

ONTARIO TRUSS REPORT

Report on the OWTFa AGM – Mississauga, January 2009

At the end of January the leading members of the Ontario Truss industry met to discuss the future of their industry. The economic turmoil began to take hold at the end of 2008 and the industry used this meeting in early 2009 to discuss ways to operate effectively in this new climate.

The meeting began with a presentation by noted economist Peter Norman of the Altus Group Economic Consulting company. His outlook, while bleak, showed the possibility of growth in 2010. He also illustrated why things are not as bad in Canada as they are in the US market.

This allowed for a seamless segue to truss manufacturing consultant Todd Drummond who talked about the principles of lean manufacturing. Todd said this about the US, “the carnage in the industry has already started and only the lean and efficient will survive”. Todd challenged the industry to understand the true costs of operating their business, improve those cost structures and therefore dramatically increase the efficiency of their operations.

A key element for the truss industry for both internal and external reasons is the development of an industry sponsored quality control program. With the quality assumptions now in place in Appendix G of the building code the need for industry quality standards became self evident. This program is now being rolled out in 2009 among the members of the association’s truss manufacturers. While the industry already dominates the residential market in Ontario it is believed that this new quality control program will provide a key building block for further inroads into commercial construction projects.

With proven design standards the building codes can continue to be expanded for wood. Recently the British Columbia code was changed to allow for 6 story buildings. Currently 4 is the maximum height for the rest of Canada. Europe has already shown that even higher buildings are quite feasible in wood.

The final part of this all day meeting was the election of the new leadership for the association. Returning, as President is Gerry Frey of Mar-Span Truss Inc. Rounding out the executive is Gary Lalonde of Locke Truss, and Greg Ruhl of Kent Trusses. The other Directors are Rick Brouckxon of LP Engineered Wood Products, Marvin Wight of Simpson Strong-Tie Canada Ltd, Rupert Evans of Brough & Whicher and Mark Fox of Terra Nova Truss.

The Ontario Wood Truss Fabricators Association (OWTFa) represents the common interests of the truss industry in Ontario, including promoting the use of wood trusses in residential, commercial and agricultural structures. For more information please contact Mike Phillips, Executive Director of the Ontario Wood Truss Fabricators Association (OWTFa) at 416-235-0194 or www.owtfa.com