, and the payment of Critical Vendors.

Forbearance Agreement: An act by which a creditor, such as a bank or bank group, waits for payment of debt due even after it becomes due as a result of a debt maturity, monetary default under a Credit Agreement, or non-monetary default under a Credit Agreement.

Foreclosure Rights: The seizing and selling by a creditor, including a bank or bank group, of Collateral as a result of a debt maturity, monetary or non-monetary default under a Credit Agreement.

Leverage: The use of borrowed funds to increase the potential return on an investment. Also, the amount of debt used to finance a firm's assets. A firm with significantly more debt than equity is considered to be highly leveraged.

Plan of Reorganization: The Chapter 11 plan must contain, among other things, a division of the Claims into various classes, a description of the treatment of each claim, a comparison of the treatment under the Chapter 11 plan to projected treatment under Chapter 7 and the means for carrying out the plan. Once a plan is proposed and a Disclosure Statement approved, the plan will be distributed to creditors for voting. The Federal Bankruptcy Court, in each case, will set rules for the balloting process.

Plan of Reorganization Confirmation: The official act of the Federal Bankruptcy Court in approving a Plan of Reorganization. Also known as an order confirming the plan.

Prepackaged Chapter 11 Bankruptcy Filing (Pre-pack): Before filing a bankruptcy case (usually a Chapter 11) debtor and creditors negotiate an agreed upon Plan of Reorganization. The Bankruptcy Petition can then be filed and the plan proposed and confirmed with much less time and expense.

U.S. Trustee: The United States Trustee Program is a component of the Department of Justice responsible for overseeing the administration of bankruptcy cases.

Editor's Note: An expanded financial glossary has been posted in the **Support Docs** at www.sbcmag.info.

Builder Services Group (BSG) Provides Full Turnkey Service

While Trussway was undergoing its Chapter 11 reorganization, Mike Estes helped establish a new Trussway division created to provide single-source erected framing packages. Builders Services Group (BSG) was created in response to customer demand. With their finances now in excellent shape, the company is now able to provide this much requested service. Estes noted, "For years our most loyal customers have been asking us to provide erected packages, yet with our past ownership and covenant restrictions, we were reluctant to do so. Now, we're up and running."

BSG customers get a complete truss and component package as before, but now the lumber and labor is also provided for one fixed price. The benefits are many: a single-source provider improves the overall coordination and scheduling of the job, reduces the builder's need for onsite supervision and scheduling, reduces the risk of cost overruns due to misuse, market swings, incorrect takeoffs and theft, reduces costs through value design and coordination, establishes more accurate budgets, and so on. "It simply minimizes the builder's risk and makes his job go much more smoothly," Estes explained.

Trussway's senior management team saw full turn-key packages as such an important growth opportunity that Estes transitioned from VP of Sales and Marketing to focus his efforts entirely on the formation of this new division. "BSG also allows Trussway to better control which products are used on any given project as well as to coordinate the most efficient overall design. This due-diligence allows for the best utilization of materials and manufactured product, which in turn maximizes production capacity and profits," he said. "With the expertise of the BSG staff teamed with the already well-respected Trussway staff, we will quickly grow this turnkey effort," said Estes. The early success of BSG shows that Trussway has successfully answered its customers' call. In fact, Estes projects 2005 sales will exceed the first-year goal of \$15 million, and expects 2006 sales to approach \$40 million.

The Calm after the Perfect Storm

Continued from page 64

ed and improved operations and profitability, vendor relationships, and experienced very little employee turnover, highly unusual for companies going through a Chapter 11 restructuring.

In the future, they have plotted a course stipulating an ideal mix in terms of single family and multi-family truss and component sales. "We've got an established customer base in the south and east. In converting our Arizona plant from single to multi-family, we've created a gateway to the west. That's pretty powerful. It's interesting to look back and see that Trussway has come full circle since it started in the 1980s,"

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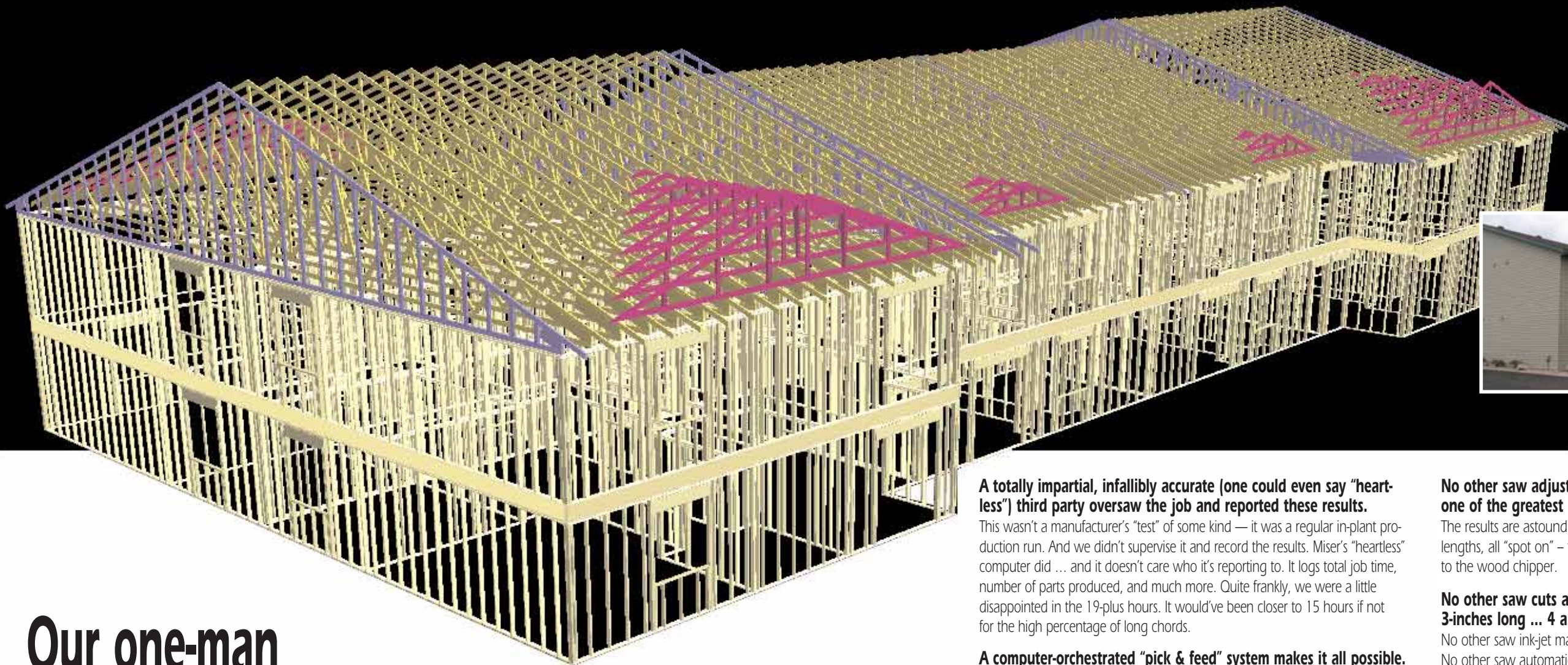
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commented Adams. The Trussway management team recently issued this statement in behalf of the entire company: "Trussway at this time offers its gratitude and thanks for the patience and loyalty exhibited by all of its constituents-vendors, employees and customers. Without the support of all of you, we would have never made it."

