

TOP STORIES

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COLD-FORMED STEEL ENGINEERS INSTITUTE – NEWS AND UPDATES

Calling All Potential Authors and Reviewers!

Among all the documents on cold-formed steel—including specifications, standards, design guides, and building codes—CFSEI Tech Notes have their own unique place. [More](#)

Just Announced! Location for 2014 CFSEI Expo

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Number of Open Construction Jobs Hits Five-Year High

New government employment data indicate that the June count of construction sector job openings was the highest total since May 2008. [More](#)

Slow Down in 2013 Nonresidential Building Activity

Washington, D.C. – July 31, 2013 – With slower than expected activity in the nonresidential construction sector in the first half of the year, the projections for growth in spending have been scaled back. [More](#)

USGBC's LEED in Motion Report Reveals More Than 4.3 Million People Live and Work in LEED-Certified Buildings

Washington, D.C. — (Aug. 14, 2013) — The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) has released its inaugural *LEED in Motion* report, a holistic statistical snapshot of the green building movement aimed at equipping its members with the insight to make a strong case for sustainable building activity. [More](#)

Mid-Rise Wood Buildings: Improving Products for Taller Wood Buildings

With Canada on track to become one of the largest construction markets in the world by 2020, demand for wood buildings between 5 and 12 storeys in height continues to increase. Pilot projects have demonstrated that significant economic benefits can be realized from using wood in mid-rise buildings, including lower construction costs and less construction time. [More](#)

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Housing Starts Up 5.9%; Q2 Productivity Beats Forecasts

U.S. housing starts and permits for future home construction rose less than expected in July, suggesting that higher mortgage rates could be slowing the housing market's momentum, while non-farm productivity rose in the second quarter as output increased more than hours worked, U.S. government reports showed Friday. [More](#)

Construction Spending: Improvement Spending Shows Strength

After recent positive data revisions, seasonally adjusted improvement spending has shown growth during the spring of 2013. The current pace of improvement spending is the highest since 2007. [More](#)

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Until recently, standards produced by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) did not have much impact on the cold-formed steel industry. However, with new and more-stringent energy provisions and a move into “green” building, ASHRAE standards have increased their profile in the codes and standards arena.

Over the past few months, the news on ASHRAE standards has been a mixed bag for the steel industry. The most welcome news may be on *ASHRAE 90.1 - Energy Standard for Buildings Except Low-Rise Residential Buildings*. After two cycles of very significant increases in building envelope requirements—including the addition of one to three inches of exterior foam insulation on steel walls in almost all U.S. climate zones—the 2013 edition will go to press without changes to these parts of the standard.

The slowdown on ASHRAE 90.1 envelopment requirements will give the steel industry time to complete research and improvements related to compliance calculations and development of connection details that were not given sufficient consideration by the committee that developed the 2010 standard. For example, the Steel Framing Alliance (SFA) is currently analyzing test data to determine the most accurate ways to calculate the thermal performance of steel wall assemblies. This work will help to standardize the methods used by various codes and software developers. Our industry is also moving forward with additional testing and simulations to assess alternative methods for compliance other than exterior continuous insulation.

Significant changes to commercial green standard proposed

While ASHRAE 90.1 may have stood pat in regard to insulation requirements that impact cold-formed steel, the committee that maintains *ASHRAE 189.1 – Standard for the Design of High-Performance Green Buildings* is attempting to move in the opposite direction. This summer, SFA responded to a call for public comments on the standard that would adopt an arbitrary 10 percent increase in stringency over the 90.1 insulation U-factors.

The 10 percent increase poses two challenges for the steel industry: 1) It exceeds the values that ASHRAE had already determined are pressing the limits of being cost-effective in the 2010 edition of the 90.1 Standard, and 2) It discriminates against some materials (including steel) due to different baselines for materials included in ASHRAE 90.1.

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In August, SFA representatives met with a representative from the 189.1 Committee assigned to resolve our comments. SFA suggested an alternative approach that provides for whole building improvement instead of the proposed 10 percent that concentrates on specific components, like walls. The SFA proposal would provide flexibility for designers to determine where to place their dollars in a building's energy system. The full committee will take up the issues raised by SFA and others during their next meeting in November.

