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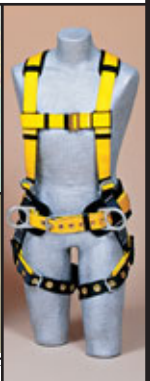













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# Welcome to the State of the Industry issue

**AS A BUSINESS PERSON, INDIVIDUAL** days are different but still mostly the same. Today is different. I am pleased to announce something new we have been working on, the State of the Industry Survey. Shield Wall Media and METALCON partnered to generate data about the market segments we serve. Through the survey we learned what builders and manufacturers experienced in 2022 and what they anticipate for 2023.

A few bullet points are included with the State of the Industry article in this issue. We added a new feature appearing on the inside back cover of every issue of every magazine we publish. This feature is titled *CSI: Construction Survey Insights*. We generated too much data to include everything in one article. In CSI we will compare and contrast specific responses from our data.

Examples of the comparisons include, but are not limited to:

- Differences between metal roofing contractors and general roofing contractors.
- Differences based on the size

- Who is looking to expand and how
  - The relationship between units sold, gross sales and net profits
  - Concerns facing different businesses (type and size) for 2023.
- If there are any comparisons you would like to see, let me know and we will include it if we can.

The only way to access the raw data is to help us share the survey. It's too late for 2022, but next year keep it in mind. We'll be doing a mid-year industry update, so you won't have to wait long to get a full data set.

Have a healthy, happy and prosperous 2023.



**Gary Reichert**  
Publisher

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Congratulations, David!

And Thank You to All the People Who Make the Industry Work.

Dear Editor,

I am writing to you today because I would like to tell you about a friend of mine, David John Cleveland. He is a very hard-working guy. He is the Chief Post Frame Specialist at Standard Lumber and Supply in Sparta, MI. He has been with the company for 38 years and in all that time, he's never missed a day of work. He is now about to retire.

David is a conscientious worker, always striving for perfection. He carefully analyzes his customers' needs and tries to ensure efficiency and customer satisfaction. Everyone agrees he is the guy to work with on post frame projects and he has earned Standard Lumber a wonderful reputation through word of mouth.

I like to give credit where credit is due, and David certainly deserves credit. I'm certain that Standard Lumber is going to have a hard time filling the shoes of this self-taught worker who spent a lifetime honing his skills.

I'm sure there are many hard workers out there who deserve some recognition and I would like to encourage others to share

their stories. They can encourage and incentivize young people who may be considering what their career should be, or those who have become discouraged because their boss doesn't seem to notice their efforts. They should understand that their work is noticed and honored by others.

Thank you for allowing me to share this story; I hope others will feel compelled to give recognition to someone they know who deserves it.

Congratulations to David on his well-deserved retirement and to all those who are retiring after a lifetime of service.

Sincerely,  
*Name Withheld*  
*Sparta, Michigan*

*Thank you for sharing. Shield Wall Media joins you in saluting every worker out there who conscientiously and tirelessly serves their chosen industry.*



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**Gary Reichert,**  
Publisher, Shield Wall Media

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# Hard Work, Not Financial Hardship

Give the Trades a Try!

BY RURAL BUILDER STAFF

**MATT BENCHEK WAS A VERY** good student, the kind of student teachers like and guidance counselors encourage to apply to college to work for a bright future. One of the classes he took was bio-tech and he did incredibly well.

In school Benчек was already a worker. He got As and Bs in his classes, participated on the golf team, and worked in maintenance at a plastics plant.

When he graduated, he knew he didn't want to continue there but he wasn't sure what he wanted to do. His bio-tech teacher had ideas though; he gave Benчек's name to Larry Hyer, of Hyer Electric. Benчек went in to check it out and he liked what he saw.

That decided it. Benчек enrolled in the local technical college and began working towards an Associate's Degree. His mom followed Mike Rowe on Facebook and encouraged him to apply for a mikeroweWORKS Foundation scholarship.

He says applying was pretty simple; his mom and his boss wrote him letters of recommendation and he wrote a short paper about what he wanted to do. He agreed wholeheartedly with the SWEAT pledge.

Benчек said, "Working isn't easy. Making ends meet isn't easy. But in the working world you get what you put into it. Those are some great guidelines to live by."

It was awesome when he won, Benчек said. He received money to put toward his education that he doesn't have to pay



**Matt Benчек on the job.**

As a result of a collaboration with mikeroweWORKS Foundation ([www.mikeroweworks.org](http://www.mikeroweworks.org)), *Rural Builder* is featuring profiles of Work Ethic Scholarship recipients in each of its issues. Hundreds of scholarships have been awarded to trade-school students who value hard work and taking personal responsibility. *Rural Builder*



applauds these students and wants to acknowledge their choice to apply their talents to skilled trades. Thank you, mikeroweWORKS Foundation, for your continuing efforts to close the skills gap and "reconnect the average American with the value of a skilled workforce."



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*Matt plays as hard as he works.*

back. No 30-year debt for him!

Technical school was great help; he learned a lot and his work builds upon it. Electrical technology is a deep and diverse subject, Benchek said. He learned about all of the different things you can do with electricity, but he says, once you wrap your head around the concepts, it can be simple.

As an electrician, Benchek works on lots of home generators and wires homes, community buildings, and agricultural buildings. What he likes about his job is that there is no typical day.

“It’s always different from day to day. I could be installing a generator, putting in lights for a farmer, fixing storm damage, or wiring a new house.

Sometimes I have to go in early or work late, but I enjoy working with my hands, and I like the principles behind electricity, I enjoy troubleshooting, and I like helping people. I like the smile I get when their problem is solved,” Benchek said.

While Benchek works hard, he plays hard as well, flyfishing, hiking, biking; he likes any outdoor activity. He has some exciting plans for next year, too. He plans to get married.

Benchek believes the labor problem is two-fold: a lack of ambition on the part of many people and the push to send all youth to traditional 4-year colleges.

Benchek believes that the schools could also tout the benefits of going into the trades so that everybody doesn’t think they have to be a lawyer, a doctor, or a psychiatrist. Principals,



teachers, and guidance counselors could ensure that kids are aware of all their choices.

“Kids can go right into a trade or into a 2-year program, pick up scholarships, and start making a decent paycheck. Kids don’t always know that. There’s always someone out there willing to give you a shot, and to teach you,” he added.

“It might be harder work than sitting behind a desk, and you might get your hands dirty, but if you put your nose to the grindstone you can make more money and it’s way more gratifying,” Benchek said. **RB**



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# State of the Industry

**WE ARE HERE.** Tips for Navigating The Road Ahead

By Linda Schmid

**MANY DIFFERENT ECONOMIC INDICATORS CAN** be taken into account when looking for clues as to what the state of the industry is likely to be just a short distance down the road. One check is what the experts in a given industry see. Shield Wall Media, parent company of *Rural Builder* magazine, did a survey in conjunction with METALCON to measure the climate in the construction industry. The results are overwhelmingly positive; the majority of builders improved sales and profitability in 2022. Further, most believe that their business will not only sell more or about the same in 2023 as they did in 2022, but they project their overall profitability to be the same or better.

A look at industry behavior can be a great indicator of where things are headed. According to Sean Shields, Director of Communications of the Structural Building Components Association (SBCA), the Business Components Manufacturers Conference (BCMC) 2022 was the most well-attended since 2006. There were twelve education sessions full of people eager to pick up new ideas including panel discussions that fostered a vibrant exchange of ideas. Attendance was up from 742 in 2021 to 1,216 in 2022, exhibiting a great enthusiasm and willingness on the part of owners to spend money to better their businesses. That's a very good sign for the economy.

Ben Johnston, Chief Operating Officer at Kapitus, a finance provider for small and medium sized businesses observed that financing applications were up in 2022, 34% up year over year with the funded volume up 46% to approximately \$230 million.

This of course speaks to the state of the industry last year when demand – and inflation – were both high. Contractors worked through spiking material costs, labor shortages, and supply chain issues.

Going into 2023, Johnston expects rising interest rates to depress both residential construction as well as low-rise commercial projects. However, he believes that as demand for new construction slows, many people will be investing in renovating the homes and business buildings they already own rather than trading up.

According to ABC's Construction Confidence Index, this past October showed a rise in sales with falling profit margins and staffing levels — yet all are above the threshold of 50 which indicates expectations of growth over the next six months.

ABC Chief Economist Anirban Basu said, "While the industry continues to gain strength from significant funding for public work, pandemic-induced behavioral shifts — including remote work and online business meetings as well as surging borrowing costs — are translating into

meaningful declines in backlog in commercial and institutional segments.

"With borrowing costs likely to increase during the coming months and material prices set to remain elevated, industry momentum could easily downshift further in 2023," said Basu.

Basu further stated that economists may be overly pessimistic, however. The U.S. economy has some momentum going and near-term recession is not inevitable. While building backlogs

## WHAT THREE PRIMARY THREATS CONCERN OWNERS ABOUT THE ECONOMY MOST?

**65%** The cost of materials & goods.

**55%** A potential recession.

**49%** The ongoing pandemic .



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## TOP WAYS BUSINESSES ARE ADDRESSING ECONOMIC THREATS DUE TO THE SLOWING ECONOMY:

**46%** of owners said they're making financially conservative decisions.

**46%** Now require deposits due to pricing.

**45%** Have raised their prices.

**35%** Request payment in full or in advance

**55%** are increasing investment in technology infrastructure

**58%** Expanding company e-commerce offerings

**51%** Expanding delivery services

## HOW PROMISING THE LAST 12 MONTHS HAVE BEEN BY THOSE WHO RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY

**61%** reported increased revenue sales.

Moreover, the increase has been substantial – with 67% of respondents experiencing revenue increases between 6-25%.

have declined, the industry remains healthy and contractor data indicates that the majority expect the next six months to be positive.

Rob Haddock, CEO of S-5! believes what many economists have been saying, that the U.S. economy is likely going into a slowdown, if not a recession. He explains that the huge building boom that everyone has experienced is largely the product of the COVID-19 crisis and the supply shortages. The industry has been basically playing catch-up all through 2022. With demand up and supplies down, prices inevitably rose. Then inflation was added in. Haddock thinks these factors will likely bring demand down as we finish out the year and move through the first quarter of 2023. Then the industry will slow — noticeably — but not necessarily catastrophically. On the up side, this may help with the labor shortage.

Keith Dietzen, CEO of Keymark agrees that rising interest rates and tightening credit will have a bit of a dampening effect in the new year. As someone who studied economics, he said that the two key factors he watches are inflation and interest rates. If inflation doesn't start coming down, the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates to try and bring supply and demand into balance. But, when rates rise, it impacts new construction and other capital expenditures and it can reduce demand throughout the economy. Still, he's not convinced it will be a very dramatic slowing of the economy.

However, he has advice for businesses should there be more than a slight downturn.

"It's a mistake to cut back too much, especially in your marketing budget. When the industry gets soft, that's when you really need to get aggressive on the marketing end, getting people into your shop by advertising and at trade shows. That's when you got to market your products and services and find new customers."

Not everyone agrees with these assessments. Christian Rios, Marketing Manager and Mike O'Hara, National Sales Manager at Levi's Building Components foresee good things coming in 2023.

They believe commercial construction particularly and construction overall will be strong. They speak to the slowly declining prices of lumber and steel as promising indicators, though they acknowledge that concrete, insulation, and some other material prices continue to rise.

Haddock also sees some prices going down and believes that material prices will stabilize eventually, once the demand calms down. He has already seen the cost of aluminum level and even decline as well as steel leveling out.

A challenge that could specifically hurt the post-frame industry is the financial community's lack of education and understanding of post-frame as a construction method, Dietzen said. The industry definitely needs to educate the banking and mortgage industry.

