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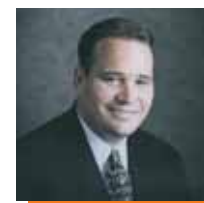
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SBC Advertisers invest in the growth of the structural building components industry!



Editor's Message

Immigration Tops List of Industry's Legislative Issues

by Don Groom

Immigration is top of mind for everyone these days, and the construction industry is no exception.

You don't have to look any farther than the nightly news or the newspaper to know that immigration is on just about everyone's minds these days. At the time this was written, proposed legislation ranged from modernization of the current system to sweeping changes on how the law looks at those currently living illegally in this country or hoping to immigrate to the U.S. It's difficult to say at this point which of the many proposals may become law, but one thing is certain—new legislation will have a major impact on American business. While everyone has—and is entitled to—their own opinion, our industry supports immigration reform that emphasizes security while also recognizing manufacturers' workforce needs.

In the midst of a nationwide manufacturing and building construction labor shortage that shows no sign of letting up or any near-term remedy, immigration is a major issue for our industry and the construction industry overall. The demand for structural building components in all markets continues to grow, and we need to be able to hire skilled and productive workers to meet this marketplace demand. At a time when young workers are not entering these jobs in large enough numbers to fill current openings, immigrant populations play a vital role in helping meet our workforce demand—from entry-level workers to assembly line workers to technical staff. These employees do much more than fill a short-term labor shortage; they're a credit to the industry and can reap the benefits through the many career opportunities available in the industry today.

Now is the time for the structural building components industry to make our voice heard. Join the effort by getting involved politically and start making a difference in your community.

As national immigration policy evolves, there's no doubt that lawmakers' efforts to secure our nation's borders is a top priority that our industry should support. But it's important to understand how national policy could also have a drastic impact on American business. At times, the current laws already pose challenges to businesses' human resource (HR) departments.

That's why the structural building components industry supports immigration reform by streamlining current immigration programs. Likewise, the creation of employment-based programs and a guest-worker or expanded visa program could help component manufacturers hire foreign nationals and meet the growing workforce demand. Component manufacturers also need any new legislation to be manageable from an HR perspective.

at a glance

- Our industry supports immigration reform that emphasizes security while also recognizing manufacturers' workforce needs.
- Immigrant populations play a vital role in helping meet our workforce demand.
- There is a lot we can do on the local legislative front. Get involved on the state and local district level by making contacts with your lawmakers.

Policy that would impose a penalty on companies who unknowingly hire an illegal immigrant would be a major blow to businesses and create an HR nightmare in trying to track down and double- and triple-check every worker's documentation. This is all the more reason why our industry supports additional funding for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to increase border security, conduct more extensive criminal and background checks on visa applicants, and identify undocumented workers in the U.S. Our industry also supports Congress appropriating funds to effectively track foreign workers and introduce counterfeit-resistant work

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Editor's Message

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authorization cards so employers don't take on unknown risk when hiring immigrant workers.

The timeliness of the immigration debate and the far-reaching effects that new polices could have on component manufacturers proves how vital it is for each and every one of us to get involved politically. The Legislative Conference is a wonderful opportunity for the industry to gather in Washington, DC to meet with members of Congress and their staffs, as well as officials from federal agencies. There's also much we can do locally in our own communities. Get involved on the state and local district level by making contacts with your lawmakers and their staffs. There's no better way to share our industry's story than to tell it first-hand.

Contacting your Senator or Congressperson may sound daunting at first, but WTCA offers many tools to help you get involved in legislative advocacy. In addition to the many resources on www.sbcleg.com, WTCA can provide you with talking points, state maps and industry statistics, all of which will help you break the ice. WTCA can even schedule meetings with lawmakers for you. When a legislative matter of importance to our industry arises, WTCA provides templates to help component manufacturers write letters to their lawmakers. Whether you're new to legislative advocacy or a pro, your trade association offers the tools to make the process simple and help you make the most of your time and effort.

Now is the time for the structural building components industry to make our voice heard. Join the effort by getting involved politically and start making a difference in your community. It will benefit your company as well as the entire industry. **SBC**

SBC Magazine encourages the participation of its readers in developing content for future issues. Do you have an article idea for a future issue or a topic that you would like to see covered? Email your thoughts and ideas to editor@sbcmag.info.

correction:

The following WTCA member was missing from the annual listing that ran in the April 2006 issue:

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We apologize for the oversight. **SBC**

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The mission of *Structural Building Components Magazine (SBC)* is to increase the knowledge of and to promote the common interests of those engaged in manufacturing and distributing structural building components. Further, *SBC* strives to ensure growth, continuity and increased professionalism in our industry, and to be the information conduit by staying abreast of leading-edge issues. *SBC's* editorial focus is geared toward the entire structural building component industry, which includes the membership of WTCA – Representing the Structural Building Components Industry. The opinions expressed in *SBC* are those of the authors and those quoted, and are not necessarily the opinions of Truss Publications or WTCA.

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