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NWCB Launches New Website
www.nwcb.org

NWCB is pleased to offer members a new website, which is a convenient one-stop location for all information regarding the NWCB. The new site combines the main association website and the previously separate convention website into one easy-to-navigate package.

The new website is fully connected to our new association management system and provides members convenient access to the latest information, registration for NWCB events and membership transactions.

Since we are now on a completely new platform, we have assigned all members new passwords. (Old passwords no longer work.) To get your new password, please point your browser to www.nwcb.org and navigate to “Members Only” at the top of the home page. Once on the login screen, click on “Click here for personal information” to have your login credentials instantly emailed to you. If you have any trouble logging in, contact us by email (info@nwcb.org) or call 206.524.4243.

We hope you enjoy the new site and would love to hear your feedback!
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Members of:
All of us at the Northwest Wall and Ceiling Bureau are excited about what the New Year has in store for us. The NWCB staff has been working on many internal projects, and we are eager to pass along these improvements to our members.

One of the biggest changes you’ll see this year is our new website. The website features a fresh new look, improved functionality, enhanced member exposure and much more. Please visit us at www.nwcb.org. What you won’t see are the association management software functions that accompany the website and will assist the NWCB staff in providing our members the best service possible. A few of the enhanced functions are improved member data management, an integrated accounting and billing system, lower operating cost, quick and easy information updating and simplified event registration.

Our industry once again showed its support in 2014 for disadvantaged youth through many donations to our annual Toys for Tots toy drive. We donated nearly 1,500 toys between the Seattle and Portland offices, which made a lot of kids very happy during the holidays. The wall and ceiling industry continues to be one of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves Toys for Tots largest toy providers in the northwest. Thank you for your continued support of this fantastic cause.

A great deal of volunteer time and effort is contributed each year by the NWCB’s Board of Directors. I appreciate the time, effort and resources these individuals contribute to the Bureau and our industry. In our February 2014 Board of Directors’ meeting, a group of volunteers formed the Strategic Planning Committee. This committee has worked diligently to establish new membership categories to help grow membership; they have formulated a revised Board of Directors’ structure to create greater efficiency within our governing body; and they have developed a pathway for continued success of the NWCB. Through these efforts, the Bureau will continue to be the “go-to” organization for the wall and ceiling industry.

With a New Year beginning, many of us will make New Year’s resolutions. When developing your 2015 goals, I hope you will include participation in the NWCB. One of the key elements to the success of the NWCB is the participation of our members. It is this continued support from our members that will keep us at the leading edge of our industry. Please continue to attend chapter meetings, social events, seminars and the convention. In addition, consider getting involved with a committee or volunteer to assist at an event. The growth, health and continued success of the NWCB greatly depends on the efforts of our members.

If you haven’t already, register as soon as possible for the 2015 Northwest Wall and Ceiling Industries Convention and Trade Show. This year’s convention will be at the Westin Mission Hills Golf Resort & Spa in Rancho Mirage California. Along with an incredible location, the convention will provide Project of the Year Awards, a large trade show, fantastic speakers, many educational seminars, fun social events, golf and much more. In addition, there is always time to meet new people in the industry and catch up with your old friends.

Please be sure to share with me any industry news such as new hires, job changes, new products or any other information that is relevant to our industry. Or if you have ideas that are for the good of the industry or issues on your mind, please give me a call at 206.524.4243 or email me at mark@nwcb.org.

Mark Eisenmann, Executive Director
Northwest Wall and Ceiling Bureau
News from the Strategic Planning Committee

Mark Eisenmann, Executive Director, Northwest Wall and Ceiling Bureau

In our February 2014 Board of Directors’ meeting, a group of board member volunteers formed the Strategic Planning Committee. The committee has worked diligently to enhance numerous items. These enhancements are designed to help grow membership, improve services and increase funding of the Northwest Wall and Ceiling Bureau. One specific improvement they are introducing is a new membership category. The new membership category titled Association Membership, which is described in the following paragraphs.

In the establishment of the new membership category the committee evaluated the following:

- How does the NWCB maintain and grow our membership?
- What is the best membership structure for the NWCB?
- How does the Bureau continue to grow and evolve as one of the premier technical experts for our industry?
- What services does the NWCB provide for its members?
- How do we further develop a platform for industry leaders to address common issues?

The Strategic Planning Committee felt that, in order to grow the membership of the Northwest Wall and Ceiling Bureau, it is important to develop a membership category that would help create a venue not currently in existence within most wall and ceiling associations—a setting where contractors and industry organizations across the country could meet and address common issues. The Northwest Wall and Ceiling Bureau can easily help to fulfill this missing component through the Northwest Wall & Ceiling Industries Convention & Trade Show. By offering an Association Membership category, we enhance the potential participation of others in our convention where we can host the perfect meeting platform.

In order to be an Association Member, you must be a member of an active Wall and Ceiling Association not located in Washington or Oregon. The Association Membership would be provided only limited services.

At the 2015 Northwest Wall & Ceiling Industries Convention & Trade show, April 16 –18, the Association Membership category will be described in more detail, and this new category, along with other items that affect membership, will be reviewed. Please be sure to attend the 2015 Convention and include participation at the Annual Meeting of the NWCB.
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10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT RAINSCREEN

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1-800-305-1045 | www.stuoflex.com

Google/YouTube
Rainscreen 10 Things to Know

[QR Code]
John Henry, Exterior Program Manager for Service Partners/R-Factor, is pleased to announce that Howard J. Hines has joined the company as EIFS/Stucco Sales Specialist (outside sales) and Allen Chapman as a Color Technician and Insides Sales Representative. Howard has over 20 years of experience as a construction professional. He will work out of the Puyallup Branch located at 926 Valley Ave NW, Suite 103, Puyallup. He can be reached at 253.313.4484 or hhines@service-partners.com.

Allen has eight years of experience with all phases of BASF EIFS products. You can contact Allen at the Puyallup branch at 253.845.3167 or email achapman@service-partners.com.

