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WTCA Update

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TPI & WTCA: A Shared Vision of Component Industry Associations by Kirk Grundahl

WTCA and TPI have been working hard to build a relationship that has a shared vision for the future of the component manufacturing industry.

It was not all the long ago that TPI and WTCA were viewed more as competing than cooperating associations, because both were essentially serving the same needs—those of component manufacturers. This, more often than not, led to friction between the two associations, which was ultimately counterproductive to the goal of advancing the component manufacturing industry and staying focused on its best interests overall.

For the past few years, WTCA and TPI have been working hard to build a relationship that has a shared vision for the future of the component manufacturing industry. The fundamental purpose is to make the maximum use of industry resources and to minimize or altogether prevent duplication of effort and redundancy between the associations. The goal is to focus each organization's work on its specific mission and keep asking ourselves the question, "How do WE most effectively serve the best interests of the component manufacturing industry?"

This notion of working to prevent duplication of services began in 2001 through several meetings and discussions between Mary Pat Keller, 2001 WTCA President, and Tom Manenti, 2001 TPI President. Mary Pat and Tom laid the foundation for the evolution to what Bill Turnbull coined "a litmus test" approach. This approach has been the result of hundreds of hours of discussion since 2001. This test provides a "checklist" to determine which association should be actively involved in or take the lead for any association or industry initiative.

In 2001, a Scope of Work Committee was formed and consisted of Tom, Mary Pat, Bill Turnbull, Dionel Cotanda, Mike Ruede and Scott Arquilla. This group reviewed the demands being placed on both groups and began to better understand the tasks that were undertaken to meet these membership and industry demands.

In 2002, Charlie Hoover and Mike Ruede became the respective TPI and WTCA Presidents. Charlie and Mike made this effort a priority of their presidencies. The TPI Board also made this issue a priority for 2003 by asking Charlie Hoover to stay on for a second term as President and the focused work continued with incoming WTCA President Scott Arquilla. The Scope of Work Committee evolved into TPI/WTCA working committee consisting of Charlie Hoover, Bill Turnbull, Mike Ruede and Kirk Grundahl.

Concurrent with work on the litmus test for the two organizations was the need to update the handling, storage and bracing information for our industry. At the May 2003 joint WTCA/TPI meeting, the following two motions were approved and implemented:

Motion 1: Our industry is best served if we have a single set of documents that serve as our fundamental information base when dealing with the proper specification, storing, loading, handling, installing and bracing of metal plate connected wood trusses. Our desire is to have common publications available to the industry, to replace the various publications with different appearances or wording serving the same objectives.

Motion 2: The HIB-91 booklet is now referenced on the truss design drawings. This makes it essential that a new/updated parent document be created. The WTCA and TPI boards desire to have one document to reference on the truss design drawings rather than all the separate TTB information that has been produced. This updated parent document will be a compilation of the existing HIB-91 and TTBs. The document will be reviewed by TPI TAC, WTCA's Marketing and E&T Committees and approved by WTCA and TPI Boards. It will be referenced on all truss design drawings, and is intended as a bridge document until an ANSI consensus developed publication is completed.

This led to work by TPI TAC and WTCA's Engineering and Technology and Marketing Committees on the development and completion of the Building Component Safety Information (BCSI 1-03) document. This also led to a new project: the consolidation of industry handling, storage and bracing documents and a joint publications agreement between WTCA and TPI.

To get where we are today took the vision and commitment of several people. Tom Manenti and Mary Pat Keller initiated this process and the concepts set forth there were developed and advanced by Dionel Cotanda, Bill Turnbull, Mike Ruede, Scott Arquilla, Tom and Mary Pat. Significant evolution took place when Charlie Hoover became President of TPI in 2002 and it is safe to say that TPI's decision to have Charlie remain president in 2003 was critical in maintaining the positive momentum that had been established between both groups.

In the last twelve months, Bill Turnbull, Mike Ruede, Charlie Hoover and Scott Arquilla have spent many hours on the concepts that have led to our industry finalizing the litmus test, BCSI 1-03 and the joint publications agreement.

All that have been close to this process recognize that the consistent leadership of Charlie Hoover, TPI President (2002-2003), and Dave Brakeman, TPI TAC Chair (2002-2003) have been critical to the success of this process. Charlie has spent hundreds of hours over the last two years understanding the issues that were facing both TPI and WTCA, reconciling the differences and working toward common ground, so that the focus of effort would be on serving overall industry needs effectively. Dave has made a similar commitment on the technical side of our industry. In particular, Dave spent significant amounts of time over the last six months to ensure that the work on BCSI 1-03 would be successful and become the valuable industry asset that it was intended to be by all involved.

As most know, there is often a tremendous amount of work that goes on behind the scenes to

effect positive change and end up with a very successful project and, in this case, a foundation of cooperation that will have a lasting positive impact on the component manufacturing industry. Charlie Hoover, Dave Brakeman, Bill Turnbull, Mike Ruede and Scott Arquilla were the “behind the scenes assets” of this success.

