

Continuing Education Is Worth the Time



A week ago, I went to a seminar put on by Simpson Strong-Tie. It was at a good location in the center of Connecticut, in a hotel just off the Merritt Parkway in Meriden — very easy to get to. Breakfast and lunch were provided, and it was free. In total, there were about 10 attendees. Two said they worked for a lumberyard, and two said they were with Habitat for Humanity. I'd guess the rest were deck builders, except two of the remainder were

dressed in that stylish way that screams, "I work in an architect's office." I could be wrong though — not all deck builders go to seminars in jeans and flannel shirts.

It was an excellent seminar. Simpson's presenter, Jim Mailey, is passionate about connectors and is deeply knowledgeable. Of course, the seminar was Simpson-centric — the company was paying the bill. Nonetheless, it was good to learn about some of its new products, and a lot of the information presented was generic.

For example, I learned a ton about corrosion. And I learned that the withdrawal strength of some of Simpson's (as well as other companies') adhesive anchors in concrete exceeds 4,000 pounds. That suggested to me an alternative way of meeting the IRC's lateral load requirement for ledgers, which is echoed in this issue's *Structure* department (page 22). I also learned that the post anchors I've been using for years really don't provide a lot of uplift resistance. I'll bet they're the same ones you've been using. About once an hour, Mailey

threw a short, amusing video into the PowerPoint presentation. I had a good time, and I learned new things — a morning well spent.

So, where were all the other deck builders from Connecticut? The building inspectors? Architects? They sure weren't building or inspecting decks. There was at least two feet of snow covering the entire state. Maybe the architects had a rush of spring orders to fill and couldn't break away, but I doubt it. Yeah, it was snowing a little bit in the northern and western parts of the state, but it's New England. It snows here. You'd get nothing done in the winter if you stayed home with every little storm.

This was a valuable seminar. For free. At a slow time of the year. And it was dismally attended. Where were you? And don't you wish you knew which post base it is that doesn't provide significant uplift resistance?

The point is, continuing education is valuable, and it's often close by and sometimes free. Simpson even offers classes online. Many lumberyards sponsor training. In the Northeast, the residential construction show JLCLive is being held this month in Providence, R.I. NADRA will debut its deck builder certification classes. This December, there will be a JLCLive show in Portland, Ore. Deck Expo is being held in October, in Chicago. I hope to see you at one of these venues.

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