Service Partners/R-Factor is now the exclusive distributor for Senergy/BASF in the State of Washington, Northern Idaho and Montana. For more information, contact John Henry at 360.772.2922 or e-mail jhenry@service-partners.com.

Kurt Mehrer, President of Mehrer Drywall, is pleased to announce that Jim Taylor has joined the company as the director of business development. Jim currently serves as president of the NWCB. Mehrer Drywall is a Seattle-based contracting company specializing in metal studs, drywall, acoustical grid and tile and smooth-wall finishes. You can contact Jim at 206.282.4288 or by e-mail jtaylor@mehrer.com.

The Harver Company in Lake Oswego Oregon is under new ownership: Kevin Hula and Art Cortez are the new owners of this contracting company. Joel Heath and Rob King have joined the company as estimators. The Harver Company performs work for all scopes of work in the wall and ceiling industry. For more information, call 503.624.1453 or e-mail khula@harverco.com.

Mark Salmon, Sales Manager for the Pacific Northwest region for CertainTeed Gypsum, is pleased to announce that Erica Lange is the new architectural sales manager for the company’s Northwest sales region. She is responsible for the promotion of innovative product solutions for CertainTeed. You can contact Erica at 206.295.0186 or e-mail Erica.a.lange@saint-gobain.com.

Parex USA, Inc. is pleased to announce new distributors in Alaska and Washington.

Salmon Bay Sand and Gravel is now a distributor of Parex USA, Inc.’s Parex EIFS, stucco, coatings and WeatherTech WRB products for the greater Seattle and Alaska markets. Salmon Bay is the Pacific Northwest’s leading distributor of EIFS, stucco and plastering products and accessories. They offer full color-match capabilities, will tint Parex finishes to your specifications and have them delivered or ready for pick-up.

Commencement Bay Construction Products is now a distributor of Parex USA, Inc.’s Parex EIFS, stucco, coatings and WeatherTech WRB products for the greater Tacoma / South Sound markets. Commencement Bay is a leading distributor of EIFS, stucco, coatings and plastering products and accessories. They offer full color-match capabilities, will tint Parex finishes to your specifications and have them delivered or ready for pick-up.

Spokane Wall Systems is now a distributor of Parex USA, Inc.’s Parex EIFS, stucco, coatings, Variance and WeatherTech WRB products for the greater Spokane, Montana and Northern Idaho markets. Spokane Wall is Eastern Washington’s leading distributor of EIFS, stucco, specialty interior plasters and plastering products and accessories. They will tint Parex finishes to your specifications, color match and have them delivered or ready for pick-up within 24 hours.

Parex USA, Inc. is pleased to announce that they have launched a new partnership and warranty program with Bonsal American Inc. - Amerimix Stucco Products.

This partnership and warranty program provide the benefits of a uniform, high-quality, sanded bagged plaster and a silo-based portland cement plaster delivery system, combined with the durability and beauty of Parex USA, Inc. finishes and coatings. Additionally, Amerimix provides quality-controlled consistency in an environmentally friendly plaster—with only water required at the jobsite.

Seattle-based law firms Miller Nash LLP and Graham & Dunn PC have combined to create the 160-attorney firm of Miller Nash Graham & Dunn LLP (MNG&D).

MNG&D is the eighth-largest law firm in the Seattle market and continues to have offices in Vancouver, Washington, Portland and Bend, Oregon, and Long Beach, California, offering clients expanded services and broadened capabilities. The new firm has combined its Seattle offices in the current Graham & Dunn space at Pier 70 on Alaskan Way.

“The combination of our two firms creates an even stronger and more dynamic platform to serve our existing clients and grow in the future,” said Steven Miller, President of Graham & Dunn.

James Yand will continue to be the go-to person for NWCB members interested in the firm’s legal services. You can contact James at 206.777.7404 or email James.Yand@millernash.com.
ROXUL ROCKFON® Ceilings, manufacturer of stone wool acoustical ceiling tiles, is pleased to announce Valhalla Construction Products is now the exclusive distributor of ROCKFON® Ceiling tiles in the Northwest.

ROCKFON® is an internationally recognized manufacturer of stone wool acoustical ceiling tiles. ROCKFON® ceilings have unique performance characteristics based on their stone wool composition for specifiers and customers in the office, healthcare and educations markets. Those benefits can be found in areas such as sound absorption, fire and water resistance, energy efficiency, dimensional stability, sustainability, design options, and ease-of-installation. Valhalla also carries the entire Chicago Metallic grid and metal ceiling products lines. Chicago Metallic was acquired by Roxul Rockfon at the end of 2013. Rockfon ceiling tile is available and ready to order.

For more information and/or pricing for ROCKFON® ceilings and Chicago Metallic grid and Specialty Metal Ceilings, contact rockfon@valhallaproducts.com or call 206.735.6606.

A new generation of construction professionals demands a turnkey solution to meet the industry’s rapidly growing needs, and On Center Software has answered the call with Oasis: the first step toward a cloud based end-to-end solution for the entire construction lifecycle. Oasis represents a first for the industry. The Oasis Platform is the foundation for seamless integration for applications across the construction project lifecycle, with robust security and data storage capabilities. The Oasis Platform initially supports several cloud applications; Oasis Takeoff and Oasis FieldCenter are the first two being launched.

The Platform is architected with standard integration capabilities that will enable companies, over time, to choose best of breed software applications and customize their individual workflows without spending the time and money to do one-off integrations.

The first two cloud applications built on the Platform are Oasis Takeoff and Oasis FieldCenter. “The early customer feedback has been tremendous,” states Cecilia Padilla, On Center CEO. “Oasis Takeoff enables true team estimating and Oasis FieldCenter allows for real-time collaboration between the office and the field.”

For more information on these apps, go to www.oncenter.com.

