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FLIP TO METAL BUILDER & METALCON PREVIEW

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Traveling Through the World of the Amish

MY BROTHERS AND OUR WIVES were looking for a cabin to put on our family land, which is primarily but not exclusively for hunting. We almost bought a log cabin to be reassembled on site, we looked at modular homes, we priced out moving an existing house, and then we gave up ... until my wife and I decided to visit a 16x42-foot cabin, made in Central Wisconsin by a really nice young Amish man named Jerry. We walked in and bought it at first sight.

We'll discuss the opportunities in cabins for builders and contractors another time, but here's what I learned about how the Amish are working in this digital world and this world of increasing prices, even in the cabin area of the marketplace.

• Many Amish builders are looking for reliable, trustworthy, and fair partners in marketing and financing.

• They also need a reliable and trustworthy moving partner, and a builder-contractor to finish their installation on-site, to basically act as the GC and orchestrate the foundation, electrical, and plumbing.

• Amish builders know their quality isn't being met at the same price by stick-built in today's market. My builder thought our price was high, at first blush. Then he couldn't match Jerry's custom, high-end cabin with his stick-built price and said "yeah, just buy it."

More on this topic in future issues. Let me know your thoughts and we'll factor them into our coverage. — Rocky



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Ridgeline Safety Systems offers ingenious ways to create tie-offs. Photo courtesy of Ridgeline Safety Systems.

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Gary Reichert,
Publisher, Shield Wall Media

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When Your Career Ends...What's Next?

You Don't Have to Be 20 Years Old to Start a Career in the Trades

BY LINDA SCHMID

JASON TAYLOR HAD A GREAT time growing up in the small country town of Bunloa, Pennsylvania. It was a one-stop-sign town where everyone knew everyone else. It was quiet and safe, and he and his buddies hung out at the Monogahela River.

School was OK, but what Taylor really loved was martial arts. He worked odd construction jobs and worked on masonry crews taking mixed martial arts classes until he went professional. It was a dream come true!

While Taylor enjoyed the career he had chosen, the reality is that this is the kind of career that doesn't last long. One day the competition is too much for a 30-year old body and it's time to move on. When that time came, Taylor had no degree or formal training to fall back on. It left him feeling like he still didn't know what he wanted to do when he grew up.

One thing he did know; he wasn't happy where he was. He was in his mid-thirties, working a janitorial job at the community college. Taylor wanted a family of his own, but he didn't feel financially secure enough to start one. Further, he wanted a job that required more brain work; he'd already had a career that was all physical and he didn't want to repeat that pattern.

One of the guys Taylor worked with was in the heating and cooling trade. He saw what Joe did and he thought he would like to try it. Realizing that the Community College of Allegheny County with its HVAC program was only about 15 minutes away, he decided that this might be the way to find better opportunities.

While he talked himself into going back to school, he was still apprehensive because he figured he would be the oldest guy in class. The student population, however, turned out to be a mix; some males, some females, different ethnicities, and a guy in his late fifties who was picking up a second career.



Classes were three nights a week and they were very hands-on. He found himself looking forward to them. The students worked with furnaces and different equipment, taking it apart and putting it back together. There were lectures and book work too, but Taylor loved actually putting the knowledge to work.

He came across the mikeroweWORKS scholarship on a bulletin board in one of his classes. He didn't qualify for many scholarships, and as an adult paying his own way through the two-year program, he thought it was a great opportunity.

Taylor's final two classes prior to graduating with an associate of science degree in Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Engineering Technology were virtual because of the new stay-at-home policies brought on by the COVID-19



As a result of a collaboration with mikeroweWORKS Foundation (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."



Jason with his family: wife Brianna and daughter Aria. A new addition is on the way, son Evan.

pandemic. Happily one of the classes was public speaking, something not overly affected by virtual learning.

His degree gained him a new position at Penn State Greater Allegheny as a Maintenance Mechanic A. In early 2022, he accepted a position as Building Technician at Chatham

University, Eden Hall Campus, home to the Falk School of Sustainability and Environment. This community is dedicated to sustainable living and the modeling of sustainable approaches to energy, water, food and agriculture, air quality and climate, and the interaction of natural and built systems. It is cutting-edge sustainable technology: thermal, geothermal, solar, and more. Taylor is excited about the possibilities and looking forward to see what comes next.

Even more exciting, Taylor is making his life dream come true. He is now married and the proud father of a 7-month old baby girl.

“You know, a four- to six-year degree is not for everyone. It’s very important to illustrate that people can get a great education for much less and you can get hired in the trades the day after you finish trade school,” Taylor said.

“The life I have now, my great career and my family... All of this was made possible by me going back to school and getting my HVAC degree, which was partly made possible by my scholarship,” Taylor said. “I am grateful to the mikeroweWORKS Foundation.” **RB**

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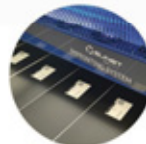
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BY MARK ROBINS

Safety Solutions

New Equipment and Technology Offer Upgrades

CONSTRUCTION SITES CAN BE VERY dangerous places. Nearly 6.5 million people go to work at approximately 252,000 construction sites across the U.S. each day. On the job, these construction workers face a wide range of occupational safety hazards. It is notoriously dangerous because of the combination of health and safety risks involving vehicles, equipment, and manual tasks, which few other industries share.

According to a recent report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), construction-related injuries have risen every year since 2007. In 2019 — the last year that reporting information was made available — there were a total of 1,061 fatalities reported in the construction industry. Because of the high rate of workplace fatality, the BLS identified construction as the deadliest occupation compared to all other industries.

The prevalence of work-related injuries among construction personnel requires the correct equipment and solutions to ensure safety. There is a range of construction



Milwaukee Tools' new hard hats offer both safety and convenience, which go hand-in-hand.
PHOTOS COURTESY OF MILWAUKEE TOOLS.

safety solutions designed to protect construction workers. “The most innovative safety products today are those that are not just comfortable to wear, but also help to address compliance and, ultimately, help keep workers safe from recurring and new safety hazards on worksites,” said Dennis Capizzi, MSA Safety Industrial Marketing Manager, Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania.

HARD HATS

Hard hats have long been the top choice among workers for head protection. However, job site hazards come in from all directions and include more than an object falling from above. A worker could be knocked off a ladder and fall, or get struck by a piece of material being transported across the site. Because of this, Zach Richman, vice president of product management

MSA Safety Products below (left to right): Hard hat with reflective heat barrier, fall-protection retractable cable, hard hat with vent, MSA Safety fall protection harness.



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PRODUCT FEATURE



On Top Safety Equipment has a variety of products to help secure ladders and other equipment.

at Milwaukee Tool, Brookfield, Wisconsin, said, “More and more, hard hats are being replaced by safety helmets. These helmets, derived from the ones used in extreme sports such as rock climbing or even whitewater rafting, attach more closely on the head and having built-in chin straps. Like a hard hat, a safety helmet shields the top of the head, but unlike a standard hard hat, a Type II rated safety helmet could also offer increased protection from side and rear impacts to the head.”

Traditionally, hard hats have made it difficult for workers to equip themselves with tools they need for the job, especially in a rural building environment. For example, protective eyewear or ear protec-



tion — or both — might not fit correctly when used with many types of hard hats. Also, this puts the item’s integrity at risk.

“Milwaukee’s BOLT System allows users to secure accessories to either hard hats or safety helmets simultaneously for a complete head protection solution. Accessories include earmuffs, eye visors, face shields, headlamps, visors, and sunshades,” Richman said. “These new advancements mean crews do not need to trade-off safety for comfort.”

One of the more recent worksite hazards identified by OSHA is heat stress and related illnesses on the job. According to OSHA, heat is the leading cause of death among all weather-related phenomena.

Due to increasing temperatures, OSHA



has implemented a National Emphasis Program (NEP) on Outdoor and Indoor Related Hazards, which has been in effect since April 2022. The OSHA NEP on heat stress is aimed at reducing the risk of heat-related illnesses and injuries in outdoor workers. The program emphasizes the importance of helping to prevent heat stress and provides guidance on how to implement effective heat illness prevention programs.



