



# Wtca Update

## New Program Spotlight: WTCA QC Wall Panel

Quality control takes another step forward with the development of the WTCA QC Wall Panel program.



by WTCA Staff

The next "coming soon" from WTCA is geared for wall panel manufacturers interested in ensuring their products consistently meet a standard of quality. **WTCA QC Wall Panel**, a new quality control program created specifically for wall panels, is currently in development and is set for release later this year.

Work on the program was started in November 2007, and was made a priority by the WTCA QC Committee. When complete, WTCA QC Wall Panel will mimic the structure of the **In-Plant WTCA QC** program that is used by roof truss manufacturers. The new program will be comprised of similar components such as product inspections, a comprehensive database with reporting and management benchmarking tools, and plant certification.

"The idea for this program was driven by manufacturers with a desire to monitor the quality of the walls they're building," said Tony Piek, WTCA QC project leader. "And the certification is a way for them to differentiate themselves from those that use traditional wall construction techniques."

The program's development process is being driven largely by user input. For instance, currently a group of 12 wall panel manufacturer beta testers is running through the inspection portion of the program and providing helpful feedback to staff. Andy English from Lezzer Truss is one of those beta testers. "We have a program currently in place that we shared with staff," he said. "Other beta testers also added input and the result is a more inspection version that will be quicker and more efficient than our original process," said the Curwensville, PA-based panel designer and quality control "guy."

The WTCA Wall Panel QC inspection process will include seven criteria:

- Dimensions
- Lumber
- Headers
- Bucks
- Placement of studs, top and bottom plate
- Fastener pattern
- Exterior wall sheathing

Piek said input from manufacturers has been critical to the creation of WTCA QC Wall Panel because, unlike In-Plant WTCA QC which is based on the ANSI/TPI 1 design standard for metal plate connected wood trusses, no specific standard exists for wall panels. "We've had a lot of help and direction from manufacturers in order to meet their specific QC needs," he said.

In addition to giving manufacturers a tool with which to measure and analyze quality, WTCA QC Wall Panel will also serve as a management tool for supervisors and upper management. Piek noted that using the QC database, managers will be able monitor the performance of different crews over a period of time and track improvement. The goal is to provide a series of quantifiable benchmarks that will serve as an early warning management information system. English said using a reliable benchmarking tool such as this helps hold crews or shifts accountable. "When they

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know the product is being evaluated for specific aspects of quality, they're more conscious of their work," he commented.

Within the next few months, Piek aims to have enough feedback from the beta group to release a final version of the program. At that point, wall panel manufacturers can order the program and start working towards the voluntary plant certification. **SBC**

If you're interested in providing input in the development of this program, contact Tony Piek at [tpiek@qualtim.com](mailto:tpiek@qualtim.com).

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