A sign Rios and O'Hara hail as good news in their own section of the industry is the continuing migration to the southern states, where they say awareness of the benefits of metal roofing is growing, promising great market growth.

Mark Stover, President of Perma-Column also sees signs of strong momentum going into 2023. He has noticed increased demand in post frame building as well as new builders entering the market to support the demand.

Dietzen has noticed a positive trend in the post-frame industry. Interest in barndominiums has been growing.

"It's an interesting phenomenon," he says, "because it's not a supplier generated interest. It's a demand on the part of consumers."

This creates big challenges for some builders according to Dietzen, because many of them are accustomed to creating a shell for agriculture and sheds; they are not used to dealing with plumbing, all of the mechanical pieces that go into residential builds, and highly finished interiors. Many of them have turned to subcontractors to complete this part of the project.

Keymark has taken this challenge and used it to help expand the post-frame market by enhancing its software to support

barndominiums. It's one of the company's primary focuses for 2023, along with incorporating supports for all metal building.

Haddock sees great things for S-5! coming up, expecting significant growth in 2023. Many of the products they produce are related to safety, especially snow retention products and mounting fault protection systems. As well as being part of new construction, these safety items are often part of retrofits; they are often required for code compliance.

While not life-saving, solar applications are quite popular as people try to bring their energy costs down. Energy costs have soared and the war in Ukraine has not helped. The more it goes up, and as governments offer incentives, the more attractive solar thermal and photovoltaics become.

"When you can install an electric generation system that will last 35 years or more and it pays for itself in the first few, who wouldn't do that?" Haddock asked.

Energy costs in other parts of the world are generally even higher than in the U.S. and Haddock and company are expanding into new export markets expanding their reach and drawing in revenue sources from all over the world.

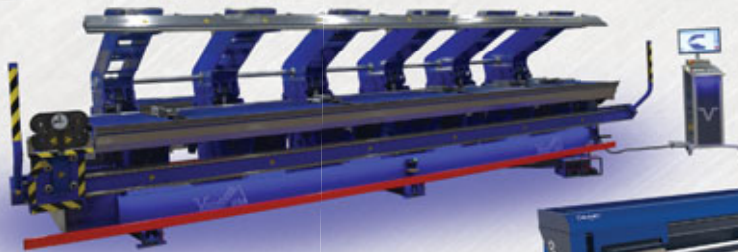
Johnston's viewpoint coincides with Haddock's belief that solar panels and accessories are a good industry sector to be in currently. He states that revenue will be driven into the residential sector of the industry, referring to the Inflation Reduction Act, in which the government has extended a wide range of tax credits for homeowners who install solar panels and other energy efficient products such as new windows, water heaters, HVAC systems and heat pumps. Of course, contractors can drive business by becoming knowledgeable about the potential tax and energy savings, tailoring their offerings and assisting potential customers to qualify for the tax benefits.

The Lumber, Building Material, and Hardlines (LBMH) industry sees promise in investments in software. In line with the construction industry overall, these companies have seen great returns in 2022. With extra capital in their pockets and an expected downturn in the economy, they are in many cases expanding their e-commerce and support for online sales. 88% of those surveyed saw increases in their e-commerce over the last 12 months. The fact that consumers have accepted new e-commerce channels is promising and suggests that while builders may not be able to

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## ADDING TO THE POSITIVE OUTLOOK, FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING GROWTH OF 18% ON AVERAGE...

**88%** saw online sales increase over the last year.

**48%** Reported increased margins

**33%** Margins stayed the same

## THE TOTAL 2023 CONSTRUCTION SPENDING IS FORECAST TO INCREASE AS MUCH AS...

**4.5%** Residential is flat at -1%.

**+13%** Nonresidential Buildings

**+7%** Nonbuilding starts  
2023 are forecast up 38%.

## CONSTRUCTION DRONES CONTINUE TO BE THE FASTEST-GROWING TREND IN THE INDUSTRY: USAGE IS UP...

**239%**

Technology continues to offer advancements, and the Augmented Reality market expects to soon be over \$1.2 trillion.

sell their finished product online, aids such as visualizers may be helpful in this business climate.

Rios and O'Hara believe that the key to being successful in the new year will be great customer service and ensuring that your company has the supplies it needs in stock. Part of that involves pre-planning and communicating with your suppliers sooner rather than later.

When it comes to the employee shortage, they advise that you take care of your current employees. Managing customer expectations is an important factor in keeping employees from burning out.

ABC's Construction Confidence Index seems to support that idea. Over half of industry professionals indicated that they believe that staffing levels will remain the same or go down, and when you consider that the staffing levels have been short this year, it's probably a sign that employers should try to hold on to the employees they have.

Haddock agrees; he doesn't see the employee shortage going away any time soon. Forward-thinking companies will likely come up with new training techniques to increase efficiency and productivity and possibly reduce turnover, he said. However, he doesn't see labor costs going down a lot unless construction demand comes down in middle to late 2023.

Dietzen doesn't see an easy fix to the labor shortage. Like Haddock, he thinks there is opportunity for anyone who can find or develop solutions to help ameliorate the problem, such as automation, new software, any techniques or processes that require less labor or lower the bar on the skill level required.

Johnston offered this insight: "Builders will continue to struggle finding quality workers at affordable wages and will continue to see elevated costs of materials, while projects plateau or decline. Fortunately, we do expect inflation to be lower in 2023 than it was in 2022, and we expect the actions of the Federal Reserve to reduce inflation further as the year progresses, limiting further

demand destruction and inflationary trends."

As far as trends in construction, Haddock has noticed over the last fifty years or so that commercial construction follows residential construction; though it does have roughly a six-month time lag. In other words, if residential construction slows down, commercial construction usually follows suit eventually. When residential starts to pick up, commercial will again follow suit.

Haddock has advice for those in the industry who would like to feel more confident about their prospects for the future. He suggested studying and thinking through the likely prognosis for different aspects of the industry. For example, if you build high-end custom residences that people pay over a million in cash for, they will likely build it even with an economic downturn. Low-cost housing is a necessity. But the \$300,000 to \$400,000 home buyer is the guy who is being squeezed. "Try morphing your business into a direction that will help protect you," Haddock said.

Johnston bears out this idea, noting that if there is a silver lining in the construction market, it may be the high-end residential market.

"High earners have not shown a meaningful decline in purchasing power," Johnston said. "In 2023 we expect high earners to continue investing in residential real estate and for high-end residential construction experts to remain in demand."

Other industry sectors that Haddock sees as safer and great options to expand a building business into: hospitals, nursing homes, and other medical facilities. These places are necessary and eventually they need to be refurbished if not rebuilt. Agriculture is another example of a more recession-proof sector. "People have to eat," Haddock says.

Dietzen notes that some business owners start as contractors, grow, and begin buying in bulk, developing a supplier business in addition to contracting or to replace their contracting business.

In conclusion, the name of the game seems to be: diversify. The more sectors you are involved in, the less you will be negatively impacted if one sector sees a downturn. **RB**



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# Dr!pstop's Winning Company Philosophy

By Linda Schmid

**“WIN.” THAT WAS THE IMMEDIATE** response from Tony Delghingaro and Chris Davis, Sales Directors at Dr!pstop regarding their business philosophy. They then explained the components of their winning plan: having the best product combined with the best customer service. This leads right into their mission: Bring that product to as many people as they can and help them solve their condensation problems.

Davis states that they have a deep belief in their product, so their job is to educate everyone that it is a cheaper, faster, easier solution than others when used for the right application.

The company began as part of a non-woven material or woolenfeltz company, Filtz, in Germany around 100 years ago. Their primary market was in Slovenia. In 1995, the Dr!pstop product was developed to replace a product which made use of diatomaceous earth (basically a type of crushed sealife) that was used to soak up water. Dr!pstop is a much better solution Davis and Delghingaro promise.

In 1995 Dr!pstop spread throughout Europe. It came to America about 2004-2005.



Tony Delghingaro and Chris Davis at the Garage, Shed, and Carport Builders Show, 2021



### THE FREUDENBERG ACQUISITION

Now as part of Freudenberg, a cutting-edge provider of medical products among other things, Dr!pstop is like a company within a company. Before they were part of a group with approximately 300 European employees; now there are 50,000 employees worldwide. That said, the two salesmen say that the culture is amazingly laid back. “Most of the time, our meetings include the two of us,” Davis said. “Freudenberg is a customer-focused company and that’s the way we’ve always proceeded, so it works.”

It’s interesting to the sales team to see the production processes Freudenberg has developed and that allows them to contemplate how their technology might be put to work for Dr!pstop. One of the things they are planning is bringing production to America, but the timeline on that is not yet decided.

### CHALLENGES

Dr!pstop has had their challenges. Initially, their biggest hurdle was being accepted by steel and paint suppliers. They had to prove their product wouldn’t cause corrosion. Galvalume has a 30-40 year warranty, and no one was going to put Dr!pstop on

their building if it was going to mess with that warranty. However, the testing and certification bore out that using Dr!pstop is a positive. While it’s like a sponge, it has a rubber layer that protects the panels. The testing showed that Dr!pstop not only didn’t cause corrosion problems, it helped fight corrosion on the panels.

When the company was working with bitumen roofing, there were market pricing issues which were very challenging. They moved to the agricultural market, which is now a fair piece of their business, but it tends to go up and down.

“When farmers have money, they spend it. When they don’t, they don’t,” Davis said.

They are also big in the self-storage sector. This industry has gone through its own challenges including a period when it was very difficult to get financing.

When self storage was struggling, “she sheds” and “man caves” began trending; as one sector slows, another ramps up.

“Port delays were another challenge for Dr!pstop,” Delghingaro said. Like other companies, they couldn’t get their imports off the boats onto the trucks and to the warehouse. “However,” he continued, “that really didn’t last all that long. Supply chain issues

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are, hopefully, in the rearview mirror.”

The company has experienced good growth over the last few years. Now with energy costs skyrocketing and transport costs going up, they've had to raise prices for the first time since 2005.

Dr!pstop is adhered to metal panels during the rollforming process, which is largely performed in industrial areas. However, rollforming equipment has become more affordable, and as it does so more people join the industry. There are many small companies, including Plain Communities Amish and Mennonite groups, so the industry is more fragmented than it was. These groups range across the country. As does Freudenberg. The headquarters is in Durham, North Carolina, but customers are spread throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Growth is constant and another salesperson is coming onboard to assist Davis in the western portion of the country.

Although they have many customers, this sales team finds delivering customer satisfaction easy. That is because their product is simple and it works well, so they answer customers'

questions and explain the limitations of what the product can and cannot do. Davis said it is their responsibility to educate people, and he believes they are doing a good job of it.

“People no longer come up to us and ask if our product is going to cause their panels to rust,” he said.

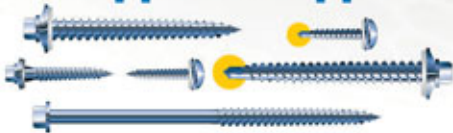
The company tries to ensure that they are solving their customers' problems to the best of their ability by making enhancements to the products. They have added bells and whistles to make it more user friendly, developed a proprietary adhesive, worked on fiber thickness and strength.

They are always innovating. Currently they are working on a prototype of a product that can be retro-fitted to a building that has experienced moisture problems.

The final piece of the pie that makes this company run as effectively as it does: integrity. Tell the truth and work as hard as you can to ensure everything goes as planned. Davis and Delghingaro agree that is the easiest way to roll, and the most effective. **RB**

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This article was originally published in the January/February 1975 edition of Farm Building News Magazine.