New Standard Announced

In August, ASHRAE expanded its venture into green standards by issuing a call for public comment on the scope of a new standard for residential buildings. *ASHRAE 189.2P - Standard for the Design of High-Performance, Sustainable Low-Rise Residential Buildings* will give ASHRAE a comprehensive coverage of buildings when combined with the 189.1 Standard for commercial buildings.

SFA submitted comments on the proposed scope to address several items. First, there was concern that the scope was so broad that it would allow almost any issue to be introduced into the standard under the banner of sustainability. The 189.2 Standard could then be used as an entry point for those wanting to codify their issues with the intent of eventually moving the same issues into the commercial green and regular building codes.

A second concern was over the use of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) as a major thrust of the document. SFA took exception to this being part of the scoping statements at the expense of more accepted ways to measure sustainability, such as recycled content.

Finally, the scope listed an objective to achieve high-performance building envelopes. SFA submitted a negative comment stating that it was inappropriate to list improvements to the envelope as objectives. Envelope improvements are a means to achieve higher performance. However, they are not the only means, nor are they the most cost-effective. They also offer little to no benefit over existing standards in the warmer climate zones.

As these standards and proposed changes move toward adoption, SFA will continue to monitor their progress and defend the interests of CFS framing as part of the industry's codes and standards program jointly funded by the Steel Stud Manufacturers Association (SSMA), the Steel Framing Industry Association (SFIA), and the Steel Market Development Institute (SMDI). For additional information, please contact Mark Nowak at mark@mnowak.net.

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Mitigating Fire Risks Should Begin With More Responsible Building Codes

Unfortunate events provide cause for retrospect, but don't always initiate positive change. An example is a recent fire that occurred at the Monroe Apartment construction site in Portland, Oregon—a 46-unit, four-story structure scheduled for completion in November 2013. Primarily wood-framed, the nearly-completed structure was consumed in flames that threatened neighboring homes, businesses, and parked cars; produced intense heat; could be seen from miles away; required 135 fire fighters for containment; and caused an estimated \$5 million in damage to the building and neighboring properties. As with many incidents, it's believed that the fire was intentionally set. This is a stark reminder that while building codes are designed to prevent fires and their spread to adjacent buildings after the structure has been built, they fail to provide protection during the construction process, when combustible materials are exposed. (Read more at: (http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2013/08/post_353.html)).

Perhaps the best-known example is a fire that occurred in Richmond, British Columbia, Canada in 2011 that destroyed two wood-framed buildings under construction. Ironically, this project was to be the first approved under new and less restrictive building code requirements in British Columbia allowing wood framing up to six stories. These experiences with wood in taller buildings demonstrate that the cost should include consideration of construction-stage risk to the building itself and the community in general. Adjacent properties and lives are at risk when a tall building with a large amount of fuel provided by combustible materials is built within a densely populated area.

The lessons learned by countries with a long history of constructing taller wood-framed buildings can help North America. Prompted by a series of serious fires in tall, timber-framed residential buildings, the London Assembly in 2010 called for an inquiry to examine the fire safety of these buildings. The inquiry determined that wood framing—often touted as a sustainable option—carries a high fire risk throughout most of the construction process. Major recommendations in the report included: 1) a call for installation of temporary fire sprinklers, and 2) notification of fire department personnel when these buildings are planned and under construction.

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Misguided policies often have unintended consequences

Historically, building codes have limited the use of combustible framing to a maximum of three stories in height, or four stories if fire sprinklers are provided. However, this is of no help when the building is still under construction and highly vulnerable, without operational sprinklers but with exposed members that have not yet been covered with gypsum board or other materials.

Despite these increased risks, there are loopholes in the current building codes that allow taller wood buildings. Designers will sometimes specify wood framing for five or six stories above grade by designing the first or second floor from noncombustible material, also called podium construction. Economic reasons also drive policy decisions, stretching the use of wood to heights previously considered to pose too much of a risk. For example, in British Columbia, the Provincial government raised the allowable height for wood structures to six stories in order to boost the use of lumber, a critical part of the local economy.

For more information on the safe and sustainable benefits of steel framing for mid-rise buildings, including a link to the London report mentioned above, visit the Steel Framing Alliance website at www.steel framing.org.

