

Build with Strength

*A Coordinated Campaign to Educate the Design/
Build Community about New Types of Concrete Construction*



For the concrete industry, 2016 will be known as the year that we started fighting back. It will be remembered as the year that we set the record straight, and the year that we collectively stood behind the strength and durability of all concrete products in a proud and very public way. This year will be remembered as the year we launched *Build with Strength*, a multi-million-dollar coordinated industry campaign to better educate design/build and code communities throughout the country about the benefits of all forms of concrete construction, including insulating concrete forms (ICFs).

We are seizing a historic opportunity. The real estate market is growing with need for more residential options. We must educate developers, architects and investors alike about the traditional attributes of concrete, like sustainability, durability, cost effectiveness, and safety, as well as the attributes of methods like ICF, like speed and ease of use.

Build with Strength was designed to connect groups like ICF installers with the design, construction, codes and standards, and public safety communities to establish concrete construction as the only safe and durable choice for new and existing projects.

Build with Strength was the product of a significant research investment made by the NRMCA to better understand the motivations behind the use of certain construction materials, including concrete. The research showed that a great majority of the design/build community favored concrete construction because of attributes like strength, durability and ease of use. However, certain misconceptions about cost and environmental impact often led decision makers to choose less safe building materials such as wood and wood products.

By setting the record straight and highlighting products like ICFs, we are not only supporting our members, their businesses, and the hard-working men and women of the concrete industry, but I firmly believe we are also leading to stronger, more durable construction that will save lives and cut costs over time.

We want the design and build communities to use concrete as their primary construction material and consumers to better understand how this construction leads to stronger, safer and more durable homes. Our goal is to change the way people think about concrete construction when it is compared to direct competitors like softwood lumber.

Here is how we do that: We are focusing on three key components: communications, direct project assistance, and advocacy; in order to identify, reach, and persuade our target audiences.

Communication

It all starts with communicating our message and making sure people know and understand the benefits of concrete before they make key decisions. The concrete industry already knows we offer a superior construction product that delivers safety, durability, and strength to designers, architects, builders, investors and consumers. Now, we are spreading that message to people who are reluctant to embrace concrete as the standard bearer of durability, or unaware of this truth. This starts with www.buildwithstrength.com, a place where visitors from all of our target groups can learn about concrete construction, its ease of use, creative applications, safety, and strength. We are already featuring case studies of ICF construction.

In the concrete industry, we understand the value of face-to-face communication. We aren't just creating a website and hoping people find us; we are embarking on a *Build with Strength* Tour that will feature six U.S. cities with unique construction needs and trends, but all of which would benefit from the attributes concrete has to offer. We have already launched in Washington D.C. and Seattle, and look forward to visiting New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Dallas.

On this tour, we will highlight new and existing concrete construction, and feature experts from the design, construction and safety communities who will attest to the strength, durability and the cost savings associated with concrete. We will continue to make a clear parallel between concrete construction and the dangerous trend of stick-built low-to-mid-rise housing in these regions by highlighting the health and safety concerns associated with inferior construction products. We are promoting safe growth for American towns and cities.

Direct Project Assistance

Communications leads to direct project assistance, the second component of our plan. Our media, advertising and outreach will drive project decision makers to resources such as webinars and live seminars for technical support and design assistance. These resources will demonstrate how concrete will bolster the projects that you and I see popping up like wildflowers everywhere from Boston to Bakersfield.

This is where we hope to work directly with ICF installers. We anticipate a strong partnership with the ICF industry as a whole because we understand the importance of ICF construction as a preferred system that improves the quality, strength, and durability of low to mid-rise buildings across the country. Our team is excited

to partner with all ICF stakeholders, including qualified ICF installers, to dramatically increase the adoption of ICF construction by developers and owners across the country.

Bringing the *Build with Strength* team to the table to combine efforts will improve communications with existing and prospective clients. Our team stands ready to support you as you make the case for building with strength. The *Build with Strength* program is structured around a Design Assistance Program (DAP) for buildings. The DAP effort brings our team of technical experts in the design and engineering fields together with developers and owners who want to explore cost-effective ways to increase their use of ready mixed concrete. One of the key prescriptions in the DAP system is ICF construction in the low- to mid-rise construction sector. We expect the success of the *Build with Strength* program will be shared by all of our partners in the industry, including ICF installers.

In the coming months we'll have the opportunity to work together to identify projects where ICF solutions will improve the opportunities for developers to succeed in their work. We will highlight the ways that ICF construction excels in those markets by producing the highest quality and most cost-effective technical solutions in all types of concrete building design solutions, including ICFs.

Give us a call and see what additional value we can bring to your own efforts to land that next project. The DAP program is free to you and to your clients, and it will help to answer whatever questions a client might have about building with concrete. We look

forward to joining your efforts and helping you as you secure your next project.

Advocacy

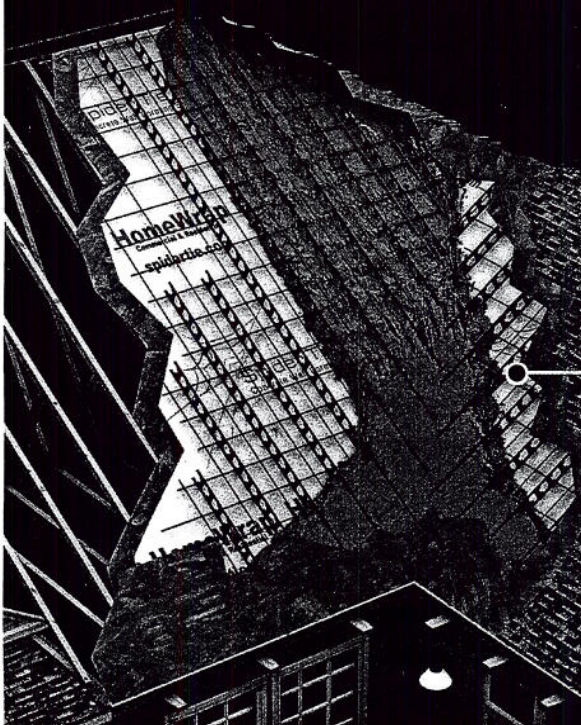
Finally, we are building an advocacy network to change the way people think about concrete and its competitors in the construction marketplace. Our advocacy efforts will take place in the United States Congress, state houses, city councils, and wherever else misguided legislation or regulation puts concrete at a disadvantage and as a result, consumers in danger. Throughout the country, unsafe wood construction has led to loss of life and investment as fires, wind, and rain have destroyed buildings in all phases of construction. More and more people are coming to understand that the strength and durability of concrete is unmatched and are now supporting concrete's position in building codes, standards and rating systems at the state and local level.

I have no doubt *Build with Strength* will serve as a united voice reminding people inside and outside of the industry that no product is as safe, strong or durable as ready mixed concrete. This will be a gargantuan undertaking, and we need your help.

Robert Garbini is president and CEO of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA), representing the producers of ready mixed concrete and other allied businesses. For more information visit www.nrmca.org or www.buildwithstrength.com. ■

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