**SINCE 1967, RURAL BUILDER HAS** been providing the news, trends and resources builders need. Occasionally in perusing these old magazines, one comes across an article that is equally relevant in the current time as it was approximately 50 years ago. This is one such article.

A Good Man is Hard to Find...and Keep!

# Labor Turn-Over Costs You Money

By Alan W. Farrant

Basic as the ideas in this article may seem, it was some good advice back in 1974. With the labor situation as it stands, it seems fitting to revisit this topic and make sure that we are all as competitive as possible in regard to keeping our employees. — RB

**IF EMPLOYEES LEAVE YOU AFTER** a short time — even a year — you are in serious trouble. Because it is costing you money!

You will have a hard time holding your help, unless you meet competitive wages, working conditions and fringe benefits. You need to meet them to hold your employees.

It costs a lot of money to “break in” a new employee, even if experienced. Not only that, but the one who dealt with your customers will be missed by them — perhaps to the point of the customer also leaving.

## FACE THE PROBLEM

What did labor turn-over cost you last year? How does it look this year? You may not know the actual dollars concerned, but it is obvious that new help is costly.

When you have lost a helper, what do you do? Most likely a replacement must be made. So you look over applications you have on the desk. The few phone calls show they have jobs elsewhere.

Depending on the skills you must have, the pay scale, your store location and general working conditions, you may have trouble getting

a new employee. You can try the State Employment Service, Commercial Employment Service, Commercial Employment agencies, or a Help Wanted classified ad in the local newspaper.

But in the meantime you have no employee for the job concerned — so other employees have to “fill in.” This takes them away from their own chores and fails to do justice to the vacant job work-load.

## THE NEW EMPLOYEE

At last! You have the help needed. Yes, but even before starting day, there has been a high cost factor. How many man-hours were spent recruiting and selecting this new helper? Was your overhead built up? And overtime, any paid? But there is more “cost.”

This new employee won't earn his keep at the start. It might take days, weeks (or



*Spliced timbers developed specifically for pole type construction successfully stood up under the smashing force of a 90 m.p.h. wind which hit a 152 x 300-ft. horse barn under construction near Olathe, Kan. The timbers were the new metal plate connected kind produced by Weyerhaeuser Co. Out of approximately 150 of the connected timbers, only three of them broke. In each case the break was at ground level, not at splices. In construction of the barn, both solid and connected timbers were used, the report says.*

years – RB) before the new employee is as good as the one you let get away. Mistakes may be made which are costly — they, too, are part of the over-all cost of getting a new employee.

If yours is a business concern with few employees, then this condition is more serious than to an employer with many helpers.

## WHO IS TO BLAME?

It is easy to blame high turn-over of help on conditions beyond your control. But are they? You can't keep all the employees with you. But are you trying hard enough to keep those you have now?

Perhaps you are not careful enough in who you hire. Take more time to interview applicants and try to learn not only how they will do the actual work of the job, but also how they will fit in with the rest of your crew. Tell this new applicant the duties of the job applied for. And don't just mention only "nice" things about the job — give a true picture. It is much better for an applicant to refuse to take the job than to quit after two weeks or so!

The first day is a tough one — for any new employee. Don't make the mistake of turning him over to an experienced employee and then ignoring him. Instead, several times during the day stop and chat. Ask a couple of questions and be sure to mention that the new person is free to ask you questions about the job. Make this new employee feel at home. Make him want to stay with you by sustaining this approach.

Tell each new employee your rules, such as rest periods, time for lunch and general working conditions. Tell him of your fringe benefits. Explain who is in charge and of what — and who is second in command. Show where everything is that will be needed on the job. Your pay schedule is very important to new employees — each wants to earn more and is entitled to know your pay increase policy.

## SO HE'LL STAY

When employees are treated decently, they are not likely to quit working for you. All you need to do is to act toward them in a decent manner. Treat them well, as they expect to be treated. In doing so, you will not only retain steady employees, you'll be making more net profit.

Contented workers have the owner's best interest at heart. See to it you have employees who fit this description! **RB**



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# The Generations on the Job Together

## Making it Work to Your Advantage

**A LOT OF TALK HAS** centered around the various generations, and how they approach life and work. The idea is that their early experiences have a strong impact on their ideas and expectations about work. But what does this mean in a practical way when your business depends on these groups working together? First, the generations are defined as:

- Traditionalists (77-99)
- Baby Boomers (59-76)
- Gen X (42-58)
- Millennials (27-41)
- Generation Z (12-26)

Age breaks are approximate, but these are only generalizations so the exact is irrelevant. What is obvious about the generations is that there are some very real differences that impact your business, according to Brian Poage, Senior Construction Manager at Raken. However, with a little insight and planning, you can make the most of these differences. This is important in the current situation where employees are hard to come by.

### THE GENERATIONS AND WORK EXPECTATIONS

Baby Boomers dominated the working world for many years, and many remain in the workforce. As kids of the generation that survived the Great Depression and World War II, they are known for their strong work ethic.

This group knows the construction business. They know the logistics of the industry, best practices, logistics, and interpersonal communication. They have had decades to create relationships with business owners, design teams, sub-contractors, and suppliers. Their knowledge and relationships are worth their weight in gold, but as the Boomers retire, much of this expertise is lost.



The succeeding generation is the Gen Xers who are now heavily involved in business leadership. This group's biggest difference from the Baby Boomers in the workplace is their level of understanding and adaptability to technology. That said, not all Gen Xers are on board with the latest gadget. Many of these workers have been in the construction industry for decades and they were trained and mentored by the older generations: Baby Boomers and Traditionalists. Overall, construction is one of the industries that is most hesitant to adopt new technology.

Now add the Millennials to this mix. Millennials have often been misunderstood by older generations. They want to work, but they expect more from their work than previous generations. They want to feel like they are part of something bigger, that their work is important and has a beneficial impact in society and on the planet. Further, they want to feel valued by their employers, and they want

an enjoyable work experience with out-of-work activities and more vacation time.

Finally, you have Generation Z coming into the work force. This group not only embraces technology — they find it essential. They have grown up with smartphones and laptops, so dealing with paper is unrelatable to them. With all of the focus on technology, this group is not excited about going into the trades.

### COMMUNICATION STYLE AND LEADERSHIP

A difference that is noticeable between the older and younger groups is in communication. Poage says that Traditionalists and Baby Boomers tend to be very direct. Younger groups can be less direct and less abrupt. Both forms of communication have advantages and disadvantages. For example, when the Baby Boomer boss, call him Roger, told the group exactly who was going to do what, there was little room for confusion.

Bob, who is a Millennial, might say that such and such needs to be done, but it is then up to the group to decide who should do what and things can be missed.

In the end, younger workers may find the communications of older generations abrasive, while the meaning of the communications of younger people may be lost in the effort to foster a friendly and inclusive atmosphere.

**MAKING THE DIFFERENCES WORK FOR YOU**

With the labor market as it stands, businesses can't afford to ignore these differences; they need to collaborate with workers to make the job work for individuals as well as the business as a whole. You want to engage every willing worker whether they are 80 or 18.

One way you can do this is through pairing older workers with younger workers so that precious knowledge is not lost. This is not new; older workers have always mentored younger workers, but nowadays the younger generations have more to contribute to the working relationship. Not only are they capable of doing the more physically demanding tasks while their teachers direct them, they can also train the older worker on any new technology or just handle that part of the job themselves.

Communication issues do not have one-size-fits-all solutions. That said, just understanding differences in communication styles is a first step toward resolving them. Pairing that understanding with empathy goes a long way toward resolution. One tip is that if



a piece of communication is crucial, yet not simply factual, you may want to avoid email and speak in person, or if that is not feasible, speak on the phone rather than texting.

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While overtime may be a reality of life for your company, you should know that while Baby Boomers expected it and Gen Xers have complied reluctantly, Millennials and Gen Zs are looking for work/life balance. To be competitive, you may want to offer generous vacation benefits, social activities, or even quality of life add-ons like gym memberships or paid time to commit to charitable causes.

**MARKETING TO A NEW GENERATION**

One of the big problems with finding employees lies in recruitment of the younger generations. If a construction business wants younger Millennials and Gen Z people to consider working in the industry they need to make it enticing to that group, and one of the best ways to do

that is to incorporate technology into the work.

There are many opportunities to make use of technology; some are as simple as software that workers use to log their time and communicate during the build process. Other more “sexy” technology like drones used for roofing estimates, online building plans, 3-D design programs, and 360 cameras to document progress are all opportunities to inject some interest into the job for these technologically savvy individuals. You might be surprised to find that these new technologies not only hold the interest of younger workers, they may also increase efficiencies by eliminating doubt and miscommunications.

Poage suggests that you might take a page from military recruitment. The gist of their advertising is that working in

the military is about more than self; it’s something bigger. It’s a mission. And of course, “it’s not just a job; it’s an adventure.”

Construction is also more than a job; it’s building the future, and the mission is to build it better. Green building is the way society is going; why not leverage it to your advantage? Show young people that they can do something good for society, the earth, and themselves. They can bypass the 4-year degree with its attendant price tag and get a good job at age 19. AND they can use technology while they are doing it.

How do you get this message out? The best way is probably to go where the young people are. You might check whether the local high school or technical college has a career day. Of course, you will find many of these potential workers on social media, too. **RB**

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# How to Use Credit Cards to Optimize Construction Spending in the Field

In the construction industry, decision making is driven by the needs of the field.

**WHEN IT COMES TO PURCHASING** power, employees are often reliant on credit cards of various types. If a field worker often has to purchase from Home Depot, it makes sense that they would get a Home Depot card. Many also get a T&E card. And a fuel card. And maybe a multi-purpose corporate card. Some workers may even charge company spending to their personal card and submit an invoice for reimbursement.

Paying with a credit card is the fastest and most efficient way for field workers to meet immediate needs. It is a great alternative to a contracting or purchase order process, which would slow the job down.

In reality, what happens on the back end is anything but fast and efficient. The accounts payable team ends up running a whole bunch of disjointed, semi-manual processes. That creates challenges around data accuracy, visibility, and control. It can also result in delays in reporting and job costing. That, in turn, leads to delays in billing clients and challenges with cost control.

Today's fintechs offer clients streamlined, standardized, automated solutions that make both the front and back-end processes around credit card spending much more efficient. They let accounts payable and finance teams enable field spending without creating a tangled mess for themselves to manage.

What typically happens now is that cards are issued upon request to meet different needs. Accounts payable teams end up managing four or five card programs. They have to track down all the receipts for each—an ongoing challenge when you've got people all over the place.

Then they have to reconcile statements. Each card provider has a different reporting mechanism. One might be in a PDF and another in a CSV file. Ultimately, they have to run several different reconciliation processes.

Then they have to do all the job costing so the bills can go out to clients. And they have to accurately code all that information, assigning it to the right job, and then input it into the general ledger in the ERP system. Since no standardized reporting, there's probably an Excel sheet or two that they have to maintain in order to properly label and categorize the data.

They also have to keep track of hundreds of plastic cards outstanding. It's an administrative nightmare—not to mention a fraud risk—as employees churn and as cards get lost or stolen and have to be replaced.

Construction companies also have seasonal or temp workers who need spending capabilities, but typically wouldn't receive a company credit card given their temporary status. That means they're also handling a reimbursement process for field expenses.

The expense management process might be somewhat easier for

the back office than managing multiple card programs, especially if they have newer expense management technology that can capture and code receipts.

The expense management system may not feed that data into the ERP system, which necessitates more manual data entry. Again you'll have to manually enter data. And, while there might be an ERP integration with the commercial card provider, there probably isn't one for merchant charge cards. You might have to manually enter transactions or import a flat file report.

Yet again, the result is a disjointed manual process. On top of that, you have people out spending money but you don't know how much and what for until you get their expense report. And asking field staff to file expense reports certainly isn't easy for them, and making things easier for them is the name of the game.

