



Cactus Comments

March, 2006

CSI Awareness Month

Join your fellow Chapter members in celebration of CSI Awareness Month March 2006!

When was the last time you looked into the future? Have you thought recently about the movie “Back to the Future? Well, join us for a glimpse of what three young students here in the valley have created as their vision of our potential future urban environment.

Cocopah Middle School will take us into the future to **Phantom Royal**, their Phoenix Chapter CSI Award winning future city. Experience their vision from the 2005-2006 Phoenix Region National Engineers Week Future Cities Competition.

Speaking of the future.....we will also be treated to a presentation by the winning entry from our Phoenix Chapter sponsored Imagination Cube Competition. See first hand what design solutions can be had with a lot of imagination!

And last but truly not least, in the spirit of CSI Awareness Month and increasing our awareness and participation at all levels of CSI, Gene Valentine, FCSI, CCS, will provide a detailed update on the What, Where and Why of activity at the Institute level. Gene’s current tenure as Institute Treasurer and recent nomination as candidate for Institute President-Elect will undoubtedly provide for an insightful and enlightening look into our organization at the national level.

So whether your looking for a glimpse into the future, want to stretch your imagination or just want to share with other CSI members, join us in recognition of CSI Awareness Month.

Date: March 8, 2006
Location: Holiday Inn, Tempe / ASU
915 E. Apache Blvd.
Tempe, Arizona
Social Hour: 5:30 p.m.
Dinner: 6:30 p.m.
Presentation: 7:30 p.m.

Reservations are required by Noon, Monday, March 6, 2006. Call 602-258-7499 (The Reference Library).

February 8 Program Synopsis: Legal Aspects of Specifications

George R. Wadding, CSI (President Elect)
(Star Roofing)

Our panelists were Norm Littler, former President of the CSI Phoenix Chapter, Craig Keller of Keller and Hickey and Eric Petrie of Holm Wright Hyde and Hays. With background with several firms, Mr. Littler's current practice includes considerable work as a consultant for litigation. Mr. Keller maintains offices in Tempe, Wickenburg and Scottsdale and has 24 years of experience in litigating construction and contract cases for all the various entities in construction. Mr. Petrie concentrates on construction contracts as well as construction litigation.

1. The specifications are a term of the contract.
2. The average construction dispute, which goes to court, will cost approximately \$50,000 to \$70,000.
3. Arbitration, while appealing, seldom is the final resolution with over 90% of cases appealed to civil court.
4. Less than perfect specifications are not sufficient to be actionable.
5. The "standard of care" is essentially the normal care practiced in the profession.
6. There are multiple tests (points) required to find for the plaintiff.
7. There must be actual "damages" which can be clearly quantified.
8. Most disputes arise from unrealized expectations rather than definitive shortcomings.
9. Contract requirements can be expanded unintentionally by efforts to "sell" the project.

If you missed this program, you missed a "goodie".

Author's note: This incomplete synopsis is drawn from memory, not notes, and contains only a few of the many valuable points made during the panelists' individual presentations and the following Q & A period. They are in no particular order.)

Special Note: Gerald I. Katz, of Katz & Stone, L.L.P. will be discussing Legal Issues in Construction at the 50th Annual CSI Convention in Las Vegas.

From the President

Ronald W. Hand, CSI, CDT, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP
(E/Fect Sustainable Design Solutions)

Strategic Planning & CSI Awareness Month

As many of you are aware, the month of March is CSI Awareness Month. Our program for March 8, 2006 will capitalize on that fact with a variety of CSI events: the student team presentation from the 2005-2006 Phoenix Region Future Cities Competition that received our Chapter Award for Excellence in the Use of Building Materials; presentation of the winning entry for the Chapter-sponsored Imagination Cube competition; and an update of the "goings on" at CSI Institute level from a member of the CSI Executive Board.

CSI Awareness Month provides the opportunity to take a close look at the outreach and development we are experiencing with our Phoenix Chapter as a result of the implementation of our three areas of focus for the year: 1) **Membership**; 2) **Awareness and Participation at all Levels of CSI**; and 3) **Commitment and Involvement**. The March program and our activities during the month are critical to all three areas of emphasis.