IAPMO’s Uniform Evaluation Service (UES) has announced that Florida-based Plastic Components, Inc. was granted UES Evaluation Report ER-284 to reference the 2012 and 2009 editions of the International Building Code® (IBC) and International Residential Code® (IRC). ER-284 states that Plastic Components, Inc. products as shown in the report satisfy applicable code requirements. This allows for the specification of Ultra-Lath® Plus HDPE Lath by architects, contractors, specifiers, and designers, and approval of installations by code officials. It also provides code officials with a concise summary of the products’ attributes and documentation of code compliance.

For a copy of the ER-284, contact Herman Guevara, Director of Worldwide Sales at Plastic Components, at hguevara@plasticcomponents.com or go to http://www.plasticcomponents.com/pdf/UES-Report-284.pdf.

In Memoriam:
Norman W. Campbell

Norman Campbell, better known as Tom Campbell, a longtime plastering contractor in the Tacoma area, passed away January 25, 2015, at the age of 90.

Tom was active with the Plasterers’ Apprenticeship Program and served on the Lath and Plaster Promotions Board, which later became the Wall and Ceiling Industry Trust. He ran a family plastering business, NW Campbell, with his sons Mike and Jeff Campbell for many years.

He is survived by his daughter Beverly Howes, sons Mike (Kelly) Campbell, Jeff Campbell, grandsons Norman Cartwright, Greg Howes, Travis and Michael Campbell and loving companion Debbie Eaton.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 47 years Dona Campbell.
Bonding Around Construction Liens: What it Means for Contractors

Seth Millstein

The purpose of this article is to clarify what a lien release bond is and how it works.

The typical scenario impacting Bureau members is one where your company, as a subcontractor, is not paid on time by the general contractor. If you are within 90 days of your last day of work, recording a claim of lien is an important tool. It often goes a long way towards receiving payment.

The lien statute in Washington says that the lien claimant must mail a copy of the lien by certified mail to the owner in order to recover attorney fees. Typically the owner receives your lien and immediately has a little “discussion” with the general contractor about it. If there’s been a dispute between you and the general contractor about the quality, character or timeliness of your work, the general contractor may paint your work in a bad light to the owner. The owner will still want resolution because the lien now encumbers his property. This is particularly true when the owner has a construction loan, which demands that all liens be removed, or the owner wants to sell the house in the immediate future. If not, the owner can wait to see if you file a foreclosure suit within the required period, which is eight months in Washington. If you wait longer than that, the lien expires and you cannot “renew” it.

In any event, the general contractor will sometimes try to “bond around” your lien. Generals sometimes use lien bonds as a threat. They will call and threaten the sub and essentially say: “Your lien is worthless; we are going to go right around it.”

In reality, a lien release bond is great news. RCW 60.04.161 is the statute in Washington that authorizes a lien release bond “in lieu” of a lien. For liens of $10,000 or less, the bond must be twice the amount of the lien. For liens in excess of $10,000 the bond must be equal to or greater than 1.5 times the amount of the lien. To qualify, a bond must be posted and recorded. The bond will name the lien claimant as the beneficiary. In other words, the bond will have your name on it. The effect of recording the bond is that your lien is released from the property itself.

So what does this mean for you and how is that good news?

It means that there is a bond on file, issued by a surety, and it has your name on it. You can no longer foreclose on the property, but if you win your foreclosure lawsuit, and the contractor does not pay, the surety must pay. This is great news typically because you do not need to worry about the (often awkward and cumbersome) foreclosure property. You have the bond waiting for you if the court orders payment to you at the end of a trial.

So, there’s no need to have a sheriff sell the property if you win. And here it’s important to remember how you “win” in a lien case, because the process works the same way for a lien release bond as an actual lien. You must file suit seeking to foreclose within eight months of the date your lien is recorded. That allows you to move towards perfecting your lien, and foreclosing on the property if there is no bond, or tapping the bond if a surety is involved. After you win, you just present the court’s order to the surety and demand payment. The surety (rather than the property owner) will already be involved because you must now name the surety as a defendant in your timely foreclosure suit. Now you don’t have to worry about where you stand in relation to a lender who likely recorded a deed of trust (mortgage) that will come out ahead of your lien. You also do not have to worry about what the property would sell for at a foreclosure sale. You know you will have enough to cover your lien and up to an additional 50 to cover costs and percent attorney fees, etc.

Until recently, it was not clear (because the lien law and cases get rather confusing) if the owner must still be named as a party to the law suit even when a lien release bond is posted. Washington courts clarified the issue. The owner no longer needs to be named as a party, at least in the northern part of Western Washington. This makes the process even easier, as the owner does not need to be served with the summons.
and complaint. Only the surety and the general contractor are typically the defendants in this situation. But you still must prove during the trial that your lien was valid and timely and all other elements that would allow you to perfect a lien. Again, the bond is simply your security because the property has been released. You are putting your hooks into the bond rather than the property, which makes the process far easier, because the bond has your name on it. It is just for your lien, and it is yours if you win.

The only downside of a lien release bond is that you might be limited to 1.5 times the amount of your lien, even if you win after a long trial. Let’s say you win, but on a $20,000 lien, your attorney fees are also $20,000, or double the lien amount. Your judgment is for $40,000. The lien release bond will be posted for $35,000. The surety who issued the bond is only responsible for that amount. The general is responsible for the full amount, but by that time, the general may be out of business. So you may end up not being able to collect the final $5,000 (but remember, as a subcontractor you can also sue the general’s contractor registration bond which can yield another $6,000, which is a different topic, but could be very important in this type of situation, so we mention it briefly).

So it caps the upside. But overall, on balance, when a lien release bond is posted with your name on it, it’s great news. So if the general calls and tells you that your lien is now useless, just remember silence is golden—and a lien release bond is even better, considering the price of gold has fallen lately.

——Seth Millstein formed Pillar Law PLLC to represent construction professionals. Liens, bond claims and construction contract disputes lie at the heart of Pillar’s practice.

