

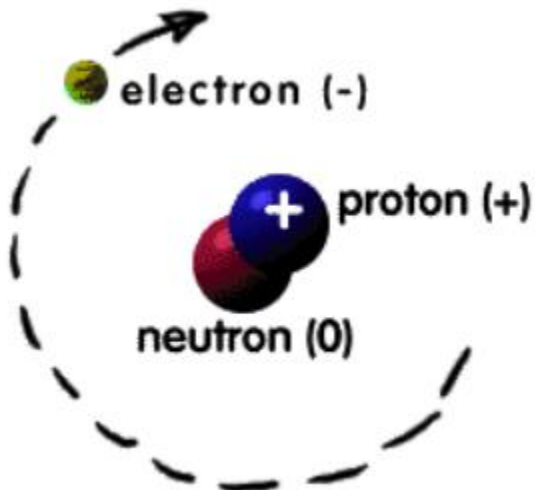
Not everyone is the enemy.

Question of the day...Why does it seem that our industry association is an island, far away from any other groups promoting the use of wood framing in today's markets?

This is a great question, but it probably leads to more questions than it does answers. On the association front, we are told that we (the component manufacturing industry) are the center of the universe. For some, that may make you feel good. For me it raises questions. First question: Really?



Perhaps we need to think a bit smaller and see if as a first step we could muster the gravitational force to attract some of our wood promoting brethren to join with us...or us with them...on more of an atomic level. Not atomic as in The Bomb, but atomic as in the smallest distinct unit of matter. As we know, atoms are the foundation of chemistry. They are the basis for everything in the Universe. All matter is composed of atoms and atoms form compounds that help the biological world survive. Let's all try and remember back to our primary school days for just a minute (I know, this is going to hurt your head.)



As any of you that know me clearly know, I am not a nuclear chemists or physicists. What I do know is that matter matters! Forming compounds that work together or getting other particles to work together really does matter. We as an organization cannot survive being an island or the negative neutron constantly repelling. There are many groups and individuals that we should gravitate to, and work alongside with, to fulfil our stated mission. Science is based on the atom because it is the smallest distinct unit of matter. Success as a trade association depends on working closely together with other trade associations, industry groups and partners. Individually, and as companies, we can and do work with our local HBAs, contractor groups, building and fire officials and the specifying community. It is true that our long term interest and goals are not always perfectly 100% aligned. That does not mean that they should be the repelled. Basic chemistry tells us that a bond between atoms can form if it is energetically more favorable for the atoms to stick together than staying apart. Relationships with our trade partners are always more favorable than the alternative. If we have the energy and desire, and the basic building block of common ground on common issues, we have the ability to attract and build durable matter. That matter will survive the environmental noise or occasional misalignment of goals and will help to build a deeper (sub-atomic) understanding of the relationship as a whole. Just as we don't throw out the baby with the bath water, we should not turn our collective back on our trade partners just because we don't get our way 100% of the time. Maybe we really don't know what we don't know after all. Maybe they are right sometimes and we're both right the rest. Let's not dwell on the negative energy but thrive on the positive. We can learn from one another by questioning one another and truly listening to those answers. When we bristle at the very thought of a question being asked, when we look for the negative in every situation or inquiry, we are heading down a very dark and lonely path.