More than six years later, one devastating storm, a massive clean-up effort, and operational and financial restructuring have all blown over. Trussway's skies are finally clear and blue—perfect conditions for an 18-hole celebration. Trussway is back; and this time around, they're older, wiser and much better prepared for the next storm. Welcome back, Trussway. **SBC**

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Devin Peterson
Blenker Building Systems, Inc.
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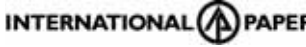
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john@turb-o-web.com
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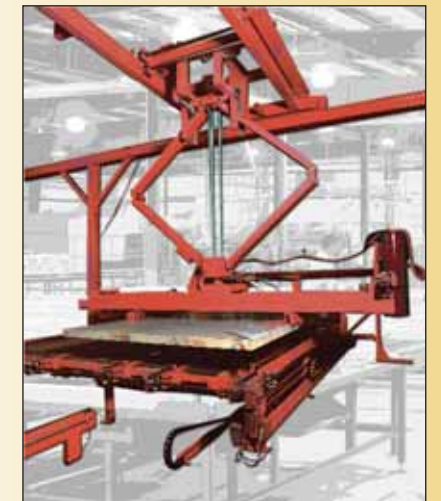


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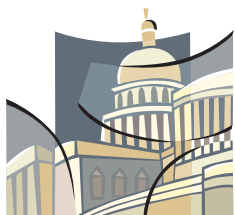
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Knowing the Courts: Part 1 of 2

by Sean D. Shields

Okay, the civics lessons contained in these articles are almost through. However, our coverage of government would not be complete without a better understanding of the judicial system. Why should you care about the men and women in black robes sitting on benches across the U.S.? From the U.S. Supreme Court all the way down to the local municipal court, the court system in the United States can seem a confusing, almost limitless juggernaut. Understanding the court system will better enable you to appreciate the ways in which laws are interpreted and enforced against your company.

This subject is very complex (suffice it to say it is one of the numerous reasons why lawyers have to go to school as long as they do), but this two part series will attempt to scratch the surface. I'll begin with a general discussion of the civil court system in the U.S.

First, the courts themselves. At the federal level, Article III in the U.S. Constitution sets forth the powers reserved for the judicial branch. What is generally glossed over is the fact the Constitution only creates one U.S. Supreme Court, and delegates to Congress the establishment of all other courts. At the state level, things are a bit different. Each state has been given deference to establish its own system of courts. Not surprisingly, no two state courts operate exactly alike. To make things even more confusing, there is what appears to be a duplication of court systems between the federal and state level.

While most civil disputes are resolved at the state level, there are presently 89 federal court districts, with many districts containing up to ten judges; every state has at least one. The larger the state's population, the more federal districts and judges are located in that state. The jurisdiction of the federal courts is established by Congress.

Presently, a civil dispute between two companies located in the same state or between two companies in different states over a sum of less than \$75,000 legally could not be heard in a federal court. Federal court is generally the place to litigate issues of federal, not state law. An example might be a dispute over how the OSHA rules ought to be applied to a particular company. Since OSHA is a federal organization (part of the U.S. Department of Labor), disputes regarding its regulatory authority or interpretation of a federal statute would take place within the federal courts.

The federal system has three tiers. As noted above, the federal district court constitutes the first tier of courts. The middle tier is called the federal circuit court, or U.S. Courts of Appeal. These courts hear appeals of legal decisions of the federal district courts. There were only ten of these until 1980 when Congress created an eleventh. Subsequently, it has also added a District of Columbia and a Federal Circuit Court to handle cases

coming out of the numerous federal agencies as well.

In the federal courts, the Courts of Appeal are almost always the end of the line, since very few, yet important cases are heard each year by the U.S. Supreme Court, the third and final tier in the federal system. To complicate things even more, the U.S. Supreme Court also has jurisdiction to hear certain disputes that come to it from a state's highest court, which as we will see below are also generally referred to as state supreme courts.

Let's move our discussion to how the state courts are generally structured. Let's ignore, for a moment, the intricate unique details, and discuss the basic state court system. It's helpful to think of it as a pyramid, with a broad system of lower courts building a foundation, with a single state supreme court at the pinnacle. Many of you have come in contact with the courts at the base of the pyramid—traffic courts and small claims courts, "small change" courts if you will, where the disputes and any dollar amounts involved are generally quite small. These courts are scattered throughout the municipal and rural districts of a state. Their structure and jurisdiction varies widely and depends many times on the unique historical development of an individual state.

Although some of the more populated cities and counties may have active municipal and county courts where some significant dollar disputes may come into play, each state will generally have what is referred to as a court of common jurisdiction. This court, whether it is referred to as a district court as in Texas, a court of common pleas in Ohio or supreme court in New York, essentially has statewide jurisdiction over disputes. Consider these courts as the workhorses of the state court systems in the U.S. While they will have jurisdiction over criminal matters, our focus is instead on civil matters and in particular disputes involving claims for money. The cases filed in these courts can range from \$10,000 for example to \$10 billion or more. Because of the great number of cases filed in these courts, most of them will be settled out of court, dismissed for procedural or legal insufficiency grounds, or compromised through an alternative dispute resolution system.