What fintechs provide is a complete solution of technology and services that consolidate all your card programs onto one platform. You deal with one vendor, have one administrative tool, and one predictable back-end experience. That eliminates many of the headaches of managing card programs from disparate providers. You have one consistent source for getting cards to people and managing cards outstanding. All of your statements look alike, so you can standardize reconciliation processes. Data is normalized so it's much easier to create dashboards and do analysis. You have one data source to integrate with your ERP.

With a much clearer view into your data, and with the time saved on administration and reconciliation, you can begin to optimize field spending. You can improve the timeliness and accuracy of job costing. You can get client bills out on time, thereby improving cash flow.

You can even issue virtual cards with time, category, and spending limits to temporary workers. This cuts down on the number of expense reports field workers need to do, as well as the plastic cards outstanding that have to be managed. It also brings that spending out of its own siloed process into the same card management process.

Credit cards are incredible financial and productivity tools. They offer working capital lending, rebates, and ultimate convenience at the point of sale. In construction, they've become invaluable for empowering field workers to minimize job delays.

Unfortunately, the efficiency they deliver to the field has historically been at a cost to the back office. The clear choice in construction is always to put the needs of the field ahead of all else. With today's fintech solutions, when it comes to field spending, accounts payable teams no longer need to choose one thing over the other. **RB**

*Matt Butler is the Senior VP of Construction Sales for Corpay Payables, which enables businesses to spend less through smarter payment methods*



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BY RURAL BUILDER STAFF

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Millboard decking and siding products combine the look of real wood with the features of a hybrid polyurethane. Millboard boards have a unique molded Lastane® surface which is produced using the same pliable material as the soles of shoes, allowing the patented lost-head fixings to disappear into the board and boasts slip-resistance even in wet conditions.

Beneath the Lastane® surface is a polymer resin core, reinforced with fiberglass for extra strength and material stability, making Millboard one of the most dependable decking materials available.

Millboard currently offers three decking collections:

- Enhanced Grain
- Weathered Oak
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[outlive.info](http://outlive.info)

### ■ LP BUILDING SOLUTIONS WEATHERLOGIC® SEAM & FLASHING SEALANT

LP Building Solutions (LP), a manufacturer of high performance building products, has announced the launch of LP WeatherLogic® Seam & Flashing Sealant, which is available for purchase across the U.S. This latest offering from LP is a solution designed for easy and effective sheathing adhesion with moisture management technology.

LP WeatherLogic Seam & Flashing Sealant is a liquid-applied flashing material certified to AAMA 714-19 and is the only liquid-applied sealant approved to seal the panel joints (seams) between LP WeatherLogic panels as part of the LP WeatherLogic system. The sealant can also be used to flash window and door openings, material transitions, and penetrations of any shape.

[www.lpcorp.com](http://www.lpcorp.com) **RB**



# 6 Steps to Nail Gun Safety

Avoid Costly and Painful Accidents



*This information was originally published in the document Nail Gun Safety: A Guide for Construction Contractors. It contains recommendations that are advisory in nature, informational in content, and are intended to assist employers in providing a safe and healthful workplace.*

**NAIL GUNS (NAILERS) ARE POWERFUL,** easy to operate, and boost productivity for nailing tasks. According to the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report from the CDC, nailers are also responsible for an estimated 37,000 emergency room visits each year.

Nail gun injuries are common in residential construction. About two-thirds of these injuries occur in framing and sheathing work. Injuries also often occur in roofing and exterior siding and finishing.

Here are six steps to help prevent injuries caused by nail guns.



## 1 USE THE FULL SEQUENTIAL TRIGGER

The full sequential trigger is always the safest trigger mechanism for the job. It reduces the risk of unintentional nail discharge and double fires—including injuries from bumping into co-workers.

At a minimum, provide full sequential trigger nailers for placement work where the lumber needs to be held in place by

hand. Examples include building walls and nailing blocking, fastening studs to plates and blocks to studs, and installing trusses.

Unintended nail discharge is more likely to lead to a hand or arm injury for placement work compared to flat work, where the lumber does not need to be held in place by hand. Examples of flat work include roofing, sheathing, and subflooring.

Consider restricting inexperienced employees to full sequential trigger nail guns starting out. Some contractors using more than one type of trigger on their jobs color-code the nail guns so that the type of trigger can be readily identified by workers and supervisors.

Some contractors have been reluctant to use full sequential triggers fearing a loss of productivity. How do the different types of triggers compare?

The one available study had 10 experienced framers stick-build two identical small (8 ft. x 10 ft.) wood structures—one using a sequential trigger nail gun and one using a contact trigger nail gun. Small structures were built in this study so that there would be time for each carpenter to complete two sheds.

Average nailing time using the contact trigger was 10% faster, which accounted for less than 1% of the total building time when cutting and layout was included.<sup>11</sup> However, in this study the trigger type was less important to overall productivity than who was using the tool; this suggests

productivity concerns should focus on the skill of the carpenter rather than on the trigger.

Although the study did not evaluate framing a residence or light commercial building, it shows that productivity is not just about the trigger. The wood structures built for the study did include common types of nailing tasks (flat nailing, through nailing, toe-nailing) and allowed comparisons for both total average nailing time and overall project time. The study did not compare productivity differences for each type of nailing task used to build the sheds.



## 2 PROVIDE TRAINING

Both new and experienced workers can benefit from safety training to learn about the causes of nail gun injuries and specific steps to reduce them. Be sure that training is provided in a manner that employees can understand. Here is a list of topics for training:

- How nail guns work and how triggers differ.
- Main causes of injuries – especially differences among types of triggers.
- Instructions provided in manufacturer tool manuals and where the manual is kept.
- Hands-on training with the actual nailers to be used on the job. This gives each

employee an opportunity to handle the nailer and to get feedback on topics such as:

- How to load the nail gun
- How to operate the air compressor
- How to fire the nail gun
- How to hold lumber during placement work
- How to recognize and approach ricochet-prone work surfaces
- How to handle awkward position work (e.g., toe-nailing and work on ladders)
- How best to handle special risks associated with contact and single actuation triggers such as nail gun recoil and double fires. For example, coach new employees on how to minimize double fires by allowing the nail gun to recoil rather than continuing to push against the gun after it fires.
  - What to do when a nail gun malfunctions.
  - Training should also cover items covered in the following sections of the guidance, such as company nail gun work procedures, personal protective equipment, injury reporting, and first aid and medical treatment.



### 3 ESTABLISH NAIL GUN WORK PROCEDURES

Contractors should develop their own nail gun work rules and procedures to address risk factors and make the work as safe as possible. Examples of topics for contractor work procedures include but are not limited to the following:

#### Do's...

- Make sure that tool manuals for the nailers used on the job are always available on the jobsite.
- Make sure that manufacturers' tool labels and instructions are understood and followed.
- Check tools and power sources before operating to make sure that they are in proper working order. Take broken or malfunctioning nail guns out of service immediately.

- Set up operations so that workers are not in the line of fire from nail guns being operated by co-workers.

- Check lumber surfaces before nailing. Look for knots, nails, straps, hangers, etc. that could cause recoil or ricochet.

- Use a hammer or positive placement nailer when nailing metal joinery or irregular lumber.

- For placement work, keep hands at least 12 inches away from the nailing point at all times. Consider using clamps to brace instead of your hands.

- Always shoot nail guns away from your body and away from co-workers.

- Always disconnect the compressed air when:

- Leaving a nailer unattended;
- Travelling up and down a ladder or stairs;
- Passing the nail gun to a co-worker;
- Clearing jammed nails;
- Performing any other maintenance on the nail gun.

- Recognize the dangers of awkward position work and provide extra time and precautions:

- Use a hammer if you cannot reach the work while holding the nailer with your dominant hand.

- Use a hammer or reposition for work at face or head height. Recoil is more difficult to control and could be dangerous.

- Use a hammer or full sequential trigger nailer when working in a tight space. Recoil is more difficult to control and double fires could occur with contact triggers.



- Take extra care with toe-nailing. Nail guns can slip before or during firing because the gun cannot be held flush against the work piece. Use a nail gun with teeth on the safety contact to bite into the work piece to keep the gun from slipping during the shot. Use the trigger to fire only after the safety contact piece is positioned.

- Recognize the dangers of nail gun work at height and provide extra time and precautions:

- Set up jobs to minimize the need for nailing at height.

- Consider using scaffolds instead of ladders.

- If work must be done on ladders, use full sequential trigger nailers to prevent nail gun injuries which could occur from bumping a leg while climbing up or down a ladder.

- Position ladders so you don't have to reach too far. Your belt buckle should stay between the side rails when reaching to the side.

- Maintain three points of contact with the ladder at all times to prevent a fall—this means that clamps may need to be used for placement work. Holding a nailer in one hand and the work piece with the other provides only two points of contact (your feet). Reaching and recoil can make you lose your balance and fall. Falls, especially with contact trigger nailers, can result in nail gun injuries.

#### Don'ts...

- Never bypass or disable nail gun safety features. This is strictly prohibited. Tampering includes removing the spring from the safety-contact tip and/or tying down, taping or otherwise securing the trigger so it does not need to be pressed. Tampering increases the chance that the nail gun will fire unintentionally both for the current user and anyone else who may use the nail gun. Nail gun manufacturers strongly recommend against tampering and OSHA requires that tools be maintained in a safe condition. There is NO legitimate reason to modify or disable a nail gun safety device.

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## SAFETY SPOT



- Encourage your workers to keep their fingers off the trigger when holding or carrying a nail gun. If this is not natural, workers should use a full sequential nail gun or set down the nailer until they begin to nail again.

- Never lower the nail gun from above or drag the tool by the hose. If the nail-gun hose gets caught on something, don't pull on the hose. Go find the problem and release the hose.

- Never use the nailer with the non-dominant hand.



### 4 PROVIDE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Safety shoes, which help protect workers' toes from nail gun injuries, are typically required by OSHA on residential construction sites. In addition, employers should provide, at no cost to employees, the following protective equipment for workers using nail guns:

- Hard hats
- High Impact eye protection – safety glasses or goggles marked ANSI Z87.1
- Hearing protection – either earplugs or earmuffs.



### 5 ENCOURAGE REPORTING AND DISCUSSION OF INJURIES AND CLOSE CALLS

Studies show that many nail gun injuries go unreported. Employers should ensure that their policies and practices encourage reporting of nail gun injuries. Reporting helps ensure that employees get medical attention (see #6 below). It also helps contractors to identify unrecognized job site risks that could lead to additional injuries if not addressed. Injuries and close calls provide teachable moments that can help improve crew safety.

If you have a safety incentive program, be sure that it does not discourage workers from reporting injuries. Employers that intentionally underreport work-related injuries will be in violation of OSHA's injury and illness recordkeeping regulation.



### 6 PROVIDE FIRST AID AND MEDICAL TREATMENT

Employers and workers should seek medical attention immediately after nail gun injuries, even for hand injuries that appear to be minimal. Studies suggest that 1 out of 4 nail gun hand injuries can involve some type of structural damage such as bone fracture. Materials such as nail strip glue or plastic or even clothing can get embedded in the injury and lead to infection. Barbs on the nail can cause secondary injury if the nail is removed incorrectly. These complications can be avoided by having workers seek immediate medical care.

