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# Editor's Message

## Ensuring the Long-Term Sustainability of WTCA

by Bob Becht

An important message about the current state of the association.

I don't have to remind you that 2007 and 2008 thus far have presented some extremely difficult circumstances for members of this industry. We've all done what we need to do to survive, and we've had to come to terms with the fact that we cannot do anything to undo these conditions.

However, we can influence how WTCA reacts to the current conditions of this market. This involves making some important decisions now that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the association. With this article I'm hoping give you a better understanding of how the response of each our members can affect the health of WTCA in the long run.

A critical piece of this discussion is understanding who WTCA is. We are a member organization whose regular members include wood and steel component manufacturers, many of whom also distribute engineered wood products and other building materials. Our supplier and professional members sell raw materials, equipment, professional services and a variety of products that enhance our industry. All of

us are served by an outstanding staff. Since WTCA's inception, the organization has had no employees. Starting in 1992, WTCA has contracted at very favorable hourly rates with Qualtim, Inc. to execute the priorities set by the WTCA Board. Qualtim staff has served us so well and made the work of WTCA such a high priority that many of us probably think of them as WTCA employees.

Even before the housing market decline beginning in 2006, the WTCA Executive Committee has been carefully monitoring the orga-

nization's financial situation. Since the late 1990s, WTCA has relied heavily on revenue from the sale of its publications and online training programs, like BCSI Jobsite Packages and TTT Online. This was a policy executed by the Board to move toward becoming less dues-driven and more focused on providing many tangible products and services to its members. Members who choose to take advantage of these programs and services pay for them. The Board believes that this approach will assure WTCA's continued value to its members and the marketplace over time.

However, in the past year, as you well know, many component manufacturers' job backlogs are dwindling. With many of WTCA's products and services being tied to the component jobs you ship, as well as the new employees you hire and train with WTCA programs, the sales of WTCA publications and online training in 2007 and 2008 are down significantly compared to 2006. The examples of "WTCA best sellers" shown in Figure 1 above have suffered as of late:

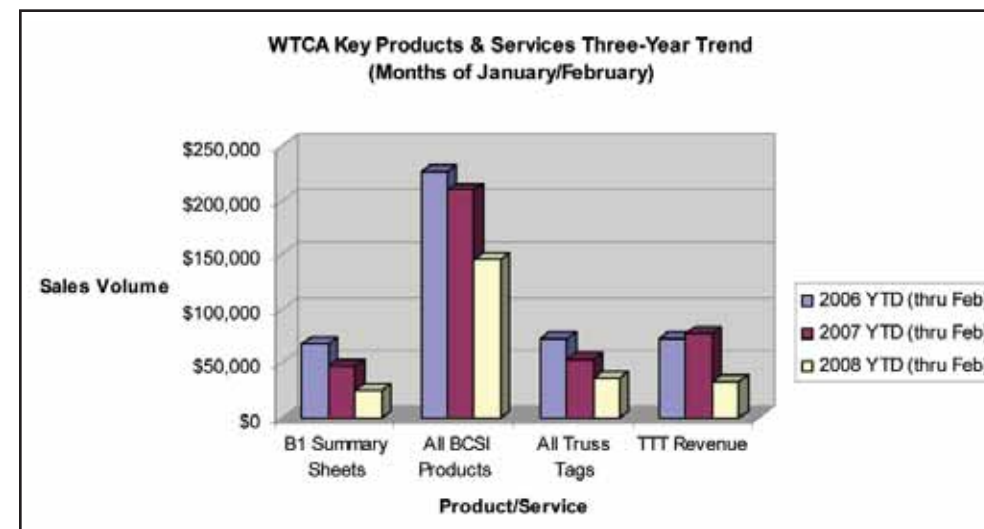


Figure 1.

### at a glance

- In 2008, WTCA has made some difficult budgetary and staffing choices to weather the housing downturn.
- Qualtim, Inc.'s fiscal management of WTCA has allowed the association to stay within budget.
- A WTCA "sales committee" has been formed to raise the sales associated with BCMC exhibiting and attendance, WTCA products and services and **SBC** advertising.

Continued on page 8

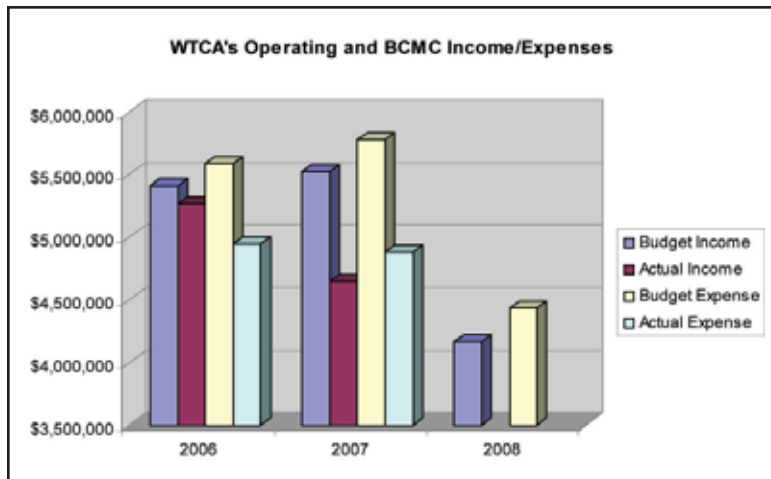


Figure 2.

## Editor's Message

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Clearly, our association is mirroring the "real world" of the downturn in the economy. Because of this, the Board approved a 2008 WTCA budget that is down by 25% compared with 2007 (see Figure 2).