Out of these state courts of common jurisdiction, the "loser" of a case has the right to appeal it to the next higher level of courts, generally called the courts of appeal. States with a small population like Wyoming have a two-tiered system where the court of appeals is the singular state supreme court. However, states with medium to large populations have adopted a three-tier system where the courts of appeal stand between the basic trial courts and the state supreme court (except the state of New York, where the state supreme court is the court with statewide jurisdiction). In the appeals courts, the case is hardly ever reviewed in full; instead,

Continued on page 87

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Housing Starts

Housing starts remained strong, but unchanged in June, holding at 2.004 million (SAAR). The single-family sector was down 2.5%, but multi-family was up almost 15%. Permits, an indicator of future activity, were up 2.4%.

U.S. Housing Starts			
Millions - Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rate (SAAR)			
U.S. Totals	June	May (rev.)	% Change
Starts	2.004	2.004	0.0%
Permits	2.111	2.062	2.4%
Single Family			
Starts	1.667	1.709	-2.5%
Permits	1.649	1.628	1.3%
Multi Family			
Starts	0.337	0.295	14.2%
Permits	0.462	0.434	6.5%
Starts and Permits By Region:			
NE Starts	0.185	0.186	-0.5%
NE Permits	0.209	0.191	9.4%
SE Starts	0.335	0.381	-12.1%
SE Permits	0.360	0.354	1.7%
W Starts	1.003	0.900	11.4%
W Permits	0.961	1.011	-4.9%
M Starts	0.481	0.537	-10.4%
M Permits	0.522	0.549	-4.9%

Analysis & Outlook: The housing market remains strong thanks largely to attractive mortgages (30 year rate still below 6%) and an improving job market. The market is slowing, albeit slowly, and coming down from very lofty levels. As noted by C. Chan (Dismal Scientist, www.economy.com), starts in the 2nd quarter are off 13% on an annualized basis from the very strong 1st quarter, however, they are still averaging two million units, annually. Short term, housing is expected to remain healthy as long as interest rates remain below 6% and inventories remain low. Most analysts believe that rates would need to approach 7% in order to slow housing appreciably, which isn't expected until late 2006 or early 2007. Inventories of new and existing homes for sale remain historically low at 4.2 and 4.3 months supply respectively. This will insure that if the economy does slow, housing prices should not be as vulnerable. Concerns remain the same: the dollar and housing prices. The dollar has been performing well lately (vs. the Euro and Yen), and that has encouraged Japanese and Chinese central banks to continue buying dollar denominated assets—that isn't expected to change in the near future. Inflation shouldn't become a serious problem either thanks to excess manufacturing capacity in cheap labor countries. The other issue, housing prices, is getting more and more press. The concern is that prices are increasing at an unsustainable rate. The consensus is that the "bubble" will deflate rather than pop. The housing market is expected to remain strong through the rest of this year, improving slightly on last year's 1.956 million units, reaching almost 2 million starts. Modest inflation and dollar problems will push mortgage rates up through 2006, which means the housing market will pull back. Single-family will slow the most due to affordability issues with entry level buyers. Higher mortgage rates will shift some prospective single-family buyers to the rental market. **SBC**

This housing starts report is provided to **SBC** on a monthly basis by **SBC Economic Environment** columnist Al Schuler. Visit www.sbcmag.info for more economic news.



Builder Banter

Builders Grapple with Sky-High Regulatory Costs

With concerns about affordability growing in many of the nation's major housing markets, NAHB Vice President and Treasurer Brian Catalde and California Building Industry Association (CBIA) President Steve Doyle, recently called on local governments to reduce the impact fees, zoning constraints, construction code requirements and other regulatory burdens on builders and developers that are driving up the cost of housing.

Catalde and Doyle said local governments should approve more medium- and high-density housing, plan better for growth, streamline the zoning and approval processes and spread the costs of government services more equitably among all their citizens rather than singling out new-home buyers.

"We are seeing millions and millions of middle-income families being priced out of the market for homeownership all across the country," said Catalde, a builder based in Playa del Rey in Southern California.

Catalde noted that four factors—the cost of doing business; cost shifting such as impact fees and inclusionary zoning; production constraints such as large-lot zoning, setback requirements, urban growth boundaries and habitat areas and open space requirements; and the cost of regulation—have escalated the cost of housing.

"You've got hundreds of regulatory costs and impact fees. There are so many layers of regulations that it's all pretty fuzzy until you've found your way through the maze," Catalde said. "Ultimately, it's the home buyer who gets stuck paying the check."

Catalde mapped out four meaningful steps that local governments can tackle immediately in order to make housing more affordable. These include:

- Passing more notice-and-opportunity to repair (NOR) legislation. Catalde said aggressive litigation tactics are currently driving up home prices and discouraging construction of much-needed multifamily housing. NOR legislation would help control aggressive litigation.
- Spreading the costs of local government services fairly among all who use them, rather than having new-home owners footing most of the bill.
- Changing zoning and development regulations so that land-use policies have less impact on housing prices.
- Applying cost-benefit analysis to all new regulations.

"Government at all levels needs to be more disciplined. If the cost to society is greater than the benefit, then the government needs to change or reconsider that regulation," Catalde said. [SOURCE: *Nation's Building News*, June 6, 2005]

Builder Confidence Holds Up Well in July

Builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes barely budged in July,

Housing Market Index 2003-04 (HMI)

The HMI is a weighted, seasonally adjusted statistic derived from ratings for present single family sales, single family sales in the next 6 months and buyers traffic. The first two components are measured on a scale of "good" "fair," and "poor," and the last one is measured on a scale of "high," "average" and "low." A rating of 50 indicates that the number of positive or good responses received from the builders is about the same as the number of negative or poor responses. Ratings higher than 50 indicate more positive or good responses.

Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 04	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
71	68	72	70	70	69	64	64	69	69	67

Source: National Association of Home Builders

edging down two points from an upwardly revised reading in June to a level that matches the strong index average for the year as a whole, according to the latest National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI), released on July 18.

