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# Editor's Message

## Remember Four Things

by Barry Dixon

**Farewell to a year of great challenges and rewarding success.**

**A**s I'm late on my last deadline, I'd like to thank Emily Patterson for helping me get these articles written on time. Until you've done this for a year, you have no idea how long the writing process takes.

Hard to believe a year ago we were just getting used to this arrangement: I was getting my first dose of executive branch responsibility, and you were learning the FSU fight song and loving every minute of it.

All joking aside, those who know me well know that I care deeply about this industry. Like so many of you out there, I (along with my siblings) inherited my father's business; with it came a concern for the success and long-term sustainability of this little niche industry we all work in. I hope this passion has resonated in my columns over the last year.

I don't have space (thank God) to recount every small victory WTCA has had on my watch. My list of top three highlights includes the themes of grassroots, data/testing and marketing. We advanced our grassroots causes this year by teaming up with the National Lumber & Building Material Dealers Association (NLBMDA) and the Florida Building Materials Association (FBMA) for two joint legislative conferences. It is my hope that we continue partnerships like these in the future. Next, our strong relationship with the Truss Plate Institute (TPI) allowed us to complete and unveil the SBC Research Institute (SBCRI), a new component testing lab. TPI has committed to donate a significant portion of funds to the facility each year, which will benefit the industry for years to come. And finally, now more than ever, component manufacturers realize that marketing their commitment to quality and continued improvement is critical to their success. I believe that the inception of the SCORE certification program will truly make a difference in the way the market views our industry.

While I feel proud to have served during such an eventful period, it wouldn't be right for me to sugar-coat the condition of the industry. This has been a challenging year for many of us. Some of us are beginning to see the light, just as analysts predicted. Others are just hitting the bottom or are stuck in the doldrums, thanks to record-high housing inventories. I wish I had a quick fix for us, but I don't and neither do you. Unfortunately, it's out of our hands.

But what we do have is something very powerful. I'll remind our collective industry of something I said at BCMC in October 2006. I challenged every component manufacturer to develop new manufacturing processes and more efficient and economical applications for our products. I believe that if we do this and look to the future, our efforts will do more to advance this industry than anything else.

I'd like to reiterate some ways we can do this.

### Learn to Differentiate

During my first years in the industry, manufacturers had to find a way to differentiate their companies in order to make sales. I believe we've become a little lax in finding new ways to market ourselves. The consequence of this is passing responsibility for advancing the industry onto either our suppliers or customers. We can reverse this by developing new manufacturing processes—we can push our own companies, suppli-

Continued on page 8

### at a glance

- ❑ Brand your company as "The Solution" for all of your customers' needs.
- ❑ If you offer wall panels, engineered wood products, steel trusses, and turnkey labor, or engineering design services in addition to wood trusses, be sure to market them.
- ❑ Work with the design and specifier community to help streamline the front end of the construction process and value-engineer structures.

# FORGING AHEAD TOGETHER



## Editor's Message

Continued from page 7

ers, and competitors to new heights by creating better—more efficient and economical—application solutions.

## Be THE Solution

Take a comprehensive approach by branding your company as “The Solution” for ALL of your customers' needs. For instance, many of us no longer only make single components. We have added wall panels, engineered wood products, steel trusses, and turnkey labor, as well as engineering design services. Through our technical advancements, we are not simply manufacturers but innovators that have streamlined the ordering, permitting, and construction process. We have become the technical framing solution for our customers. We are their most valuable resource in the construction industry, and it's time we let them know it.

## Collaborate

The value we provide as manufacturers needs to be understood by everyone in the building process—not just our customers! Another way we can advance our industry is to work with architects, engineers and building officials to help streamline the front end of the construction process and be able to value-engineer structures. Together, we can create a more cost effective solution for the builder.

## Prepare for Added Risk/Liability with Education

If our ultimate goal is to increase profits by becoming total solution providers, profits should rise. But we shouldn't turn a blind eye to the fact that our risks and liabilities also can increase sharply in this process. Learn to identify comprehensive training and education. I recommend the SCORE program developed by WTCA to accomplish this. It's essentially a marketing tool that helps companies define themselves as quality conscious, educate their workforce and market, manage risk and stay current on industry advancements while also defining their unique brand in the market. For more information about SCORE, visit [www.sbcindustry.com/score.php](http://www.sbcindustry.com/score.php).

Remember these tools as we ride out the next year or so. We can't lose if we focus on them with an eye toward the future.