Most importantly for us as Chapter members, we will revisit our Phoenix Chapter Strategic Plan (completed in March 2003) and update it for the next three year period. The Strategic Plan Working Session is scheduled for Friday, March 10, 2006, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at The Reference Library. I ask that all of you plan to attend. The Planning Committee will lead us through a strategic planning exercise to continue the evaluation of our goals, while establishing strategies and milestones (action steps or tasks) for our Chapter's short term future. Chapter leadership will be attending. Several of you will be extended a specific invitation and we encourage all members to join us and participate.

Our recently appointed Phoenix Chapter Ad Hoc Elections and Nominations Task Team comprised of George Wadding (President-Elect), Eric Camin (Past President), Teri Hand (Treasurer/Region Director) and yours truly have been organizing the candidates for our upcoming Chapter elections this March/April 2006. We extended the opportunity for nominations from the floor at the February meeting and dead silence prevailed. However, we do have a full slate of candidates for the Board that will be published for elections. Please take the time and vote for the candidates of your choice. This is one election where you don't have to be concerned with party affiliation!

Finally, thank you all for an exciting February meeting on "The Legal Aspects of Writing Specifications". The presenters were intriguing and the program well attended and received. Don't forget to register for and attend The 50th Annual CSI Show and Convention in Las Vegas, March 28 – April 1, 2006. Reserve the dates of July 27 – 29, 2006 to attend the SW Region Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. Both events will provide you with continuing education, professional development, relationship building and fun! We all need to attend, represent our Chapter and support our Southwest Region and the national CSI organization.

Make a **Commitment** and get **Involved!**

YARD SALE **CSI PHOENIX FUND RAISING EVENT**

LOCATION: *427 West Gleneagles (Rehse's) – In conjunction with Moon Valley Neighborhood Garage Sale.*

DATE: *MARCH 18TH 6 AM TO 1 PM*

Early Drop Off Location : *1408 E Monte Vista (Stoneman's)
Phone: 602-684-2311*

Drop Off Dates: *March 11th to 18th ONLY*

What to Donate: *All types of items are acceptable, clothing (clean), furniture, trinkets, books, toys, sporting goods, etc.*

What else is needed: *Help moving material to the yard sale and people to work the yard sale.*

Please have items dropped off as early as possible to allow for pricing of material. All donated material will be moved to yard sale location on Saturday morning the 18th at between 4 and 5am. Left-over material will be donated to organizations or sold to junk dealers.

If you can help, please contact:

Cary Stoneman – Phone No. 602-684-2311
FunRaising Chair
Gabor Lorant Architects Inc

From the Editor
Pamela Bir, CSI, CDT
(Your Computer Lady)

Our new **member roster** is awaiting your input!

The roster has the standard contact info. You can sort by name, occupation, company like you did in the old roster. BUT! This roster allows you to search by Division number also. Every member gets one division listing for free. Each additional division costs you \$10 for the life of the listing. Click here for the form to complete for your free and paid listings.

Please check the roster to be sure your information is complete. On the bottom of the Home Page, you enter your name (Example: PBir). Yes, the entry is case-sensitive. Then you enter your CSI member number. It's on your membership card if you don't remember it. You can update your own data and view information about other members.

On March 8th at 5:30 pm, the Publications Committee will give a short demo on how to use the chapter web site and the member roster. You'll learn how to do searches, how to print a member roster, how to use the calendar and how to find archived articles from the newsletter.

The Classified Ad section is also improved. The business card ads are more visible. You can even choose to put your business card on a particular page of the site or the newsletter. You can post help wanted ads, press releases or items you have for sell. The link above will take you to the flyer with all of the details.

CSI Phoenix Chapter Has its Very Own Projector!

When George F. Bir passed away in May, 2001, the family requested donations for CSI Phoenix Chapter or the Sportsman's Fund which supports the YMCA camp outside Tucson in lieu of flowers. Both were organizations that George had been involved with for many, many years. The recommendation was made to use the CSI funds for a leadership library. George was a firm believer that leaders were made, not born. He worked to mentor and encourage many current chapter leaders. Many people contributed books, videos, cassettes and CDs to the collection. George's clients even got involved and made donations. The Reference Library offered to house the collection. Some funds were used to purchase Project Resource Manuals which can be borrowed for CDT study sessions. However, the chapter members involved didn't feel the funds were being utilized to their fullest.

The decision was made to purchase a projector for the chapter. We've borrowed from DMJM and Gould Evans for years for program meetings. We've borrowed from Tnemec and countless others for seminars and other chapter events. So the purchase was made.