"Builders have every reason to remain confident in the single-family marketplace," said NAHB President Dave Wilson, a custom home builder from Ketchum, ID. "While mortgage rates have risen slightly in recent weeks, financing conditions remain very favorable to families considering homeownership, and demand still outpaces the supply of new homes in many markets." [SOURCE: NAHB Press Release, 7/18/05, www.nahb.org]

OSHA Compliance Assistance Web Page Updated

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recently announced updates to its Compliance Assistance Web page. The page provides a public gateway to OSHA resources that can help home builders and other employers meet their responsibility to provide their workers with a safe and healthful workplace. Among the new features:

- A Hispanic Outreach module has been added to the Compliance Assistance Quick Start to help English-speaking or bilingual employers identify Spanish-language outreach resources for Spanish-speaking workers. Quick Start introduces employers and employees, especially those at new or small businesses, to the compliance assistance resources that are available on OSHA's Web site.
- The Highlights box on the Compliance Assistance page now features New Compliance Assistance Products. This feature lists new or updated fact sheets, publications, Safety and Health Information Bulletins, Web pages and other recently issued OSHA compliance assistance products.
- A new Hispanic outreach success story features efforts by Rinker Materials Corporation to redesign its training materials to communicate more visually with Spanish-speaking employees.
- At the request of the Department of Labor, the Highlights box also includes a link to the department's Web Site Customer Satisfaction Survey to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the Compliance Assistance page. [Source: *Nation's Building News* 2005] **SBC**

Email ideas for this department to builderbanter@sbcmag.info.

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Adventures in Advocacy • Continued from page 84

it is reviewed for errors, and new facts are rarely introduced in these proceedings.

In states with a three-tier system, the one state supreme court has enormous discretion over its workload. The "loser" in an appeals court case generally does not have the automatic right to appeal to the supreme court. Certain criteria must exist such as the existence of conflicting legal precedent from different courts of appeal within the state or what is referred to as a "case of first impression," where a legal issue has otherwise not been reviewed by the supreme court of a particular state.

Whether this is true or not, the fact remains there are many court systems and thousands of courts, all of which can potentially exercise a considerable influence over how laws are interpreted and enforced, including those laws applicable to component manufacturers. In the next issue of **SBC Magazine**, this column will explore the ways in which this judicial authority can specifically impact you and your business. **SBC**



Chapter Corner

For more information about WTCA Chapters and how to become more involved, contact Anna L. Stamm (608/310-6719 or astamm@qualtim.com) or Danielle Bothun (608/310-6735 or dbothun@qualtim.com). Contributions to Chapter Corner, including pictures, are encouraged. Submissions may be edited for grammar, length and clarity.



Chapter Spotlight

The South Carolina Chapter Returns

The South Carolina Chapter is on the rise again. Several interested members gathered in June to plan the relaunch of the chapter. Hosted by Boozer Lumber Company in Columbia, the WTCA members at the informal meeting made the following decisions for the next meeting of the South Carolina Component Manufacturers Association (SCCMA):

Tuesday, September 13 at 2 pm
Hampton Inn • Columbia, SC

The central topic of the meeting will be "Why We Need an Active Chapter." Chapter officers will be elected too. In 2006, the SCCMA meeting dates will be set to coincide with the North Carolina Chapter meetings in February, June and November. In addition, a joint North Carolina/South Carolina Chapter meeting will take place in September 2006.

If you have not yet received a sign-up form and would like to attend the September 13 meeting, simply contact WTCA for more information. Members AND nonmembers are welcome to attend! **SBC**

Chapter Highlights

California Engineered Structural Components Association

The southern and northern regions of the California Chapter held back-to-back meetings in May. In order to tackle its issues in the most effective manner, several subcommittees were created to take the lead on the hot projects. In CalESCA-South, a subcommittee on electronic seals and signatures will work on a specific issue in San Diego and then on a systematic plan to the have Riverside approach adopted in jurisdictions across the state. Top plate performance is an issue so a subcommittee will investigate the jobsites where this has come up and draft a response for dealing with the problems encountered by framers. A guide for off-loading trusses is now under development and the first draft will be headed up by a Cal-South subcommittee. For its part, CalESCA-North will continue to take the lead in the area of permitting and transporting trusses. These are generally local legislative issues and this group is putting together its thoughts on holding a legislative conference to have a uniform approach to transportation statewide. All of these subcommittees will provide updates at the next chapter meetings, August 30 in Riverside for Cal-South and August 31 in Sacramento for Cal-North.

Iowa Truss Manufacturers Association

The Iowa Chapter held a terrific day of events on June 8 at the Harvester golf club. A great presentation from Steve Kennedy and Richard Zimmermann concerning **The Load Guide (TLG)** started off the day. Steve and Richard's knowledge helped spur on the meeting and more conversation. A motion was made that ITMA form a subcommittee to review the **TLG** with the purpose of assisting in the achievement of consensus within the truss industry on how to apply the codes and the ASCE 7 load standard to trusses, its impact on ITMA member markets and be prepared to report findings at the WTCA E&T Committee meeting during the August 17-19 Open Quarterly Meeting in Denver, CO.

After a rather rainy morning, good weather finally arrived. The course drained extremely well and after the first few holes the temperature went up and the wind died down making for a good day. There was a tie for first place with both teams shooting a 66! To break the tie, the handicap system was used, starting on the hardest hole and working back. The winning results were as follows: 1st place - Tom Lambertz, Dick Marriott, Joe Newby, Tod Hennessy, Mike Stineman; 2nd place - Mike Farr, Lance Beasley, Andy Green, Bill Weber; 3rd place - Wes Parker, Dave Andres, Ron Oldt, Dave Mitchell; Closet to the Pin on #3 - Wes Parker; Longest Drive on #6 - Mike Farr; Longest Putt on #9 - Joe Newby; Longest Drive on #15 - Dave Mitchell; Closet to the Pin on #17 - Tod Hennessy; Longest Putt on #18 - Dick Marriott. Congratulations! A huge thank you goes out to everyone who supplied prizes or donations. Everyone's generous support of this association is appreciated. The next meeting will be October 13 in Milwaukee, WI at BCMC 2005.

Mid Atlantic Wood Truss Council

At its spring meeting, the Mid Atlantic Chapter welcomed back Mr. Lou Mraw, Director of Regulatory Affairs, New Jersey Dept of Community Affairs. The state requested labeling the bottom chords of trusses to ease inspection procedures, and he had been working with the chapter to reach a consensus on how best to define and implement this. Mr. Mraw also stated that NJ was adopting the 1996 BOCA National Building Code language for residential attics with trusses. The chapter thanks him for his time and hopes to continue working with him. Members also reviewed the chapter's recent efforts to protest the labeling of truss construction in Upper Providence, PA. The chapter will continue to deal with these local labeling laws and attempts to inappropriately regulate trusses in PA. The new slate of chapter officers was approved too. Dave Walstad moved into the position of Past President and Ken Slotter became President. Rich Phalines stepped up to Vice President, Tom Wurster agreed to continue as Secretary and Barry Hoffman as Treasurer. The next meeting date is set for November 10.