Ridgeline’s Safety Anchor has variations for all roof types and is virtually invisible while providing a tie-off point for life.

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The Pitch Hopper's purpose is self-explanatory from a picture alone.
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PITCH HOPPER.

Whether it be in a rural or city environment, it's difficult to escape the sun's rays on the job. Released in 2022, Capizzi said MSA Safety's newest hard hat, the MSA V-Gard C1, is designed to alleviate heat stress for workers in sunny conditions on job sites. "The V-Gard C1, with ReflectIR Thermal Barrier technology, can keep the hard hat interior up to 20 degrees Fahrenheit (11 degrees Celsius) cooler, compared to those without ReflectIR. The barrier is applied to the inside of the hard hat and provides benefits similar of a windshield sunshade, by reducing the penetration of the sun's infrared rays into the hard hat."

FALLS

OSHA cites that falls account for the greatest number of fatalities in the construction industry each year. These falls may occur due to unstable work surfaces, the misuse or failure to use fall protection equipment and human error. In May 2023, OSHA introduced a NEP focused on fall protection across all industries, recognizing that falls can occur anywhere. Additionally, OSHA has a pending rule revision that will explicitly require that construction equipment must fit properly. With falls from height continuing to be a leading cause of workplace injury and

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death, according to OSHA, keeping workers safe from falls remains a priority.

"While the fall protection harnesses can be one part of a fall protection system that can help to keep workers safe, personal fall limiters (PFLs) and self-retracting lifelines (SRLs) are another part of that system that can help with safety," Capizzi said. "MSA Safety's V-SERIES line of PFLs and SRLs are designed for simplicity with

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Werner LeanSafe Ladders securely lean against flat surfaces or studs. PHOTO COURTESY OF WERNER.

easy-to-understand color coding, clearance charts and labels to allow workers to see at a glance safety information about their fall protection system. The innovative V-SERIES line helps to make fall protection selection safer, faster and easier.”

Falls from ladders are serious. Buffalo, New York-based On Top Safety Equipment’s Life Grab Ladder Stabilizer enhances ladder safety. Its adjustable straps and secure attachments offer unmatched stability in a compact design, providing peace of mind for elevated tasks. Workers can secure a ladder against a structure without using unreliable bungee cords reducing the possibility of the bottom kicking out or from sliding due to the transition between the two. A variety of attachment devices, including sturdy hooks, secure the ladder. Whether it’s a roof, tree, or any other fixed object, it keeps the ladder firmly in place, keeping workers safe with anchor points designed to fit most ladders.

Werner Ladder has introduced several new product introductions for the rural building audience including ladders, fall protection equipment, and ladder accessories. These new products include:

Extension Ladder WalkThru Series:

It attaches to most Werner extension ladders (Type II to Special Duty IAA) to provide a safe and smooth transition on and off of roofs or elevated platforms. It allows a user to step directly from the ladder onto a roof, without stepping out to the side.

D-Ring Permanent Roof Anchor A220330: The Single D-ring permanent roof anchor is designed for use in both new construction and repair work. When installed during construction, this Werner anchor can be used as part of a full fall arrest system to safely perform future repair or maintenance work.

6308 Fiberglass Step Ladder 6308: This type IAA ladder with fiberglass rails is perfect for electrical work, and also comes with an enhanced LOCKTOP Ladder Cap for maximum storage capacity to hold a contractor’s most used tools. There’s a slot specifically for impact drivers, a metal plate to hold magnetic tools like flashlights and 3-anchor points to safely tether hand tools.

Ridgeline Safety Systems has a fall-prevention device (featured on this month’s cover) called the Ridgeline Safety Anchor that owner Todd Meinhold called an “an-



SteelGrip SAMM magnetic mats offer secure footing on metal roofs. PHOTO COURTESY OF STEELGRIP SAMM.

chor system is a permanent roof anchor that fits under the ridge cap and under the metal. Used for both residential and commercial, it allows anyone who needs to be on a roof a place to tie off.”

A “hidden anchor version” is available for steel slopes of 6/12 and up. There are versions of the product for virtually every roof type. The basic idea is that using two main components — anchors and ridge hooks — you can create a permanent tie off point on the ridge, usable during construction or later, and virtually undetectable from the ground. It also doesn’t create any additional holes in the roof.

SURE FOOTING

Construction sites can sometimes become a maze of equipment, debris, dirt and more. Navigating around a busy site

What’s Different about Safety in a Rural Environment?

Working remotely and independently
Werner has a Jobsite Safety and Security (JSS) Team that trains more than 60,000 job site professionals across the country every year. One of the things this team emphasizes to pros is to have a plan in case anything happens — especially when working independently. “We can provide the latest innovations in both climbing and fall protection,” said Chad Lingerfelt, Director of Training and JSS at WernerCo, “but nothing replaces the need to have a plan before you ever step foot off the ground.”

Vaulted overheads
When you think about commercial, operational or residential rural construction, you see a lot of high, open overheads. “These kinds of spaces, make choosing the right ladder, the right duty rating and the right height all that more important,” said Mike Melton, VP of Climbing at WernerCo. “At Werner, we’ve done a number of things to make choosing and using the right ladder a lot easier. For example, we’ve recently launched new icon-based, interactive safety labels and standardized duty rating colors on ladder rails and labels. Those changes will be rolling out across our full line over the next several months.”

Information provided by WernerCo. To learn more go to www.wernerco.com/safety.

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PRODUCT FEATURE

— even when using caution — can cause workers to slip and trip. Working in a rural environment is indeed a slippery situation but there are new safety solutions on the market that didn't exist 40 years ago to remedy this. Elk Rapids, Michigan-based SteelGrip S.A.M.M. Inc. developed what its CEO/President Neil Warner called the most innovative new product on the market today: the S.A.M.M. mat, SteelGrip S.A.M.M.'s Safety Assist Magnetic Mat for walking and working on steel roofing. "This high-tech, high performance safety mat is lightweight and easy to use. It provides secure footing while holding tools and equipment within reach while protecting finished surfaces. It increases productivity and saves time thus increasing profits. It has multiple uses such as chimney cleaning, power washing, debris removal, roof repair, window washing, painting, antenna and solar panel installation. It can be used on heavy equipment, water towers, fishing trawlers and steel decking."

Warner cited another new and innovative safety solution from Highland, Michigan-based The Pitch Hopper. Named after the company that invented it, The Pitch Hopper allows roofers to stand on a nearly vertical wall, and will function as a temporary working surface to increase productivity and safety. It provides a level working surface on any pitch from a 9/12 up to a 12/12. Weighing 6 pounds this ergonomically designed roofing tool sticks on the roof by simply tossing it on the asphalt shingles, giving roofers a better grip. It will support not only a roofer's weight, but the force of jumping up on, or even dropping 70 pounds of shingles on it. With its superior grip surface, the pitch hopper creates a stable surface without any roofing nails or attachments.

PERSONAL RESCUE DEVICES

By nature, rural building sites are generally away from urban centers and cities, and as a result, emergency medical response times to rural construction sites can be lengthy. "Safety managers or

constriction site leaders in rural areas can consider adding personal rescue devices (PRDs) for their workers," Capizzi said. "Many sites may rely on local fire and EMS crews to respond to an emergency, but in rural areas those response

times can be lengthy. When faced with a workplace incident, such as a fall or suspension trauma, having additional safety products, like PRDs, available can help add another layer of protection for workers." **RB**



Werner Walk Thru assists with stable access to a roof or other elevated surface. PHOTO COURTESY OF WERNER.

