

Distributor Spotlight

RUCK BROTHERS BRICK STARTED IN 1947

Ruck Brothers Brick was started in 1974 in Ft. Myers, FL by its founders Skip Ruck, Jim Ruck, and Tom Reilly.

In the early 80’s we expanded to Sarasota, FL and several years ago opened an aggregate yard in Ft. Myers. We employ approximately 34 employees, many of which have well over 20 years at Ruck Brothers. Along with brick, we sell stone, of all types, and the standard masonry related products. In the period of hurricanes, Charlie and Wilma we took heavy damage to several structures, however our brick building still stands tall.

We have proudly promoted Belden Brick for over 25 years, and have never been called out to deal with a complaint related to their product. It is such a pleasure to deal with the same people year after year, a company that is not in a state constant of flux. Thanks you all at Belden Brick, for the great relationships and superlative products.



I.T. Update

You are in business to make a profit. At least, that’s what the repeated message is in any business school. Making a profit involves making decisions day in and day out. The quality of those decisions will determine your level of profit. There is an old adage that says “Good decisions come from experience..... experience comes from bad decisions.”

In order to make good decisions, we must have quality information in a timely manner and we have to act on that information. How much time do you actually spend improving the quality and timeliness of your information? There are many avenues to better information. Nothing has enhanced our ability to quickly gather information like the internet. Unfortunately, the internet is filled with information that has little reference to our particular needs. Finding the juicy morsels that can provide better decisions can be time-consuming. You can spend hours on Google attempting to locate information only to become frustrated. You can also pay for private subscriptions to services that bring information together for your particular market, which is a topic for another time.

Many people don’t use the free sources that are available because they just can’t find them. Here are a couple of tips to developing a list of free internet resources that you can use to understand your market and what’s happening in it.

- 1) Check to see if the newspapers in your local area have a website and what kind of information is available. Many newspapers now replicate important information such as building permits, land purchases, and zoning requests on their online version of their newspaper. You can add these sites to your favorites and quickly scan these pages for items that may interest your business.
- 2) Check with your local government officials to find out what information they have accessible via the internet. Many offices are now providing land records and planning office information via the internet.
- 3) Local associations. Do you have a local architect association or homebuilders association? Often these

groups have their own local websites with email lists of news and information that directly affects your market.

- 4) Networking with industry professionals is a good way to develop sources of information about suppliers. Take the time to talk with industry representatives and ask about the resources they use. News about your suppliers can have a dramatic impact on your bottom line.
- 5) The government has a wealth of statistical information. Unfortunately, you can’t translate it into a short term action plan, but the information provides demographics about the entire country. Here is a list of interesting sites to look over when you have time:

- Presents access to all of the construction related data in one place.
- Directs you to a page with all of the economic indicators. You can also sign up for receipt of economic indicator reports.
- The Bureau of Economic Analysis is responsible for analyzing the use economy. Information can be gathered by industry , state, and region
- The U.S. Census bureau provides statistics on many forms of construction.

The Belden Brick Company provides a wealth of tools that help you manage your business with our company. Using you can view available inventory, special inventory, offload unwanted inventory, and pick up available inventory. In addition, you can receive notifications about important events at Belden and real-time updates on the status of shipments.

If you have any requests or ideas about how we can improve the quality and timeliness of the information we provide to you, please contact your sales representative.

2007 Graduating Sales Class

In 2007 the following individuals graduated from our Annual Sales Training School



Front Row (l to r) Lucas Cherry, Jillian Riddell, Brian Driscoll, Mark Bateman, Michael Seiden, Michael Homan, Jr., Roger Mathison, David Turowicz, John Pacitti & Ken Merkley
Back Row (l to r) Jennifer Bieneman, Marya Butler, Jennie Mann, Greg Wright, Scott Grimm, Joe Krupa, Steven Taylor, Michael Markoff, Pete Anderson, Michael Arbona, Lori Bell, Ron Angie, Israel Torres, John LeJeune, James Piteo

23rd Annual Sales Meeting Dinner



From the President's Desk

Dear Employees and Friends:

We are well into the construction season and it is no secret that the severe housing slow down has had a major impact on our operations. Strasburg is permanently closed, and Plant 3 is down for the summer. Fortunately for us the non-residential sector still is active and our diversified line of products is keeping the other plants busy. Hopefully this will continue until the housing sector bottoms out and starts growing again. In my opinion, that is going to be well into 2008.

In the meantime, it is not getting any easier to manufacture products in the USA. We know what the cost of natural gas is doing to brick makers. How about the part of manufacturing that is maybe the most essential supplier to all other manufacturers: the chemical industry. Thousands of companies make everything from crayons to computers with chemicals made by American manufacturers. 25% of those chemical companies say they will move a third of their operations off shore if natural gas prices do not get lower soon. Everything from food packaging to metals processing depends on bulk chemicals (polymers, adhesives, etc.). The importance of this manufacturing supply chain is not evident to many Americans, yet it plays a central role in our standard of living and its health will determine how many high-paying manufacturing jobs stay in this country. A recent NAM study conclusively shows that, because of the dramatic escalation of natural gas prices in the USA, 80 new large scale chemical plants on the drawing boards around the world (\$1 billion each with thousands of high paying jobs) will be built some place other than in our country. Energy policy drives competitiveness in chemical production; sound familiar?