WTCA-Kentucky

The Kentucky Chapter held its second meeting of the year on May 20 in Lexington. Clyde Bartlett was ratified as Chapter President and Ralph Mason accepted the position of Secretary/Treasurer. The members present

Continued on page 90

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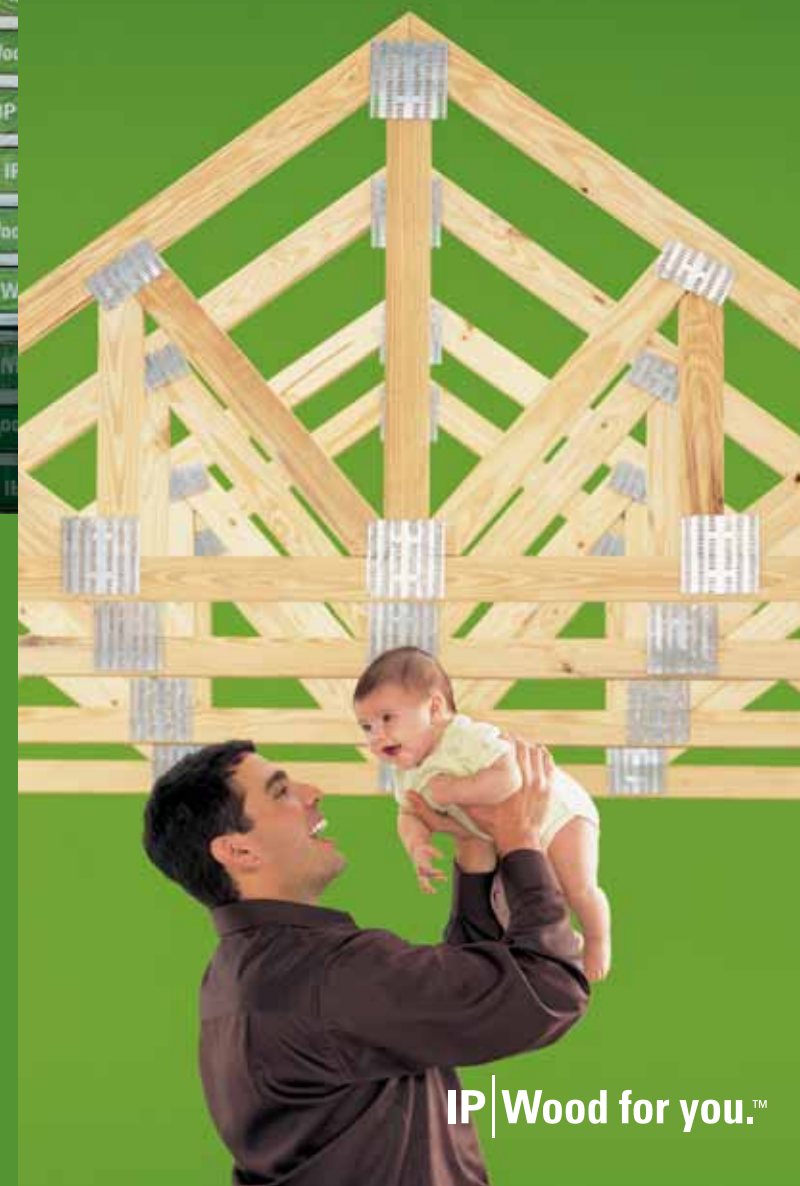
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Chapter Corner

Continued from page 88

posed several ideas for increasing attendance at chapter meetings and participation in chapter activities. A newsletter will be written prior to the next meeting to disseminate current information and create a buzz on the latest news. Members will assist in follow-up calls to encourage greater attendance. A survey will be sent to all members and nonmembers to gauge interest in specific topics and the work that the chapter should accomplish. For example, requests for sealed placement plans are on the rise and that is an issue the chapter should address proactively. Negative attitudes about the fire performance of trusses is another issue toward which the chapter could direct its energies and educational efforts. In conclusion, Clyde Bartlett delivered the evening's presentation on **The Load Guide (TLG): Guide to Good Practice for Specifying and Applying Loads to Structural Building Components**. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 18 at the Sheraton Suites Lexington.

WTCA-Northeast

The April meeting of the Northeast Chapter was moved to May to accommodate the guest speaker, Dan DeDentro of the Rhode Island Code Enforcement Committee. In particular, members were experiencing several problems and inconsistencies regarding the enforcement of the bottom chord live load according to IRC 2003. After very good discussion, the issues were clarified and a course of action determined. Indeed, shortly after the meeting, the chapter and staff team was pleased to report success in obtaining a "blanket variance" to the Rhode Island residential code that allows the use of the 2004 IRC supplement bottom chord live load requirements. For more information on the variance and for assistance pursuing a similar solution in neighboring states, contact WTCA. **SBC**



Calendar of Events

Check out WTCA's web site at www.woodtruss.com for the most current calendar information.

August

- **10:** Southwest Florida Truss Manufacturers Association (SWFTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Jim Swain at 239/437-1100 or jimsw@carpentercontractors.com.
- **11:** Wisconsin Truss Manufacturers Association (WTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Gene Geurts at 920/336-9400 or ggeurts@richcostr.com.
- **17-19:** WTCA Open Quarterly Meeting, Hyatt Regency Denver, Denver, CO. All are welcome to attend. For more information, contact staff at 608/284-4849 or visit www.woodtruss.com.
- **18:** Minnesota Truss Manufacturers Association (MTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Jim Scheible at 763/675-7376 or jim_scheible@trussabc.com.
- **30:** CalESCA-South Chapter Meeting, 3:00-6:00 pm, The Mission Inn, Riverside, CA. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA-National, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qualtim.com.
- **31:** CalESCA-North Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA-National, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qualtim.com.

September

- **6:** WTCA-Illinois Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA-National, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qualtim.com.