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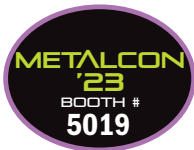
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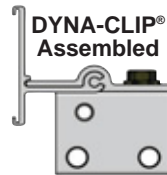
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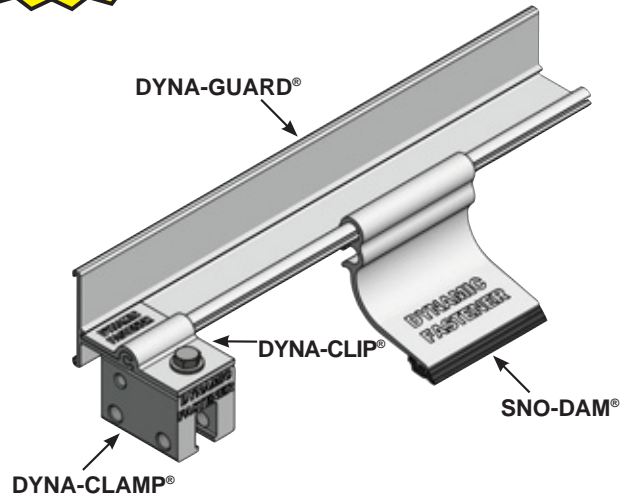
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The Rural Landscape

The State of the Industry, Mid Year 2023

LOOKING AT THE LANDSCAPE BEFORE us, it can be simple to state what is in sight, but what is beyond the horizon? Many industry and economic experts made predictions regarding construction activity in 2023, including many who said '23 was going to be a letdown after the flurry of construction activity in '22. Are those predictions coming true? Based on the first few quarters, what is indicated for the rest of the year? And what, if anything, can builders do to make themselves more economy-proof?

CURRENT STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

It appears that not all construction niches are equal. Rob Haddock, CEO of S-5!, says that while residential construction has taken a geographically varied hit, other sectors are doing well. “The commercial/industrial space is still reasonably robust, especially in manufacturing and data-center-related construction,” Haddock said. “The agricultural marketplace is on stable ground, pardon the pun,” he added.

Stephen Keith, National Sales Manager at Stockade Buildings, says that business was surprisingly busy in the first quarter of the year. The second quarter saw a dip in the suburban buildings that are one of their staples, but there was no lack of garage and agricultural projects.

Paul Zimmerman, Vice President of Hixwood, said that the industry is doing well; “not as strong as 2021 but still strong.”

“Overall, the economy hasn’t affected this industry. We have seen a shift from recreational toy-box type sheds to more agricultural buildings, but demand is still strong.”

Steel residential siding and steel board and batten siding have performed much better than expected, Zimmerman added.

Mike O’Hara, National Sales Manager at Levi’s Building Components, agreed that the state of the economy has had limited effect on pole barn building. He says that as a representative of a company that participates in “an interesting niche market that spans residential, commercial, ag, and shed, they really haven’t been negatively affected by the economy yet.”

Even the metal and lumber pricing fluctuations haven’t negatively impacted projects according to O’Hara.

Buddy Pullen, Regional Sales Manager at AmeriLux, finds that units and sales are down, but that is what most people expected as the pandemic ended and everything opened up again, he stated.

Renee Ramey, Executive Director of the Metal Roofing Alliance, also comments that the residential roofing market is strong, although backlogs have softened.

THE COST OF CREDIT

Andrew Mullen of Direct Metals Inc. (DMI) said that they believe a general economy recession is underway.

“We have seen a slowdown in the 4th quarter, 2022 and first quarter, 2023 in new residential construction,” said Mullen. “This is mainly due to a pull-back by large national builders due to the cost of customers financing new homes.”

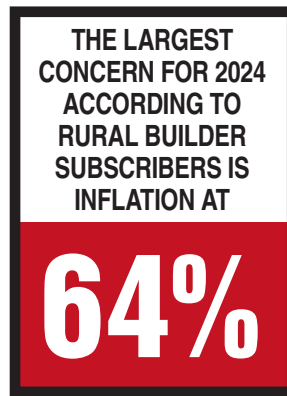
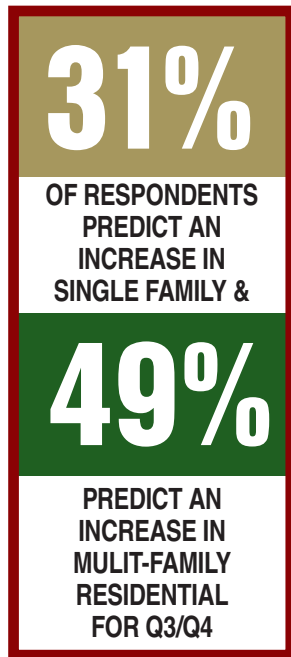
“Higher interest rates make the ‘repair or replace’ question much more important,” Pullen said, “and in the current condition, I feel like end users will focus more on home improvement and upgrading versus purchasing a new home.”

Ben Johnston, COO of Kapitus, a provider of financing for small and medium sized businesses said, “Higher interest rates are cooling the real estate market across the country, but we continue to see strong credit demand from contractors as a shortage of affordable housing, coupled with low unemployment rates, generate demand for new housing stock.”

He also sees homeowners who are locked into lower rate mortgages choosing to stay in their homes rather than selling and repurchasing in a higher rate market. These homeowners are looking to renovate existing housing stock, driving demand for contractors.”

Since spring of 2022, Johnston has seen a tightening in credit, however, which accelerated after the failures of SVB and Signature Banks. As banks become more cautious, many quality applicants, often small businesses, are unable to obtain the financing they need.

Perhaps tighter credit explains why Sean Shields of the Structural Building Components Association (SBCA) sees that single-family housing construction has returned to 2019 (pre-COVID)



levels. He notes that many component manufacturers who were in a position to pivot to multi-family projects actually saw an increase early this year as near-record numbers of large projects got underway.

High-end earners who will sometimes move forward with projects regardless of the economic situation have continued to invest in real estate and home improvement.

ON A POSITIVE NOTE...

For many, the slow start to the year is providing the opportunity to retool and retrain.

“Production equipment that has been on backorder for 12 months or more is being delivered and installed,” Shields explained. “Personnel have to be trained on these new systems, and the current conditions are favorable to getting this new capacity up and running.”

Due to the current slowdown, lumber costs have been relatively low for most grades and sizes. MSR lumber is still difficult to source in many areas of the country, though, impacting products

“We have seen a shift from recreational toybox type sheds to more agricultural buildings, but demand is still strong.”

Paul Zimmerman, Hixwood

such as floor trusses and long span roof trusses.

“Obviously, the economy has dampened real property commerce because of interest rate increases, but the *uncertainty* of economic stability going forward has played the greatest role in dampening the construction economy,” Haddock said.

Keith Dietzen, CEO of Keymark, said that it’s a bit of a surprise how strong the post-frame and roofing industries have remained while interest rates have gone from near zero to the highest in many years.



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“Don’t just bid on projects to keep your crew busy. Know your numbers and take the emotion out of the estimating process.”

Mike O’Hara, Levi’s

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

While interest rates are an important indicator of the economy and where it is headed, there are other indicators. Mullen states that the team at DMI believe that the national unemployment rate is a leading indicator of the economy, which is something they will be watching to help them make business decisions.

Ken McLauchlan, Vice President at MetalForming, LLC pays attention to building permit applications, industry reports on material usage, and internal and external sales histories.

Ann Iten, Director of Marketing at Westlake Royal Roofing Solutions said, “We are continuing to watch any, and all, changes in the following areas: the industry’s ongoing challenges with labor shortages, residual global supply chain, and logistics issues.”

THE FORECAST

Pullen predicts that the cost of borrowing money (interest rates) is going to be the biggest challenge for builders and contractors in 2023.

Keith says that Wichita is a diverse economy with suburban, commercial, and industrial opportunities which makes it strong even during recessions. However, he warns, “if the banks make it hard to borrow money, it will be 2008 all over again.”

THE OVERALL ECONOMY’S IMPACT

Tom Bowne, Chief Economist for the Freedomia Group (a division of MarketResearch.com, Inc.) has this to say: “We expect that residential construction activity will face a number of headwinds in 2023. As the Federal Reserve maintains its tighter monetary policy in an effort to keep expectations of future inflation from rising, mortgage interest rates will remain elevated, constraining housing demand. Smaller regional banks are likely to be less eager to make construction loans while these banks’ balance sheets are under increased scrutiny. That tighter lending environment will weigh on builders’ and contractors’ ability to finance projects.”