The board has approved the following agreement which allows chapter members to borrow the projector for company or personal use. The \$75 / day fee is a major reduction from the fees charged by rental firms. The fees are kept by the chapter to buy replacement bulbs, maintenance and eventually a replacement projector. It is a tough agreement in that you accept full responsibility for lost pieces or damage. But it is a fair agreement to protect a valuable chapter asset.

The projector is kept at The Reference Library. It is rented on a first paid, first served basis. We hope you will take advantage of this extra membership benefit.

Agreement for Use Of the CSI Phoenix Chapter Dell LCD Projector

The projector was donated to the Chapter by the George F. Bir Leadership Library. Its primary purpose is to be used by the Chapter for meetings, education seminars and other Chapter functions.

In addition, the Chapter wishes to allow members to use the projector as a benefit of their membership.

Members Only – Only active members of the Phoenix Chapter may rent the projector.

Location – The projector will be kept at The Reference Library and must be picked up and returned to the Library by the Borrower.

Rental Fee – Each Borrower will pay \$75 / 24 hour period at the time of picking up the projector. Rental fees are payable to CSI Phoenix Chapter. Weekends are counted in the rental period. Funds will be kept as a separate line item on the Chapter accounting. Funds will accumulate to buy replacement parts and, eventually, to replace the projector.

Late Fee – Should the Borrower not return the projector within the agreed time, the rental fee increases to \$100 / 24 hour period.

Equipment Condition – A list of all components is on pages 5 and 6 of the Owner's Manual. The Borrower must check the projector to be sure all parts are accounted for at pick up. Signing this agreement is agreement that all parts were received and all parts will be returned. The agreement must be signed at the time of the return by a staff member of The Reference Library and by the renter to acknowledge the return of all components. Should any component be missing, the Borrower agrees to replace the component regardless of cost. Failure to replace the missing component within 4 weeks of the rental will result in a fine of \$200. Fine is payable to the CSI Phoenix Chapter.

The Phoenix Chapter is not responsible for the operation of the equipment. No refunds are given for equipment problems.

Projector Bulb – The exception to the above Equipment Condition rule is the bulb. A renter is not responsible for the bulb expiring.

Rental Priorities – CSI Phoenix Chapter events are always top priority for using the projector at no charge. If the projector is not needed for a Chapter function, it is rented on a first-come, first-served basis. Full rental payment must be received to reserve the projector.

Exceptions to Agreement – Exceptions may not be made by The Reference Library staff. Only the current President of the Chapter may approve an exception to these rules.

I accept the above terms to rent the CSI Phoenix Chapter projector. I agree that I have received 15 pieces of equipment with this projector as listed on pages 5 and 6 of the Owner's Manual.

Computer Tips

Howard Seay
Seaytech Computer Services

Try out these Word time-savers!

To Quickly Change the Case of Text

Select the text you want to change and press SHIFT+F3. Each time you press the F3 key, the text case switches between Title Case, UPPERCASE and lowercase.

Save All Word Documents at Once

Hold down SHIFT and click the File menu. When you hold down SHIFT, two new options appear on the File menu: Close All and Save All. To save all your open documents at once, click Save All.

Select Column of Text

To select a vertical block of text that is not in a table, such as a column of numbers, press and hold down the ALT key and then drag your mouse over the text. Once the text is selected, you can Copy or Cut.

Copy Text or Graphic

Select the item or text you want to copy. Press and hold down the CTRL key. Then use the mouse to drag the item to the desired position. A copy of the original item is made right where you want it. This is helpful when you're creating a document that will include a lot of repeated text or images.

Add Fake Text to a Document

Place your mouse cursor where you want to insert the text in your document. Type =rand(4,5) and then press ENTER. The numbers in parentheses correspond to the number of paragraphs (4) and the number of sentences per paragraph (5). You can change the numbers in the parentheses to put more or less text on the page.

Howard Seay is the principal of Seaytech Computer Services. He can be reached at 480-206-1024 or howard@seaytech.com

Mr. Wolfe goes to Washington

*Sheldon Wolfe, RA, FCSI, CCS, CCCA
Institute Director, North Central Region, CSI*

I should have known things were going too well. I was just getting accustomed to the chauffeur-driven limousine that comes with being an Institute director when I was invited to attend a chapter membership committee meeting. Their intent was not to host a lunch in my honor, but to ask about two Institute issues: customer service response and the FY 2005 dues increase. The board of directors deals with a lot of important issues - creating and maintaining standards, working with other organizations to improve the construction industry, education, certification and more - but they must never forget that some of the most important issues are the day-to-day needs of our members.

