

# STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE

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## Tales of Community Partnering to Promote Building Components by Libby Walters

*Two component manufacturers pitch in to rally for the building components industry and good causes. Are you active in your community?*

There are no two ways about it. Component manufacturers who lend a hand in their communities are simultaneously promoting the use of building components and the collective structural building components industry. Here are stories of two component manufacturers who have reached out—and spread the word in the process.

### YOUR NEW HOUSE

Al Sifuentes of Timber Tech Texas recently achieved small screen status when he appeared on Michael Holigan's Your New House. Holigan, a homebuilder turned media personality, hosts a television program about homebuilding and remodeling that is broadcast on many major networks across the country. Like other DIY programs, Your New House has broad appeal, although its main audience includes builders and consumers interested in building, buying or remodeling their home.

During the week of February 12 - 14, 2004, Sifuentes posed as the "truss expert" on the site of Holigan's 12,688 sq. ft. project house north of Dallas, TX. "I served as a human face for our product and industry. They also asked me to demonstrate the pros of using components," he said.

In the episode, Sifuentes and Holigan appeared on the jobsite, explaining the structural benefits, material waste reduction and labor savings that are realized when components are used in residential building construction. For instance, Holigan demonstrated how attic roof trusses allow for extra living space to be created on the top level of a house. Holigan also noted that because of the truss's load distribution, long span trusses can accommodate a more spacious room layout.

Sifuentes explained that using building components means savings for the end user. "I talked about the benefits of using the engineered components, and that they mean material and labor savings for the contractor. Ultimately, savings for the contractor will lead to savings for the consumer or homeowner," he said.

As current Vice-President of the Truss Manufacturers Association of Texas (TMAT), Sifuentes commented on the chapter's dedication to educating the marketplace about the benefits of using building components. "I was chosen by my peers to represent our chapter (and industry) and to demonstrate our continued commitment to educate people on the use of building

components. The show was a great opportunity for our industry to be seen at the consumer level and therefore, hopefully create a demand from the building and design professionals to specify engineered components in their structures," he said.

Sifuentes also noted that it is rare for the industry to get national media coverage, so it was extremely important for TMAT to participate actively in every possible capacity. Fellow TMAT members contributed to the project by donating components. The floor trusses were provided by American Truss Systems, Inc. while Panel Truss Texas, Inc. donated the roof trusses.

Sifuentes commented that TMAT's aim in participating was to market the entire industry. "We weren't thinking of promoting [TMAT], we were thinking of job security for the entire industry."

Sifuentes noted that the show's producers were very impressed with TMAT's participation on Your New House and are looking forward to a continuing working relationship. Sifuentes said he would welcome a second opportunity to appear on the show, "Next year as the acting President of TMAT, I want to make sure we keep up the relationship [with Your New House]. I just may end up in front of the cameras once again."

With the show's average audience of more than two million viewers each week, Sifuentes may have a shot at a second career on the small screen. "I'm not so sure about that," he contested. "I'm not ready to give up my day job yet."

You can view the five-minute segment featuring Sifuentes and find additional viewer information by visiting [www.MichaelHoligan.com](http://www.MichaelHoligan.com). See episode #219, by clicking on episode information, then click on previous week until you get to #219. Finally, click on the segment on trusses. You can also view WTCA's previous work with TMAT, promoting our industry on Your New House by going to the following link: [www.michaelholigan.com/ProjectHouse/default.asp?week\\_key=3](http://www.michaelholigan.com/ProjectHouse/default.asp?week_key=3) and clicking on the two videos located there. Many thanks to the Southern Pine Council for supplying the lumber for this project, as well as their role in facilitating the work between TMAT and Michael Holigan's Your New House.

## **TRUSS SYSTEM HAWAII DONATES TO FIRST ANNUAL BUILD A THON**

The Aloha State is known best for its pineapple, luaus, extreme water sports and as one of the world's most popular vacation destinations. Despite Hawaii's reputation as a tropical paradise, there are always people in need and plenty of volunteers to lend a helping hand. Just ask Scott Loomer, whose truss company, Truss Systems Hawaii, recently donated trusses and pre-cut wall packages for a Habitat for Humanity project in Waiakoa, a city on the island of Maui. The Habitat team moved into a Waiakoa subdivision for one day—Saturday, June 26—to host their first annual Build A Thon.

"I'm a supporter of the [Habitat for Humanity] programs and I'm happy to have contributed to this worthwhile cause in our own way," said Loomer.

Volunteers at the Build A Thon focused their efforts on three homes that had each been started, but were all in need of additional materials and manpower to be finished. Loomer's company

provided the roof trusses and wall panels for a home that had just a foundation. With plenty of help from volunteers, Truss Systems' components were added to the foundation and the home was completely framed and closed in from the elements by the end of the Build A Thon.

Loomer commented that the home's efficient completion was made possible in large part by his donated products. For example, using Truss Systems Hawaii's pre-cut wall components, the Habitat crew completed the wall framing onsite at the same time that the floor framing was being done. Once the floor was finished, the wall panels were installed. The trusses were prepared in roof sections while the wall panels were installed. A crane lifted and installed the truss sections on the plates when the final truss installation was completed.

Loomer said the major benefit of component use in this project was reduced installation time. "The simultaneous construction of the wall panels and roof sections reduced the actual installation time significantly," he noted.

The event was part of a statewide project aimed at helping families build their own homes while raising money for the program. Maui Habitat Executive Director Sherri Dodson said about 120 volunteers gathered at the Build A Thon, estimating that half were likely first-time volunteers.

Would he be willing to donate again? "Yes, as an annual event, to help bring awareness to the project and the work that is being done by Habitat," Loomer said. "It's such a worthwhile cause."

For more information about Habitat for Humanity in your area, visit [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org).

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