Later in the year, however, there is a chance that the Federal Reserve may ease monetary policy somewhat, offering some relief for mortgage lending Bowne said. The other factor that will likely provide a boost to new construction as 2023 progresses, he continued, is the aforementioned lock-in effect of existing homeowners with low mortgage interest rates retaining ownership. The lack of available houses will create new home construction demands for newly formed households.

Mullen said, “As the financing industry and their customers get used to more normal or higher than 2020 interest rates, we expect the high demand for residential housing to continue to drive demand beyond the fourth quarter of 2023.”

The presidential election will have a bearing on the economy, according to Pullen, which translates to the construction industry in the following way: “With an election cycle around the corner, I expect a drop in interest rates next year, which will bump volume,” Pullen said. “As far as the remainder of ’23, I am expecting a sustained trend of slowing volume while end users wait on that interest rate drop.”

SUPPLY CHAINS AND LABOR POOLS

Shield says that component manufacturers as a group expect the last half of 2023 to pick up. There is concern that many projects will be started within the same time frames, thereby straining

supply chains and causing volatility in the lumber and steel markets. Further, hiring and training enough people to service a spike in demand could be problematic.

Component manufacturers advise builders and developers to avoid a “wait and see” attitude, according to Shields. “By the time you realize that a lot of projects are going forward, it’s likely too late to get a good place in line which can lead to many delays such as material or production capacity shortages.”

Zimmerman believes that finding qualified labor will be the biggest challenge throughout 2023. He sees evidence that commercial

building would pick up if there were more qualified crews.

Chandler Barden, President of Cidan Machinery, believes that hiring enough labor is going to be an ongoing challenge for the foreseeable future.

“We see technology developing quickly to address these shortages,” Barden states. “The industry is pushing innovation in manufacturing to address this, and companies are investing in it, using more software to increase efficiency of their current work-

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UNITS SOLD WERE UP FOR OF RESPONDENTS	43%
GROSS SALES WERE UP FOR OF RESPONDENTS	46%
AND PROFITABILITY WAS UP FOR OF RESPONDENTS.	40%
DECREASES IN ALL CATEGORIES WERE	20-25%

force. Although this has been in the news for general manufacturing for years, it is quickly penetrating into the architectural sheet metal industry.”

Dietzen advises employers to automate as much as they can.

“My best advice to contractors is to automate,” Dietzen stated. “One of the most effective ways to address the labor challenge is to use software systems that can automatically generate necessary information that otherwise would require many hours of toil from team members who are already more than busy.”

CREDIT, TRENDS, AND CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

These concerns may be inapplicable, at least in the short term, as Johnston warns that the SVB and Signature Bank failures have made everyone more cautious and if interest rates continue to rise, participation by those paying the bills may dissipate. More likely they will continue to build and invest, but they will be looking for price concessions and better overall terms, Johnston said.

Johnston’s group sees trouble ahead for the commercial market as remote work becomes a permanent fixture in American life

and many long-term leases expire.

Bowne feels the outcome of that trend is uncertain. He put it this way: “Office construction is expected to see below-average activity for a few more years as businesses continue to sort out staffing arrangements (in-person vs. hybrid) and their need for space to handle their personnel.”

He expects that the non-residential construction markets in general may face a bit of a downturn similar to the residential market later this year based on the difficulty in obtaining construction financing.

“Activity in retail building construction will be dampened if consumer confidence and overall economic activity weaken during the middle part of 2023,” Bowne said.

However, he did offer some hope for light manufacturing . “Construction of light manufacturing facilities will continue to be aided by efforts to improve supply chains, which could induce some reshoring of manufacturing activity,” he concluded.

ADVICE FOR BUILDING A STRONGER BUSINESS

What should companies do to improve or maintain their suc-



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cess going forward?

Wayne Troyer, Sales Manager of Acu-Form, thinks we are through the worst of industry challenges and exhorts everyone to stay positive and keep up the good work. Quality and service are always in demand.

With some materials' price fluctuations making estimation difficult, O'Hara said, "Don't just bid on projects to keep your crew busy. Know your numbers and take the emotion out of the estimating process. Then be all in on projects as the best advertising is word of mouth and repeat customers."

O'Hara also advised partnering with suppliers to work together for better outcomes. They can offer such insight as when it is best to buy the supplies you need.

Jay Lara, COO of Carport Central, suggests leveraging lending partners to find clientele. When the economy is not at its strongest, lending options can entice people who were previously undecided, he points out.

A good marketing plan can go a long way to boost your business when the rain sets in, and Lara advises companies to in-

crease their marketing efforts. You want your company's name to be the one that comes to mind when the service you offer is needed, he said.

SERVICE EXPANSION

Mullen expects growth even if the economy is not roaring, mainly through new market penetration and the expansion of their product line. Perhaps there are new markets or add-on products or services that would bolster builders' and roofers' businesses.

Agricultural building is often touted as a safe market, and Mullen points out that the population is constantly increasing along with the need for domestic food production, so they expect agricultural building to *increase* in 2023. Perhaps this would be a good time to add agricultural building to the "menu."

Troyer agrees, stating that with the price of crops and dairy, the ag side is getting stronger and stronger.

Ramey comments, "We anticipate the importance of environmentally friendly building materials will continue to drive the market toward products that are sustainable, offer longevity, and

provide benefits in the extreme weather conditions we continue to see happening throughout the U.S. and Canada."

Pullen chimes in, "as the industry and our society trends to greener and more environmentally friendly methods and materials, manufacturers who do not share that view will be left behind."


Increased interest in energy efficiency makes a good case for Haddock's advice. He says builder/contractors should be proactive and provide themselves a Plan B in case their usual revenue takes a dip, for example the installation of solar photovoltaic products.

Two trends that Dietzen has observed seem to bode well for the future: more and more roofing contractors are adding metal roofing to their service menu and consumer demand for barndominiums is growing. "There is real opportunity in these markets," Dietzen said. Perhaps they are more good Plan B options.

Ken McLauchlan, Vice President at MetalForming, LLC, sums it up like this: While he has heard of some slowing in specific markets, for the most part, "companies that are diverse, manage the process, and are willing to accommodate project demands continue to have great backlogs." **RB**


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Company Nails a 175-year Milestone

JUST 30 YEARS AFTER ILLINOIS became a state, Samuel Maze started his lumber company along the Illinois River. It eventually grew to include making the nation's largest selection of Specialty Nails.

To this day, Maze's company is still going strong. Maze Lumber is the state's

oldest lumberyard, Samuel's great-great-grandson, Roelif Loveland, is president of Maze Nails, and Maze Company proudly celebrates its 175th anniversary this year.

"We have been blessed with many generations of great associates — both non-family and family employees," Loveland

said. "A huge part of longevity is having quality people ... and the other part is having quality products that are continually demanded in the marketplace.