This information was sourced from *Nail Gun Safety: A Guide for Construction Contractors*, a joint publication from the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Labor. [DHHS (NIOSH) Publication Number 2011-202, OSHA Publication Number 3459-8-11.] Download the entire Guide at <https://bit.ly/3kzQ68b>. **RB**

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755	753	751	749	747	745	743	737	735	733	729	727	725	723	717
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Aisle 700

748				
657	655	653	651	649

641
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732	730
635	631

517
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Aisle 600

656	652	648
557	553	549

642	636	
543	541	537

630
531

Aisle 500

556	554	552	548	
457	455	453	451	449

<b>NFBA DEMO AREA</b>
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431
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317
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Aisle 400

355	448
361	349

331
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Aisle 300

348
249

342	340	336
243	241	237

330	326	
233	231	227

117
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Aisle 200

256	252	250	248
155	153	151	149

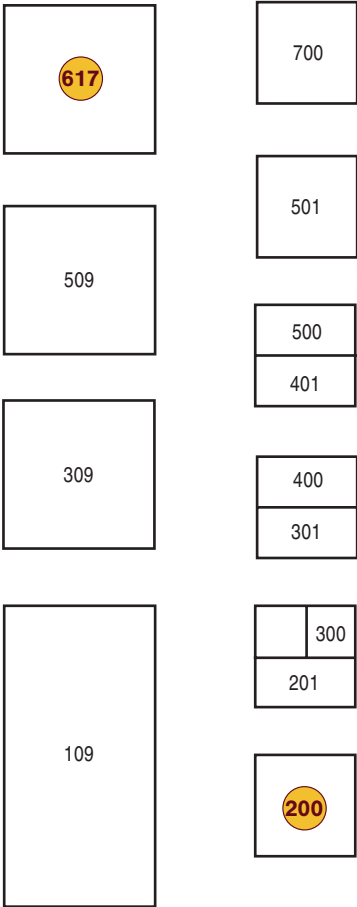
244	240	236	
145	143	141	137

232	230	228	226
133	131	127	

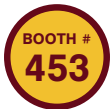
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170	164	158	152	146
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orders@directmetalsinc.com  
www.directmetalsinc.com

Direct Metals Inc. supplies fasteners, solid & vented foam closure strips & rolls, pipe flashings & other accessories to the post-frame, steel-frame & residential metal roofing industries. Key products include the #12 diameter SCAMP 304 SS Cap metal to wood long-life fastener & PANCLIP low profile Pancake & Wafer screws & panel clips for standing seam metal roofs. Butyl mastic, 304 SS rivets, windows, foil insulation & polycarbonate panels for skylight replacement round out the product line.



## Dr!pStop

**Booth 236**

10118 Settlement House Rd.  
Dayton, OH 45458  
937-660-6646  
937-999-3927 (fax)  
info@dripstop.com  
www.dripstop.com

For over 25 years, DRIPSTOP has been the absolute best way of dealing with condensation on non-insulated metal roofs. It has been tried and tested in every climate condition across the globe and has proven to be a simpler and more economical way. The membrane will absorb the water caused by condensation, thus preventing dripping from the roof. DRIPSTOP serves as an added layer of protection for the metal in corrosive environments while also improving inside and outside acoustic properties. Both impact and echo noises are reduced significantly.

# 2023 NFBA CONFERENCE & EXPO EXHIBITORS



## Eagle Metal Products

### Booth 264

802 N 3rd St  
Mabank, TX 75147  
972-350-9800  
972-888-9966 (fax)  
connect@eaglemetal.com  
www.eaglemetal.com

Serving the industry for over 30 years with connector plates, software, engineering services and manufacturing equipment, Eagle Metal is committed to providing exceptional products and customer service. Wall panel, floor truss, and roof truss manufacturers across the country are discovering the advantages of TrueBuild® software. Visit our booth to learn more. Eagle Metal...Engineered. Tested. True.®



## Everlast Roofing, Inc.

### Booth 549

10 Enterprise Court  
Lebanon, PA 17042  
888-339-0059  
717-270-6569 (fax)  
marketing@everlastroofing.com  
www.everlastroofing.com

For more than 20 years, Everlast Roofing, Inc. has continued to push the metal building component industry forward, leading to the creation and introduction of CECI® and Heat Forming. Understanding how essential quality roofing and siding is to your structure, Everlast shapes their steel roofing with laboratory-tested technologies such as AZM with Activate Technology and COLORBOND. These technologies allow for a self-sealing, protective barrier in the most vulnerable spots, such as scratches and cut edges, while providing a superior paint system tested in some of the harshest regions and formulated against the weather. It is easy to see why Everlast Roofing, Inc. continues to be the most innovative on the market.



## Flack Global Metals

### Booth 252

425 West Lakeside Ave., Ste 200  
Cleveland, OH 44113  
216-456-0700  
questions@flackglobalmetals.com  
www.flackglobalmetals.com

FGM designs and fulfills custom supply chains for OEMs using flat rolled steel, aluminum and stainless. FGM was established to fill a void in the steel industry. It provides customers with a geographically agnostic steel distribution process and offers industry-leading risk management services to OEMs. FGM is headquartered in Scottsdale, Arizona, and maintains offices in Cleveland, Chicago, and Atlanta.



## Frame Building News Magazine

### Booth 743

PO Box 255  
Iola, WI 54945  
marcus@shieldwallmedia.com  
www.framebuildingnews.com

Frame Building News has been devoted exclusively to coverage of the post-frame construction industry for over the past 30 years. It has more than 21,000 subscribers, most of which make their living in the post-frame industry. It is published five times a year.



## Graber Post Buildings Inc.

### Booth 336

7716 North 900 E  
Montgomery, IN 47558  
800-264-5013  
812-636-4936 (fax)  
info@graberpost.com  
www.graberpost.com

At Graber Post Buildings, we stock over 4,000 coils in order to accommodate the immediate demands of our customers. We have slitting capability and 'Cut to Length' service. Our coils are painted with AkzoNobel Ceram-A-Star 1050 - Energy Star. We have 22 brilliant colors with a 40- year paint warranty. Recently, we added AkzoNobel Ceram-A-Star Frost in six colors. Graber Post offers direct mill order and pickup for maximum cost efficiency. We also offer warehouse shipment from Graber Post. We can ship stand-alone coils or can combine coil shipping with other building materials for additional savings. Graber Post also offers complete building packages that can be delivered to your door.



## Hershey's Metal Meister

### Booth 317, 326

420 Progress Drive  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
877-289-3030  
Info@HersheysMM.com

We are the manufacturer of the Variobend trim folder, a high-quality folder built in the Midwest using both European and local engineering. We are also distributors of the Slinet coil storage system. Our service department is very prompt and parts are available locally should any problems arise.

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## Hixwood

**Booth 553**

N14685 Copenhaver Ave.  
Stanley, WI 54768  
715-644-0765  
715-644-0094 (fax)  
[www.hixwood.com](http://www.hixwood.com)

Hixwood is the premier source for all your coil, blank flat stock, and slit coil needs. We specialize in supplying the industry with products that are at the top of the spectrum. We have been proudly serving West Central Wisconsin, manufacturing quality building components for the past 23 years.



## I-Beam Sliding Doors

**Booth 548**

1000 E US Rte. 24  
Chenoa, IL 61726  
815-945-3667  
815-945-7073 (fax)  
[info@ibeamdoor.com](mailto:info@ibeamdoor.com)  
[www.ibeamdoor.com](http://www.ibeamdoor.com)

I-Beam Sliding Doors is a company founded on building heavy-duty, lightweight sliding doors for the post-frame industry. The company prides itself on supplying doors to fit your needs. "Doors That Work!" is its promise. Doors are now available with the 6000# Ultra Glide track and trolley system. The trolley adjuster system allows for accurate and easy adjustment for our Ultra Glide trolley. It cannot come out of adjustment. Enjoy a lifetime unlimited warranty on ultra-glide track and trolley systems! The real game changer is the Incredible Swing Door on display again this year with many improvements to the structure and operating system. This is a game-changing system for the door industry. The True automatic mode system has obstruction

detection and full velocity command mode built into the system for ultimate operation safety. It self-adjusts closed positioning so that call-back and never-ending adjustment frustration is over!



## IdeaRoom

**Booth 554**

910 W Main St., #200  
Boise, ID 83702  
208-954-8570  
[sales@idearoom.com](mailto:sales@idearoom.com)  
[www.idearoom.com](http://www.idearoom.com)

Today's consumer expects self-service and instant gratification. To remain competitive in a changing e-commerce landscape, shed, carport, and building companies must provide their customers with a superior shopping experience. IdeaRoom allows you to visually represent your buildings in 3D, providing your customers the tools to quickly configure the structure of their dreams without the assistance of a sales person. Generate qualified, high-value leads that are more likely to close faster and at higher average sales prices.



## Janus International Group

**Booth 557**

135 Janus International Blvd.  
Temple, GA 30179  
678-379-4475  
[www.JanusIntl.com](http://www.JanusIntl.com)

Janus International is the leading global manufacturer and supplier of turn-key self-storage, commercial and industrial building solutions including: roll up and swing doors, hallway systems, re-locatable storage units, and facility and door automation technologies. The Janus team operates out of several U.S. locations and five locations

internationally. Our team of experts are the ultimate resource for every aspect of your project, ranging from the exploration of planning phase all the way through an easy installation.



## Lakeside Construction Fasteners Inc.

**Booth 500**

6476 Highway 135 North  
Paragould, AR 72450  
800-537-4160  
[sales@lakeside-fasteners.com](mailto:sales@lakeside-fasteners.com)  
[www.lakeside-fasteners.com](http://www.lakeside-fasteners.com)

Lakeside Construction Fasteners, Inc. is a U.S.-owned and operated, FULL SERVICE, international fastener supplier and manufacturing company offering a vast array of construction fasteners, pipe flashing and foam alternative solutions. From Total Supply Chain Management to Total Project Management, coupled with U.S. based warehousing and sourcing of product from the Pacific Rim – Lakeside will provide a custom construction fastener or pipe flashing solution for your organization.



## Leland Industries, Inc.

**Booth 401**

95 Commander Blvd.  
Toronto, ON M1S3S9 Canada  
[www.lelandindustries.com](http://www.lelandindustries.com)

Leland manufactures a complete line of fasteners for the wood frame, metal roofing and steel frame industries. We are one of North America's largest manufacturers and suppliers to the post-frame market. We offer self-tapping and self-drilling sealing fasteners in lengths to 12 inches in #10, 12 and 14 diameters. Leland's fasteners are 100 percent North American made, in carbon or stainless steel and can be plated, coated or powder coated to match any panel color. Leland will match any steel painted panel warranty. NZF3000® Series Zinc-Flake plating will revolutionize corrosion protection. Hexavalent Chromium Free, ROHS and DFARS compliant.

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## Levi's Building Components

### Booth 227

400 Burkholder Drive  
Ephrata, PA 17522  
877-897-7020  
info@levisbuildingcomponents.com  
www.levisbuildingcomponents.com

Known for quality products, quick shipping and expertly filled orders, Levi's Building Components is a wholesale supplier and one stop for all your metal roofing needs. Check out our extensive line of fasteners, including Fastgrip, Metalgrip, ProCap and ProZ and our variety of snow retention guards in our Snow Defender line. Snow guards are available in 40-plus color offerings. Find roofing underlayment, venting, sealing and more in our accessory offerings including our exclusive FastVent Plus, FloVent and Roloshield lines. Visit our website and use our mobile-friendly Snow Defender Calculator.



## Marion Manufacturing

### Booth 161

201 S. Coble St.  
Marion, KS 66861  
620-382-3751  
www.marionmanufacturing.com

Marion Manufacturing Inc. adds the value to the metal. The company designs, fabricates, and installs custom manufacturing equipment, specializing in roll formers, decoilers, shears, stackers, etc. Also offered is a full service machine shop, with service on other brands of roll-form equipment provided.