Most members don't realize it, but our board of directors has made many tough decisions in the past several years. The first time I visited CSI headquarters - back in the good old days - it was in the building we *owned*. I don't know how many people worked there at the time, but it was a much larger office. Since then, there have been a number of reductions in staff and office space. At some point, publishing *the Construction Specifier* was farmed out, as was customer service.

During the last five years, costs increased while our income fell, and the inevitable result of this combination was downsizing. Our total staff is about thirty now, down from more than fifty just a few years ago. But, even while staff was being reduced, Member Services was brought back in-house, where it belongs. Currently there are four people in the Member Services department who handle all e-mail and calls - *and* process orders, registration, member special requests and invoicing.

This smaller staff is lean, mean and hard working, but they are well aware of the importance of customer service and are continually searching for ways to make it better. The IT platform and database they use are being upgraded to make it easier to find information, and one of the reps will soon focus entirely on leader issues and requests, using a VIP Help Desk.

Customer service is largely an issue of perception; we tend to remember and talk about those few things that go wrong, rather than the many things that work as expected. Yes, some member service experiences have been less than satisfactory, but the vast majority have been handled promptly and effectively. There are a few glitches, but overall, Member Services is doing a great job. If something doesn't go as expected, ask that it be corrected. And when things are done as expected, remember to say thanks!

The other issue raised by the chapter - membership dues - attracted a lot of attention last year because the chapter's members faced simultaneous increases from chapter and Institute - the result being a forty-dollar bump in one year. Without new sources of income, dues increases will remain a fact of life. The Board has looked for ways to increase income; it has also cut costs to control our expenses. Those efforts have been successful and our financial status is improving, but there is no way to avoid the effects of inflation.

Year	Dues assessed	Dues at 4% annual increase
1997	\$155	\$155
2002	\$180	\$189
2003	\$195	\$196
2005	\$210	\$212

Using 1997 as the base year, and assuming an annual inflation rate of four percent, it is clear that Institute dues have remained stable in constant dollars.

To avoid large increases, should we consider establishing an annual increase pegged to inflation? Would it be better to see our dues go up a few dollars each year or would you prefer an increase of twenty or thirty dollars every few years?

These are just a couple of the issues that are debated and decided by our board of directors. If you have questions or suggestions related to these or other matters, don't be bashful - contact your region or Institute directors! They need your input to help make decisions in the best interest of our members.

Member Bios

Jill Rehse, CSI
The Reference Library

Andrea Grum
StrongGo LLC
602-515-2717
agrum@aol.com

StrongGo is a company devoted to research, development and manufacturing of products that have outstanding physical properties. These outstanding physical properties and our advanced manufacturing technology enable us to produce products that provide the ultimate solution for many different industries. One of those industries where we saw a need for a more advanced product was in the area of detectable warning systems. Our R&D is done in Tucson, AZ and manufacturing is in Phoenix, AZ.

Andrea is the regional manager and is responsible for specifications and sales. As of right now, her territory is Phoenix and Northern Arizona. The highest profile job that Andrea has worked on is the Cardinal Stadium. She has found that introducing a new detectable warning tile product, TekWay Dome Tile, to the Phoenix market has been fun, frustrating, and educational all at the same time. Everyday is a new challenge for her to overcome.

Being a member of CSI has given Andrea the knowledge and understanding of the construction industry, through the educational meetings and passing her CDT exam. The networking that CSI provides makes Andrea feel more confident when calling on professionals within the industry.

Andrea grew up in New York City (Queens) and is a huge Yankees fan...of course! She received her degree in Marketing and Merchandising in New York. Growing up in NYC gave Andrea a look into the fashion industry. An interesting fact—Andrea was a ready-to-wear buyer for a group of 165 department stores across the US.

Busy is the one word Andrea likes to feel—when she is not out on her motorcycle, she likes to make jewelry, crochet, knit, and sew. The Phoenix Chapter of CSI is happy to have Andrea Grum as a member.

