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STRUCTURAL BUILDING
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Editor's Message

The Evolution of Component Bracing & Safety on the Jobsite

by Bob Becht

The new WTCA president and his passion for safe handling and bracing.

Let me introduce myself. I first built trusses in 1966 as a summer college job. I was in and out of the truss business for the next 15 years. In 1981 I went to work for Chambers Truss in Fort Pierce, FL, where I got involved in the South Florida chapter of WTCA. In 2000, I began representing the chapter on the WTCA board. Which leads me to why I am writing this column.

I assume the job of president of WTCA at a difficult time for our association and our industry. I don't have the solutions to our problems in this article. If I could buy a half a million homes this year I would. That would help, but unfortunately I just don't have the cash. What I can tell you is that we will work to continue the industry-changing innovations WTCA has worked so hard to accomplish. What I can talk about is the great job I have witnessed WTCA do. The first meeting I attended at the May 2000 WTCA Board meeting happened to be the first component manufacturers roundtable. That meeting was a no holds barred freewheeling discussion of where we wanted the component industry and WTCA to go. I am happy to say that we have gotten there. The TPI-WTCA joint publications agreement, changes to ANSI/TPI 1 QC standard and WTCA QC, BCSI and the SBC Research Institute were dreams then, but realities today. The accomplishment I am going to talk about is BCSI. BCSI is emblematic of the revolution that WTCA has accomplished.

The focus of this issue is Handling, Installing and Bracing of building components. This gives me an opportunity to talk about two things you know I love to talk about, the truss industry and me. My experiences in the development of truss installation procedures and documents is just one story out of hundreds that has brought our industry to where it is today. I hope what I have to say illustrates the broad-based cooperative nature of the development of BCSI.

Safe installation of trusses has been a passion of mine for over 20 years. I created what I termed the Safe Truss Partnership, a training program for truss installers. I have given it many times and I know of jobs where it has prevented truss collapse. One of the first truss collapses I worked on involved a four-ply 68-foot scissor girder. The installer set one ply and did not fasten the jacks to the forty-foot high wall. The truss collapsed, sending two men fifty-three feet to the slab. When I arrived at the jobsite the foreman was ashen. He said, "If I had known what was going to happen I never would have done this."

I found this a recurring theme. "If I had only known." Most of the truss collapses I have investigated have made me ask, "How could anyone have been so stupid?" When I was deposed about this collapse, the plaintiff's lawyer made much of the "green sheets" (TPI's BWT 76) reference to multiple truss installation versus single truss installation. John Meeks was my forensic engineer on this case. John was on the TPI committee that drafted HIB-91; as a result of this he made sure that the fastening of multi-ply girders was referenced on the first page. Years later I made sure that this warning was included in BCSI. This is an example of many truss people who have contributed their experience to the development of BCSI.

Over time WTCA created documents on truss related issues to meet the needs of its members. These documents have become known as Truss Technology In Building

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at a glance

- ❑ WTCA President Bob Becht emphasizes bracing and long-span truss installation education.
- ❑ There was a time when short member temporary lateral restraint was not installed safely.
- ❑ BCSI and the B-Series documents have helped to provide direction and a consistent message on bracing and installation issues.
- ❑ Given the current state of housing, we need tools like BCSI to raise the level of professionalism in construction.

FORGING AHEAD TOGETHER

Editor's Message

Continued from page 7

(TTB) and the predecessor of BCSI were TTB documents which we now call the "B" series. CMs began using the documents to supplement and in some cases replace HIB-91. From practical experience CMs knew that 26-inch "killer cleats" or short member temporary lateral restraint could be safely used in the installation of trusses. While truss installers almost always used short members, seldom did they use short members safely. To remedy this WTCA added the safe use of short members to their new "Always Diagonally Brace for Safety" TTB document. This was later termed WTCA B2 and was out of sync with TPI's HIB-91. To remedy this and to unify WTCA's and TPI's documentation, the two organizations began work on a single guide for the storage, handling, installing and bracing of trusses. On March 12, 2002, the BSR/TPI 3 Project Committee met in Chicago. Leaders from the plate and component manufacturing sides of our industry met to begin harmonizing HIB-91 and the TTB documents. At the April 2002 WTCA Board meeting, a resolution was passed that officially kicked off work on what would eventually become BCSI. Amazingly, after just over a year, BCSI 1-03 was released. This represents an enormous and groundbreaking agreement between TPI and WTCA to share responsibility for and revenue from BCSI.

What do we truss manufactures do with BCSI? Jobsite packages are a necessary and easy answer. Fill up the package with the B-series documents, the installer has an opportunity to read them and we have actively met what Kent Pagel (WTCA's Legal Counsel) would refer to as our "duty to genuinely warn and instruct." *I urge you to be proactive.* You won't be sued if you do and more importantly truss installers won't be hurt if trusses don't come down. My company insists installers take our two-hour Safe Truss Presentation featuring BCSI. It's available from WTCA, on long span trusses. We are giving the presentation to homebuilders associations, truss installation companies, building officials and others not related to a specific job. I know that truss jobs have been saved from collapse by this presentation. Some of you may think that we can't educate truss installers, but I know better. One installer with twenty years plus experience told me before the presentation, "I bought a set of trusses from X truss company and they fell down because the plates weren't big enough." At the end of our presentation he told me, "Today I learned that those trusses fell because I didn't brace them properly."

We can make truss installation safer. WTCA and TPI have given us a great tool in BCSI but we have to use it.

BCSI is just one of the great things that our industry has done through WTCA. In these hard times we need these tools even more and we need the information that is shared at WTCA Board meetings—please attend the next chance you get. Please also support WTCA and use the organization's tools for your survival. **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@sbcsmag.info.

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS™

THE FUTURE OF FRAMING

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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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