Note: Lien laws vary from state to state. This article relates to RCW 60.04, Washington’s lien statute. Other states in the Northwest typically have mechanisms that are similar, but not identical. It’s important to consult with an attorney in your state.
We did something new this year: we took the extra step to promote our industry directly to the general contractors, architects and owners by using the NWCB annual awards. The concept was simple enough: personally deliver plaques reflecting those presented at ceremony to the local representatives of those projects. The meetings and presentations ranged from a five-minute handshake and stand-up conversation with one project manager to an hour-long event to which the entire team was invited. In fact, one opportunity included a presentation to the entire 75-member board of the local Associated General Contractors chapter. My role was to organize an opportunity for delivery, make sure a member could attend, promote the NWCB in person and then get out of the way so the member could take the conversation from there.

At each stop, it was clear that the representatives were very proud of their project and appreciated the award. But, it was also clear that they respected and appreciated the extra effort by our contractor member to participate in this bit of outreach. More than once I heard an owner say they looked forward to working with one of our members.

As the construction economy continues to improve for our industry, we have to keep the marketing and sales efforts going. This was one example of what we can do.

Dear Valued Members,

The BC Wall and Ceiling Association wrapped up another year of training and events that support and foster our industry. We had apprentices go through our training facility, resulting in a number of Red Seal - Wall and Ceiling Installers being certified. We look forward to another busy year in 2015, and word is that our contractors are busy and looking forward to a number of large-scale projects in the coming years. The BCWCA will also be participating again in the Skills Canada BC competition at the Tradex in Abbotsford in April. The goal of Skills Canada BC is to encourage students to explore areas of interest in the trades and technology fields. We look forward to showcasing our trade to students from all over our province both with a “Try-A-Trade” area for hands-on use of the tools as well as a spectator area to watch our apprentice competition teams construct their mock-ups. We anticipate this to be another great success, as it was last year.

Our local chapters are busy organizing their 2015 social events. It’s important as members to take time out of your busy schedules to remember to relax and unwind. Utilize these events to network and socialize with your industry peers. All three chapters of the BCWCA (Lower Mainland, Southern Interior and Vancouver Island) will have their 2015 Golf Tournaments in the warm summer months ahead. In the meantime, the focus will be on chapter dinner meetings, educational opportunities and wall and ceiling training.

I look forward to working with our members over the months ahead and encourage everyone to visit the BCWCA website www.bcwca.org for up-to-date information about our news and events. Be sure to check out the photos from the Lower Mainland Christmas Casino and Dinner night held in November; a great time was had by all!

As technology and our way of communicating with one another changes, we mustn’t lose sight of reaching out and engaging in face-to-face opportunities to share conversation and ideas. I would ask each of you to find time to contribute that little extra to our industry. Join a committee, mentor and apprentice, or volunteer to help at an event. Contact us at the BCWCA office to find out how you can make a difference, for the good of the industry.
The Wall Systems business of BASF Corporation is a leading manufacturer of EIFS, stucco, specialty finishes, and air/water-resistive barriers in North America. For over 35 years, Senergy® has established a reputation for providing innovative systems to meet the most challenging project specifications. As a distributor of BASF Senergy systems and products, Service Partners is committed to providing customers with the best products, service and staff in the industry. Learn more at www.senergy.basf.com
NWCB to Convene in Rancho Mirage

Tiina Freeman, CAE
NWCB Director of Communications & Events

The 2015 Northwest Wall and Ceiling Industries Annual Convention will be held April 16-18 at the Westin Mission Hills Golf Resort & Spa in Rancho Mirage, California.

This industry event is the largest gathering of wall and ceiling industry professionals on the West Coast, drawing attendees from Western Canada and throughout the United States. You will find delegates from all the major West Coast wall and ceiling industry associations collaborating to strengthen our industry.

The goal of this event is to help the attendees navigate their organizations in the rapidly changing world and to help them take advantage of new opportunities—and dodge bullets—brought on by trends that are and will be affecting all aspects of our lives and businesses.

This year’s keynote speaker is Kelly McDonald, who is considered one of the nation’s top experts on consumer trends. At the opening session on Thursday, she will highlight the top four trends affecting the construction industry now and how to capitalize on them. This engaging presentation will intrigue and inspire you to “think like a futurist” and spotlight the opportunities that these trends present for the construction industry. You will find out what’s driving these trends and what the “new marketing expectation” means to your and your business.

On Friday, she will present a high-energy workshop that takes an in-depth look at consumer preferences for
“green” options, communication and socialization habits, demographic shifts, and trends in family formation and how these key trends are affecting your business now. This session will equip you with dos and don’ts to navigate these changes, including actionable, low-cost or no-cost steps you can implement to stay on top of the ever-shifting business climate.

The convention schedule has been built around an informative trade show displaying the latest products, systems, tools and services for the wall and ceiling industry. There are no competing events during the exhibit hours to ensure we maximize this invaluable networking opportunity.

In addition to the trade show, the convention offers educational sessions providing the latest must-know information and ample opportunities to connect with industry peers and partners at meetings or, more informally, at fun social events. The 2015 Outstanding Project of the Year Awards will be announced at the opening ceremonies as we celebrate the contributions of our industry.

This convention and trade show present a unique opportunity for learning and networking in a fun, relaxed setting. Please visit our website www.nwcb.org to learn more and to register for this event.

**Convention keynote speaker**

Kelly McDonald, one of the nation’s top experts on consumer trends, will present the top trends affecting the construction industry and how to capitalize on them.

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**HOTEL RESERVATIONS**

**Book early**—our convention coincides with the Coachella Music Festival and hotel rooms will be hard to find if you miss our reservations window.

**ROOM CUTOFF: MARCH 12, 2015**

(OR EARLIER IF ROOM BLOCK SELLS OUT)

Westin Mission Hills
Golf Resort & Spa
71333 Dinah Shore Drive
Rancho Mirage, CA 92270
westinmissionhills.com

**Reservation methods:**

Call **1.877.253.0041** or reserve online
(link available at wallceilingshow.org).