As you can see, Qualtim's fiscal management of WTCA allowed us to reduce our actual expenses, primarily through staff re-deployment to other proprietary work and layoffs, to reflect the trend that was being seen in significantly reduced revenue. No different than what all of us are doing. This work allowed WTCA to stay within budget and within its bylaws to accommodate a more than \$800,000 reduction in expected revenue in 2007. Setting the 2008 budget was a difficult process that required taking a hard look at the membership's needs and balancing them with ensuring the long-term health of WTCA. As a result of the significant budget reduction, some projects were reduced or cut entirely. On top of this budget reduction, 2008 revenue through February is down 12 percent compared to our budgeted revenue.

It is of critical importance to note that the long-term sustainability of WTCA is very closely tied to Qualtim. In this challenging environment, it has been necessary for Qualtim staff's priorities to shift. With our substantial budget cuts, as much as possible, in 2008 Qualtim staff will focus on building business outside of its WTCA contract to help take pressure off the WTCA budget first and foremost, and keep the risk of losing staff experience and knowledge at bay. While in the short-term WTCA members may not get the level of service we have come to expect over the years, this approach is to WTCA's benefit, because it enables Qualtim to retain the knowledgeable and hard-working staff that have gained an expertise over the last 16 years of serving our industry. With all this as background, you can see that we are in a delicate spot; if Qualtim staff doesn't exist, WTCA staff doesn't exist.

The leadership of WTCA understands that in the short term, this serves the needs of both organizations best. It is also important to understand, however, that in cases where Qualtim staff is diverted to non-WTCA work, they won't necessarily be able to immediately shift their priority back to WTCA once the economy rebounds.

In addition to committing to an extremely conservative budget, the Board and staff have focused our efforts on items that increase

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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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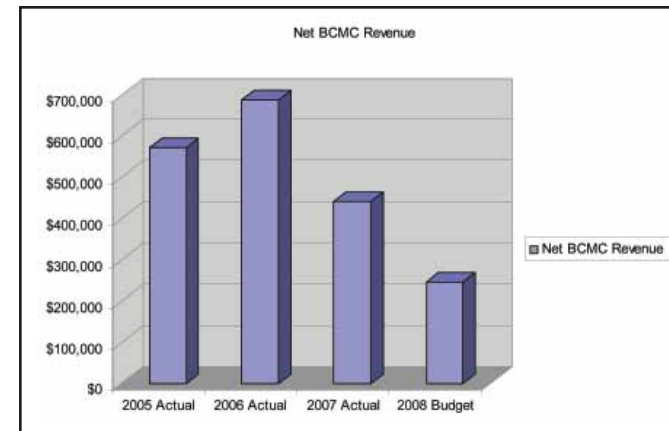


Figure 3.

WTCA revenue. We've formed a "sales committee" under the leadership of President-Elect/Treasurer Ben Hershey, our Membership Chair Frank Klinger and myself, along with the members of WTCA's Board and BCMC committee to bolster BCMC exhibiting and attendance and increasing the sales of WTCA products and services and advertising in *SBC*. Here are the main goals of these efforts.

## BCMC

Each year, the BCMC show generates a significant amount of net income for WTCA. As you can see from Figure 3 above, net revenue was off significantly in 2007 and our budget for this year projects a further reduction in net BCMC revenue.

However, the sales committee's challenge for this year's show in Denver (October 1–3), is to exceed last year's attendance numbers and produce attendee revenue over \$300,000 while equaling or exceeding \$835,000 in exhibits revenue. Past President Don Groom recently said, "If you spend any money this year, it should be going to or at BCMC." I agree. I urge exhibitors and attendees alike to come to the show and immerse your team in a week of networking and passion for advancing the industry. After a couple of tough years, the industry needs a boost of energy and invigoration. BCMC is the place to find it!

## WTCA Publications Sales

The sales team will also focus on the Board goal and objective that the more chapters and members buy WTCA products, the more they support the association. The WTCA revenue stream is dependent upon publications sales—it allows us to continue to develop new products and services as well as provide technical support and countless other benefits on which our members now rely. Among other benefits, distributing WTCA literature is a low cost way to fulfill a company's duty to inform on product installation and also educates building designers, building officials and

other groups to increase the use and promote the acceptance of components.

## SBC Magazine

Another priority for the team is recruiting new *SBC* advertisers. You may not know it, but each year, *SBC Magazine* provides more than \$200,000 in industry project support. The sales committee will target companies in the lumber industry, the cold-formed steel industry and the EWP industry.

In order to boost advertising sales, I encourage WTCA members to contact their vendors and talk to them about promoting their companies by advertising in *SBC*.

## SBC Research Institute

The sales team will also explore all avenues for members to get involved by supporting our state-of-the-art research and testing facility: the SBC Research Institute. Last month's issue of *SBC Magazine* was dedicated to SBCRI, so I encourage you to review the April issue to find out the latest progress that we've made. This facility has already provided a great deal of value to all of our businesses and will continue to add to the legitimacy of our industry and improve the way we design and install components.

When I was sworn into office in October, I predicted 2008 would be a tough year. I also said Christmas would come again for the industry, and I still believe this is true. I would like to emphasize that it continues to be our desire to find the best possible solution(s) to deal with the financial pressures on WTCA's budget and also the time and budgetary constraints of all our members who are committed to our chapters. Together we've built a strong organization that has helped support the growth of our industry and served our businesses very well in good and now in the bad times. Thank you for continuing to support WTCA. **SBC**

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