



BY EDWARD SLISH



## CSSA Goes to the Source For Code Compliance Certification

The Certified Steel Stud Association is a new organization with an undeniable commitment to code compliance. Its founding members are the three largest wholly-American-owned stud manufacturers in the United States.

The sole purpose of CSSA is to enroll distributor-friendly manufacturer members into a certification program created and managed by ICC-ES; a subsidiary of the International Code Council, which develops the International Building Code (IBC). This program is the only one of its kind because it removes interpretative nuances of ASTM standards by placing program standards in the hands of ICC-ES. In contrast, many other programs are controlled or influenced by a board of manufacturers.

CSSA's simple approach to code compliance will benefit the metal framing industry because it goes to the source of the building code for answers on code compliance. CSSA's work with ICC-ES bypasses unnecessary sidebars in the approval chain. ICC-ES President Shahin Moinian says, "ICC-

ES is pleased to be the certification agency of choice by CSSA. It is our belief that this cooperation is beneficial to the industry."

### THE BIG THREE

Today's building code was patterned after three legacy codes previously developed by BOCA, SBCCI, and ICBO. They decided to combine their efforts and in 1994 formed the ICC. The first edition of the IBC was published in 1997. Every few years, a new IBC code book is published, reflecting the latest evolution of thought on building standards. The standards ultimately decide what materials may be used in construction.

This bit of history is important when you consider who will ultimately decide when debates arise over the "intent of the code." CSSA's Chairman Chip Gardner

says, "We have chartered a path which eliminates confusion and controversy related to interpretations of the 'intent' of the building code. Certain subjects remain in terminal gridlock, such as how to define 'equivalent coatings'. On this topic, CSSA will not deviate from coatings specifically listed in Table 1 of ASTM A-1003 unless or until ICC-ES determines that these alternatives are truly equivalent. At present, they accept nothing but Table 1 coatings, so there is no argument as far as we are concerned. CSSA goes directly to the source of the code for its answers."

Besides ending quibbling over standards, Gardner cites other benefits to membership at the CSSA. Members enjoy use of ICC ESR #3016 for structural products, which is current to IBC 2012. They also have access to ICC ESR #2620 (product license required), which supports the compliance certification for ViperStud. These longstanding products are well recognized for their quality and superior performance.

### STUD AND TRACK CERTIFICATION

At CSSA, members are required to certify any similar stud and track products. That prevents manufacturers from running certified products for some applications, and similar uncertified products for others. Certification under the CSSA program includes listing on the CSSA website ([www.certifiedsteelstud.com](http://www.certifiedsteelstud.com)). The program allows the listed company to affix CSSA's certification labels on each pallet of product covered under the program.

Costs at CSSA are lower than other venues. Its one price approach cuts tens of thousands of dollars out of dues for a company with two or more locations. There are no assessments either. With a laser-like focus on compliance certification, virtually 100 percent of the financial resources are dedicated to upholding that standard. "CSSA doesn't offer much in terms of social networking, but that

is not why we are here,” Gardner says. CSSA also keeps costs low by holding only one membership meeting per year. Ad hoc meetings are called by conference call when necessary.

Membership at CSSA is open to all manufacturers who have produced stud and track from 18 to 68 mil for at least one year. Since the program is based on ICC-ES certification, applicants can either supply their own ICC ESR reports or gain access to those provided by the organization through membership. Once document verification is completed, the producing facility(s) are subjected to an audit process to ensure all production meets the published standards. An ICC-ES appointed inspector will measure all quantitative manufacturing specifications; including length, width, flange height, returns, leg angle, bow, cam-



ber, and twist. Measurements will be taken to verify all steel properties; including mil thickness, yield strength, and coating weight (actual zinc coating weight per surface area). CSSA upholds the most current standards in accordance with IBC 2012.

Upon successful qualification and completion of the audit(s), the appli-

cant achieves full membership. CSSA's simple and cost effective code compliance program may be the best choice for many manufacturers. CSSA Vice Chairman Tom Porter says, "We considered all options and found that CSSA was most consistent with CEMCO's goals to provide the best compliance program without all the politics involved at other associations."

All CSSA members were in final stages of certification at the time of this publication, and all mem-

ber locations must be certified no later than June 30, 2013. For more information on membership, go to the CSSA website at [www.certified-steelstud.com](http://www.certified-steelstud.com). **W&C**

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