**Group name:**

NW Wall & Ceiling

Group rate: $189 per night, plus taxes and assessments. This rate is available three days prior and after the convention. The resort fee has been waived for our group. Cancellation policy is 24 hours prior to arrival to avoid penalty.

**USEFUL CONTACTS**

**Organizer**

Northwest Wall and Ceiling Bureau
206.524.4243 • info@nwcb.org • nwcb.org

**Convention & Trade Show Venue**

Westin Mission Hills Resort & Spa
760.328.5955 • mhinfo@westin.com • westinmissionhills.com

**Guestroom Reservations**

1.877.253.0041
Online reservations link available at nwcb.org

**Trade Show Booth Reservations**

map-dynamics.com/nwcb2015
NWCB members use coupon code “membersonly”

**Trade Show Contractor**

Shepard Exposition Services (Formerly US Expo)
702.507.5278 • lasvegas@shepardes.com • shepardes.com
Future NWCB Convention Locations

See http://www.nwcb.org/conventions.html

Loews Coronado Island
San Diego, California
April 28 - 30, 2016

The Coeur d’Alene Resort
Coeur d’Alene, Idaho
May 4 - 6, 2017
Announces: 

THE OASIS PLATFORM™

A cloud platform to enable collaboration throughout the entire construction project life cycle.

Oasis FieldCenter™
The cloud-based field management solution that allows everyone in your company to access and collaborate on the right plans in real-time available to anyone, anywhere, at anytime.

Oasis Takeoff™
The cloud takeoff solution that allows everyone in your company to access and collaborate on the right plans in real-time available to anyone, anywhere, at anytime.

“Oasis Takeoff and FieldCenter will lead to improvements in overall estimating efficiency, document control with the field, and end of the month report processes.”

- Scott Scully
Senior Manager at TAS
Commercial Concrete Construction, LLC

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How Technology is transforming the construction office & the job site

Cecilia Padilla

As contractors, we clearly understand how the “Iron Triangle” can affect the success of a project: an increase in the scope of work requires an increase in time and money, or quality will suffer. Most likely, we deal with an increase in the scope of work by either increasing manpower, or working overtime, but higher wages and shortages in skilled labor make these options less desirable. So, how do you stretch time without spending more money? By increasing productivity. As a manager, I prefer increasing productivity by 10 percent to increasing payroll by the same amount.

For decades, we have looked to technology as the primary source of increasing productivity. We’ve transitioned from 10-key calculators to computers and from walkie-talkies to smart phones. Some contractors have been taking advantage of the improved productivity brought by technology for years; others are just now looking for ways to begin the transformation.

The use of electronic plans is now widely acceptable in the construction industry. These documents and images are easily loaded into software—the result is dramatically reducing printing and storage costs. The plans reside on a server or a computer hard drive for years without any deterioration in quality, which eliminates the need to store plans and file boxes in your warehouse. Along with the cost savings that come with switching to electronic plans, there are many other benefits that the contractors enjoy by using automation. All contractors are interested in reducing costs, saving time and eliminating material waste and punch work items. Takeoff, estimating, and project management automation result in these very benefits. Technology eliminates paper plans and paper faxing or mailing, and it shows the exact work that should be done—when, where, and how much material is needed.

There are many benefits to technology beyond automatically loading and storing plans. The competition is stiff when bidding for jobs in the construction market, and often what sets one company apart is the accuracy and timeliness of their estimate submittal. As companies are adjusting to working with smaller estimating departments, they are looking for automation solutions that will make life easier for the estimators, allowing them to increase their bid/win ratio. Changes are inevitable in any construction project’s life cycle, and in many instances, change orders are issued with minor warnings. We all know you can’t rely on clouded revisions to know what’s changed. With the right automation solution, estimators can easily let the software identify changes and addendums to the plans in a matter of minutes without having to spend countless hours looking over the paper plans.

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Technology enables companies to build green. Building green is more than just eliminating paper though. It also means finding ways to reduce material waste and creating a better delivery process for materials and a more accurate oversight of the crew. Construction technology and automation enables project managers to line-out the workers, knowing how much material will be needed and how long the work should take. Up-to-date stocking reports minimize the chance that excessive materials are ordered and/or delivered to the wrong area or floor.

We started using various forms of technology and software in the early 80’s, when the IBM PC first hit the market. And after 20 years, we realized that most of the efficiencies were being gained in the office. But we all know money is made in the field. So, over time, contractors began looking for software solutions and technologies that will take them to the next level by making the job site run efficiently. The introduction of tablet technology in the mid-2000s began transforming field project management. The project manager and foreman are no longer stuck copying and sending papers back and forth regarding the project process or to clarify an aspect of the plans. Plans, change orders, RFIs, etc., are all sent electronically from the tablet in the field to the project manager’s laptop or desktop, wherever he might be. In addition, when automation is in the hands of the foreman at the job site location, issues that arise cause fewer delays, and the steps to resolution are greatly improved.

This gradual shift toward accessing information wherever the contractor is located, whether in the office or the field or somewhere in between, has resulted in an increased use of tablet technology at the job site. The use of tablets on the site saves time and improves communications. For example, a foreman or the project manager at the job site now has ready access to the latest set of plans, revisions, and change orders. Likewise, cameras in tablets allow a foreman to easily document safety concerns or other issues that can hinder the job from getting completed on time. Such daily logs help contractors stay on budget or monitor and rectify obstacles that can cause lag time in a project.

A key element to consider in avoiding cost overruns is knowing who all the players are on the project. This helps with staging and sequencing the work at a greater level of detail. It is at this point that the labor-budget strategy is determined. The project is then broken down into floors, rooms, phases, etc., for better job costing. The right size and mix of the crew is determined. Site and stocking considerations are reviewed.

The next extensive analysis before start of construction is around developing a construction-ready budget. The best budgets are collaborative, credible, and measurable. This collaboration/teamwork starts between the estimator and the project manager and is then carried on between the project manager and the site foreman. The budget deliverables include: a color-coded quantity takeoff, detailed color-coded labor costs, a solution to keep track of the budget, reports for additional material, scope, and change-order updates. The takeoff and pricing is done with the foreman. Because of this collaboration, when the foreman receives the color-coded plans and corresponding stocking list and labor budget, it is then easier to track and manage the job.