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Calling All Potential Authors and Reviewers!

Among all the documents on cold-formed steel—including specifications, standards, design guides, and building codes—CFSEI Tech Notes have their own unique place. The Tech Notes address topics on the design and construction of cold-formed steel framing that are not covered in-depth by other resources, including state-of-the-art technical information, clarification of best practices, and the collection of related information from a variety of sources that would otherwise be difficult to locate.

In the past few weeks, CFSEI has published three Tech Notes, including one on “AISI S100-12, North American Specification for the Design of Cold-Formed Steel Structural Members, 2012 Edition - Section A2.2, Other Steels,” and two addressing the issue of corrosion. With a backlog of more than 35 ideas for additional Tech Notes ([click here to view the list](#)), CFSEI is looking for authors with expertise and the desire to either author or review new editions.

But it doesn't stop there! These ideas for new notes were generated by survey responses from construction professionals who requested information on specific challenges encountered when designing cold-formed steel projects. To accommodate future requests, we've added a Tech Note Suggestion Form to the CFSEI website ([Click here to download](#)) or [click here](#) to complete form online.

Take the opportunity to advance the mission of CFSEI by providing your expertise to grow the cold-formed steel market. Contact us at technotes@cfsei.org and indicate your area of expertise and how you can assist by authoring a Tech Note, reviewing a Tech Note, or both.

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Just Announced! Location for 2014 CFSEI Expo

What does CFSEI have in common with the birthplace of Rock and Roll, the home of Blues, and Justin Timberlake? The answer is Memphis, Tennessee—the location selected for the 2014 CFSEI Annual Expo and Meeting. The event is scheduled for May 2014 (dates and venue to be announced) and promises to provide all attendees with superior educational sessions and networking opportunities.

Planning is underway, with new conference add-ons being explored to make this the must-attend event of the year! So dust off your best Elvis impersonator wig and keep May 2014 open on your calendar. Stay tuned for more Expo details!

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CFSEI Executive Committee Shakes Things Up in Buffalo

Taking advantage of the AISI Committee on Specifications (COS) and Committee on Framing Standards (COFS) meetings held in Buffalo, New York in July, CFSEI Executive Committee Members combined their regularly scheduled monthly meeting with the opportunity to witness small-scale shake testing of a two-story steel-framed structure as part of a seismic testing project conducted at the University at Buffalo.

Under the direction of Ben Schafer, Ph.D., professor and chairman of the Department of Civil Engineering at The Johns Hopkins University, the project was in the final stages of three years of research funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) to increase the seismic safety of buildings that use lightweight cold-formed steel for their primary beams and columns. The CFSEI committee members were part of an entourage that toured the facilities and witnessed a seismic test, with detailed explanation of the research underway conducted by Dr. Schafer and his team.

The objective of the project was to advance cold-formed steel light-frame design in buildings to the next level and equip engineers to implement these performance-based seismic designs in their projects. The final seismic test held on August 16 duplicated a 1.1g MCE-level earthquake, and the building performed exceptionally well. To see a video of the final shake table test, click [here](#).

For more information on the project and to view the blog, click [here](#).

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Topics Needed for 2014 CFSEI Webinar Series

The CFSEI webinar series has been very successful, providing more than 3600 hours of continuing education hours on cold-formed steel design to engineers, architects and others. Evaluations of the program have exceeded all expectations, with participants clamoring for more.

The CFSEI Education Committee is busy planning the 2014 series of CFSEI webinars and is asking for your input. Do you have a topic that is of interest or want to be a presenter? If so, simply complete [online survey form](#) or [download form](#) and email to webinar@cfsei.org to provide your thoughts on future topics.

Be sure to sign up today for the next webinar, presented by Mitch Hughes of Dsi Engineering, titled "**Designing for Efficiency & Estimating With Accuracy**" that's scheduled for October 3, 2013. For the webinar description and to register online, visit <http://www.cfsei.org>.

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“There continues to be encouraging signs that the design and construction industry continues to improve,” said AIA Chief Economist, Kermit Baker, PhD, Hon. AIA. “But we also hear a wide mix of business conditions all over the country, ranging from outstanding and booming to slowly improving to flat. In fact, plenty of architecture firms are reporting very weak business conditions as well, so it is premature to declare the entire sector has entered an expansion phase.”