"As my brother, Jim, said on the anniversary of his 150-year-old home in Spring Valley, Illinois, we are all simply caretak-

W. H. Maze Company



Illinois-Michigan Canal completed - dug primarily by Irish immigrants



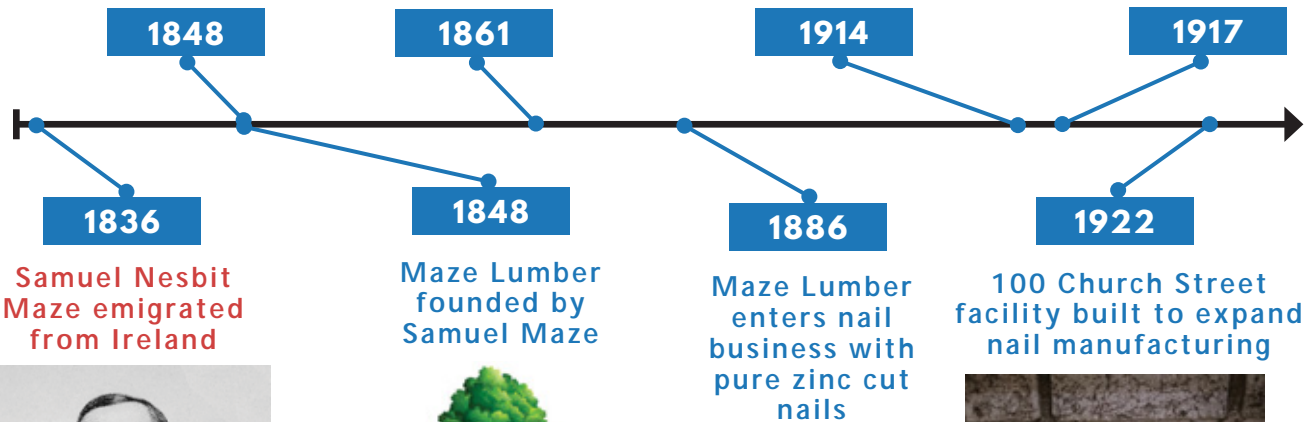
American Civil War begins



Maze begins making hand-dipped Zinclud™ hot-dip galvanized steel nails



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ers of old businesses and old houses. It is our job to nurture them and make certain that they survive for the next generation. I am very proud to be spending my years doing exactly that.”

He also said he is impressed by his ancestors’ ingenuity, which set up Maze Nails for longevity.

“It seems like entrepreneurship was the rule rather than the exception back in those days,” Loveland said. “Family owned and operated store fronts and small businesses sprang up everywhere. The Maze boys were

pretty clever fellows and built a very strong business for future generations.”

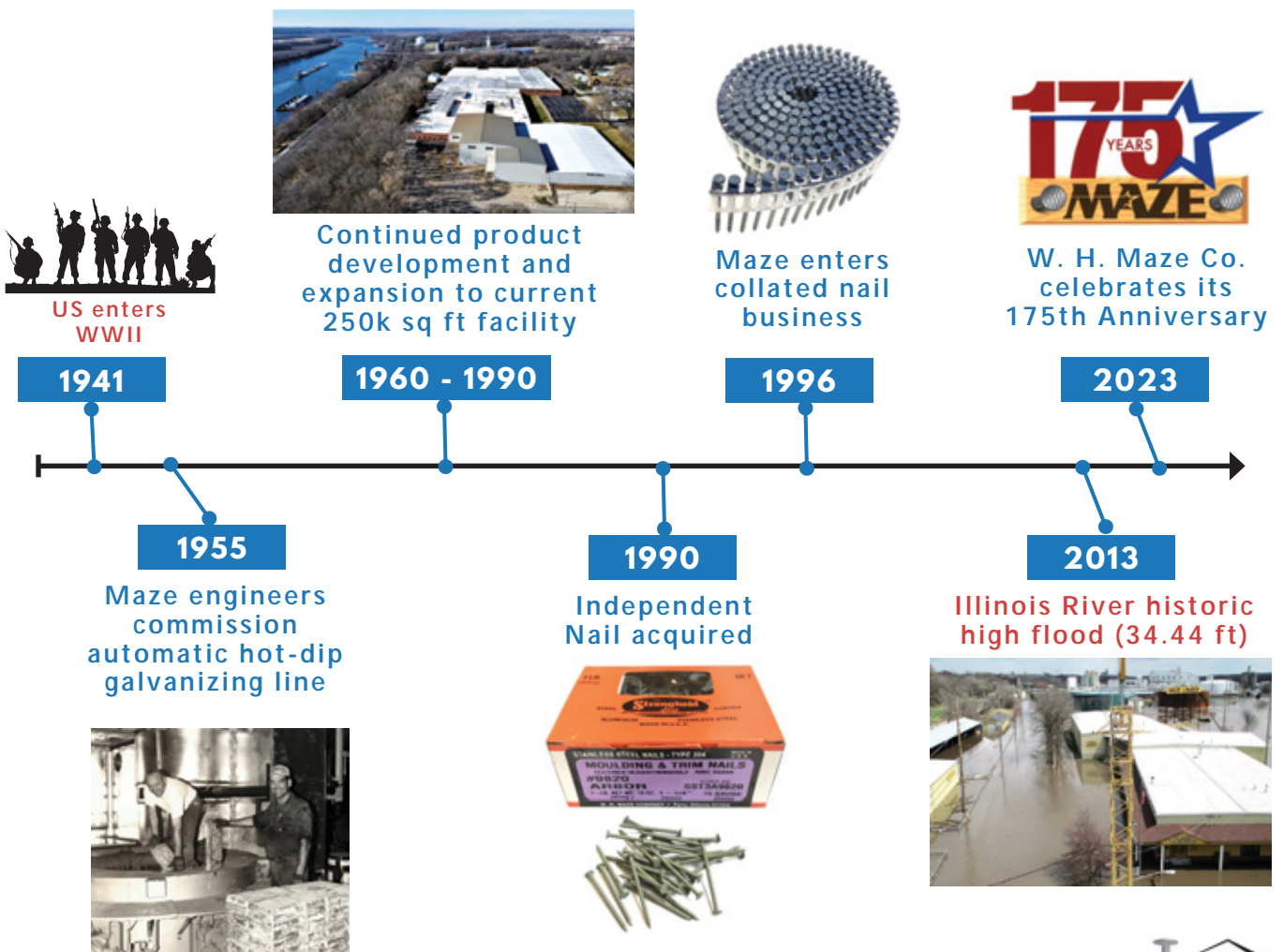
Over the years, Loveland said there have been steady changes to the family business. For example, Loveland said nails were once made entirely of zinc purchased from Illinois Zinc and M & H Zinc, but in 1916 nails started to be made of steel and dipped in zinc.

That was done by hand at first, but in 1955, Loveland said brothers, James and Hamilton Maze, designed a dipping machine to do the work.

“The only thing that has stayed the same is that both types of nails were highly dependable and became demanded by contractors nationwide,” Loveland said.

And with 175 years in the rearview, Loveland said things will continue to evolve. “We continue to change with the times, including updating the products we handle at Maze Lumber and developing new nails that we manufacture and sell at the Maze Nail factory,” he said. “We’re now looking forward to our bicentennial year!” **RB**

Through the Years



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How to Choose Your Livestock Flooring

Do You Settle for Dirt? Or Do You Need to Upgrade?

WHETHER YOU ARE BUILDING NEW or retrofitting a building for livestock, there are choices to be made about flooring. These choices should likely be driven by the type of livestock that will use the building, the particular use (living, loafing, milking ...), your environment, and what type of bedding and manure handling you intend to use. There are more flooring options out there than you can shake a stick at, but many of them are variations on a theme and all of them center on a few key choices that you will need to make.

Let's start with livestock and a little about traction or foot consideration. Animals such as cattle and pigs are significantly heavier than poultry or other critters and require a bit more substance to their floors. Also animals with hooves (goats excluded on the count that they are crazy and defy all norms) are not really designed for hard slick floors.

So traction and consideration of the animals' feet is important in floor selection. With poultry this means that if you wish to have a floor that lets manure fall through the holes can't be too big, well ... because of chicken feet. You don't want those toes

getting caught and causing an injury.

With large animals such as cattle, traction can be achieved with grooved concrete in areas where they come and go routinely. But don't expect those grooves to last if you are routinely running a skid-steer through and removing manure where they are. Simply put, the animals' size and what their feet are like needs to factor in to flooring choices.

THE HIGH-END OPTION

Concrete floors are the gold standard, but they are not your only choice and there may be better options depending on what you are planning. Bill Koepke, small livestock operator and farmer in Marion, Wisconsin, shared that in his bull barn they simply used limestone screenings that were quite cheap and ultimately packed in really hard and made a nice floor. This type of flooring was used in a small building, though, without a lot of coming and going and only a couple animals at a time.

In contrast to this, Bill has concrete in his pig building and uses a significant amount of bedding in the form of straw and shav-



(ABOVE) In some areas of the country you can get away with dirt. It's trickier in wet or cold climates.

