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**ERNIE CASADOS JOINS GULF COAST BUILDING COMMUNITY
AS STEEL FRAMING TECHNICAL FIELD REPRESENTATIVE**
Casados Brings Extensive Steel Framing Expertise to Rebuilding Effort

Washington, DC - The Steel Framing Alliance (SFA) announced today the appointment of Ernie Casados, an expert in steel framing for homes, as a technical field representative in the Gulf Coast region. Casados brings 27 years of experience in managing all phases of homebuilding projects, including training workers who have no previous experience in steel framing. He is based in Mandeville, Louisiana. This position is funded in part with the support of the Steel Stud Manufacturers Association (SSMA).

Casados is working in the region under an “umbrella” steel industry effort to help rebuild the Gulf Coast, which was devastated by hurricanes Katrina and Rita last August. SFA is one of three organizations aligned with the American Iron and Steel Institute to provide resources and expertise to the Gulf Coast Steel Initiative (GCSI), a focused, \$1.1 million dollar collaboration of 12 North American steel companies to make a long-term impact on future construction practices in the region.

“We are fortunate to have Ernie join us in the rebuilding effort,” said Larry Williams, president of the Steel Framing Alliance. “Since Katrina and Rita hit, Gulf Coast cities and parishes are being reshaped by new economic and legislative realities and by the demands of local residents.” Williams said that the steel industry is working to provide homebuilders and homeowners with steel solutions that are durable and will sustain the wrath of future natural disasters. “Ernie’s deep knowledge of building homes with steel framing and his commitment to assisting in the rebuilding efforts makes him ideal for this job.”

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Casados is making inroads for a product well suited to the region – steel framing, which can withstand 150-mph winds as well as resist damage to termites, fire, hail, mold and mildew. Homes built with steel have stood up very well in other hurricane-prone states like Florida. Steel roofing offers the same benefits in residential construction and is gaining momentum in the region as well.

Williams said that Casados will work to form partnerships with established builders in the region who are committed to making steel framing a significant part of their businesses. In exchange, the GCSI team will provide significant assistance to the builders in order to accelerate them and their crews through the learning curve on steel construction projects. This will include planning and estimating jobs, providing on-site training for framers and sub-trades, aiding in sourcing tools and materials, providing post-project reviews, and assisting with the marketing and promotion of the new steel-framed homes. Casados has already established contact with more than 40 local builders and regional Home Builders Associations in Louisiana and Mississippi.

The Steel Framing Alliance and its 1,400 member companies are leading the development of steel framing as an efficient and cost competitive alternative to traditional framing materials by providing builders and designers with information and resources they need.

SFA, along with 12 steel companies and the Metal Roofing Alliance (MRA), American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI), and Steel Recycling Institute (SRI), is supporting the Gulf Coast Steel Initiative. GCSI's collective efforts to help reshape future construction in the region include training code officials on steel framing and roofing best practices, working with the insurance industry to implement Builders Risk and homeowner insurance discounts, and promoting building codes that define state-of-the-art practices for hurricane-prone areas with state and federal legislators. The steel industry is also updating its national recycling database in the Gulf Coast region to list sites where consumers and businesses can bring their steel products for recycling.

For more information on the Steel Framing Alliance go to www.steel framingalliance.com; and for the Gulf Coast Steel Initiative, visit www.steel.org.

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