Contractors are using tablets in the field to digitally sign contracts, enter payroll hours, fill out progress reports, capture and organize photos of the project, and line-out the crew while identifying the daily scope of work. Software solutions allow the foreman/project manager to assign tasks to one or many crew members at the start of each day using the estimated production rate. Thanks to automation, guessing the amount of scope the crew should accomplish on any given day is no longer necessary. Using automation wisely, the project manager can avoid overruns by looking at actual labor worked and materials installed.

Cost overruns are a major headache, because they affect the bottom line and often go undetected till the end of the job. Effective project management software can alleviate this headache by monitoring the labor production output and instantly spotting any production lags. Successful project management packages illustrate when the project is over, under, or right at budget.

A common complaint among foreman and project managers is that they do not have the information to effectively monitor and manage their labor costs. In most cases, the data is available. Job cost management requires six components: estimated quantities, estimated hours, method to measure installed quantities and corresponding hours, percentage complete to calculate earned value, actual payroll data, and a report to calculate job-to-date (JTD) and projected costs. When this information is readily available, the foreman and the project manager must review this data. When this is done in a timely manner, such as each week, they know if the project is making money and what the projected profit margin is at the end of the job. Additionally, they have the ability to look at the number and dive in if it looks wrong. It is possible to turn around a ‘losing’ job if it is done early in construction (approximately 25 percent complete). The longer a problem goes unnoticed the less time there is to react and the lower the likelihood that it can be positively affected.

No software program can guarantee a company will win every contract, but a quality program helps contractors stretch time, manage day-to-day functions, increase productivity and raise profit margins. In the end, it comes down to getting the right information in the right hands, at the right time. 📦

---Cecilia Padilla, chief executive officer of On Center Software, Inc. is an internationally known expert in the construction industry. She serves on the firm’s executive Vision Team, a think tank for the future of construction automation. A second generation construction professional, she has 25 years of experience in drywall, light and heavy gauge framing, lath and plaster, EIFS, fireproofing, themed facades and acoustical ceilings.
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I am here to talk about times when what you see is not what you get. It is a sad fact that sometimes things are not what they are supposed to be. It happens in almost every aspect of life, but my concern is in what we do. We are the wall and ceiling industry. We are lathers, plasterers, framers, rockers, EIFS mechanics and acoustic carpenters.

In our industry, as well as almost every other industry, the quality of every component in an assembly is governed by a group of people who give their time for the constant testing, testing methods and the quality of the products used. This is the American Society for Testing and Materials. This Society is made up of a membership of engineers, scientists, architects, consultants, manufacturers, industry experts, contractors and, yes, even plastering subs like me. We are the guard that sits at a post while others sleep. We make sure what is produced for use in construction has been tested to the standards we require for a particular test method. All members have a vote (“yes,” “no” or “abstain”) and the opportunity to comment. One “persuasive” negative vote may stop a ballot. It may be modified in verbiage or on technical issues and re-balloted or stopped in its tracks completely. I bet you that the gargoyle that fell in Chicago in September is being investigated by someone involved in the ASTM. It may be one of the engineering firms specializing in concrete and/or attachment methods.

As with life, construction and its components are constantly evolving for the better. Much of the change is in direct relation to what many members of ASTM do. For example, I install lath and plaster and have experience in proven means and methods. Many other members are forensic scientists or engineers, specializing in “what went wrong.” They investigate failed structures, why they failed and what to do to make sure it does not happen again.

All U.S. building codes reference the ASTM for construction, and their enforcement is at the hands of the designer and code officials. I would like to think that I build better and almost everybody wants to build something to be proud of, but this doesn’t always happen. Look at the past years and three building collapses in India and now one in China.
Foreign vs. Domestic

Manufacturing in the U.S. must meet the standards of the ASTM in building products, down to the size of the threads on any particular screw size. Even the pull-out resistance is tested. Manufacturing of metal lath has specifications as well and is governed by the ASTM C847 Standard. The installation of lath is dictated by ASTM C1063 and plaster by ASTM C926.

Back in the mid-80s, we had an influx of lath products from South Africa. Many state and federal projects did not permit them in the project. These products were underweight and/or did not meet the minimum standards of the code. Projects requiring submittals would reject underweight lath, but a large percentage of jobs do not require a submittal. The building official or owner may not know any different. If it’s round and orange in color, it must be an orange. Products were consumed and installed. One of the biggest problems in my business was the channel iron we used for suspended ceilings was so light in weight that when the plaster was installed, the channels rolled onto their sides.

The issue we now face is imports from foreign mills in the Far East. OK, let’s say it: China. Although I am also in the material supply business, I have been contacted direct, as a contractor, to buy straight from the Chinese mills. They want to sell me EIFS mesh, and, lately, two different lath manufacturers wanted to sell me container quantities.

I was contacted by a man named Jack. I inquired about his product, and he said not to worry—it complies with the ASTM Standards. I asked how so? He stated the lath was 27 inches in width and 96 inches in length. He produced a copy of the 2009 Edition of the Standard. Being somewhat arrogant (some say) and from the South, I had to jab a bit at his material. As a voting member of the C11 Committee, I know of changes in the Codes yet to come, items currently being balloted and what is being considered for change. I told Jack that his material was not compliant because C847 Section 4.3 states: “The minimum length of lath shall be 97 inches.” ASTM C847 Section 4.5.3 goes further to say the length must be minus 0 inches and plus 1.5 inches. I also reminded Jack that reproduction of copyrighted material was a violation of U.S. laws, the 2009 edition was outdated and, if he did not believe me, I could refer him to hundreds of other professionals that were responsible for this change. Having “hooked” Jack, I had to show him the fighting spirit of an Irishman. I asked if his material met the minimum galvanization of G-60 and if China’s test methods were consistent with those of the USA? He said he could produce an Evaluation Service Report. I was sure he could, but after a few e-mails, I got the impression it was much like getting a bad haircut and the barber telling you it looks great. He was a good sport through it. His last transmission thanked me for my “teachings.”