- **13:** Colorado Truss Manufacturers Association (CTMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Dennis Wilson at 303/307-1441 or DWilson@HomeLumber.com.
- **13:** South Carolina Component Manufacturers Association (SCCMA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA-National, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qualtim.com.
- **14:** Chapter Teleconference. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA-National, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qualtim.com.
- **14:** SWFTMA Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Jim Swain at 239/437-1100 or jimsw@carpentercontractors.com.
- **15:** Missouri Truss Fabricators Association (MTFA) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Dani at WTCA-National, 608/310-6735 or dbothun@qualtim.com.
- **15:** Truss Manufacturers Association of Texas (TMAT) Membership Meeting & Golf Tournament, Austin, TX. For more information, contact Anna at WTCA-National, 608/310-6719 or astamm@qualtim.com.
- **15:** Wood Truss Council of Michigan (WTCM) Chapter Meeting. For more information, contact Chapter President Denny Metiva at 989/792-6800 or dmetiva@deltatruss.com. **SBC**

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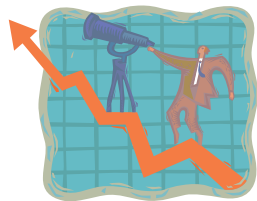
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Industry News & Data

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Consumer Price Index

[an index measuring the change in the cost of typical wage-earner purchases of goods and services expressed as a percentage of the cost of these same goods and services in some base period - called also cost-of-living index]

Expenditure Category	Changes from Preceding Mo.			Compound annual rate 3-mo. ended May 05
	Mar	Apr	May	
All Items	.6	.5	-.1	4.4
All Items Less Food & Engery	.4	.0	.1	2.2

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Unemployment Rate

Mar	5.2%
Apr	5.2%
May	5.1%
June	5.0%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Producer Price Index - Customized Industry Data

An inflationary indicator published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to evaluate wholesale price levels in the economy.

Engineered Wood Mem. (exc. truss) Mfg.	Mar	Apr	May	Truss Mfg.	Mar	Apr	May
Eng. Wood Mem.	119.0(P)	123.2(P)	123.4(P)	Truss Mfg.	117.6(P)	119.0(P)	119.0(P)
LVL	119.0(P)	128.5(P)	128.1(P)	Wood Trusses	114.7(P)	116.1(P)	116.2(P)
Other	119.4(P)	122.6(P)	123.0(P)	Primary Products	114.7(P)	116.1(P)	116.2(P)
				Secondary Products	113.7(P)	114.0(P)	114.0(P)

(P) = preliminary
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Producer Price Index General

% changes in selected stage-of-processing price indexes

Month	Total	Ex. Food & Energy
Feb	0.4	0.1
Mar	0.7	0.1
Apr	0.6	0.3
May	-0.6	0.1

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

U.S. Prime Rate

Month	2005	2004	2003
Mar 1	5.50%	4.00%	4.25%
Apr 1	5.75%	4.00%	4.25%
May 1	5.75%	4.00%	4.25%
June 1	6.00%	4.00%	4.25%
July 1	6.25%	4.25%	4.00%

Source: Federal Reserve Board

Industrial Production Index

The industrial production (IP) index measures the change in output in U.S. manufacturing, mining, and electric and gas utilities. Output refers to the physical quantity of items produced, unlike sales value which combines quantity and price. The index covers the production of goods and power for domestic sales in the United States and for export. It excludes production in the agriculture, construction, transportation, communication, trade, finance, and service industries; government output, and imports. The IP index is developed by weighting each component according to its relative importance in the base period. The information for weights is obtained from the value added measures of production in the economic censuses of manufacturer and minerals industries, and from value added information for the utility industries in Internal Revenue Service statistics of income data. The weights are updated at five-year intervals to coincide with the economic censuses. The current index base year is 1992. (r=revised)

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Industrial Production Total Index (% change)	0.5	0.2(r)	-0.3(r)	0.4
Capacity Utilization Total Industry (%)	79.4	79.4	79.1 (r)	79.4

Source: Federal Reserve Board

CM News

WTCA MEMBER SUPPLIES COMPONENTS, FRAMING FOR EXTREME MAKEOVER: HOME EDITION PROJECT

WTCA member Capital Structures of Fort Smith, AR, demonstrated the power of using structural building components on a recent episode of ABC-TV's No. 1 rated show, *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, and played an important role in helping out a nearby Alma, AR family who has lived through tragedy. The episode will air this August. For more information about *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* and framing with components, visit www.woodtruss.com. Look for an in-depth article about Capital Structures' involvement with this project in the November issue of *SBC Magazine*.

FIRE AT U.S. COMPONENTS LOCATION IN NJ

WTCA member U.S. Components had a major fire at its Winslow Township plant on June 23. The silver lining is that no one was hurt and they didn't lose any office space. They have been able to move their production to other locations for the short term and plan to rebuild the facility.

News

WTCA PAST PRESIDENT, HOLLAND, SPEAKS AT SFPA MEETING

At the Sothern Forest Products Associations' (SFPA) recent Midyear meeting, Dan Holland, WTCA Past President and President of Clearspan Components, Meridian, MS provided an overview of Southern Pine's role in truss

and wall panel markets. Using his homespun humor, Dan encouraged SPC members to "rethink how you sell" to component manufacturers. "Many component manufacturers are becoming defacto home designers," he said, noting that information technology is helping his industry for the better. Virtually every component manufacturer faces different markets, methods, and customers. [Source: SFPA Newsletter, 6/24/05]

TX GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT ON WORKERS COMPENSATION REFORM LEGISLATION

Gov. Rick Perry, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst, Speaker Tom Craddick, Sen. Todd Staples, and Rep. Burt Solomons announced on Wednesday, May 25, that an agreement has been reached on a comprehensive workers compensation reform plan that will bring a real and lasting solution to one of Texas' most pressing problems.

"Today we have reached an agreement that will lead to lower workers' compensation costs for employers, control the cost of health care provided for injured workers and ensure injured workers get the care they need so they can get back to work as quickly as possible," Perry said. "I give a lot of the credit to Sen. Staples, Rep. Solomons and the other eight conferees who have labored through intense negotiations. Their work will pay off in the form of improved benefits and care for those hurt in the workplace, real savings for employers and increased efficiency and fairness for all parties involved in the system."

This compromise plan includes aspects of the two proposals put forth by each chamber and it finds middle ground on sticking points that had prevented the bill from moving forward. Key aspects of the comprehensive plan include:

- The workers' compensation system will be governed by a single, appointed commissioner, housed in the Texas Department of Insurance.
- Injured workers will see the cap on weekly benefits increase by 12 percent, and will have a stronger voice in the process through a new Office of Injured Employee Counsel.
- Employers will get some much needed financial relief on insurance costs allowing more employers to opt into the system and freeing resources to grow and create jobs.
- Government mandates on medical fees will be replaced with free market principles, doctors will have a stronger incentive to participate and injured workers will have greater access to care.

"This agreement represents a major victory for everyone who has a stake in the workers' compensation system," Perry said. "It will give those hurt on the job the care they deserve, at a price employers can afford and just as important, this bill will help create thousands of new jobs for our families as employers continue to flock to Texas for our excellent business climate."

