

First Annual BCMC Build Gives Industry a Feel-Good Boost



by Libby Maurer

BCMC Build unites attendees toward a common goal.

No one will ever forget the first year of BCMC Build: rain, then mud, and a whole lot of camaraderie. Enough camaraderie, in fact, to change the tenor of the entire BCMC Show. "We were covered with red mud from head to toe at the end of the first day...and laughing about it," said Carl Schoening, BCMC Build Production Chair. "But it gave everyone something positive to talk about. That was the point."

Ever since the downturn, the BCMC Committee has turned its attention toward reinventing the 30-year-old tradeshow. "The show has typically been very machine-focused. I don't think that's enough anymore, especially during a time when the industry isn't expanding a whole lot," said Dan Holland, BCMC Build 2010 Chair. He thought a charitable event would unite people toward a common, positive goal. And maybe even appeal to folks who wouldn't normally go to BCMC. "There's a strong need to reach out to people who feel they don't have a reason to come to the show."

If the goals were to bring the industry together, help a Charlotte family realize the American Dream, and educate the community about the benefits of building components, BCMC Build was an exhilarating success. "The camaraderie of all kinds of people from our industry was something to see. We had management, executives and competitors—none of them competing for attention. To see it fall into place was amazing," said Jerry Vulgaris, BCMC Build Marketing Chair. In essence, the Build more than lived up to the BCMC theme, *Building Community, Making Connections*.

The teamwork for BCMC Build started well before volunteers met on the jobsite September 27. In March, the group started working with Habitat Charlotte on the floor plan and integrating building components into the home. In February, the Committee began a fundraising campaign to collect funds to build the house from the ground up. (Over \$55,000 was donated by more than 50 companies. See page 9 or visit www.bcmshow.com/bcmcbuild.php for a list of donors.) Component manufacturers and material vendors were given the opportunity to make material donations. In the weeks leading up to BCMC Build, the Committee finalized jobsite signage and



Volunteers set the walls mid-day on Day 1.



The roof trusses were set Day 1.

t-shirts for the volunteers. Schoening put together the volunteer list, created the framing schedule, and defined production goals for Day 1 and Day 2 to keep things on track.

Going the Distance

A framing crew from Capital Structures drove over 900 miles towing a trailer full of tools. "They brought every tool you could possibly imagine from Arkansas to Charlotte," Holland said. Jeremy Jones, Wes Sadler, Larry Sanford, Justin Williams and Steven Spradlin (SBCA Past President) coordinated each stage, calling out the next steps so other volunteers could prepare tools and materials. "I was afraid we'd get bogged down in making decisions. But the Capital guys blew past those points so we could move forward."

Schoening said the framing team was integral to staying on schedule. "They sure knew how to work that timeline. You could tell they've had experience doing this kind of build before," he said. Sanford said his team stepping in to take the lead is natural. "We each know our strengths and revert to what we're used to," noting the team has worked together on similar charity builds.

Nuconsteel donated the materials for a cold-formed steel garage near the back of the house. Volunteers from the company were on site on Day 2 to frame it. (See photo on page 15.)

Although the Ksor family's limited English created quite a language barrier, many volunteers said their actions expressed their gratitude. At the jobsite both days, Mr. Ksor helped frame, while mother Ayui Rmah swept the subfloor free of debris over and over. "When the family is working alongside you, it makes you appreciate the work you're doing for them," Spradlin said.

The Habitat personnel learned a lot about how to use structural components and their benefits by observing how they were framed. "One of the site supervisors said they picked up two full days on the job by using components. We framed it in half the time, so they were very aware of the advantages," said Vulgaris.

The event attracted impressive local media coverage, including live from the jobsite segments by local NBC and ABC

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Volunteers from Capital Structures put the finishing touches on the floor trusses.

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affiliates. The staff of Visit Charlotte and Habitat Charlotte promoted BCMC Build tirelessly by distributing media advisories and organizing open media sessions at the jobsite. "The work of Habitat Charlotte and Visit Charlotte to pitch our event was tremendous. Linda Blum and Phil Prince from Habitat Charlotte and Molly Hedrick, Susan Schwint and Mike Butts from Visit Charlotte did a fantastic job," Vulgaris said.

Local Media Coverage

Reporter Meghan Danahey with NBC affiliate WCNC Channel 36 documented the event from before volunteers started Monday morning all the way to Wednesday's Kick-Off ceremony at the Convention Center. Her interviews with volunteers appeared on several newscasts throughout the week, and one segment was even posted on WCNC.com's "Most Viewed" video list. Ben Hershey, who joined his ProBuild colleagues on the jobsite Tuesday, found that the media coverage made quite an impact. "On the way to the airport, I told the taxi driver I'd been in Charlotte for the BCMC Conference. He said, 'Oh, you're the group that built the house everyone is talking about.' All I could do was smile," he said.

Suppliers who donated their products were grateful that Habitat allowed them full exposure on the jobsite. "There's no doubt that when you compare this event to Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, everyone who donated products got some mileage out of the exposure. Habitat was completely open to helping us market our products," Vulgaris said. Spradlin said it's refreshing to work with an organization that "gets" that charity should be a selfless act. "The great thing about this project is it wasn't about glitz and glamour. It's about helping a deserving family."

A video crew from ITW Building Components including Michael Fagan, Gary Muzzarelli and Mark Duffy filmed the event from start to finish, and then produced a video documenting each stage of the process for viewing on the show floor.

Wednesday Kick-Off

Bert Green, Executive Director for Habitat Charlotte, told BCMC attendees that they lived out their theme of Building Community, Making Connections. "Your industry shows us that the power of making connections makes things stronger. Roof, floor or wall—it doesn't matter what the components are, when you connect them, they create something even stronger," he said at the Kick-Off ceremony Wednesday morning. "Acknowledging the family really brought the experience together. Seeing them together, you realize we



Volunteers from NUCONSTEEL framed the family's garage with cold-formed steel on Day 2.

took a house and it made it a home," said Vulgaris. The Ksor family accepted a housewarming gift, and the father thanked BCMC attendees and exhibitors for their generosity.

Holland believes the idea he had one morning driving to work in late 2009 had a large influence on the culture of BCMC. "And I think probably a lasting one. The initial goal was to have an activity other than buying and selling machinery. But the unexpected result was that it bridged a divide among all



The Ksor family, pictured with BCMC Chair Bob Allen and Habitat Charlotte Executive Director Bert Green, accepted a housewarming gift at the BCMC Kickoff ceremony.

of us as competitors." Vulgaris felt the mood at BCMC was a little lighter. "You could almost feel the pride in the air." When the waters get still, sometimes you have to make your own waves. BCMC Build is a wave the industry hopes to ride for years to come, rain or shine. **SBC**

Preparations are already underway for BCMC Build 2011 in Indianapolis. If you'd like details about getting involved, contact Jill at jzimmerman@qualtim.com. Visit www.bcmcbuild.com for a copy of the final video.



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