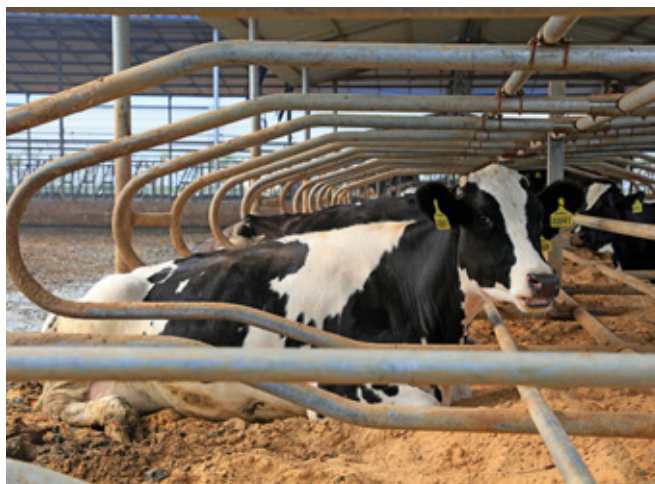
(LEFT) Products like Comfort Slat Mats are far more comfortable for cattle than concrete slats.

in dry environments but might be a bit trickier in wetter climates. If you go this route you had better have a solid compacted dirt pad with a grade leading away from your building. If that is the case then a dirt floor can work for you.

Just remember that winter can be wet and messy too as snow may get tracked in and out of that building. What you might be able to get away with in dry airy Nebraska may not work so well in Minnesota. Once again ... concrete is the gold standard.

MANURE AND BEDDING FACTORS

The next consideration is how you intend to handle manure, or mainly whether you intend to use bedding and what kind. Personally, I think that bedding is really important for animals and that it should be used liberally to both promote good hygiene and



Sand doesn't do much to stabilize manure, but it is quite hygienic and can be a good choice.

ings to both stabilize his manure and provide cushion to the animals feet while promoting good hygiene.

A world away in Kansas, Nate Heinen, contractor and "pig logistics manager" (he doesn't like the pigs but his wife does), uses a slatted floor over a concrete floor with a drain so that he can flush manure easily with water. Initially Nate had a dirt floor building and used lots of bedding for those pigs which really hardened up when it got dry and was quite difficult to manage.

Contrast these uses with poultry where you can get away with a dirt floor and you can see why the type of livestock matters quite a bit. In short, chickens are small and a dirt floor for them doesn't present a big problem.

THE DIRT ON DIRT

Now that you've heard a few anecdotes to add to your own experience, let's get into some details. Once you have decided what livestock may be in your building your next step is something that isn't really your choice and that is the environment or the weather and soils where you are. A dirt floor building is an option

stabilize manure to make the best possible composted manure that you can later apply to your land. Bedding is going to provide cushion and build up a bit of bed pack manure that actually composts in place and provides some heat as well.

Straw and wood shavings are common bedding types. While both of these do a good job with hygiene and stabilizing manure, they do have to be sourced and they do add bulk to manure, which does create some handling challenges later. Alternatives to the use of organic bedding are things like sand and rubber stall mats or rubber flooring. Sand doesn't do much to stabilize manure, but it is quite hygienic. Sand still might be a good choice as it does provide cushion, can be reused after washing, and adds

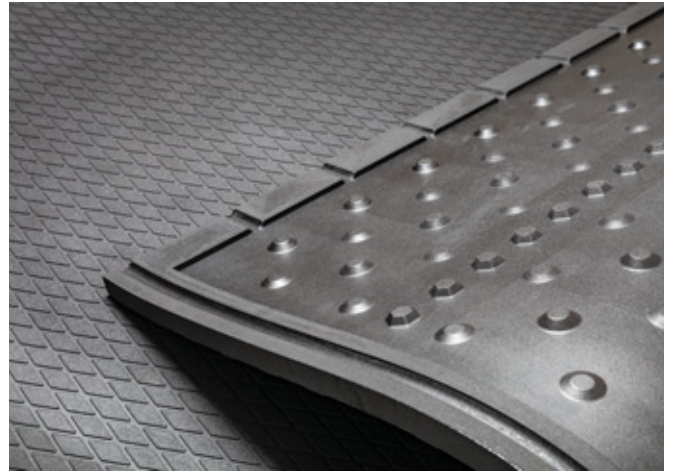


Animals with hooves are not meant for flat, hard surfaces. Slats in the floor allow for waste to pass through.

less bulk, ultimately, to manure when it is time to land spread it.

Why all this bedding talk? Well, this works best on concrete floors where bedding and manure can be scraped out with a loader or shovel (there are some rubber flooring options that with a bit of care can work this way, too). One caveat is that you can do this with a dirt floor, too, but you just have to take care that you don't dig a hole in your compacted dirt pad. The synopsis here is that concrete is probably your best choice if you plan to use bedding, particularly organic-type bedding.

What if you don't want to use bedding and you want to be able to just flush that manure away? There are options for this, too. For poultry this might look like a wire mesh floor (quarter inch holes) with something under it to catch the droppings (some people use wooden boards but a dirt floor could work or concrete may be desirable in larger scale operations). With larger animals such as pigs, a slatted floor (there are plastic, cast iron and concrete options) elevated above a concrete pit or floor with a drain can be a good option.



Rubber mats help the animals overall and are better than concrete alone, but they get very messy, so plan on regular cleaning.

PROS AND CONS OF RUBBER MATS

If the animals are larger still, then a concrete floor with some pitch that runs to slatted areas draining into a pit can work as well. When you go to these options that manure can be flushed through and you aren't using bedding there is a need to provide some cushion to the feet of the animals. You have probably stood on concrete for a while before and know that it can be rough on the joints. The animals feel this, too. So, if you have a hard floor and aren't going to use bedding, then rubber stall mats may be in order for you. While these rubber mats do help the animals they can get quite nasty so regular cleaning will be required.

There are also slatted flooring types that incorporate some cushion using rubber coated slats with some significant upsides. The rubber coating not only provides cushion and increases traction, but it has the added benefit of decreased manure retention in the winter when manure might freeze on other slatted floor types. Strategic use of sand bedding in certain areas can work with concrete floored flushing type systems without having to change the sand too often, and for many central Wisconsin dairies this is a common system. In addition, there are rubber floors that can be added over concrete slatted floors to provide cushion and traction while facilitating flushing at the same time.

Whatever flooring type you end up choosing expense will also be a factor in the end. Remembering the old adage of buy once, cry once may help here, though. Getting set up and doing it right the first time is often better than trying to use a cheaper alternative that doesn't quite fit your needs.

Similarly a building with a manure pit under it and a flushing type manure handling system with a slatted floor may be excessively expensive for a smaller operation. Consider the scale, the livestock, the cost, and the availability of bedding materials to pick your best option. **RB**

TELL 100,000 SUBSCRIBERS ABOUT YOUR NEW PRODUCT

If your company has developed a new product for builders or contractors, email a new product announcement to one of the contacts listed below for possible publication in our business-to-business magazines.

Include a clear, high resolution image of the product (no logos or advertisements), along with a brief description of your product and the problems it solves.

Submission is not a guarantee of publication. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for content, length, and clarity.