Key July ABI highlights:

- Regional averages: Northeast (54.3), South (54.2), West (51.1), Midwest (50.8)
- Sector index breakdown: mixed practice (56.9), commercial / industrial (54.2), multi-family residential (53.3), institutional (50.6)
- Project inquiries index: 66.4

The regional and sector categories are calculated as a 3-month moving average, whereas the index and inquiries are monthly numbers.

Source: The American Institute of Architects, August 21, 2013

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US Manufacturing Activity Expands, Hits Five-Month High

U.S. manufacturing activity hit a five-month high in August as hiring picked up and new orders increased at their fastest pace since January, an industry report showed on Thursday.

Financial data firm Markit said its "flash," or preliminary, U.S. Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index rose to 53.9, its best showing since March, and just below economists' forecast of 54.0. The index stood at 53.7 in July. A reading above 50 indicates expansion.

Overall output, however, declined to 53.4 from 54.8, its slowest rate of growth in three months, suggesting the pace of overall U.S. economic expansion remains "disappointingly sluggish," said Markit chief economist Chris Williamson.

"Hopefully the faster growth of new orders seen during August will translate into increasingly strong production gains in coming months, and also boost hiring," he added.

New orders rose to 56.5, a seven-month high, from 55.5 in July, and firms took on new workers at their fastest pace in four months. But Williamson said the manufacturing sector "is still barely contributing to nonfarm payroll growth."

U.S. employers slowed their pace of hiring last month but the jobless rate declined. Global investors, however, still expect the Federal Reserve will start winding down its massive stimulus program this year, with many betting the central bank could slow its monthly bond purchases as soon as September.

Markit's "flash" reading is based on replies from about 85 percent of the U.S. manufacturers surveyed. A final reading will be released on the first business day of the following month.

Source: Reuters, August 22, 2013

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Number of Open Construction Jobs Hits Five-Year High

New government employment data indicate that the June count of construction sector job openings was the highest total since May 2008. While the increase in unfilled positions is consistent with the uptick in construction sector activity, particularly for home building, the data reflect only modest increases in total employment thus far. The rising count of open positions is thus consistent with reports of local labor shortages.

For the construction sector, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate that gross hiring declined, falling from 317,000 to 300,00 from May to June. The hiring rate, as measured on a 3-month moving average basis, continued to slow, falling to 5.2% in June.



Consistent with reports of some labor shortages for builders, the number of open, unfilled positions in the construction industry reached a five-year high in June. The number of unfilled positions in the sector climbed to 133,000 from 102,000 in May. This marks five of the last six months for which the total number of open positions was greater than 100,000. This is the first time this has occurred since 2008. Successfully filling open positions with qualified workers is a top concern for home builders in 2013.

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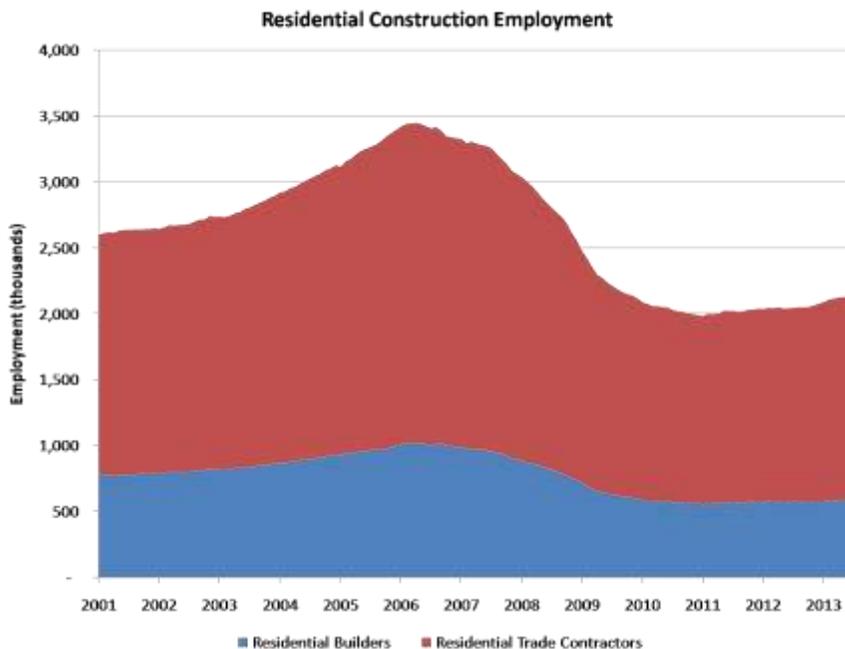
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The June job openings rate (open positions measured as a percentage of current employment) for construction was 2.2%. Measured as a three-month moving average, the openings rate (the blue line above) has staged a noticeable rise since September 2012. Combined with a declining sector layoff rate (non-seasonally adjusted), charted as a 12-month moving average in the graph above, these factors suggest more net construction hiring in the months ahead – if firms can find workers with the right skills.