Last, I have a lot of people to recognize for getting me through the past year. I have a lot of respect for all the WTCA past presidents who went before me—each of them has had a profound impact on the direction of WTCA. I am especially grateful to Don Groom (2006), Kendall Hoyd (2005), Scott Arquilla (2003) and Mike Ruede (2002); these guys are some of my best friends in the industry, and I called on them for guidance many times during my presidency.

My job was made easier thanks to the passion and commitment of the WTCA Board. This includes Chapter reps and Committee chairs; their work in local/regional levels and in small groups keeps this association moving. With that, I'll turn this column over to incoming president and fellow Floridian Bob Becht. I wish him—and the entire membership—the best in the coming year. Go 'Noles! **SBC**

*SBC Magazine encourages the participation of its readers in developing content for future issues. Do you have an article idea for a future issue or a topic that you would like to see covered? Email your thoughts and ideas to [editor@sbcmag.info](mailto:editor@sbcmag.info).*

# STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS™

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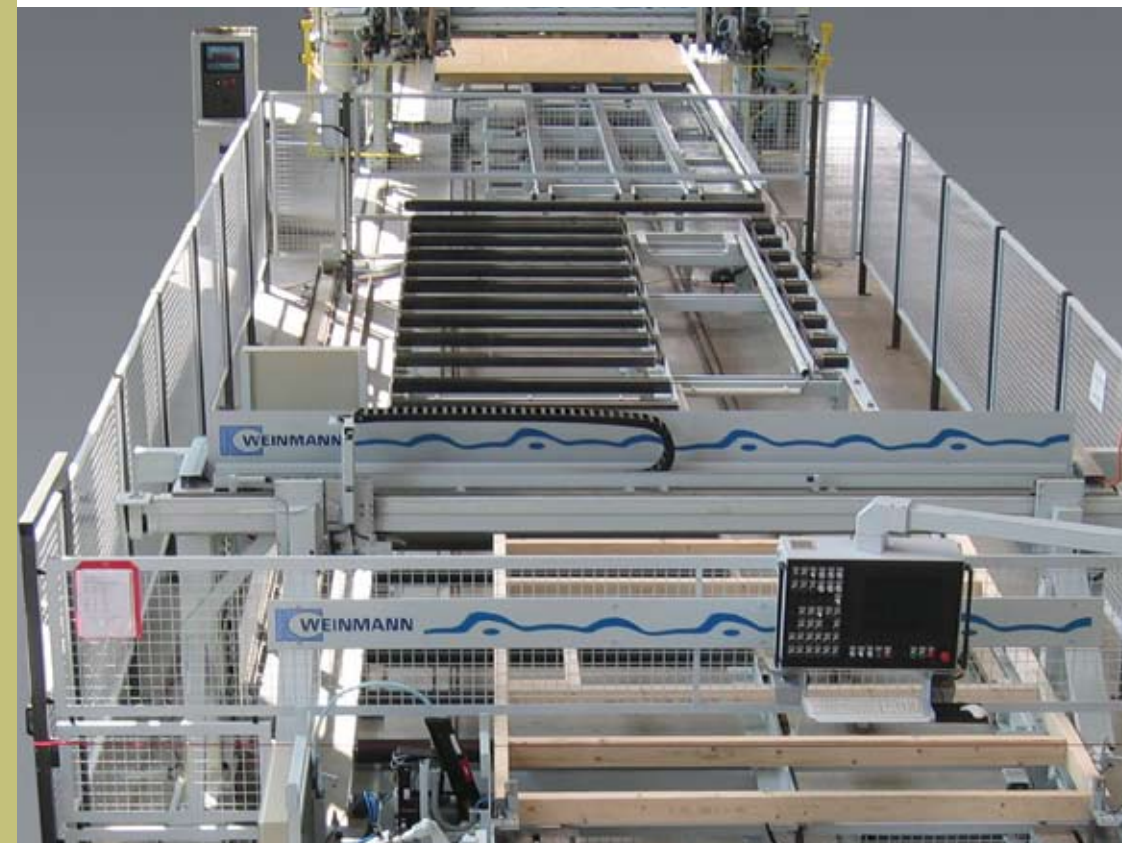
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The mission of *Structural Building Components Magazine (SBC)* is to increase the knowledge of and to promote the common interests of those engaged in manufacturing and distributing structural building components. Further, *SBC* strives to ensure growth, 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 WTCA – Representing the Structural Building Components Industry. The opinions expressed in *SBC* are those of the authors and those quoted, and are not necessarily the opinions of Truss Publications or WTCA.

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