



# Publisher's Message

## Manufacturers Combine Old & New Automation for Best Results

by SBC Staff

An overwhelming majority of component manufacturers employ old and new automation and equipment to "get the job done."

Out with the old, in with the new." We've all heard that at one point or another. Or how about "everything old is new again"? With this issue of **SBC Magazine**, we build off that theme to rediscover equipment and materials handling—the old, the new and everything in between.

One indication of how the building components industry has combined old and new was evident to **SBC** staff in compiling recent One Minute Poll (OMP) data. Sixty-two percent of component manufacturer respondents feel they strike a delicate balance between high and low levels of automation in their manufacturing facilities.

Our cover story is a nod to new: new everything. WTCA member Shelter Systems Limited in Westminster, MD opened a new truss plant in January 2005 that houses cutting-edge materials handling equipment to maximize capacity, efficiency and productivity. As Shelter's proud Joe Hikel commented, pictures and words don't do his new facility justice. But we've tried our very best to convey the "larger than life" presence of Shelter's new facility in "Building a Bigger Shelter" on page 40.

An issue devoted to automation and materials handling wouldn't be complete without the perspective of those who are producing the equipment. In a special segment beginning on page 52, the technologies behind automation are revealed by two suppliers who have their fingers on the pulse of component manufacturer production needs.

Switching gears completely, we explore topics in bankruptcy in the second installment of Trussway's "Perfect Storm." In the June/July issue, Libby Maurer outlined the company's downward spiral to financial demise. In "The Calm after the Perfect Storm," she tells of the company's journey through the Chapter 11 process and hopes to dispel some of the many misconceptions about bankruptcy. As Maurer explains, Trussway is back, better than ever, and enjoying great financial health for the first time in many years. You can find the full story on page 58.

It's time to test your memory. Some of you may remember that ages ago when the industry-specific Koskovich cartoon ran in each issue. The last cartoon appeared in the December 2000 issue. In those days, **SBC Magazine** was still *WOODWORDS*, a gallon of gas cost just \$1.46, and the world was up in arms about Y2K. After five long years of searching for a suitable replacement, we're pleased to welcome the cartoon back to **SBC**. It's almost as if it's never been gone. Enjoy!

The concept of relishing both new and old things hasn't been lost on the staff here at **SBC**. To fulfill the notion of "new," we debut a special column this month called **Reading the PE Palm**. It is meant to cover technical and design issues in more depth than ever before. Appropriately, each column will be written by a professional engineer from the industry. Thanks to Joe Heinsman, P.E., of Davidson Industries for volunteering to be the first to step up to the plate. If you have a story (or even an engineer!) to share, pass it on to **SBC** staff at [newcolumn@sbcmag.info](mailto:newcolumn@sbcmag.info).

Finally, you'll find a little surprise in **Parting Shots**. If you've ever aspired to sport a style we call Component Manufacturer Casual, you don't want to miss it. **SBC**

### at a glance

- ❑ This issue of **SBC Magazine** spotlights Equipment and Materials Handling. It also houses the Annual Supplier Listing.
- ❑ Shelter Systems has new everything. Review a new plant that houses cutting-edge materials handling equipment to maximize capacity, efficiency and productivity.
- ❑ Trussway is back from bankruptcy—what you can learn from their experience?
- ❑ Read what a few of our suppliers think is on the horizon for the future of automation in the industry.

# STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS™

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