TPI exists to meet the common needs of the metal plate connector manufacturers and truss design professionals. WTCA exists to meet the common needs of the metal plate connected wood truss industry and component manufacturers. The shared vision of the TPI and WTCA Board of Directors has led to a renewed focus on serving the best interests of all involved in the component manufacturing industry. Because of this, more positive outcomes like BCSI can be expected in the future.

2003 WTCA ANNUAL MEETING

On Thursday, October 9, outgoing WTCA President Scott Arquilla of Best Homes, Inc., passed the gavel to incoming president Daniel Holland of Clearspan Components in Meridian, MS. Dan addressed the crowd of nearly 550 eager members, explaining how his childhood and education led to his first job in the component manufacturing industry.

Having grown up on his family’s Southern Colorado potato farm, Dan was heavily involved in the success of the family farm, and that meant helping his father create machines for the farm. Thus, from a very early age, Dan developed interest in machinery and engineering. It was only fitting that Dan attended college at LeTourneau University, a small private school in Longview, TX. Dan graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering and took a job with AT&T as a manufacturing engineer. Dan entered the truss industry in 1987 and joined his father-in-law’s truss operation in 1988.

After explaining his background, Dan asked the crowd to ask themselves “Who are you?” Dan reminded everyone in the room that despite the unique make-up of the membership—managers, key employees, owners, competitors, friends, suppliers, first-generation business owners, and second-generation business owners—we are represented by one industry association. One

of WTCA’s greatest challenges is to meet the needs of members in all areas of the country and all markets. Dan emphasized, “We are a growing part of the healthiest sector of the largest economy on the planet.” He noted that within the last ten years, our industry has increased from a \$2 or \$3 billion/year industry to an \$8 billion/year industry.

Dan’s next point of discussion was his goals and aspirations for WTCA this year. He encouraged the membership to come forward with their input. Dan outlined a few of his top priorities for 2004:

1. Increase the market share of building components. “We have a grand opportunity from growth and penetrate those areas that are not using components yet,” Dan said.
2. Develop a program to test full-scale bracing models. There are parts of this bracing

methodology that we don't know which became apparent when working on the BCSI document. The Carbeck Structural Components Institute (CSCI) is a natural vehicle for us to do this testing.

3. Finalize the TPI/WTCA joint publications agreement. Dan thanked TPI/TAC Board for their diligent work on the recent development of the BCSI document.
4. Reach the goal of having at least 50 member companies WTCA QC certified by end of 2004.

Dan closed his portion of the address with a quote that a sage man (his father) once said: "Life is like carrying a piano: some men are lifting more than others, some are leaning more than others. Only you know if you are doing more lifting or more leaning." Dan urged the audience to explore the analogy in this quote as it applies to membership in WTCA.

HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

Merle Nett, currently of Richco Structures in Haven, WI, has been involved in the structural component industry for nearly 30 years. In 1974, Merle was hired as Manager of the Floor Truss Division for Richardson Industries. He worked with Chuck Richardson, the second president of the Component Manufacturers Council. In June 1986, Merle became corporate VP of Richardson Industries and took over the Floor, Roof and Wall Divisions.

Merle was later promoted to President of Richardson Industries Lumber & Building Divisions, which include Richco Structures in Haven and DePere, Richardson Lumber Company as well as the wall division.

In addition to his endeavors in the component industry, Merle has also found time to volunteer in his community. In Sheboygan Falls, WI, he served as president of United Way and was a board member of Sheboygan Falls School District for seven years.

Merle has always been a big advocate of WTCA and in 1982 and 1983, he served as the president of the Wisconsin Truss Manufacturers Association—a chapter of WTCA. In addition, Merle served as WTCA-National president in 1996. During his tenure with WTCA, Merle was very instrumental in working with the Truss Plate Institute (TPI) to coordinate the ANSI-TPI 1-95 implementation process. He was also active in the development of WTCA's QC program.

He is an excellent leader and has always taken whatever time was needed to make thoughtful decisions on behalf of the organization. Merle's compassion and dedication to the industry, evidenced by his involvement in telling the WTCA story to his industry peers, has earned him diamond level recognition in the Top Chord Club.

Roger Gibbs, president of SpaceJoist TE, LLC, presented Merle with the 2003 Hall of Fame Award at the WTCA Annual Meeting on October 9. Merle will be added to the Wall of Fame at BCMA 2004.

4TH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The results are in! WTCA Ohio Chapter Association is the #1 Recruiting Chapter for 2003. South Florida Truss & Component Manufacturers Association, WTCA-Arizona and the Truss

Manufacturers Association of Texas received Honorable Mentions. Mr. Ken Bucek of A-1 Roof Trusses in Fort Pierce, FL is the #1 Membership Recruiter for 2003. Honorable Mentions go to Keith Azlin of U.S. Components (AZ) and Steve Yoder of Stark Truss Company (OH). Thank you to everyone who recruited new members this year!

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