Monthly employment data for July 2013 (the employment count data from the BLS establishment survey are published one month ahead of the JOLTS data) indicate that total employment in home building stands at 2.137 million, broken down as 584,000 builders and 1.553 million residential specialty trade contractors.



According to the BLS data, over the last 12 months, the home building sector has added 89,000 jobs. Since the point of peak decline of home building employment, when total job losses for the industry stood at 1.466 million, 153,000 positions have been added to the residential construction sector.

While employment growth for the sector is not expected to occur at rates seen for the growth in overall building activity, the current level of improvement for total employment remains a puzzle.

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This small amount of job creation could be due to increased hours for existing workers, but if true, this is not a sustainable situation. Expected increases in building should lead to further growth in residential construction employment over the course of the year. Thus far in 2013, home building employment is averaging monthly growth of about 9,000 positions.

For the economy as a whole, the June JOLTS data indicate that the hiring rate fell slightly to 3.1% of total employment. The hiring rate has been in the 3.1% to 3.4% range since January 2011. The job openings rate was unchanged at 2.8% in June.

Source: *The National Association of Home Builders, August 6, 2013*

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Slow Down in 2013 Nonresidential Building Activity

Washington, D.C. – July 31, 2013 – With slower than expected activity in the nonresidential construction sector in the first half of the year, the projections for growth in spending have been scaled back. Led by the hotel and retail project categories, the commercial sector looks largely unchanged, but a noteworthy drop in demand for institutional projects has caused participants in the American Institute of Architects’ (AIA) semi-annual [Consensus Construction Forecast](#), a survey of the nation’s leading construction forecasters, to reduce projections for spending to a 2.3% increase in 2013, with next year’s projections raised to 7.6%.

“A disappointing recovery of the U.S. economy is limiting need for new nonresidential building activity,” said AIA Chief Economist, Kermit Baker, PhD, Hon. AIA. “Optimism for a stronger performance next year is based on the recent increase in domestic energy production, the boost to the general economy from a resurgent housing market, and improving employment figures that should help drive demand in the design and construction sectors.”

Market Segment Consensus Growth Forecasts

Overall nonresidential	2.3%	7.6%
Commercial / industrial	8.5%	11.5%
• Hotels	7.4%	15.0%
• Retail	8.2%	11.7%
• Office buildings	5.8%	9.5%
• Industrial facilities	4.0%	6.3%
•		
Institutional	-1.8%	5.6%
• Religious	1.5%	6.0%
• Healthcare facilities	1.4%	7.7%
• Education	-2.5%	4.8%
• Amusement / recreation	-4.1%	6.5%
• Public safety	-4.8%	1.0%

Source: The American Institute of Architects, July 31, 2013

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USGBC's LEED in Motion Report Reveals More Than 4.3 Million People Live and Work in LEED-Certified Buildings

New report series demonstrates breadth, momentum of green building movement

Washington, D.C. — (Aug. 14, 2013) — The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) has released its inaugural *LEED in Motion* report, a holistic statistical snapshot of the green building movement aimed at equipping its members with the insight to make a strong case for sustainable building activity.

The first of three reports in the *LEED in Motion* series, available exclusively to USGBC member companies, *LEED in Motion: People and Progress* examines the individuals and organizations that are driving and benefitting from green building, utilizing graphics, charts and other tools to demonstrate the breadth of the community intent on creating buildings that are better for the environment and the people who utilize them every day.