Jorge A. Pierson
Kurt D. Reed Associates
480-941-1440
jpierson@kdra.com

Kurt D. Reed Associates is a full service architectural firm that specializes in commercial retail and has over fifty employees in the Phoenix office. Jorge is a manager at the office and also is working on many projects: San Tan Plaza Phase II (a retail center in Chandler); Golden Corral site improvement package in Mesa; a Walgreens in Rancho Mirage and West Covina, CA; Lowe's in South Phoenix; and a Walgreens Home Care tenant improvement in Peoria.

Jorge has been involved in CSI for 6 years and has gained practical knowledge from the different topics presented at the monthly meetings. He has also has received good connections to the industry trade by networking with other members.

Jorge grew up in Nogales, Arizona and attended the University of Arizona...Go Cats! Outside of work, Jorge likes spending time with his family and friends. He has enjoyed many vacations, and cannot recall his favorite one yet, but probably the best one will be when he does not have to keep in touch with work. (Note the photo—Jorge is in the middle of the woods...checking his voicemail!)

The Phoenix Chapter of CSI is proud to have Jorge Pierson as an active member of our chapter.

Membership Committee

Larry Gill, CSI (
Gill Consulting)

Come meet the new faces of CSI Phoenix!

I even had a comment from one of the dinner servers that noticed a lot of new faces.

In case you haven't been to a meeting lately, the attendance has been very good. There were 90 at last month's meeting and over 80 the month before.

Our membership continues to grow. At the end of January, our count was **202** members. Our membership increased by **seven** just during January. Thanks for bringing guests and potential members!

Remember that your guest gets their first dinner for free in exchange for a 5 minute presentation from the Membership Committee about the value of CSI.

Milestone anniversary awards will be given out in March. We will notify those receiving awards.

By the time this article is published I hope we will have our General Contractors contest completed. We are getting very close to having a winner!

Thanks to all who have been helping us achieve our membership goals.

Oh No! Paint Prices Going Up Again

Darrell F. May, Smith Painting

Have you heard paint prices are going up again? FEAR SETS IN. Now you have to tell your builders and customers that you have to raise your prices. Oh no! They will not accept them. They will tell me that this is out of line. They are going to put the projects out for rebid. Someone else will come in cheaper. I won't have any work for my crews. My business will go out of business. Sounds all too familiar don't you think?

Well I say it is good to see prices go up and it is about time. For years I've said that no paint should be available for less than \$15.00 per gallon. Then we would have a quality product that would do what it should do and that is cover the wall and touch up after it has been applied. It is time to get away from worrying about low prices and sell quality and service. All too often, we only think price can get us the job. For years, we have demanded from our suppliers to give us cheaper and cheaper products to try to stay competitive. Has it worked? I say emphatically NO! We are doing work today for less money than we were 15 years ago. "Cheap" and "quality" cannot work in the same sentence. Everything that is made cheaper actually costs more because you have to use more of the product. It takes more time to apply and it will not last as long. Therefore, I say lets work on providing VALUE for the customer. Let your customers know that you are a quality company that provides them a quality product at a fair price. You are a company that is here for the long haul. You do not want a job. You are wanting to build a relationship that will last. REPEAT business is the best business. Nothing is better than LOYALTY from you customers.

Remember that the framers, plumbers, electricians, mechanical, cabinet companies, flooring, stucco, and concrete companies have their prices go up too. What do they do? They just pass it along when it comes. It is called the cost of doing business. We all get the same price increase and we all have a right and an obligation to make a fair profit from our services. This is called Return on Investment. Do you see the builder worrying about their prices to the customer? NO. Why not? Because they call it appreciation or increased VALUE. When you have low supply and high demand it causes the price to go up. The builders raise their prices every time they need to keep their margins and stay profitable and they have had record years. Why? Because the pay attention to details. So don't worry about price. Just pay attention to the details and have a profitable and Happy New Year. PRICES WILL GO UP AGAIN NEXT YEAR. WILL YOU BE HAPPY OR SAD? Only you can make that decision. As for me, I say this is a GREAT time to be in business.

Re-print permission granted by Darrell F. May, Smith Painting

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THE CODE CORNER

Building Classification – Part 2: Construction Types

By Ronald L. Geren, RA, CSI, CCS, CCCA

In my last article, I discussed the first of two types of building classifications used in the building code: Occupancies. The second, which is frequently misunderstood by new users of the building code, is the Construction Type classification. The Construction Type has little to nothing to do with the Occupancy classification. But, like the two towers of the Golden Gate suspension bridge, without both, the whole thing wouldn't hold together.