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Rural Builder; Frame Building News; Garage, Shed & Carport Builder:
Rocky Landsverk – rocky@shieldwallmedia.com • 715-513-7288

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NEW PRODUCTS



Bosch GST18V-50 18V Brushless Top-Handle Jig Saw
 Bosch Power Tools has announced the launch of the GST18V-50 18V Brushless Top-Handle Jig Saw. The cordless jig saw delivers a strong cutting capability with up to 4.9" in wood. Its brushless motor delivers up to 2,500 no-load strokes per minute extending the motor's runtime and improving cutting performance on tough projects. The tool-free blade change system permits fast and convenient blade insertion and ejection. A bright LED light illuminates the cut line in dark work areas, allowing workers to tackle tasks on a variety of jobsites efficiently. Complete with a built-in dust blower, workers can clear dust aside to navigate the cut line. The variable-speed control provides a dial to adjust the operating speed from 0-3,500 no-load strokes per minute. With the variable speed trigger, users can control the operating speed by feathering the trigger. Workers can select the right blade stroke for their specific project by choosing one of the four orbital action settings. Complete with Bosch Power Tools' CORE18V battery, the cordless jig saw delivers an extended runtime to help carpenters, remodelers, roofers and plumbers get a quick cut done to accomplish a range of projects.
www.boschtools.com



ProVia Coal Black Soffit
 ProVia has introduced Coal Black Soffit as an addition to the Universal vinyl soffit product line. Building products professionals are aware of the popularity of trend-setting color choices for home exteriors — combining black and white, black and gray, and even black with black. This has created a high demand for black materials such as siding, roofing, soffit, and accessories. ProVia's Coal Black Soffit provides the dramatic dark look that homeowners seek. It's available in full-vent drilled and solid panels. "We are excited to offer this great new color to our customers," said Jon Lapp, ProVia siding product manager. "We believe it checks all the boxes — classic styling, a true shade of black, and of course the quality contractors and homeowners expect from ProVia vinyl products."
www.ProVia.com

ALL NEW STRETCH WRAP
 All new stretch wrap from Levi's Building Components is a high quality Stretch Wrap banded plastic wrap that has excellent cohesion and holding strength. With 80-90 gauge thickness, Stretch Wrap is not easily punctured or torn. Available in 5" x 1000', 12" x 1500', 18" x 1500' and 20" x 5000'. A dispenser handle is included in every box of 5" Stretch Wrap and is also available for purchase separately.
www.servico.com

DIABLO STEP DRILL BITS
 Diablo has announced the release of their new impact and drill-driver-ready Step Drill Bits. Using innovative technology, these new Step Drill Bits are designed to meet the user's needs when drilling holes in sheet metal, stainless steel, PVC and other plastics. These new Step Drill Bits answer the growing issues confronting users of standard step drill bits: durability, speed and lack of being impact driver ready. Diablo's new impact and drill driver ready Step Drill Bits feature:
 • A Split Point Tip stays sharper longer for easy on-point drilling — no pre-drilling necessary.
 • Accu-Grip™ Technology, which delivers strict angle tolerances on each step for minimal bit wear and up to two times faster drilling and hole making.
 • Drills clean holes, leaving no burrs and can de-burr holes, as well.
 • Impact Strong — An impact drill ready 1/4" hex shank which can be used on standard corded or cordless drill driver as well as cordless impact drills.
 • Optimized dust-flute design for jam-free holes and easier chip removal.
 • Easy-to-read laser marked steps for accurately drilling holes of varying sizes.
 Diablo's new Step Drill Bits include a 1/2" 6-step bit; a 1/2" 13-step bit; a 3/4" 9-step bit; a 7/8" 12-step bit; a 1-1/8" 17-step bit and a drill driver only 1-3/8" 15-step bit.
www.diablotools.com
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WWW.CONSTRUCTIONMAGNET.COM

38 GARAGE ■ SHED ■ CARPORT BUILDER / DECEMBER 2023

Spotlight On: Levi's Building Components

BY LINDA SCHMID

The Key to Success: Keeping the Customer Top of Mind

IN 1978, LEVI FISHER FROM Bird-in-Hand, Pennsylvania, saw an opportunity. People wanted nails to match the color of their metal roofing. He began painting the nail heads and people liked it. Levi's Nail Coatings was begun!

INNOVATIVE FROM THE START

From nails, the company moved to screws, matching metal colors as they had with nails. (Screw heads are painted in the Levi's facility to this day.) The company name changed to Levi's Nails and Screws.

In 1995, a new facility was opened in Leola, Pennsylvania, to handle the company's growth. Recognizing an opportunity in the market, they developed snow guards called Snow Defenders™ in over 50 colors that match metal roofing panels.

New products come from collaboration between customers and the sales group, then getting the R&D group involved, according to Mike O'Hara, National Sales Manager. Everyone works together as a team to find solutions for customers and to keep an eye on trends, colors, and developments in the industry.

The company, now known as Levi's Building Components, continued to expand and in 2020 they moved to their



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Brownstown location. They have continued to grow their product offerings.

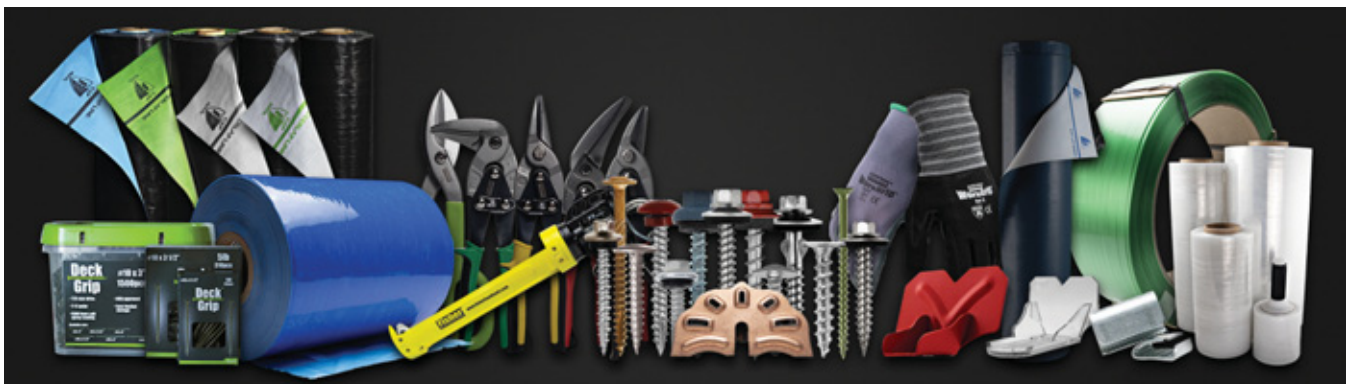
Innovation can come in forms other than products, such as a process change in manufacturing, speeding up the onboarding of new customers, or getting products into the hands of customers, generally distributors and rollformers, more quickly. The team is always looking for ways to better serve their customers.

WORKING TOGETHER AS A TEAM

While focusing on providing quality

products and service, their other core values of growth and integrity apply to both customers and employees.

Teamwork and communication come naturally to the group, according to O'Hara. While they are very serious about their commitment to their core values, they have an unusual way of driving that commitment: daily huddles, game days, birthdays, ping pong matches, corn hole competitions, and anything the team can find to add engagement and rapport to the workplace. This group knows how to have fun and they know that these activities are



team-building; work teams function more efficiently because of them.

CHALLENGES

Like all businesses, Levi's has had their share of challenges. They were struggling with a space shortage; then they moved into a newly built facility about 2½ years ago and now they enjoy twice the space.

During the worst of the supply chain issues and unpredictable freight delivery times, the leadership team met on a regular basis to talk across departments regarding challenges and working together on solutions. They stressed staying close to vendors to receive real-time updates, and immediately passing this information on to customers. This kind of on-time information facilitates understanding in customers that they are partners and the team is doing everything they can to help.

SUCCESSSES

Building brand awareness takes time, and the company's inside and outside sales forces have grown, expanding and improving their marketing programs, including partnering with Shield Wall Media. These efforts lead to many new customers in the last few years.

The growth Levi's has seen required more space with double the employee count in their new state of the art facility. However, it's not just new employees that are needed; you need *the right new employees*, O'Hara said. They look for people who have the same mind-set; people who believe in open communication and have a desire to serve. Management should exemplify servant leadership, he added.

"We've been able to hire the right people", O'Hara said. "That's a result of networking within the industry of metal roofing and the construction industry as a whole. Plus, we have a nice referral program to encourage employees to refer friends and family they believe would be a good fit"

Further, the company is proud that their product line is ever-expanding. Their most recent addition is their green

polyethelene banding material for lumber or metal panels.