Some of you old-timers, and I am considered one now, may remember when lath was 98 inches. I do and don’t know why it was shortened in length. Maybe it was because Americans always like to give the other guy a chance, and 96-inch lath would fit into a cargo container. More importantly, the 97 inch length permits the lath to make full contact with the framing members and meet the ASTM requirements for lapping at the ends. This is especially important in hurricane-prone zones and areas with high seismic activity. ASTM, being a cautious group that considers the safety factors for the population, allows very specific methods for the lath to be tied or laced securely. Who wants a chunk of plaster to be pulled from the wall in a wind storm because the lath failed? The changes come for the better, not hidden agendas.

In conclusion, cheap is seldom better. My philosophy is: “Do not value-engineer your roof, your foundation or you wall assembly.” (To anybody that does not know the word “value-engineering” or “VE,” it means “what can we discard or do cheaper to save money?”). In construction, you can only cut three corners. Once you cut the fourth, you have a circle, and a circle always comes back to you. Material quality is not a corner to cut. Know the products you purchase or sell. Make sure they are labeled and compliant with codes. This will provide for a better end product. I strongly encourage anybody who has the interest in our industry to join the ASTM. You can be a part of something positive, support our industry and the cost is minimal.

For more information about the American Society for Testing and Materials, go to ASTM.ORG.

(Editor’s Note: A version of this article ran in Walls & Ceilings Magazine.)

—Tim Rogan is operations manager and vice president of Houston Lath and Plaster. He is also past president and still a current member of the Texas Lathing and Plastering Contractors’ Association (now renamed the South Central Wall & Ceiling Plaster Association) and is chairman of the Technical Committee for the Texas Bureau for Lathing and Plastering. Tim Rogan can be reached at 281.291.9500.
Early last year, one of our contractors called to ask if a HSS tube steel spreader beam, supporting a shaftwall system for one or two levels in a multi story structure, was required to be protected by spraying with fireproofing (SFRM or IRFM) or if the beam could be protected by encapsulation or incorporation into the shaftwall system. After doing a bit of code reading, I came to the conclusion that it all depends. You see, within the buildings, we have primary structural members and secondary structural members, and the requirements for fire protection of these members vary.

Primary structural members include columns and structural members that have direct connections to the columns, such as girders, beams, trusses and spandrels. They also include steel members of the floor construction that have direct connection to the columns. And, if that weren’t enough, they also include bracing members that are essential to the vertical stability of the primary structural frame under gravity loads. So primary structural members are basically those steel members that work together to hold up the whole building. Simple enough, but if these are primary members, what are those steel members that don’t appear to contribute to supporting the structure but are similar in appearance?

That brings us to secondary structural members. Secondary members are those structural members, including members of the floor construction and roof construction that do not have a direct connection to the columns. Secondary members are also bracing members other than those that are part of the primary structural frame.

Most of us that have spent anytime hanging shaftwall have probably set our wall on some type of steel member, and generally when we do so, that steel member has had Z-clips attached to the top and bottom of the beam, and the beam has been sprayed with fireproofing. We screw our track to the Z-clips, and off we go. But do these beams actually play a part in supporting the structure? Many times they do. It’s not unusual for steel columns to be within the shaft and to have horizontal beams connected to these columns. Generally these structural steel members do support the structure and, as a result, require sprayed-on fireproofing as the means of protecting the member in case of a fire.

But, what about horizontal tube steel beams within the shaft, with the sole purpose of supporting the shaft wall assembly? These beams do not provide support, nor are they bracing members that support the structure. Generally, these HSS or tube steel beams support only the walls of the shaft wall assembly. These members do not meet the definition of a primary structural member in that they aren’t contributing to the support of the structure, but these HSS members are structural members that support wall assemblies. So, in essence, this tube steel would be a member of the floor construction and meet the definition of a secondary member.

We all understand the importance of primary structural members and why these members must be protected from fire, but what are the requirements for that protection? The fire-resistance rating required for these primary members will vary depending on a number of factors, such as the type of building, occupancy rating (e.g., factory-industrial, hazardous, mercantile, etc.), and these factors will determine the thickness of the SFRM or IRFM fireproofing or other methods, such as plaster or layers of drywall. Those methods provide the materials necessary to afford protection, but the important distinction for protecting primary members is that they must be protected by individual encasement. This means that primary members cannot be protected by being encapsulated in a fire-rated partition, but they must have individual protection. This is why we will often see that a column located within a fire-rated wall is coated with fireproofing even though the fire-rating of the wall assembly may be equal to that of the fireproofing for the column.

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Although individual encasement is mandatory for primary structural members, would the HSS beam be considered a primary or secondary member, and if so, is individual protection also mandatory for secondary members? The City of Bellevue, as well as others, has always required that secondary members, such as HSS beams in an elevator shaft, be protected by individual encasement. When viewed as a secondary member, as stated in IBC Section 704.4., these components “shall be protected by individual encasement protection, by the membrane or ceiling of a horizontal assembly in accordance with Section 711, or by a combination of both.” A horizontal assembly refers to a listed and tested system, typically applied to floor and roof systems.

To be directly applicable to this scenario, the shaft wall assembly would need to be tested and listed with the beam in place within the wall cavity under the test parameters for a horizontal assembly. As there is no tested and listed assembly which addresses the protection of the member within the wall cavity via “the membrane or ceiling of a horizontal assembly,” the City of Bellevue Building Division has historically defaulted to “individual encasement protection.” (City of Bellevue Interpretations & Procedures Document Shaftwall Spreader Beam Protection Index # IBC-2014-02.)