A Construction Type, as the term clearly states, is based on how the building is constructed, and the requirements are found in Chapter 6 of the *International Building Code (IBC)*. Most people will relate the Construction Type to the materials used for constructing a building. But, it's a little more than that. The "little more" is called combustibility and fire-resistance.

There are a total of nine types of construction that span from noncombustible types to combustible types of construction, with varying degrees of each in between that are based on fire resistance. Table 601, *Fire-Resistance Rating Requirements for Building Elements*, shows each of the types with their respective fire-resistance requirements for building elements. These building elements include the structural frame (columns, beams, girders, trusses, and spandrels), bearing walls (i.e. walls that have imposed loads on them), nonbearing walls, floors, and roofs. The only exception is for nonbearing interior walls, which have no fire-resistance requirements unless they're required to be fire-resistive by other sections of the code.

The nine types of construction are:

- Types IA and IB
- Types IIA and IIB
- Types IIIA and IIIB
- Type IV
- Types VA and VB

Construction Types IA and IB are considered noncombustible and fire-resistive, and are the direct descendants of the *Uniform Building Code's* (UBC) Type I-F.R. and Type II-F.R. (F.R. refers to "fire-resistive") construction types, respectively. The most significant difference between the IA and IB types is the level of fire-resistance required for the building elements previously discussed, with IA having a higher fire-resistance. Since both types are noncombustible, they only permit noncombustible materials. Unlike the UBC, the IBC doesn't specify what materials are considered noncombustible; that is left to testing per IBC Section 703.4. Noncombustible materials are determined through ASTM E 136 for basic, or "elementary," materials and ASTM E 84 for composite materials.

Construction Types IIA and IIB are also noncombustible, but have little to no fire-resistance. Like Type I construction, Types IIA and IIB are comparable to the former UBC Types II 1-hour and II-N. Determination of whether or not a material is noncombustible is the same as that for Type I construction. Type IIA has a minimum of 1-hour fire resistance throughout. Type IIB, although noncombustible, has no requirements for fire-resistance, unless required by other sections of the code.

Construction Types IIIA and IIIB are considered combustible. Being a combustible construction type, Type III construction permits the use of wood framing. Type III construction, like Type II construction, has little to no fire-resistance. Type IIIA requires 1-hour fire-resistance throughout except that exterior bearing walls require no less than 2-hour fire-resistive construction. Type IIIB has no fire-resistance requirements, except for exterior bearing walls, which has the same requirement as Type IIIA.

Construction Type IV is unique. It is a combustible construction type, but it is limited to heavy timber construction. Although it is considered a combustible construction type, the exterior walls are required to be of noncombustible construction. Heavy timber construction includes columns not less than 8 inches thick, and floor and roof framing not less than 6 inches thick; all dimensions are nominal. Floors and roofs have thicker than normal construction consisting of varying layers of materials that build up to a deck of 3 to 4 inches thick, nominally.

Lastly, Types VA and VB are also combustible construction, but each is slightly less fire-resistive than the Type III construction types. For example, the exterior bearing wall fire resistance is reduced to 1-hour for Type VA and no fire resistance for Type VB.

It is important to understand, that a noncombustible building could still be classified as a Type III or V building. This is clearly stated in Section 602.1.1:

A building or portion thereof shall not be required to conform to the details of a type of construction higher than that type, which meets the minimum requirements based on occupancy even though certain features of such a building actually conform to a higher type of construction.

In other words, if an entire building, or part of it, is designed to the requirements of a Type IIA construction (concrete frame and masonry walls, for example), but the actual height, allowable area, and occupancy housed would only require the building to be classified as a Type IIIB, then the building will not be required to meet all the detailed requirements for the Type IIA construction.

In addition to the fire-resistance ratings indicated in Table 601, nonbearing exterior walls are required to comply with the hourly fire-resistance requirements of Table 602, *Fire-Resistance Rating Requirements for Exterior Walls Based on Fire Separation Distance*. As the title states, the requirements are based on the fire separation distance between the wall and the nearest lot line, street centerline, or an imaginary line between two buildings on the same lot. This table also begins to incorporate occupancies into the mix when determining the fire-resistance. For example, a Group M (Mercantile) occupancy with a nonbearing wall that is 20 feet from the lot line, and using Type IIA construction, is required to have a fire-resistance rating of not less than 1-hour. If it were Type IIB construction or more than 30 feet from the lot line, it would have no requirement for fire-resistance.