"As the session nears its end, our success on workers' compensation should remind every lawmaker that there is no challenge we cannot overcome if we put aside our differences, work together in a spirit of cooperation and make the goal of building a better Texas our only aim."

Announcements

DORBYL LIMITED ANNOUNCES SALE OF ALPINE ENGINEERED PRODUCTS, INC.

On June 3, Dorbyl Limited of South Africa, the owner of Alpine Engineered Products, Inc, since 1998, announced that it has agreed to the sale of Alpine to a select group of investors led by Stonebridge Partners Equity Fund, III, L.P., a private equity firm based in White Plains, New York. The transaction is expected to be completed in July. All senior members of the Alpine executive team will continue to be actively involved in the operation of the company and will have a limited investment in Alpine. [Source: Press Release, 6/3/05. For the full release, visit www.sbcmag.info/alpine.htm]

CANADA WOOD OPENS OFFICE IN BEIJING

Canada Wood has announced the opening of an office in Beijing as a means to enhance operations between Canada and China. John Allan, CEO of the Council of Forest Industries, asserts that Canada has significant expertise in timberwork architectural technologies and use of wood products for building, and will be able to provide guidance to China in its endeavor to construct energy-efficient buildings. The Beijing office will offer training courses and supply information on timberwork technologies. [Source: *Widmans' Market Barometer*, June 29, 2005]

THE KOSKOVICH COMPANY INTRODUCES NEW PRODUCT

The Koskovich Company recently announced the introduction of the Crooked Lumber Sensor (CLS, patent pending), available on its linear feed Miser™ saw. [For the complete release, go to www.sbcmag.info/koskovich.htm.] **SBC**

Visit www.sbcmag.info for additional industry news!

JUNE 2005 ISM BUSINESS SURVEY AT A GLANCE

	Series Index	Direction June vs May	Rate of Change June vs May
ISM Manufacturing Index (formerly PMI)	53.8	Growing	Faster
New Orders	57.2	Growing	Faster
Production	55.6	Growing	Faster
Employment	49.9	Contracting	Slower
Supplier Deliveries	53.1	Slowing	Faster
Inventories	47.8	Contracting	Unchanged
Customers' Inventories	44.0	Too Low	Faster
Prices	50.5	Increasing	Slower
Backlog of Orders	51.0	Growing	Unchanged
Exports	50.4	Growing	Slower
Imports	54.2	Growing	Faster

For an in-depth explanation of this summary, go to www.ism.ws/ISMReport/ROB072005.cfm.



Chapter Teleconferences are a great way to keep informed about issues that affect the industry as well as to network with other component manufacturers. Join these upcoming calls:

August 10 • September 14 • 1 pm ET
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Classified Ads

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Wood Truss Manufacturer near sunny Palm Springs, CA is seeking experienced Truss Designers. Excellent Compensation Packages. Relocation Assistance. Canadian applicants welcome. Spates Fabricators since 1976. Email resumes to: Dennis@Spates.com

WALL PANEL DESIGNER

Woodinville Lumber, WA's leading Wall Panel supplier, is looking for a Wall Panel & an I-Joist Designer for our Woodinville, WA location. Must have exp W/ CAD, understanding of load calculation/transfer, familiarity w/wall panel and/or pre-engineered wood products, ability to read construction blue prints & execute take-off list, & min. 2 years exp in construction industry.

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Incoming WTCA President Embraces Casual Dress Code on Capitol Hill

This Ohio man and future WTCA President was spotted on Capitol Hill at the 2005 WTCA Legislative Conference wearing an exquisite fine-grade Italian wool suit and bright white New Balance sneakers, proof that you can be comfortable and still get the job done. The man, known best for sporting Component Manufacturer-chic style, told industry peers, "Comfort has been the key to my success."

Well Don, you can be proud of one thing: New Balance are made in the USA!

Independence Day by the Numbers

[SOURCE: www.kwtx.com/news/headlines/1656632.html]

Americans celebrated this Independence Day with food, fireworks and fun, and the U.S. Census Bureau is keeping track of the numbers.

296.5 MILLION: Projected number of U.S. residents on this July 4th. Back in July 1776, there were about 2.5 million people living in the colonies. (2005 population from unpublished data; 1776 population from Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970.)

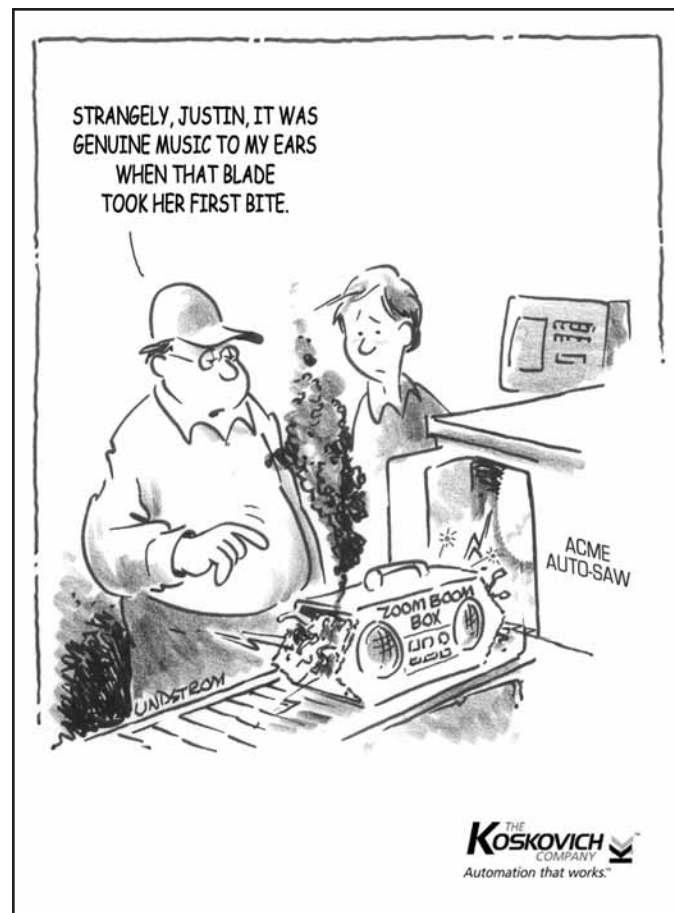
150 MILLION: Number of hot dogs (all varieties) expected to be consumed by Americans on the Fourth. (That's one frankfurter for every two people.) There's about a 1-in-4 chance that the hot dogs made of pork originated in Iowa, as the Hawkeye State had a total inventory of 16.2 million hogs and pigs on March 1, 2005. This represents more than one-fourth of the nation's total. (Data on hot dog consumption courtesy of the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council.)

