

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE (FORMERLY WOODWORDS)

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President's Message



"Mutually Beneficial Relationships" by Richard Brown

How time flies! As we know, time doesn't really fly, but does continue at its same pace, all the time. This past year, serving as your association president certainly falls into this category. It seems like only yesterday that I stood before you in Cincinnati and accepted this position.

During this past year, I have worked hard at strengthening the relationships between the WTCA and other associations and organizations. I felt and continue to feel that our bright future is contingent on such relationships. In particular, we need to gain support and commitment from our supplier associations to advance truss industry objectives, as well as assist our customer associations to ensure they meet their goals. Otherwise WTCA cannot effectively follow through with its programs and policies. The support of our membership at large is just as essential. Thank you for your help! Let me also take this time to thank your Board of Directors and our staff for their excellent support during the year. I can say unequivocally that without their guidance, direction and follow-through, a lot of work would have been left undone. Please take the time during BCMC to thank them personally. I know I will!

Even though we've had a strong year, a number of obstacles remain for us. Most of us as manufacturers do not become aware of many problems or concerns unless we come face to face with them. It's been proven time and again that when a problem or concern occurs in Georgia (for instance), that eventually it's felt in North Dakota. I could spend time giving you a litany of specific examples, but let's look instead at a number of issues still facing our industry directly:

- **Fire Service Concerns with Trusses:** As Kirk Grundahl pointed out in the August issue of *WOODWORDS*, we have to find a different approach to dealing with this issue. The old approach of fighting "fire with fire" is not going to work in the long-term. We have got to find another way, and the best approach may be to determine how to help the fire service understand our industry better than they do now, with the goal being to have a fairer hearing. Invite them into your business and let them see what we're all about. In a conversation with Kirk, I found out about a truss plant in California that is donating a set of trusses for a new fire training facility and is working with them on training. The side benefit is that this truss plant will be able to use this facility for their own training purposes. I'm not saying that we've all got to go down this path, but maybe the next time, in that locale, the fire service will look to them for assistance and not automatically assume the truss industry is the enemy.
- **Lumber Quota:** This issue continues to raise its ugly head. I used to think that it only affected our Northern-most manufacturers. Boy, was I wrong! When Canadian lumber is priced higher,

users typically bring in more Southern wood, consequently driving up that price. So it definitely affects all of us. I don't have the answers for this problem, but it does seem that a "free market" approach could or should solve most of the problem. Certainly, the government's involvement is not the answer. There are other lumber issues that continue to directly impact us that need addressing as well, but for the moment the "quota" tops the list.

Some of these problems and issues will be solved in the coming months and years. Others will not be solved easily. Hopefully, with the relationships we've attempted to strengthen, our partners will help us to accomplish many of our industry's goals and objectives.

Your Board of Directors has mandated that the Board meetings be scheduled throughout the country to give everyone a chance to interact with and provide input into the activities of the Board. Have you taken advantage of this opportunity? This is your Board and they represent YOU! Your input is vital to the success of our industry. Please try to attend an upcoming meeting either here in Kansas City or next year in San Diego, Biloxi, Boise (tentative schedule) or Milwaukee. We'd love to see you!

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