Then there are the lawyers! The US spent 2.2 percent of its GDP on direct tort costs; advanced economies spend an average of 0.9 percent. The yearly “tort tax” for a family of four is \$9,827. People who are actually injured get about 15 percent of this. We have an incredibly inefficient system that needs fixing fast.

This is enough complaining for now. Maybe the next time we’ll talk about global warming! With all our challenges, it’s still a great country and we will muddle through. Have a great summer.

Sincerely,



William H. Belden, Jr.
Chairman and CEO



Calendar of Events July

July 17-18
NBRC 2007 Summer Meeting
NBRC Executive Committee & Technical Meeting

September

September 5-7
Fall Committee Meetings
BIA Committee & Task Force Meetings,
Midwest/Northeast Region Council and
Board Meetings
Westfields Marriott
Chantilly, VA

October

October 20-23
BIA Board & Council Meetings
The Greenbrier
White Sulphur Springs, WV

Congratulations... Joe Rice Honored as Volunteer of the Year

President Reagan once said, “It’s easy to volunteer. It’s a lot harder to make a difference.”

With this in mind, BIA has established a new honor – the Volunteer of the Year Award, which will be given annually to an individual for the time and energy he or she devoted to helping BIA achieve the industry’s strategic goals.

Judging for this year’s award was done by BIA’s President and senior staff. Nominations, which were provided by BIA staff members, were based on the degree to which a member helped advance the strategic initiatives in 2006.

For this inaugural award, BIA proudly recognized Joe Rice. Joe’s contributions to BIA have significantly propelled the industry’s efforts forward through his active participation as:

- A member of BIA’s Board of Directors
- A member of BIA’s Distributor Council
- A member of MAI’s Board of Directors
- Chairman of MAI’s Distributor Council
- Chairman of the New York/New Jersey Brick Distributor Council
- Co-chairman of the Non-Residential Committee, as well as
- A member of the Architect Task Force; and
- Serving on numerous ASTM committees.

Furthermore, Joe was the first member to make a personal contribution to BIA’s new Federal political action committee, the Brick PAC for a Stronger America.

For all that he has given, please join BIA in honoring the recipient of BIA’s Volunteer of the Year Award, Joe Rice of Belden Brick Sales and Service.

Belden Brick Sales & Service New York, NY-based, won for its “Do the Right Thing For Our Friends” program delivering to all employees wellness, medical and pharmaceutical insurance free of charge. In addition to the coverage, any staff member wishing to quit smoking is given up to \$500 for treatment

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[http:// www.beldenbrick.com](http://www.beldenbrick.com)

BELDEN NEWS

SPRING 2007

Quality Corner

New Approach to Safety has Quality Written All Over It.

In January of this year, Belden Brick management was introduced to a new tool for continual improvement. Rather than addressing quality, this one is designed to help improve safety performance. ANSI Z10 is the new American National Standard for OHSMS (Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems) and, much like the ISO 9001:2000 standard, it requires that companies have a policy, training, document control, corrective and preventive actions, internal audits and management review.

Because the systems are similar in their approach to improvement, it seems natural that we utilize resources already in place for ISO 9001 as a basis for a Z10-compliant program. The Quality Policy Manual, Standard Operating Procedures, Work Instructions, Exhibits and Forms can be altered or amended to include provisions necessary to meet Z10 documentation requirements.

In addition to those elements shared with ISO 9001, Shauna Ross has been building a framework to address the unique requirements of ANSI Z10. Before we seek certification, a Job Hazards Analysis must be performed for each work process. When identified, the hazards will be thoroughly documented. Training for all affected personnel will then focus on the existence of these hazards, and defined safe work practices will become new Safety Procedures or be incorporated into existing ISO 9001 Work Instructions.

Newly-purchased Human Resources software, RiskPRO, will allow us to define task-based safety training requirements. Subsequent training events will become part of an individual’s records.

All involved agree there is a lot of work ahead to build a system that will meet the requirements of ANSI Z10. Whether or not it’s decided that certification of our OHSMS is a primary goal, organizing our approach to safety using Z10 methods will ultimately pay dividends. This activity, along with many others, is the reason we remain the Standard of Comparison in the Brick Industry.

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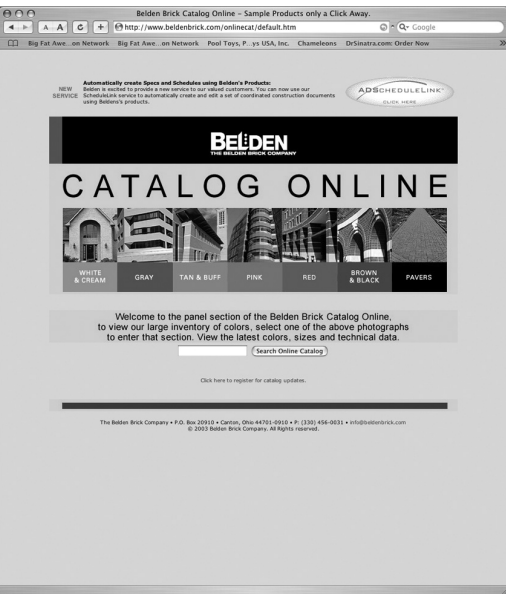
QUALITY CORNER

DISTRIBUTOR SPOTLIGHT

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

webnews

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