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These companies provide significant sponsorship of the structural building components industry. Many thanks for their ongoing support!

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Editor's Message

Diversifying, Staying Connected Are Key in Current Environment

by Bob Becht

Reflections on a year like none other.

It goes without saying that this year so far has been more challenging than I ever imagined, and I'm sure many of you are finding yourselves in the same position. However difficult business is, I feel fortunate to have served as WTCA president over the past year. I like to think of the silver lining in our current situation as forcing us to become better, smarter, more innovative businesspeople. The latest predictions from most resources I've checked call for a housing rebound in 2010—later than originally projected. If you're anything like me, these projections are forcing you to think hard about how your business will stay strong. In a word, I believe one of the keys for many of us is diversification. Taking big or small steps toward diversifying our product lines and related services may feel like uncharted territory after a stretch of "boom" years for our industry. I know that for my company, we had several years of taking orders and trying to keep pace with demand. The environment we're in now is much, much different. We've got to get creative, explore new markets and think outside the box.

Kirk Grundahl shares his **Big Picture** on page 16. Getting back to business basics, he says, is one of the most important survival strategies for any business. Among them: connect with customers, differentiate, and market, market, market. He also talks about the importance of staying connected with peers, and a new forum WTCA created is precisely for this purpose. If there's one benefit of your membership in WTCA, it's staying connected and learning from each other.

Another all-too-familiar example of keeping on your toes no matter how hard things get is spotlighted in one of this issue's features. On page 30, read up on what you can expect the next time you get a surprise visit from OSHA—from the inspection itself to reviewing your safety records. There are even examples from CMs who have endured surprise visits to demonstrate some of the things that can happen during an inspection. You might never be able to foresee the future, but with "What to Expect When You're (Not) Expecting...OSHA," your operation will be as prepared as possible.

A couple more thoughts before I pass the gavel to Ben Hershey, our 2009 president:

Many thanks to the suppliers who have continued to support the industry and component manufacturers by advertising in **SBC**. The value of advertisers who have stayed with the industry through the downturn is tremendous. Readers may not be aware that **SBC** is fully supported by advertising dollars. But in addition, **SBC**-derived revenue also enables WTCA to undertake membership activities that otherwise might not get done due to a lack of funding. I encourage all component manufacturers to support these folks that have stuck with **SBC** through the downturn. You can find a list of them on page 6.

One of the best things I think you can do for your business is to come to a place where you can learn more than any other event of the year: BCMC. If you want to keep your finger on the pulse of the industry, and carry out business planning, evaluating and adjusting, there's no better place to do it. Find a list of this year's exhibitors on page 42. There's still time to register! Visit www.bcmcshow.com for complete details.

In closing, I would like to thank the WTCA Executive Committee and the Board of Directors for the pleasure of serving WTCA over the last year. I also thank the entire WTCA membership for their participation in and support of our great association. **SBC**

at a glance

- ❑ In our current business environment, we've got to get creative, explore new markets and consider ways to differentiate.
- ❑ If there's one benefit of your membership in WTCA, it's staying connected and learning from each other.
- ❑ BCMC is the place to keep your finger on the pulse of the industry and make adjustments to your business.

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS™

THE FUTURE OF FRAMING

www.sbcmag.info

Dear Reader:

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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 of structural building components to ensure growth and continuity, and to be the information conduit by staying abreast of leading-edge issues. SBC will take a leadership role on behalf of the component industry in disseminating technical and marketplace information, and will maintain advisory committees consisting of the most knowledgeable professionals in the industry. The opinions expressed in SBC are those of the authors and those quoted solely, and are not necessarily the opinions of any affiliated association (WTCA) .



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