“LEED is a transformative force that works at the intersection of a variety of societal and economic interests, including the construction, real estate and environmental communities,” said Rick Fedrizzi, president, CEO and founding chair, USGBC. “The new *LEED in Motion* report reflects that incredible cross-section of people — diverse in background, geography and vocation — who are working together to fulfill USGBC’s mission of a sustainably built environment within a generation.”

The first section of the report, Occupants and Industry, examines the broad community that engages with green buildings as residents and tenants — as much a part of the movement as industry practitioners. Currently, USGBC estimates that more than 4.3 million people live and work in LEED-certified buildings, while more than 6.2 million people experience a LEED-certified project every day.

The LEED Professionals section of the report considers the community of more than 186,000 LEED credential holders who are actively applying their specialized knowledge of LEED to advance the green building rating system while adding value to the firms that employ them. In particular, the report notes the top 10 U.S. states for LEED Professionals, as well as the top 10 industries in which they are employed.

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The report also examines the nearly 13,000 USGBC member organizations, ranging from Fortune 100 corporations to small neighborhood businesses, representing 13 million employees and \$1.8 trillion in combined revenue. People and Progress reports on the location and market sectors of these geographically and professionally diverse organizations, which are advancing green building with activities such as portfolio-wide LEED certifications and participation on LEED development committees.

Additionally, the report features USGBC's network of 77 chapters and nearly 30,000 chapter members, explaining how the network's educational, advocacy-related and community-based activities are proving pivotal to the expansion of green building in local communities around the nation.

The report also features several project spotlights, highlighting sustainable features and achievements at projects in the medical, education and commercial real estate sectors, in addition to interviews with green building leaders.

USGBC will release the next two *LEED in Motion* reports, Places and Policies and Impacts and Innovation, later this year.

Source: U.S. Green Building Council, August 14, 2013

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Mid-Rise Wood Buildings: Improving Products for Taller Wood Buildings

With Canada on track to become one of the largest construction markets in the world by 2020, demand for wood buildings between 5 and 12 storeys in height continues to increase. Pilot projects have demonstrated that significant economic benefits can be realized from using wood in mid-rise buildings, including lower construction costs and less construction time.

Canadian manufacturers of wood construction products want to access this growing market by providing mid-rise builders with cost-effective products that have validated performance. Manufacturers have identified technical challenges with their products but need the expertise to overcome them.

NRC is partnering with construction product manufacturers and building owners to develop technologies—including wood-based products—for mid-rise, wood-based buildings. Through strategic research projects, technical services, and large-scale and real demonstrations, we will enable manufacturers to offer cost-effective, high-performance building products to mid-rise building owners. Our integrated approach combines expertise in materials science, building engineering, performance evaluation and fire protection engineering to examine whole building effects.

We will provide clients with technical solutions and technologies in the two most critical market barrier areas:

- *Site-Built Wall and Floor Assemblies with Improved Wood-Based Products* will increase builder and industry acceptance and use of lightweight frame construction products with proven durability, fire resistance and cost-effectiveness for five and six storey buildings.
- *High-Performance Pre-Fabricated Structural Assemblies* will provide manufacturers with design guides and validated innovative wood-based construction products with superior fire safety, acoustic performance and construction speed for 7 to 12 storey buildings.

Along with product and guide development, we will conduct full-scale demonstrations for clients who will have access to state-of-the-art facilities and fire, acoustics, structural, moisture and mould expertise. Expected results will enable clients to increase their share of the mid-rise building market.

Source: National Research Council Canada

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Housing Starts Up 5.9%; Q2 Productivity Beats Forecasts

U.S. housing starts and permits for future home construction rose less than expected in July, suggesting that higher mortgage rates could be slowing the housing market's momentum, while non-farm productivity rose in the second quarter as output increased more than hours worked, U.S. government reports showed Friday.

The Commerce Department said on Friday that housing starts increased 5.9 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 896,000 units. June's starts were revised up to show a 846,000-unit pace instead of the previously reported 836,000 units.

Economists polled by Reuters had expected groundbreaking to rise to a 900,000-unit rate last month.