## Maze Nails

### Booth 250

100 Church St.  
Peru, IL 61354  
800-435-5949  
www.mazenails.com

Maze Nails is the exclusive manufacturer of Stormguard® double hot-dipped galvanized nails with a lifetime warranty against rust. In business since 1848, Maze offers a full line of specialty nails in bulk for hand driving and in collated sticks and coils for popular pneumatic nailers. Maze has been serving the post-frame industry for many years, providing painted rubber washer nails for corrugated roofing and siding. Maze post-frame nails meet ASTM F1667 specification. In addition, Maze manufactures nails for fiber cement siding products, cedar and redwood sidings, fencing, decking and roofing. All Maze Nails are proudly 100% made in the USA.



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## McElroy Metal

### Booth 531

1500 Hamilton Rd.  
Bossier City, LA 71111  
800-562-3576  
info@McElroyMetal.com  
www.mcelroymetal.com

Designed for post-frame and residential applications, Mesa is a patent- and copyright-protected panel with a nearly invisible lap. Mesa's standard paint system is PVDF, the industry's best coating for long-term protection against chalking and fading. Matrix soffit panels, now available in 16-inch widths, are offered in colors that match McElroy's

wall and roof panels. McElroy Metal, a leading supplier of metal roofing and wall products to the post-frame industry, is a participating supporter of the National Frame Building Association.



## Metal Rollforming Systems

### Booth 717

4511 North Freya St.  
PO Box 6246  
Spokane, WA 99217  
888-284-6794  
info@mrsrollform.com  
www.mrsrollform.com

Metal Rollforming Systems (MRS) designs, manufactures, and sells innovative rollforming equipment. Established in 1993, MRS continues to develop its business through dedication to equipment innovations and reliability to its customers. MRS understands quality is important. By choosing MRS, you will be working with a company that knows quality and reinforces it in their equipment. We do it all: Development, manufacturing, and assembly are all done in-house. This allows us to price our equipment very competitively, making it affordable for our customers. Our product line includes roll formers, trim roll formers, and much more!



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RURALBUILDERMAGAZINE.COM

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## METALFORMING

### MetalForming, Inc.

#### Booth 117

100 International Dr.  
Peachtree City, GA 30269  
678-325-2313  
770-631-7776 (fax)  
info@metalforming-usa.net  
www.metalforming-usa.com

MetalForming is the leader in metal building and architectural sheet metal technology. With 25 years of selling and servicing high quality metal folders, shears, rollformers, slitters and curvers from the most respected manufacturers across the globe. We have the largest service and parts organization in the business. Schleichbach Quadro is the number one bestselling portable rollforming system in the world offering 11 profiles with instant change over.



### Mill Steel

#### Booth 431

2905 Lucerne Dr. SE.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
800-247-6455  
info@millsteel.com  
www.millsteel.com/building-products

Founded in 1959 by Harry Samrick, Mill Steel Co. is one of North America's premier flat-rolled steel suppliers. Headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Mill Steel operates five service center locations across the nation. Mill Steel excels at serving some of the world's most demanding industries through its dedication to superior quality, delivery, and performance. The company continues to grow by consistently operating with integrity, putting its customers and associates first. Mill Steel proudly supplies Sherwin-Williams, AkzoNobel, and PPG paint systems, as well as any customer-specific coatings.

With excellent customer service and same-day or next-day turnaround time, Mill Steel is your one-stop shop!



### MWI Components

#### Booth 200

1015 32nd Avenue West  
Spencer, IA 51301  
800-360-6467  
800-361-3452 (fax)  
csr@mwicomponents.com  
www.mwicomponents.com

MWI is a leading manufacturer/supplier of post frame products. With 100+ steel colors, almost 30 aluminum colors and 50+ powder coat colors, the combinations are endless. Create beautiful buildings with MWI's cupolas, ridge-vents, soffit, trim, round/square track & accessories, and stall systems & complete your building's aesthetic with Dutch or Arcadian Sliding Doors. They also supply Uni-Vent®, sealants & retrofit products, and polycarbonate/PVC panels. Plus, MWI recently began manufacturing their own foil insulation, Infinity Shield®! Call MWI Components today at 800-360-6467 to make your buildings stand out from the rest!



### New Century Bank

#### Booth 141

www.newcenturybankna.com

New Century Bank is dedicated to the post-frame industry with mortgages and leasing nationwide. It specializes in housing construction and permanent mortgages with metal siding and roofing. It offers fixed rate mortgages and low-down payment construction loans. Its positive approach to post-frame financing will make a difference in client decisions to purchase.



### Northern Building Components

#### Booth 451

44815 CR 388  
Bloomington, MI 49026  
269-521-4554 ext. 1

Northern Building Components (NBC) is a manufacturer/distributor of post-frame building components. We provide US- and Canadian-based customers with great customer service and quality items including ridge vents, premium closures, reflective insulation, pipe flashing, Emseal products, snow guards, sealants, fasteners, metal-to-wood/roofing screws, entry doors, and other miscellaneous items for post-frame buildings. Plus, we have cupolas in 18 colors and 3 sizes in stock and ready to ship.



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### Novagard

#### Booth 230

5109 Hamilton Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44114  
216-881-8111  
216-881-6977  
products@novagard.com  
www.novagard.com

Novagard is a Woman Owned innovator and manufacturer of silicone sealants for the construction industry with product offerings for use in a variety of roofing applications to meet the needs of metal roof manufacturers, dealers, building material wholesalers, and contractors. ISO 9001:2015 (QMS with Design) | IATF 16949:2016 (QMS with Design) | Certified WBE | www.novagard.com



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## Onduline North America

**Booth 660**

4900 Ondura Drive  
Fredericksburg, VA 22407  
540-898-7000  
TMSProSales@onduline-usa.com  
us.onduline.com/pro

Founded in Virginia in 1976, Onduline North America, Inc. is a member of the International Onduline Group, a global leader in roofing materials and building products. Manufactured in the United States, TUFTEX Master Series provides quality corrugated polycarbonate and PVC panels for a variety of agricultural, industrial and professional plastics applications.



## Palram Americas

**Booth 729**

9735 Commerce Circle  
Kutztown, PA 19530  
800-999-9459  
contactus.usa@palram.com  
www.palram.com/us

Palram is a leading manufacturer of PVC and polycarbonate panels. Palram's SUNSKY® polycarbonate corrugated panels are the leading daylighting solution for skylight, sidelight and roofing. Easily incorporate natural light into your project with SUNSKY for reduced energy costs. With the world's largest selection of corrugated profiles, SUNSKY matches virtually any metal profile, or custom match using our MetalMatch technology. Palram also offers chemical and moisture resistant PVC panels; AG-TUF® corrugated liner panels; DURACLAD® interlocking multiwall panels and new PALCLAD™ PRO solid PVC wall and ceiling panels for use in interior agricultural, commercial, and residential applications.



## Perma-Column, LLC

**Booth 537**

400 Carol Ann Ln.  
Ossian, IN 46777  
800-622-7190  
Mark.Stover@permacolumn.com  
www.permacolumn.com

Perma-Columns are 5-foot precast concrete columns that keep wood out of the ground, ensuring your building's foundation will never rot. They are the first product to combine the economy of post-frame construction with the durability of a concrete foundation.



## Planet Saver Industries, LLC

**Booth 267**

New Holland, PA 17519  
610-377-3270  
717-355-9813 (fax)  
www.advancedpostsolutions.com

GreenPost from Planet Saver Industries offers a unique non-toxic concept for protecting in-ground wood from the harmful effects of ground-contact decay, at the same time providing uplift restraint. GreenPost is laboratory proven, termite tested and building code compliant and is applied to posts using a specialized production machine so posts arrive ready for installation. GreenPost also complements pressure-treated posts by providing an environmentally friendly barrier, helping to keep the preservatives in the post longer.



## Plyco Corporation / East Coast Fasteners

**Booth 109**

500 Industrial Drive  
Elkhart Lake, WI 53020  
800-558-5895  
marketing@plyco.com  
www.plyco.com

For over 50 years, Plyco Corporation has been a leading supplier of products to the post-frame, metal clad building and commercial construction industries. Plyco manufactures and distributes a wide variety of products including metal doors, windows, horse stall systems, ventilation products, fasteners and more. For many customers, we provide one-stop shopping for a majority of their building component needs. Plyco Corporation has a true spirit of quality in all aspects and strives for customer satisfaction for all products.

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## Post Protector, Inc.

**Booth 231**  
PO Box 187  
Pottsville, PA 17901  
570-624-7030  
570-624-7031 (fax)  
ken@postprotector.com  
www.postprotector.com

Post Protector is a slide-on barrier system, delivering serious post-decay protection. Post Protector tackles post longevity concerns by eliminating both soil/concrete-to-post contact and chemical migration. Post Protector retains the simplicity, affordability, speed and strength of typical post-in-ground construction techniques. Horizontal perimeter ribs, in conjunction with provided hardware, yield substantial post uplift protection, and best of all, installation is a snap. It's simple: By keeping soil out and treatment in, Post Protector dramatically improves post-frame foundations.



## PowerLift Hydraulic Doors

**Booth 330**  
www.powerliftdoors.com

PowerLift has built hydraulic doors continuously since 1992. It has 45+ local support centers that manufacture, deliver, and install every single door. PowerLift strives to make your building project and your long-term ownership experience simple and hassle free.



Progressive Metals

## Progressive Metals

**Booth 453**  
PO Box 685  
Cornwall, PA 17016  
855-835-9762  
www.progressivemetals.com

Progressive Metals maintains one of the largest inventories of coil in the industry while providing dependable service. With our strategically located facilities, you can expect fast, professional delivery service on time, every time. Progressive Metals offers a wide variety of colors in 28-gauge coil and a full line of 26- and 24-gauge slit coil.



## Red Bud Industries

**Booth 302**  
200 B and E Industrial Drive  
Red Bud, IL 62278  
618-282-3801  
rbi@redbudindustries.com  
www.redbudindustries.com

Our Slitting Lines have been specifically designed with metal building producers in mind. These Slitters are simple to set up and easy to operate. They offer a compact, floor-mounted system that is ideal for quick installation and easy maintenance. We also offer a wide range of Cut-to-Length / Multi-Blanking Lines that come standard with some of the most advanced features available on the market.



## rFOIL Insulation (Covertch)

**Booth 640**  
279 Humberline Dr.  
Etobicoke, ON M9W 5T6  
Canada  
800-837-8961  
www.rFOIL.com

rFOIL Reflective Insulation is the leading manufacturer of reflective insulation to the post-frame, metal building and metal roofing industry. rFOIL is specially designed to reduce radiant heat gain/ loss and eliminate condensation in metal buildings. rFOIL utilizes a metalized aluminum surface(s) for outstanding thermal resistance, and an inner core of high-strength bubble to reduce condensation. rFOIL's white interior facing contains UV inhibitors and antioxidant additives for long-term durability and resistance to cracking or flaking. rFOIL products are RIMA-Verified and tested to the highest ASTM standards.



## Richland Laminated Columns LLC

**Booth 460**  
8252 State Route 13  
Greenwich, OH 44837  
419-895-0036  
419-895-0062 (fax)  
twilson@richlandcolumns.com

We are your "One Stop Pole Shop" manufacturer/wholesale. We manufacture and distribute Glulam Poles, Nail-Lam Poles, Perma-Columns, Sturdi-Wall Brackets, GreenPost (Polyethylene Plastic Wrap), Post Protector/Grade Guard Sleeves and The Footing Pad. With several different foundation options available for your post frame building, turn to Richland Laminated Columns for the most trusted and recognized products available. Please call for more information or to find a dealer near you.

