

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE

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Grassroots Nation by Libby Maurer

From coast to coast, the structural building components industry is a Grassroots Nation



PROFILE 1: GANG-NAIL TRUSS COMPANY OF VISALIA, CA

GRASSROOTS CHALLENGE: LEGISLATIVE

Who you are: Tim Rouch, Manufacturing Manager/President

Total employees: 189

Grassroots challenge: Get the attention of legislators and convince them to vote in favor of HR 876, a bill that would provide grants to California railroads for necessary upgrades.

How this issue impacts your company: Without the passage of HR 876, we'd eventually have to abandon rail transportation of our products. Most likely, we'd hire trucks to do the work, putting more trucks on the road daily. This has environmental and economic implications as well.

How you confronted the challenge: I was asked to represent Gang-Nail at a press conference supporting the passage HR 876. I, as well as representatives from other local businesses, described how the passage of this bill would allow us to continue to use rail transport to move our products efficiently, economically, and in an environmentally-friendly way.

How you enlisted WTCA's help to achieve this: I called the WTCA legislative staff and asked them to help me draft a short speech for the press conference. They were able to give me the necessary support to deliver a very professional speech to my peers and elected officials. This would not have been the

success it was without WTCA-National's guidance!



PROFILE 2: ITMA EDUCATION COMMITTEE GRASSROOTS CHALLENGE: EDUCATING HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION WITH BCSI 1-03

Who you are: Iowa Truss Manufacturers Association Education Committee: Ray Noonan Jr. (Committee Chair), Alan Esch, Andy Green, Bruce Feldman, Bruce Kinney, David Mitchell, Jeremy Moser, Mike Stineman, Randy Thurm, Rick Parrino, Roger Gibbs, Scott Baker, Tod Hennessy, Wayne Howard and Wes Parker.

Grassroots challenge: Provide cost-free training for the home building associations and technical schools in Iowa. Spread the word about BCSI 1-03 in the marketplace.

How you accomplished it: A winter-spring training schedule at various locations and dates for anyone and everyone in the state of Iowa who expresses interest in learning more about the use of structural components in building construction.

What the presentations entail: A scale model, a Truss Technology Workshop (TTW) Power Point Presentation (varies by audience type), a panel of four to six members of the ITMA Education Committee, a certificate of completion for each participant, and maintenance of a database of trained persons.

What factors influenced ITMA to create this training schedule? Our objective is to promote the safe and effective use of components. We've done our job if we've accomplished that goal. I'm convinced that there have been less personal injuries and claims that have occurred in Iowa since we've been hosting this training. If our products are installed properly, people are going to want to use more of them.

Your role: As committee chair, I coordinate all the training schedules. I start by sending a letter to every home builders association, community college and junior college in the state around November or December, inviting them to contact us and set up a presentation. We've been doing this for five or six

consecutive years now.

How has WTCA helped you to achieve this goal? We hand out a BCSI 1-03 booklet to every participant—whether it be a student, home builder or engineer. We have gotten excellent feedback about BCSI. The meat of each presentation is the BCSI content. We would not have high quality presentation materials without WTCA.

In His Own Words: I have to give all the credit to our Education Committee members. Each one of them is very dedicated to our training cause. They spend the preparation time necessary for us to put on a professional, informative seminar to every audience. It is a huge time commitment and we couldn't do it without them.



**PROFILE 3: WTCA-NE
GRASSROOTS CHALLENGE: EDUCATING ENGINEERS &
BUILDING OFFICIALS ON DESIGN RESPONSIBILITIES**

Who you are: WTCA-Northeast Chapter: Josh Bartlett, Tom Caggige, Roger Cote, Dave Denoncourt, John Goodrich, Brad Ferris, Shawn Simonds and Chris Smith.

Grassroots challenge: Provide training for engineers and building officials in the marketplace on design responsibilities topics using TTW presentations, TTB permanent and temporary bracing literature, and the BCSI 1-03 booklet.

Why was there a need to offer training in your region: Communication between us needed to be improved. It wasn't enough for us to only communicate when dealing with the day-to-day problems of designing a building.

Details about what the sessions entail: Members of WTCA-NE gave a series of three presentations focusing on design responsibilities to the Structural Engineers of New Hampshire, the New England Building Officials, and the Structural Engineers Association of Vermont. After each presentation, there were lively Q & A sessions. The post-seminar discussions were very helpful to us in terms of understanding each other.

How the training has helped to develop an open dialogue with the engineering and building official community: The results of the meetings with these organizations were tremendous. It opened up a communication line that seems to close a little tighter over time. We should not be afraid to meet with these groups. In fact, we should try to get in front of them as often as possible. It's true; we deal with engineers and building officials all the time. By asking to attend a meeting of your local engineers or building officials you see a whole new side of them and the inverse is true also. They get to put a face with a name. This face-to-face contact just can't be accomplished with a fax machine or computer.

How you enlisted the assistance of WTCA-National to achieve the goal: We were grateful for the TTBs and BCSI 1-03 booklets from WTCA-National that helped our presentations look more professional than we could ever have done on our own.

How the chapter's work has ultimately benefited the structural building components industry: Each time we educate somebody new about responsibilities or bracing we make new contacts. That benefits us twice. We're getting the message out and we're opening the lines of communication.



**PROFILE 4: CASMIN, INC.
GRASSROOTS CHALLENGE: EDUCATING TRUSS
TECHNICIANS**

Who you are: Natalie Casp, Grant & Training Coordinator

Total employees: 220. Casmin employs 18 truss technicians in its Technical Services Department. 56 employees are actively enrolled in online training throughout the organization.

Manufacturing locations: Lady Lake and Tavares, FL. Headquarters is in Leesburg, FL.

Grassroots challenge/goal: Improve skill levels of employees by seeking out training for technicians at various skill levels. With access to a comprehensive

and self-contained training program, we are able to introduce the concepts of truss design to other departments within the organization, such as plant production, sales, and quality control. Not only does this type of cross-training increase overall knowledge of the process of creating our product, but it serves as one of the ways we try to create a mutual understanding of each departments' tasks and responsibilities.

How you confronted the challenge: Chuck Stillwaggon, Technical Services Manager, applied for (and received!) a state training grant to assist in the costs associated with WTCA's Truss Technician Training program.

How you used WTCA's programs/services to achieve your goal: The reporting features enable me to compile monthly progress statistics that, in our case, are required by the State in order to receive reimbursement funds for the training. Furthermore, we can assess the progress of our employees in the training program by reviewing the scores for each section, as well as the amount of time spent on each category. Level I and II certification has been added as a requirement to several of our positions throughout the company. When promoting from within the organization, employees who have completed the online training are preferred.

In Her Own Words: With WTCA's program and partial funding from the state, Casmin is able to offer an excellent training program that benefits both the employee and the company.

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