The position of the NWCB, as well as that of the contractor directly involved, as it relates to the HSS beams in the elevator shaft, was that IBC Section 704.3 provided exemptions to individual encasement. When viewed as a secondary member, as stated in IBC Section 704.4., these components “shall be protected by individual encasement protection, by the membrane or ceiling of a horizontal assembly in accordance with Section 711, or by a combination of both.” A horizontal assembly refers to a listed and tested system, typically applied to floor and roof systems.

Our position was that Exemption #2 specifically addressed the condition and protection of the HSS beam within the shaft. The Code permits protection of the HSS beam to be accomplished by incorporation into the shaftwall system. Incorporation in this manner affords the required protection even though the protection may be less than would be afforded by individual encasement. Our final position was that by protecting the HSS in this manner, we meet the intent of the Code and the requirements of both IBC Section 704.3 and Section 704.4.

The NWCB met with the City of Seattle and the City of Bellevue to explain its position and also to discuss acceptable methods for protection of the HSS beam within the wall assembly. After a vigorous discussion, both the City of Seattle and the City of Bellevue agreed that if the HSS beam members met the requirements of IBC Section 704.3, supporting only a wall system extending not greater than two levels, the HSS beam could be protected within the shaftwall system with the required hourly rating. It must be clearly understood that if the HSS beam is also contributing to the support of other structures, such as stair landings, and if the walls systems extends for more than two levels, the HSS beam cannot be protected within the wall assembly and must be afforded individual encasement.

Following these discussions, the City of Bellevue drew up a new Interpretations & Procedures Document that explains the conditions in which the City of Bellevue will accept protection of the HSS beam by incorporation when installed entirely within the listed shaftwall assembly and under what conditions the City of Bellevue will require individual encasement. (The City of Bellevue Procedures & Interpretation Document can be downloaded from the City of Bellevue Building Division website or you can contact me at the NWCB for a copy.)

As mentioned previously, the meetings with the City of Seattle and the City of Bellevue also discussed methods for incorporation into the shaftwall assembly that both cities approved. Depicted in Figure 1 (at right) is a method of incorporation that has been used to protect the HSS beam within the shaftwall systems. The City of Seattle has, historically, accepted this method of encapsulation and the City of Bellevue also approves of this method. This method merely continues the shaftwall membrane, gypsum wallboard, as protection to the HSS member and seals the resulting joints with an approved fire caulk. One item this detail does not provide is relief for deflection. If the design of the building is such that deflection is anticipated, a deflection track may be used in lieu of the Track Channel at the underside of the HSS beam. In so doing, the resulting gap or joint between the two layers of drywall at the tenant side of the assembly must be addressed by the design professional to provide for an approved firestopping method at both the shaftliner side and the tenant side.
As an alternative to this detail, the City of Seattle and the City of Bellevue have historically approved the “bandaid” method wherein a rip of 1-inch shaftwall liner may be installed over the face of the shaftwall system, spanning above and below the tube steel member by a minimum of 6 inches below and 6 inches above the steel. Even though this method maintains the continuity of the shaftwall system and affords the proper protection of the beam, it may cause interference within a mechanical or elevator shaft and should be approved by affected inspectors, e.g., elevator inspector, prior to application. (See Figure 2.) (One again, this design does not allow for deflection of the HSS beam. If deflection is anticipated, the design professional should provide design and direction.)

Another method that was discussed with the City of Seattle is by use of intumescent products that have a UL or equivalent testing, such as the BlazeFrame PS30 – “OAN” (Outside Angle) or equivalent, which may be installed at the joint as a replacement for fire caulking. (See Figures 3 and 4.) The City of Seattle advises that if proprietary products or methods are intended to be used, it may be necessary that they be approved on a per-project basis. This recommendation by the City of Seattle should be followed for other cities as well.

As mentioned, the methods shown in Figures 1 and 2 have been reviewed and approved by the City of Seattle and the City of Bellevue. Even though the departments have approved these methods, it is strongly recommended that, if not currently reflected in the construction documents, a “request for information” be generated and the construction documents modified to reflect the actual method of construction or installations that the code official will be inspecting. It is strongly recommended that the design professional obtain a copy of the City of Bellevue Interpretations and Procedures Document, Reference # IBC-2014-02 to ensure compliance to IBC Section 704.3 and Section 704.4 for protection within the shaftwall system and for reference in the construction documents.

I would like to mention my appreciation to the City of Seattle and the City of Bellevue for taking time away from their very busy schedules to meet with the NWCB to discuss and reach resolution on this condition. Also, I’d like to thank the Anning-Johnson Company for bringing this condition to the attention of the NWCB and for working with me throughout the process with the City of Bellevue as well as to Isolatek International for participating in those discussions.

—Terry Kastner is technical consultant for Northwest Wall and Ceiling Bureau.
CALENDAR

NWCB NORTHWEST CHAPTER

Wednesday, March 18
Industry Products Showcase
Sheraton Bellevue Hotel

April 16-18
Northwest Wall and Ceiling Industries Annual Convention & Trade Show
Westin Mission Hills Golf Resort & Spa
Rancho Mirage, CA

Thursday, September 3
Golf Tournament
Redmond Ridge
Redmond, WA

Go to www.nwcb.org for up-to-date information or contact info@nwcb.org or 206.524.4243 for details.

NWCB OREGON CHAPTER

Wednesday, March 11
How “legalized Marijuana” Will Affect Our Drug Free Workplace
Location to be announced
11:30am Luncheon

Go to www.nwcb.org for up-to-date information or contact John Killin at john@nwcb.org or 503.205.0333 for details.

BCWCA EVENTS:

BCWCA – Skills Canada-BC Event Participant
April 15

BCWCA - LOWER MAINLAND

Wednesday, March 25
LMWCA Dinner Meeting
Cascade Casino, Langley

BCWCA - SOUTHERN INTERIOR

SIWCA Dinner Meetings
to be announced, please check our website at www.bcwca.org for more details

BCWCA - VANCOUVER ISLAND

VIWCA Dinner Meetings
to be announced, please check our website at www.bcwca.org for more details

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