Publisher's Message

Priority Check

This issue is packed from front to back with reasons that are sure to make you think twice about where equipment and material handling fall on your priority list.

by Libby Maurer

As you push through the mid-year building craze, replacing or upgrading equipment is likely one of your last priorities. This year, you might consider finding room for it near the top of your list, and here's why. With saws, tables and stackers running at full capacity for two or even three shifts/day, now is a perfect time to evaluate efficiency, target bottlenecks, and run a battery of time tests. If you've reacted violently to the thought of adding these things to your already frenzied schedule, here's your chance to start small. Reading this issue of ***SBC*** cover to cover will no doubt put material handling and equipment in clear sight. We've come up with recommendations for things you should consider both inside and outside of your operation. Check them out in "From the Inside Out: Evaluate Internal Material Flow with Site Plan" and "Outside the Plant: Handling Finished Trusses in the Yard," and starting on page 44.

More and more, "green" is becoming gold in this industry. That's why our cover story about a company that chose an eco-friendly way to dramatically cut costs is so intriguing. By burning wood waste to heat its three facilities in the brutal Plains winters (and springs and falls...year-round, really!), Dakota Craft has created a domino effect of success. Its use of wood scrap in lieu of fuel has served as the catalyst to maintaining its competitive edge, a drastic expansion of operations, and the creation of a highly competitive and rewarding employee profit sharing plan.

At the suggestion of a reader who was inspired by Molly Butz's September/October 2005 feature article on Cal Jureit, we tracked down Eugene "Gene" Woloveke to talk shop. Enjoying retirement in northern California, Woloveke was happy to take me back—way back—to the creation of some of the first automated manufacturing equipment known to the industry. Hearing from an industry veteran of Woloveke's ilk reminds us that even in the early 1950s, manufacturers placed heavy emphasis on production efficiency and equipment vendors delivered with quality automation. Although the Idaco name ceases to exist today, we salute the man who simultaneously dreamt of and built the first fully automated machines known to the industry.

This month marks the first anniversary of a storm so devastating it doesn't need a name. A group of manufacturers ventured into the debris of New Orleans in late April to survey the progress and determine whether there is business opportunity for component manufacturers. In "Katrina Confronted: Seeing for Themselves," they reveal their thoughts on the rebuilding effort and voice their opinions about future economic growth in the Gulf region.

Immigration is on everyone's minds these days, but who knows the real impact of impending immigration reform legislation on the industry's economy and long-term growth? We do! Sean Shields crunched the numbers, did the research, and assembled the astounding picture of what the immigrant population means to the industry for your benefit in "Immigration: Bordering on Insanity."

Last but not least, don't overlook the annual *Supplier & Professional Directory for the Structural Building Components Industry* (page 84), especially as you evaluate your options for your every material handling and equipment need. And now is a perfect time to start making a list—BCMC is just around the corner! SBC

at a glance

- This issue of ***SBC Magazine*** spotlights material handling and equipment. It also contains the annual *Supplier & Professional Directory.*
- Dakota Craft, a component manufacturer that has opted to cut costs by going green, is featured in the cover story.
- Idaco's Gene Woloveke was interviewed for an article about automation early on in the industry.
- Other articles in this issue focus on immigration, considerations when evaluating material flow both inside and outside the plant, and a progress report on the rebuilding effort in New Orleans.

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Dear Reader:

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Truss Publications, Inc.

6300 Enterprise Lane • Suite 200 • Madison, WI 53719
608/310-6706 phone • 608/271-7006 fax
www.sbcmag.info • admgr@sbcmag.info