NEARLY 69 MILLION: Number of Americans who said they have taken part in a barbecue during the previous year. It's probably safe to assume a lot of these events took place on Independence Day.

\$164.2 MILLION: The value of fireworks imported from China in 2004, representing the bulk of all U.S. fireworks imports (\$172.5 million). U.S. exports of fireworks, by comparison, came to just \$14.3 million in 2004, with Japan purchasing more than any other country (\$4.7 million).

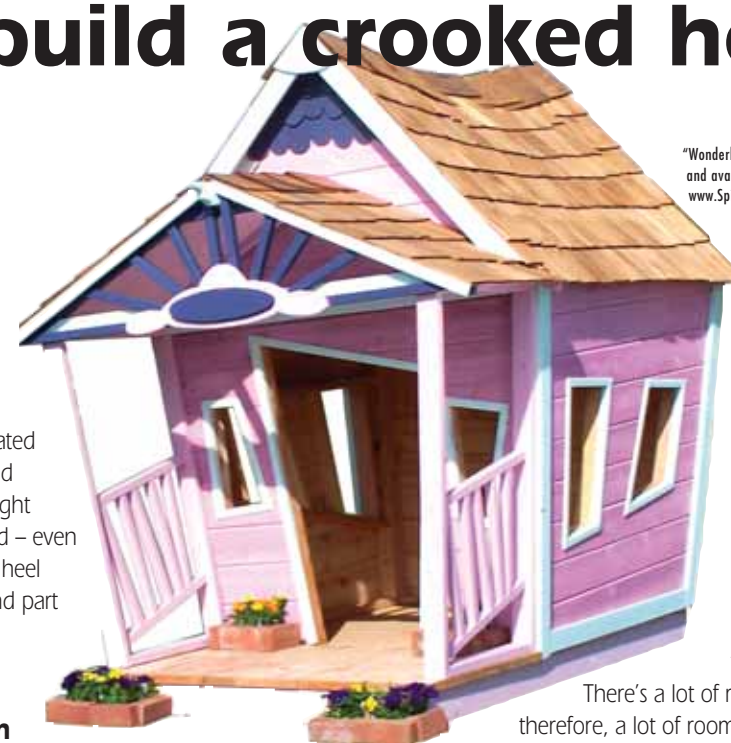
\$5.2 MILLION: The dollar value of U.S. imports of American flags in 2004; the vast majority of this amount (\$4.8 million) was for U.S. flags made in China.

34 MILLION: The number of foreign-born residents in the United States in 2004; they accounted for 12 percent of the nation's total population. Another 30 million Americans were "second-generation," meaning that at least one of their parents was born abroad.



Oft told tale debunked

**It doesn't take a crooked man
to build a crooked house.**



"Wonderland House" created by
and available from, Spirit Elements, Boulder, CO
www.SpiritElements.com

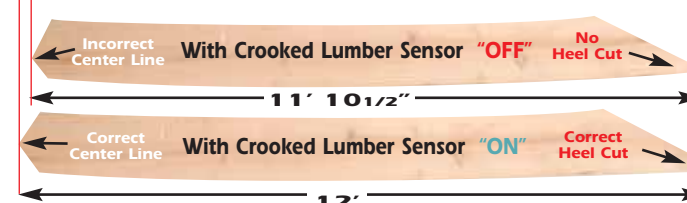
**All it takes is crooked
lumber ... and an
automated saw that
can't compensate.**

Crooked lumber — and automated linear-feed saws that turn a blind eye — have been the culprits right along. If lumber stock is crooked — even mildly crooked — bottom chord heel heights, centerline locations, and part lengths can be off. Way off.

Miser™ is the only automated saw that can sense a crooked piece of lumber, compute the cut correction needed, then adjust the position of its cutting head to compensate.

So Mizer operators end up with an accurately cut part whether the lumber's crown is up or down, whether it's a leading-end cut or a trailing-end cut. And it does it all without slowing down production.

Look at this crooked demonstration part and you'll see what we mean.

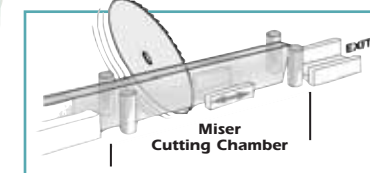


The top part was cut with our Miser's Crooked Lumber Sensor turned off (CLS, Patent Pending). The bottom part was cut with CLS turned back on – it's a full 1½ inches longer, the correct 12-foot length. It also has the correct-height heel on one end, the correct centerline location on the other.



Miser also compensates for lumber that's bowed (curved on the wide surface).

First, Miser's feeding trough is designed to accept all but the worst of it for processing. Then the gripper (called "LASM"), which travels back & forth inside the cutting chamber, grips it as it enters the cutting chamber ... brings it to the blade ... and holds it straight while it's being cut.



Our competitors' linear-feed saws have nothing comparable to our LASM. Our closest competitor's saw simply feeds lumber through pinch rollers into

the cutting blade some 18" away.
There's a lot of room for bow in that 18"... and,
therefore, a lot of room for cutting error.

Our Crooked Lumber Sensor is just one difference between Miser and its competitors.

There are a host of others. Miser automatically feeds itself any type, grade, or size lumber called for, from 2x3 to 2x12. Miser requires just one operator to produce 250-300 truss parts or more per hour on average (about 400- 450 lineal feet of complete wall per hour). Miser determines the production rate, not the operator. Miser produces its own production reports. Miser cuts parts as short as 3" and off-loads them into the finished parts stream (doesn't drop them in the trash pan). Miser ink-jet prints ID numbers and assembly point locations on up to 3 sides of the lumber without ever slowing down.

Not that long ago, one man cutting & marking wall components for a 2000 square-foot house in 1½ hours would've been considered a fairy tale.

So would a saw that picks and feeds its own lumber. Prints stud positions on plates while it's cutting. Sets up for different cuts in a fraction of a second. Consistently achieves 1/32" cut accuracy. And, now ...

... Automatically makes good parts from crooked & bowed lumber.

No longer a fairy tale.

Call, email, FAX, or write, for full information.

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