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## Rigidply Rafters

**Booth 241**

PA Location  
701 E. Linden St.  
Richland, PA 17087  
717-866-6581

MD Location  
1283 Joni Miller Rd.  
Oakland, MD 21550  
301-334-3977  
[www.rigidply.com](http://www.rigidply.com)

Rigidply Rafters has improved the quality of post-frame buildings by manufacturing and distributing the original 100% glue laminated post. By specifying Rigidply Posts, you guarantee the labor-saving and quality advantages of true glulam posts. Not only are glulam posts lighter, straighter, and stronger than solid-sawn posts, but they minimize cracking and splitting. When planning your next building project, Rigidply Rafters promises to supply integrity, quality, and service with your glulam posts.



## S-5!

**Booth 449**

8750 Walker Rd.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80908  
719-332-3983  
719-332-3983 (fax)  
[jhaddock@s-5.com](mailto:jhaddock@s-5.com)  
[www.s-5.com](http://www.s-5.com)

Founded by a veteran metal roof expert, S-5! has been the leading authority on metal roof attachment solutions since 1992. S-5!'s zero-penetration clamps and lifetime brackets attach ancillary items to standing seam and exposed-

fastened metal roofs respectively, while maintaining roof integrity and warranties.



## Safe-Way Garage Doors LLC

**Booth 648**

3814 E. US 30  
Warsaw, IN 46580  
574-267-4861  
[bthompson@safewaydoor.com](mailto:bthompson@safewaydoor.com)  
[www.safewaydoor.com](http://www.safewaydoor.com)

Safe-Way Garage Doors is a leading manufacturer of quality residential, commercial, and industrial overhead garage doors in steel, wood, and aluminum. Headquartered in Indiana, Safe-Way also operates facilities in Tennessee and Missouri with distribution throughout North America and Canada. Residential and commercial doors are available in multiple configurations including polyurethane and polystyrene insulated, un-insulated, up to 11 colors in steel, and multiple powder coat colors in aluminum.



## SFS Group USA, Inc.

**Booth 630**

1045 Spring Street  
Reading, PA 19610  
610-376-5751  
[us.construction@sfs.com](mailto:us.construction@sfs.com)  
[us.sfs.com](http://us.sfs.com)

SFS is a premier manufacturer and supplier of fasteners for post-frame and metal building industries. Our wood screws, including our new and innovative Woodgrip+, in a variety of materials, thread styles and point geometries meet the requirements and demands of today's buildings. ConnexTite™ structural wood screws are ideal for single and multi-ply truss, column header and joist applications. Accessories include VistaVent® ridge ventilation, VistaFoam® closures, tapes and sealants, and pipe flashing making SFS a one-source supplier for metal panel attachment solutions.



## Sherwin-Williams Coil Coatings

**Booth 635**

888-306-2645  
[coilhelp@sherwin.com](mailto:coilhelp@sherwin.com)  
[www.coil.sherwin.com](http://www.coil.sherwin.com)

Sherwin-Williams has been a leader in the art and science of metal coatings that excel in both beauty and function. High-quality, field-proven options including Fluoropon®, a 70% PVDF, and WeatherXL™, an SMP coating, each known for its time-tested reliability. Each coating comes to life through a full palette of colors and textures to meet the most demanding environmental requirements and designs. We provide protection against weathering and damage that allows your project to endure.



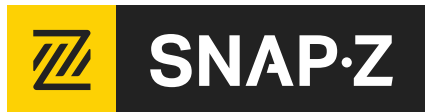
## SmartBuild LLC

**Booth 631**

PO Box 20627  
Boulder, CO 80308  
303-443-8033  
[sales@keymark.com](mailto:sales@keymark.com)  
[www.smartbuildsystems.com](http://www.smartbuildsystems.com)

SmartBuild Systems is the construction industry's only complete design system for pole barn buildings and roofing. This simple, web-based software quickly generates a 3D model, material lists, pricing, proposals, and construction documents for almost any post-frame structure or roof. If you supply the post frame industry with metal sheathing or complete packages, or metal roofing to the roofing industry, let us show you why SmartBuild is the marketing tool for cementing your relationship with these communities!

# 2023 NFBA CONFERENCE & EXPO EXHIBITORS



## Snap-Z

### Booth 248

330 Swamp Road  
Morgantown, PA 19543  
717-572-0910  
info@standingseamroofvent.com  
www.standingseamroofvent.com

Most standing seam ridge vents are too complicated to install. With SNAP-Z, installation is easy, and you can relax knowing that it won't fail over the lifetime of the roof and will vent adequately, in turn giving you satisfied customers and no call-backs. SNAP-Z has undergone rigorous testing by independent labs to ensure its standing seam ridge vent will withstand the worst elements and maintain the beautiful hidden fastener look that everyone wants. SNAP-Z currently supports 1", 1-1/2", 1-3/4", and 2" profiles. Have a more complex ventilation situation? Get in touch with SNAP-Z to see what can be specifically designed for you. "Do It Right."



## ST Fastening Systems

### Booth 301

6357 Reynolds Road  
Tyler, TX 75708  
800-352-4864  
800-352-3940 (fax)  
www.stfasteningsystems.com

ST Fastening Systems manufactures steel-frame and post-frame fasteners for agricultural, industrial, commercial, and residential metal roof and sidewall applications. Product strengths are drill point quality and corrosion resistance, as shown by the WOODBINDER MB drill point and ZXL zinc-aluminum alloy molded head. Both products are enhanced by a powder coating paint system. Solid and vented closure strip systems, pipe flashings, and other accessories round out the product line.



## SWI Machinery

### Booth 509

85 Howell Ave.  
Fairburn, GA 30213  
770-891-4388  
info@swimachinery.com  
www.swimachinery.com

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## THE DETAILS:

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**Building Size:** 80x100

**Materials:**

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**Roof Panels:** Metal Exteriors

29 Ga. Parallel Rib

**Doors:** Plyco Series 92 Entry Doors

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**Windows:** Silverline

**Fasteners:** Levi's Pro Z

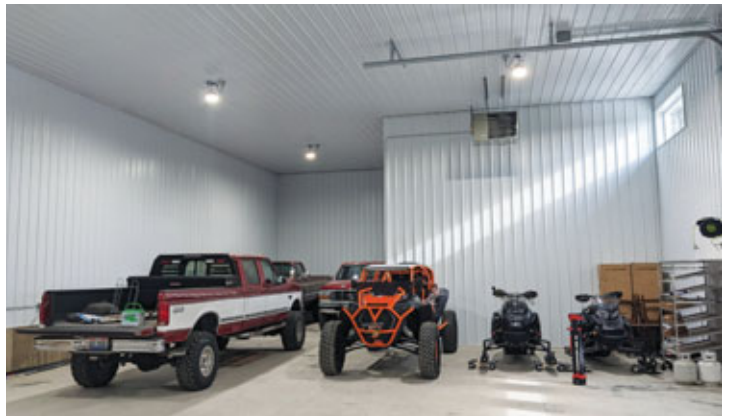
**Insulation:** Spray Foam

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# Running on Fumes?

## Diesel Prices Explained



**FOR DIESEL BUYERS, PRICE RELIEF** can't come soon enough. Essential to truck fleet operations and a costly drain on business profitability, the distillate fuel oil was selling for a historic high of \$5.75 a gallon this past summer, more than double the \$2.40 level of two years earlier.

Prices have since moderated, declining to \$5.21 by late 2022. And more relief is on the way. The U.S. Energy Information Administration projects a price dip to \$4.41 by the Fall of 2023.

One reason for the price moderation is a decline in the panic-buying that occurred in the initial months of the Russia-Ukraine war. Another is a move by refineries to retool their operations for greater diesel capacity. Another a third is a general deceleration in the global economy which results in declining demand.

### **THE COSTS OF WAR**

While diesel prices have moderated, they remain sky high by historic standards. Price estimates for the Fall of 2023 remain some 47% above typical pre-pandemic levels (see chart). And there's no disagreement about the primary reason. "Diesel prices are elevated right now largely because of the Russia-Ukraine war," said Clark Williams-Derry, an analyst at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis. "What's happening in Russia is affecting global energy markets in a very deep and profound way."

Russia produces about 10% of the oil from which the world refines diesel. Europe is especially dependent on Russia for its supply. "The war has disrupted the European market, either

completely eliminating it or dramatically reducing it,” said Allen Schaeffer, Executive Director, Diesel Technology Forum. “That means that folks in Europe and other countries that might have done business with Russia in the past now are scrambling to find fuel in other places.” Spooked by disruptions in natural gas deliveries from Russia, Europe is also stockpiling diesel in case it’s needed for home heating this winter.

Europe’s increasing demand for diesel affects prices everywhere, given the commodity status of oil and its distillates. “One nation’s demand affects everyone,” said Schaeffer. “We are seeing a whole trickle-down scenario as more people try to use a product that has become less available.”

The global nature of diesel is responsible for its elevated pricing in the U.S., despite the nation’s export of roughly one million barrels of the distillate every day. “The US is a net exporter of oil and petroleum products but is still as dependent and as vulnerable as ever to global market forces,” said Williams-Derry. “We don’t get a cheaper price just because we are producing more oil or because we have a lot of refinery capacity. We pay the same price as anyone else who is avoiding Russian oil.”

**UPWARD PRESSURES**

While the Ukraine war is the major driver of higher diesel costs, it’s not the only one. “A number of factors have put upward pressure on retail prices,” said Andrew M. Lipow, President of Houston-based Lipow Oil Associates. “One is the post-pandemic reopening of economies around the world.” People are traveling more, and that means greater demand for the jet fuel which pulls from the same oil resources required for diesel. And more fuel is needed for the greater number of trucks delivering capital goods and consumer merchandise.

The rebound in global demand is happening at a time when many refineries have cut back production or closed. “We don’t have as much capacity to produce diesel fuel today as we did pre-pandemic,” said Schaeffer. “COVID caused a lot of layoffs at refineries around the world. It also caused a delay in the startup of new refining capacity which would have increased supply.”

The U.S. possesses some specific additional drivers of fuel prices. “For the last few years, even before the Russian crisis, diesel has sold at a premium to gasoline in the U.S.,” said Williams-Derry. “One reason is higher federal and state taxation. Another is the shift to lower sulfur diesel. That’s been very good for clean air but has also slightly increased the price of diesel relative to gasoline.”

**LOW INVENTORIES**

The fact that distillate inventory is running low around the world has only added to upward pricing pressure. “As economies have recovered, the supply of crude hasn’t kept up with demand,” said Lipow. “For all intents and purposes, diesel levels are the lowest they’d been since 1951. The world has been living on

**Retail Diesel Prices  
(\$ per gallon)**

October 2020:	\$2.39
January 2021:	\$2.64
April 2021:	\$3.14
July 2021:	\$3.33
October 2021:	\$3.47
January 2022:	\$3.72
April 2022:	\$5.12
July 2022:	\$5.49
October 2022:	\$5.21
* January 2023:	\$5.29
* April 2023:	\$4.84
* July 2023:	\$4.43
* October 2023:	\$4.41
* December 2023:	\$4.47



***Diesel prices are expected to decline over the coming year but remain at elevated levels.***

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration. \* Projections.

borrowed time if you will, by drawing down inventories.”

Diesel supplies are tight in most of the regions of the U.S., noted Lipow. Nationally, inventory supply has been running at 25 days, down from its normal 30- to 35-day level. Of particular concern is the East Coast, a region with high population centers, high heating oil demands, and a lack of refining capacity. In late 2022 the region had only 13 days’ supply of diesel, down from 26 a year earlier. One exception to the trend is the Gulf Coast with its robust refining capacity and limited requirement for home heating.

