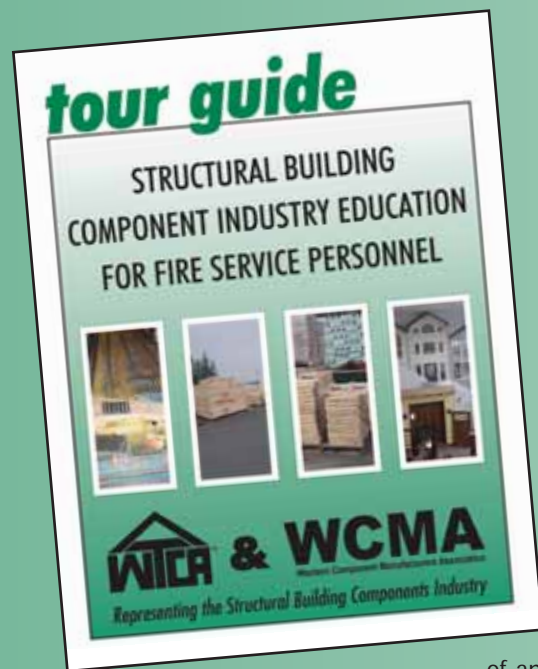


WCMA, BMC WEST HOST TOUR FOR fire service leadership

A photo recap by Libby Maurer



“Another fine example of the efforts WTCA continues to put forth in educating the manufacturer, building designer, general contractor, building official, and the fire service of the advantages of the component industry.”

—Jeff Reynolds, BMC West

It's been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. On February 28, a plant tour for the some of the fire service's most instrumental and involved education/training curriculum developers helped tell the story of an industry that has historically been looked upon unfavorably by the firefighting community.

Together with WTCA staff, the Western Component Manufacturers Association (WCMA) met an American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA) request to provide a truss plant tour for their Fire Service Awareness Tour. From there we planned the event and put together a package of materials to educate attendees about truss manufacturing. The goal of the tour was twofold:

- Bring to the fire service's attention the work WTCA has done to provide solid technical education on the fire performance of wood trusses.
- Hear their concerns about structural building components in modern building construction.

Gathering at BMC West's Sherwood, OR location, ten fire service representatives and ten members of the lumber industry toured the truss plant, EWP distribution center and the millwork shop to learn about how building components are designed, manufactured and shipped before being installed into a structure on the jobsite.



BMC West Truss Plant General Manager Steve Wethern welcomes the attendees.

“The entire team at BMC West was pleased to have been involved with this tour.”

—Steve Wethern, BMC West

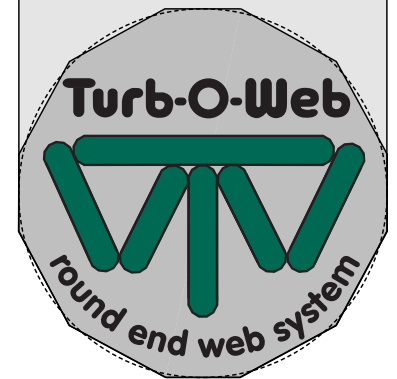


Members of the fire service (Dan Smits, Calumet City Fire Department; Ron Coleman; and Shane Ray, National Fallen Firefighters Foundation) participate in a challenge to pull a metal connector plate from wood members with pliers. Determined to show up his colleagues, Smits spent 20 minutes prying the teeth from the wood before claiming victory.

“The tour was a great way to better understand the truss product and more importantly to see the use of technology to maintain better quality control of their product.”

—Dan Smits, Calumet City Fire Department

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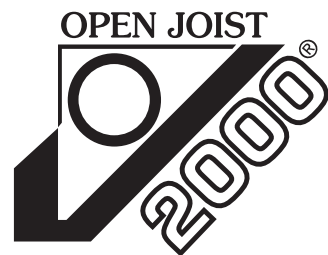


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Ron Siarnicki (National Fallen Firefighters Foundation) and Charles Smeby (University of Florida Fire & Emergency Services Distance Learning) look on as Rob Brooks of TrusJoist concentrates on prying off the plate.



Jeff Reynolds, BMC West Assistant Truss Manager, explains the truss design process by showing a sequence of roof layouts. The fire service was very impressed with the level of sophistication programmed into the truss design software, and asked questions about 3D layout capabilities, loading, and electronic submittals and how this work could be integrated into the pre-fire planning process.



Siarnicki pauses to ask the sawyer about the automated component saw.

"Observing the process of how trusses are actually constructed was very helpful for me. The level of quality control that the plant workers put in was phenomenal.

When I saw that pile of lumber that didn't make the grade, it caught my attention and I realized there is a whole lot of QC that goes into the manufacturing process that I never knew before."

—Ron Siarnicki, National Fallen Firefighters Foundation

Continued on page 60

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Attendees watch as production employees stack a finished truss.

"During the tour I learned in the past that the lumber and component industry used the wood from trees as product. However, with today's building demand and innovative construction techniques, the tree is now the resource and the product is engineered wood. It was amazing to see how far the component construction and lumber industry have come with technology and products, and it is clear that the fire service still teaches out-dated construction methods."

—Greg Rogers, South Kitsap (WA) Fire and Rescue



A cold mist falls on the cut members staging area in the BMC West yard.

"Each member of the fire service expressed a great deal of interest in the truss manufacturing process. The tour was a great opportunity to show them first hand, the entire process from start to finish. They were all impressed with the amount of effort and coordination involved in designing, fabricating, and delivering the finished product."

—Jeff Reynolds, BMC West



Ron Coleman and Kuma Sumathipala (AF&PA) immersed in conversation against a backdrop of stacked lumber ready for shipment to the jobsite.

After the plant tour, attendees received a binder full of educational resources available from WTCA. Among the materials were a listing of Truss Technology Workshops (TTWs) and the new Wood Truss Construction and Fire Performance CD from the Carbeck Structural Components Institute (CSCI). The chapter encouraged the fire service to use this information in its ongoing nationwide curriculum development, especially given the need for supplemental and updated construction methods training for firefighters. By the time the group broke for lunch, it had become clear that the tour helped bridge a gap, bring the fire service and the lumber and component industry closer. A special thanks to BMC West and the Western Component Manufacturers Association for so generously hosting the plant tour and providing educational literature for the fire service. **SBC**

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