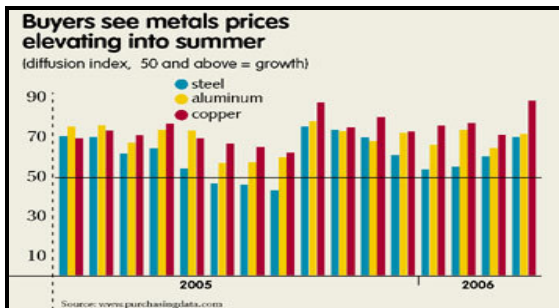


Seeing Through the Fog

Interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve have slowed the robust pace of residential construction. Most parts of the country have seen a decrease in single-family residential starts as well as permits for new construction projects.

On the other hand, commercial construction appears to be maintaining a fairly strong pace. Most architects have a decent backlog of work to do. This should be a positive sign of future commercial construction activity. Competitive conditions do exist, however, as some residential contractors become involved in commercial work to supplement lost revenue.

In an effort to find a safe place to do business, investment fund managers and institutional investors has discovered the commodity metals marketplace. Their large financial commitment is one of the reasons for the recent surge in the price of metals. Investors want more profitable investments than stocks and bonds in the face of high crude oil prices, inflation, weakness in the U.S. dollar, and continuing tensions in the Mideast. "The fact is that supply and demand trends don't mean a whole lot these days when trying to gauge market prices for many traded commodities," says William Adams of BaselineMetals.com in London. "It's the 'hot money' that's being used to buy futures of precious and base metals as investment hedges against various fears about the political and economic future."



A recent article on Purchasing.com by Tom Stundza points out the less cyclical nature of steel pricing.



He writes that steel prices have recently increased but for different reasons. Increased metalworking activity and non-residential construction have increased steel purchasing just as price-depressing stockpiles have been reduced and mill lead-times have extended. And, with the U.S. dollar depreciating lately, steel imports have been low-priced enough that they aren't damaging the ability of regional mills to raise selling prices.



Mining and smelting firms overproduced in past commodity-metal price booms—even if too much supply resulted. During this current growth period there is an attempt to manage the upswing. Production expansion is being limited so prices for key commodities stay higher for a longer period of time. What is the expected result? Higher but stable pricing.

Shipments of imported steel, which can play a role in pricing, were lower in the month of June. Shipments for the month were down relative to the same period in May of this year. Although June volume was 32% higher than that in June of 2005, the large decrease in June shipments has concerned industries already dealing with tight supplies of raw materials.

Further confounding this whole scenario is an outlook by some that imported steel is becoming too costly, domestic mills are shipping tonnage ahead of demand, and inventories are becoming overstocked—despite the fact that imports have slowed. This school of thought is predicting a decline in pricing.



A Council of the
 Steel Framing Alliance

Concentric and Eccentric Load Paths and The Effect on Truss Performance

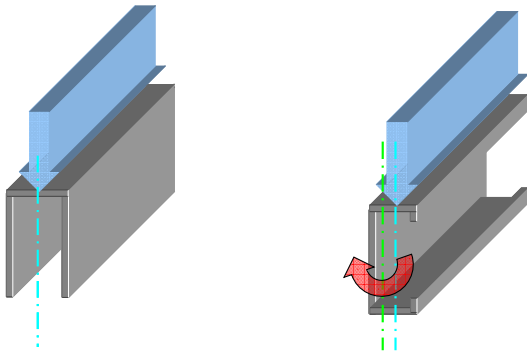
Editors Note: Articles, including the following, focusing on topics involving the design, specification, fabrication, and installation of cold-formed steel trusses, will occasionally appear in *Steel News and Views*.

In the area of the design of truss shapes, the efficiency of a cold-formed steel truss is greatly dependent on the shape of the component members and how they are connected together, which also determines the paths that the loads take through the component member.

Loads will be transmitted in either a concentric manner, traveling through the center of gravity of the member, or they will be transmitted in an eccentric manner, traveling off the center of gravity.

Typically, a concentric load path creates a more stable member. When a load path is transmitted eccentrically through a member, rotation is introduced. Rotation creates instability that must be addressed—usually with additional lateral web bracing.

Concentric load path Eccentric load path



Installation, which can be a large component of the overall cost of a cold-formed steel truss project, is usually higher when installing a truss using a non-symmetrical design due to handling difficulties and the need for additional lateral web bracing.

When selecting a cold-formed steel option to work with on a project, consider all costs involved with the project. Material costs, handling at the jobsite, bracing requirements, and ease of installation all need to be considered.

WTCA Creates Cold Formed Steel Council

WTCA, representing the structural building components industry, recently announced the formation of a Cold Formed Steel Council (CFSC). Comprised of steel component manufacturers and members of WTCA, CFSC will focus on protecting and advancing the structural building component industry with a special emphasis on steel component manufacturing issues.

“This will be the most beneficial move the cold-formed steel business has seen,” says Joe Odgers, Sales Manager for Bama Truss and Components and CFSC co-chair. “Creating the council and working with WTCA offers members the opportunity to participate in key WTCA committees, network with component manufacturers on common issues, and have access to tools and resources for steel component manufacturers that are unprecedented.”

The new council will offer a host of services that build off of the work that the structural building component industry has been working on.

Photo Gallery

Cold-formed steel trusses can be designed to achieve sloping roofs and accomplish interesting architectural features quickly and competitively.

This issue of *Steel News and Views* features a project that was a conversion from its original design to cold-formed steel trusses.

Dubuque Greyhound Park and Casino, located in Dubuque, Iowa, began an expansion project in the Fall of 2004. One of main features of the project involved a 76' 10" x 92' 5" drive-through canopy. The hip roof for the canopy was initially drawn utilizing bar joist and structural steel. Cascade Mfg Co was contacted by the project architect, The Durrant Group, to provide an alternative using cold-formed steel trusses. The conversion resulted in cost savings on the project.

J. P. Cullen and Son located in Janesville, Wisconsin, was a contractor for the project. Randy Thor, project superintendent, liked the idea of using cold-



formed steel trusses in this application. “We deal with bar joist on a frequent basis. A bar joist product may require more structural support or framework to create sloping roof outlines featuring ridges and roof angles. Cold-formed steel trusses provided the rooflines for the required aesthetics and did it easily.” Randy continues, “I also liked the light weight material which made a difference with the on-site equipment needed to erect the trusses. Our lifting requirements weren’t nearly as heavy compared to a bar joist installation--which saved crane costs.”

Do you maintain a database of suppliers to email bid invitations?

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Or fax your requests to: 563/852-5034.

We look forward to bidding your next project!