In a perfectly fluid market one would expect dwindling inventories and growing demand to stimulate higher production at the world’s refineries. Yet there are roadblocks, one of which is a carry-over from the worst days of the pandemic. “At the peak of the pandemic in 2020, diesel demand had gone down by 30%, and refineries were losing tons of money,” said Lipow. “At the same time, they were getting older. In the U.S. they were also facing more environmental restrictions, especially in California.”

Refinery operators were put on the spot as the pandemic softened demand for their products and the Biden administration moved away from fossil fuels. “Suppose you’re looking at spending several hundreds of millions of dollars, perhaps even a billion dollars, to comply with new environmental regulations,” noted Lipow. “In an environment where the demand for your product is

going down, you may well decide to simply shut down.”

The slim levels of diesel inventory leave the market vulnerable to unexpected shocks. “All you need is one little hiccup in the supply chain or a problem with a pipeline or a big cold snap in the Northeast,” said Schaeffer. “The next thing you know higher prices and shortages are back in the news.”

## GROWING CAPACITY

Not all is doom and gloom in the energy picture. Despite the cost and the delays required for creating new refineries or upgrading older ones, some new capacity is coming on stream in the first half of 2023. “Kuwait and Oman are building brand new large refineries,” said Lipow. “Two new refineries have just come on stream in China. And we’ve got another large refinery coming on stream in Nigeria. Closer to home, Mexico is building a new refinery, known as Dos Bocas, coming online in the next couple of years.” Lipow figures these new refineries will produce some 2 million barrels a day, equivalent to about 1.5% to 2% increase in world refining capacity.

Another contributor to an increase in diesel supply is the green energy movement. “We are seeing a tremendous growth

in investments to produce biodiesel and renewable diesel,” said Schaeffer. “Having more renewable biofuels helps not just keep the price down a little bit, but also it helps with more supply being available.”

Major oil refiners jumping onto the green bandwagon include Phillips 66, Marathon Petroleum, and Chevron. All are investing in new refining capacity or transitioning older petroleum operations to make more renewable diesel. Other companies such as Marathon and Diamond Green Diesel are joining the effort. All told, the past year has seen the production of 3.2 billion gallons of green diesel, about two thirds of which was biodiesel. Schaeffer figures that by 2030 production should top 15 billion gallons.

Currently, renewable diesel and biodiesel account for about 5% of U.S. diesel demand, and there has already been some favorable effects. The Clean Fuels Alliance America, an organization of biodiesel producers, estimates that renewable fuels account for a little over 3 cents a gallon of price suppression.

The larger benefits of green energy, however, are expected to be more medium than short term in nature. Industry watchers feel that it will take three to five years before a significant growth

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in green diesel production will assist the broader diesel market.

A larger concern is the effect the green energy production may have on food availability—particularly soybeans. “Currently, renewable diesel and biodiesel production consume roughly 35% of soybean oil production,” said Lipow. “And there is enough renewable diesel capacity coming online this year and next to increase demand for soybean oil by another 10%. We can certainly divert crops to fuel, but that gets us back into the debate about food for fuel.”

Another technology, electric vehicles, may also help loosen the diesel market. “The growth of EVs may lessen the demand for gasoline,” said Schaeffer. “And that might lead refineries to adjust their output of finished products.”

Green energy initiatives aside, a deceleration in global economies may also help bolster diesel supply. “We have been seeing a little bit of a slow down on freight demand in the trucking sector,” said Schaeffer. “The economy and inflation seem to be taking a bit of a toll there, and that should allow some of the inventories to come back up a bit.”

**SLOWING ECONOMIES**

According to estimates from L.E.K. Consulting, fuel can account for up to 25% of a typical trucking operation’s operating costs. That can rise to 35% to 40% in a high fuel price environment. It follows that the price moderation forecast for the coming months will come as welcome relief. “We feel like we’ve hit the ceiling now and are just going to be settling down over the next six months,” said Schaeffer. “We’re going to be paying a higher rate for diesel than we’ve been accustomed to. But it won’t be as high as where we are now.”

Even so, uncertainties in the global operating environment mean that the future of diesel availability and pricing will depend largely on the answers to some open questions. How will the world deal with and recover from the Ukraine War? How will Europe handle the shock of a drop in oil supply? Will sanctions and tensions escalate, or will Russia experience an internal political shift and reach an accommodation?

“If you’re trying to predict what’s going to be happening in fuel markets, this is a particularly unusual time,” said Williams-Derry. “It’s not just about supply and demand. It’s also about politics.”

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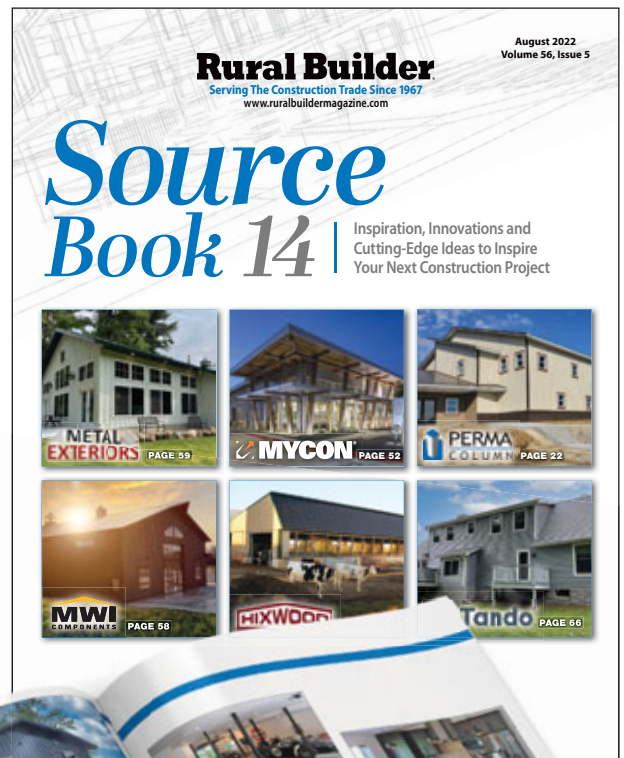




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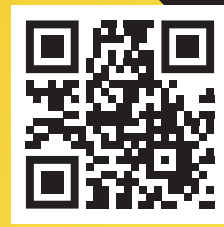
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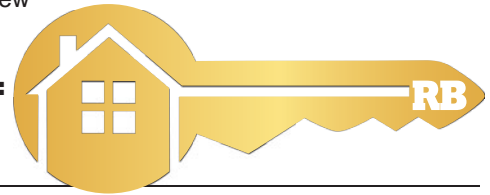
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### HOW DO YOU AVOID DUST ACCUMULATION WHICH CAN CUT DOWN ON REFLECTIVITY?

If dust accumulation is a problem, it is often because the insulation is laying flat across the floor of the attic. Then, over time the dust accumulates and reduces the thermal performance of the product.

In fact, since dust is normally light gray in color, which is also reflective, it is usually not problematic unless you have a lot of dust or it is darker in color.

If you install the product so that dust won’t lay on it, that will solve dust problems. When the product is installed directly to the decking, on the side of or over the truss, or on the underside of the rafter. The downward facing side of the product is the operative surface that provides the radiant barrier benefit and when installed per these recommendations, dust is not an issue.

### HOW DO YOU AVOID CONDENSATION?

Place the radiant barrier on top of the porous insulation, whether that’s EPS or batt, the radiant barrier protects it and keeps it from being exposed to the dew point, the point at which the air cools enough to allow condensation. Since foil insulation does not compress and lose effectiveness from moisture, you will want the radiant barrier to be the material that protects other



PHOTO COURTESY OF MWI COMPONENTS

insulating material. Otherwise, you can have a “wet blanket” sitting on top of the reflective insulation.

Applying the overhead install methods of direct to the deck, to the side of or over the truss or the underside of the rafter should eliminate condensation also.

### HOW SHOULD RADIANT BARRIERS BE INSTALLED IN COLD CLIMATES?

Most common insulation materials work by slowing conductive heat flow and – to a lesser extent – convective heat flow. Radiant barriers and reflective insulation systems work by reducing radiant heat gain. To be effective, the reflective surface must face an air space, a thermal break, between the heat source and the radiant barrier. Generally as little as 3/4” will do the trick.

A radiant barrier works best in a cold climate with another insulating material. Batt can be installed or foam insulation can be used. It is especially important to place the radiant barrier to protect other insulation. Often rigid foam panels faced on one or both sides with reflective foil are used for an all-in-one install.

Installing more insulation in a building increases the R-value and the resistance to heat flow. In general, increased

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insulation thickness will proportionally increase the R-value. However, as the installed thickness increases for loose-fill insulation, the settled density of the product increases due to compression of the insulation under its own weight. Because of this compression, loose-fill insulation R-value does not change proportionately with thickness. To determine how much insulation you need for your climate, you may consult a local insulation contractor.

Unlike traditional insulation materials,

radiant barriers are highly reflective materials that re-emit radiant heat rather than absorbing it, reducing cooling loads. As such, a radiant barrier has no inherent R-value.

**WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO INSTALL A RADIANT BARRIER TO AVOID CONDUCTIVITY ISSUES?**

One way to avoid conductivity problems in the roof is to source roof decking (WSB or plywood) with aluminum foil

laminated to it.

An important consideration in installation of insulation is the thermal breaks that are inherent in the structure of the building. For example, if you have studs placed every 16”, and you insulate between them, then a significant portion of your structure is not insulated. To solve this problem, simply wrap the entire envelope with insulation. **RB**

**RURAL BUILDER EXPRESSES ITS SINCERE APPRECIATION TO THE FOLLOWING SOURCES FOR SHARING THEIR EXPERTISE AND INSIGHTS.**

- Mark Aspenson, Thermal Building Concepts
- Wes Hall, Retail Sales & Marketing Manager, Reflectix
- Energy Star



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**RB FEB 2023**

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## CSI: How did Rural Builder Readers do in 2022 (compared to 2021)?

The numbers between Rural Builder subscribers and All Respondents are similar. The on consistent difference in sales volume (both gross sales and units) The “Up Somewhat” is about 10% higher for Rural Builder subscribers. The additional “Up Somewhat” responses were from the “The Same” and “Down Somewhat” categories. **RB**

Gross Sales (Rural Builder Subscribers/All Respondents)		
	Subscribers	All Respondents
Up significantly	23%	22%
Up somewhat	55%	45%
The same	14%	19%
Down somewhat	3%	11%
Down significantly	3%	2%

Units Sold (Rural Builder Subscribers/All Respondents)		
	Subscribers	All Respondents
Up significantly	16%	16%
Up somewhat	54%	45%
The same	16%	26%
Down somewhat	11%	11%
Down significantly	2%	1%



Profitability (Rural Builder Subscribers/All Respondents)		
	Subscribers	All Respondents
Up significantly	15%	13%
Up somewhat	47%	48%
The same	21%	27%
Down somewhat	13%	11%
Down significantly	1%	2%

## CALENDAR

BY RURAL BUILDER STAFF

### FEBRUARY

**12-15**, Sprayfoam Convention & Expo, Daytona Beach, Florida. The largest annual convention and trade show in the U.S. dedicated to Spray Polyurethane Foam. [sprayfoam.org/sprayfoam23](https://sprayfoam.org/sprayfoam23)

**22-24**, Frame Building Expo, Louisville, Kentucky, The National Frame Building Association’s Annual Post-Frame Construction event. [nfba.org](https://nfba.org)

### MARCH

**7-9**, International Roofing Expo., Dallas, Texas. The premier roofing and exteriors event. [theroofingexpo.com](https://theroofingexpo.com)

**14-18**, CONEXPO, Las Vegas, Nevada. North America’s largest construction trade show. [conexpoconagg.com](https://conexpoconagg.com) **RB**



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