Permits to build homes rose 2.7 percent in July to a 943,000-unit pace. Economists had expected permits to rise to a 945,000 unit pace.

Meanwhile, productivity increased at a 0.9 percent annual rate, the Labor Department said. Economists polled by Reuters had expected productivity to gain at a 0.6 percent rate.

Productivity fell at a 1.7 percent rate in the first quarter, compared to an earlier estimate of a 0.5 percent gain.

Output rose at a 2.6 percent rate in the second quarter, while the number of hours worked increased at a 1.7 percent rate.

Unit labor costs—a gauge of labor-related costs for any given unit of output—rose at 1.4 percent rate in the second quarter, slightly above forecasts of economists polled by Reuters.

Mortgage rates have spiked in anticipation of the Federal Reserve tapering its monthly bond purchases as early as next month. The residential construction figures last month could also be a reflection of supply constraints.

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Builders have been complaining about a shortage of labor and materials. Still, residential construction remains on a firmer footing and should again contribute to economic growth this year.

A report on Thursday showed confidence among single-family homebuilders neared an eight-year high in August, with builders fairly upbeat about sales prospects over the next six months.

Last month, groundbreaking for single-family homes, the largest segment of the market, fell 2.2 percent to a 591,000-unit pace, the lowest level since November last year. Starts for multi-family homes jumped 26 percent to a 305,000-unit rate, reversing the prior month's decline.

Permits for multi-family homes rose 12.6 percent to a 330,000-unit rate. Permits for single-family homes fell 1.9 percent to a 613,000-unit pace.

Source: Reuters, August 16, 2013

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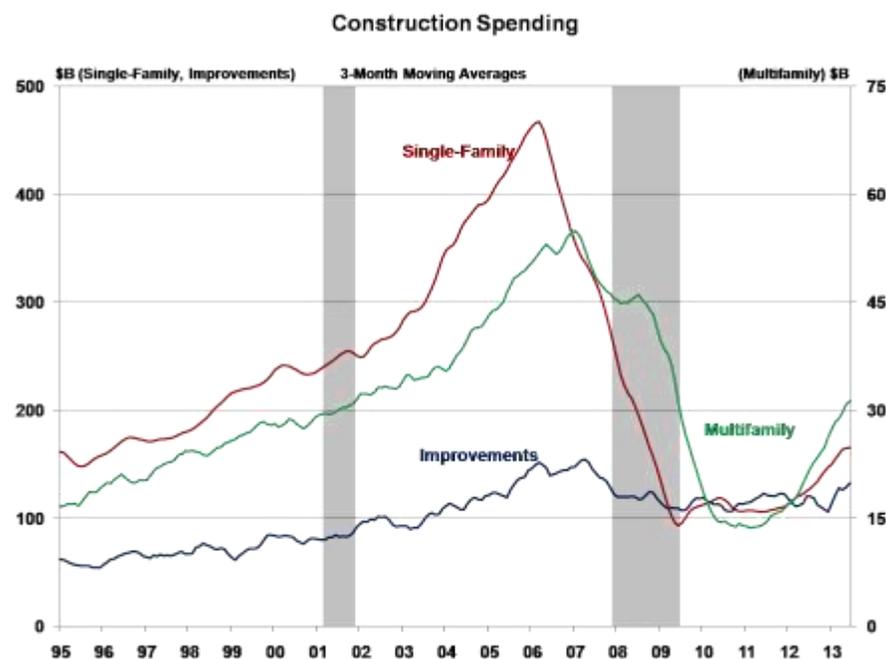
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Construction Spending: Improvement Spending Shows Strength

After recent positive data revisions, seasonally adjusted improvement spending has shown growth during the spring of 2013. The current pace of improvement spending is the highest since 2007. This improved picture of the remodeling market is consistent with [NAHB surveys of remodelers, suggesting improving market conditions during the second quarter](#).

[According to the current Census construction spending report](#), total private residential construction spending was effectively unchanged at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$332.1 billion in June 2013. The May rate of \$332.2 billion was the fastest pace since September 2008. The current reading is 18.1% higher than a year ago.

Single-family spending registered a slight decline (0.8%) for the month, while the more volatile multifamily category was down 3.3% in June.



Source: The National Association of Home Builders, August 1, 2013

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