Like I've stated in a few of my previous code articles, you need to look closely at the footnotes in the tables. In Table 601, there's a footnote that permits the substitution of the 1-hour fire-resistive construction (excluding exterior walls) with the installation of an automatic sprinkler system in Construction Types IIA, IIIA, and VA. There is a catch, though...if the sprinkler is required by another section of the code, then this substitution can not be used; nor can it be used if the sprinkler system is used for an area increase (a subject that will be covered in next month's article).

Additionally, there's a footnote that permits the use of fire-retardant-treated wood in Type I and II roof construction (including girders and trusses) as long as the building 1) is two stories or less in height, 2) is Type II construction over two stories, or 3) is Type I construction over two stories and the vertical distance from the upper floor to the roof is 20 feet or more.

Construction Types and Occupancy Groups establish the foundation upon which the majority of the building code is built. Occupancy Groups drive egress, floor area, building height, among other requirements. Likewise, Construction Types also affect building materials, floor area, building height, and many other requirements. As you've probably noticed, building area and height are tied to both Construction Types and Occupancy Groups...like the suspension part of the Golden Gate bridge mentioned at the beginning. In my next article, we'll look at how the IBC has changed the method of determining allowable area and height...so get your calculators ready!

To comment on this article, suggest other topics, or submit a question regarding codes, contact the author at ron.geren@gouldevans.com.

About the Author: Ronald L. Geren, RA, CSI, CCS, CCCA is the specification writer and code reviewer for the Phoenix Office of Gould Evans, and is an ICC Certified Building Plans Examiner. He is a 1984 graduate of the University of Arizona, and has held various technical and managerial positions for military, state, and private agencies.

Green Stuff

Stephen J. Andros AIA/FCSI/CCS/LEED-AP
(Gren A/E Consultants)

Responding to the Marketplace

The column entitled *A moving target... or... a rolling stone gathers no moss* addressed some of the problems created by the frequently occurring changes in the LEED Green Building Rating System. A few weeks ago, at a USGBC workshop, we had the opportunity to discuss these problems with USGBC staff. It was a lively discussion.

We stated our concerns that these changes are beginning to alienate some of the early LEED adopters and that the individuals that have advocated LEED are having second thoughts about continuing to pursue certification. The knee-jerk response from staff was that there were other potential clients that would take the place of those that chose to drop out. We reminded the staff that if you create a negative situation that this negative is usually passed on to at least 7 other individuals... but... if you do something right, this usually only gets passed on to one individual. We need to be doing the right things if we want LEED to continue.

After some more discussion, it was revealed that the changes were “a response to the needs of the marketplace.” The question that was left in our minds was, “Which marketplace?”

So, it appears that USGBC does get feedback regarding LEED and is responding to that feedback. What this means is that whoever is the most vocal, may be the one that has the most opportunity to impact the direction of LEED. If you don't like the direction, then you need to say something. Hopefully our discussion with the staff regarding the frequency of change was noted.

It is a lot easier to simply choose to abandon LEED than it is to try and change LEED. But is this really the best thing to do for our industry, for our neighbors and for our planet? LEED is making an impact. For the first time, we have a tool that can truly transform the marketplace and allow the industry to change from mediocre, energy consuming “boxes” to architecture that addresses environmental and energy concerns.

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Take something simple... like daylighting. A phone call just came into the office regarding the requirements for the LEED credit for daylighting in a retail space. Did we REALLY want windows on the backside of the retail space? Wouldn't that create a security issue of thieves looking into the back of house? Maybe. (We suggested adding security bars.) But... consider a storage room that doesn't have to rely upon fluorescent fixtures to provide light for the workers in that space. Isn't that an improvement over the dark and dreary spaces typically found at the back of most stores? Consider the energy savings. Consider the improvement in the work space for the employees. Consider the fact that LEED actually caused a discussion regarding this matter. This is just one example of how LEED is transforming our industry.

The primary issues regarding most building projects is how much will it cost and how soon can it be completed. Not, how good will it be. Cost and schedule typically override quality and performance. LEED is attempting to overcome these issues by rewarding those buildings (and building owners) that decide that responding to environmental and energy concerns are worthwhile. The fact that the program is continually growing is testament that the marketplace wants this type of program.

What we, as the “marketplace” needs to do is to identify what we want from a green building rating system... and then provide the input into the existing prevailing rating systems. So... what do YOU want?

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