THE FUTURE

Levi's mission is to be a good steward,

educating both employees and customers. Through collaboration and education, the company plans to foster the communities they serve so that everyone grows together. **RB**

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The September/October 1975 issue of Farm Building News included this article, and you will notice what appears to be product placement on the cover (PBR bottles)

FOR 50+ YEARS RURAL BUILDER has been providing the news, trends and resources builders need. Prior to the January 1974 edition, "Farm Building News," as it was called, was in newspaper form. However, those old papers are not to be found in our Shield Wall library. We would love to see some of them... it's our lost heritage! If you have one/some of them please drop a line to me: rocky@shieldwallmedia.com. I'll publish a brief news story about you, your organization, and your projects in return!

Squaring Your Business

How to Get Along With Others

By Thelma T. Fair

THE FARM BUILDER BUSINESS IS more or less a forced association of individuals. Effective cooperation in getting a job done or achieving a specific goal seldom comes automatically. This applies to crew members, salesmen, designers, management associates, and in a firm's relationship with others in the same industry.

Working with other people takes specific action on your part. It is not a matter of following one simple procedure, but of keeping several considerations in mind.

How do you ask a co-worker to do something? If you exert too much force in a "demand," resistance will build up in the other person. Requests or suggestions invariably bring better results among co-workers than any "demands," no matter how carefully they are phrased in pleasant terms.

MAKE PROPOSALS CLEAR

Be sure that what you are proposing is clear to the other person. Never taken it for granted that he or she is aware of a detail that you think is elementary. No matter how much background or knowledge the other person may have, it is always difficult for anyone to cooperate with something they don't understand.

Try to understand the other person's position on what is to be done. A full grasp of his position will enable you to program what needs to be done most intelligently.

Simplify the proposals when you first talk with the other person. Let the complicated elements follow in a detailed presentation. Don't give the "whole load of hay" at one time.

Be sure that you're willing to step back a little to gain everything the other fellow has to offer. This is of major importance when working with our partner, associate, fellow contractor, or a supplier to a current project. Avoid getting yourself in a position of "winning the battle, but losing the war." The best of everything that is done in business usually results from compromises on many elements.

Know the limitations of each individual with whom you work and accept them not as necessary evils, but simply as elements which must be worked with carefully. Downgrading another because of his limitations sooner or later will get back to him, and any cooperation that you may otherwise have had will disappear.

Share the rewards of an achievement fully with all others who were involved even if only in a small way. Doing so provides incentive towards effective future cooperation.

Insofar as possible, provide the information, data, and equipment the other person will need to effectively cooperate with you. Asking for cooperation if you haven't supplied these aids can create errors, for the other person might find himself forced to employ makeshift methods.

USE CAREFUL TIMING

Be careful picking the time and place to ask for cooperation. Your co-worker might have a busy workload of his own and be unable to give you his full attention immediately. Remember, his current task may have first priority.

When you have the attention of your

The best of everything that is done in business usually results from compromises on many elements.



co-worker, give him the entire outline of your proposal. If you supply only a small part, you may think you are protecting your own interests. However, you will get better results if the individual knows the complete picture. Too often what you withhold might be just what he needs to accomplish his part of the program.

KNOW LIMITATIONS

Always be ready to give your own full cooperation when others bring problems to you for your help. Working effectively with others inside or outside of your business is definitely a two-way procedure.

Take your full share of the difficult parts of a project. Don't try to put them off on other people. Anyone will recognize if you try that, and cooperation will lessen as the other person thinks about the extra burden.

Ask for the other person's ideas instead of insisting on your own. Some of his ideas may be good ones and contribute to your program.

If you are working with a new procedure, set up ground rules for yourself and other people involved to avoid misunderstandings. And, save that "rush and hurry" approach only for times when it is actually needed. Otherwise, it will be easy to antagonize another person if you insist on pressuring him with a need for unnecessary haste.

Lastly, be accessible while your project is underway. Your own availability and cooperation will help speed up your project. **RB**



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BY RURAL BUILDER STAFF



■ POLYGLASS USA ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF VERTIWRAP AIR AND VAPOR BARRIER LINE OF PRODUCTS

Polyglass U.S.A. Inc., a leading manufacturer of roofing and waterproofing solutions, announced its newest line of products, VertiWrap Air and Vapor Barriers. The VertiWrap Air and Vapor Barrier system offers complete flexibility in selecting sheet and fluid applied options for both permeable and non-permeable project needs. The VertiWrap line of products allows Polyglass to seal the envelope from roof to wall to foundation with complete compatible systems, protecting the entire building envelope.

VertiWrap VPS is a primerless, self-adhered, water-resistive, vapor-permeable air barrier. VertiWrap VPS air barrier membrane permits the passage of water vapor, while acting as a barrier to air and liquid water.

VertiWrap NPS is a primerless, self-adhered, water-resistive, nonpermeable air barrier. VertiWrap NPS air barrier membrane prevents the passage of air, water, vapor, and liquid water from entering the wall assembly.

VertiSeal 50 is a one-part, low VOC, moisture cure, sealant for the use with VertiWrap Air Barriers. VertiSeal 50 is a silane-terminated polyether (STPE) based sealant designed for use in terminations, penetrations, and openings.

VertiWrap VPL is a primerless, fluid-applied, water-resistive, vapor-permeable air barrier with SwiftSet Technology. An air barrier membrane permits the passage of water vapor, while acting as a barrier to air and liquid water. VertiWrap NPL is a primerless, fluid-applied, water resistive

nonpermeable air barrier. An air barrier membrane that prevents the passage of air, water, vapor, and liquid water from entering the wall assembly.

www.polyglass.com



■ ASV INTRODUCES THE VT-100 AND VT-100 FORESTRY COMPACT TRACK LOADERS

ASV, a manufacturer of all-purpose and all-season compact track loaders and skid steers, introduces the VT-100 and VT-100 Forestry Posi-Track compact track loaders. The new VT-100 compact track loader is a vertical lift machine that excels in loading and grading applications in landscaping and construction. The VT-100 Forestry is suited for mulching, right-of-way clearance, site prep, and more. The models include elevated comfort, visibility and performance features, allowing them to stand out as top compact track loaders in their class.

“They are the perfect option for those looking for a little more power than the RT-75 without having to go to the heavy hitter of all CTLs — the RT-135,” said Buck Storlie, product manager for the ASV brand. “The lifting capabilities, pushing power and hydraulic flow of the new VT-100 and VT-100 Forestry are sure to impress.”

ASV’s VT-100 and VT-100 Forestry come equipped with a 103.5 horsepower Tier 4 Final Yanmar diesel engine and standard 40 gpm high flow. The loaders’ large line sizes, hydraulic coolers and direct-drive pumps transfer more flow and pressure directly to the attachment and reduce power loss. The VT-100 features a 3,500-pound rated operating capacity and 10,286-pound tipping load while the VT-

100 Forestry includes a 3,700-pound rated operating capacity and a 10,571-pound tipping load.

www.asvi.com



■ MECALAC LAUNCHES MULTIFUNCTIONAL COMPACT LOADER LINE TO NORTH AMERICAN MARKET

Mecalac, a leading global designer and manufacturer of compact construction equipment, launches a new product line of robust compact loaders to the North American market. Comprised of six models, including the MCL2, MCL4, MCL4+, MCL6, MCL6+ and MCL8, the series presents versatility and agility for industries ranging from agriculture to landscape, forestry, snow removal, utility and construction. New hydraulic and maneuverability options, such as M-Drive and Speed Control, ensure versatility of the machines in terms of both application and industry.

“Time and space to complete jobs are increasingly limited,” said Peter Bigwood, general manager for Mecalac North America. “To enable our customers to be more productive, we developed a line of compact loaders the size of a skid steer but with features and functionality not found on other machines this size. Whether being used in agriculture to push silage or as a replacement for a compact track loader on a construction site, these multifunctional loaders provide unparalleled versatility for growth and tackling new applications.”

The M-Drive and speed control features allow the loader to function as a tool carrier, providing control of RPM by hand throttle and speed via a foot pedal. This

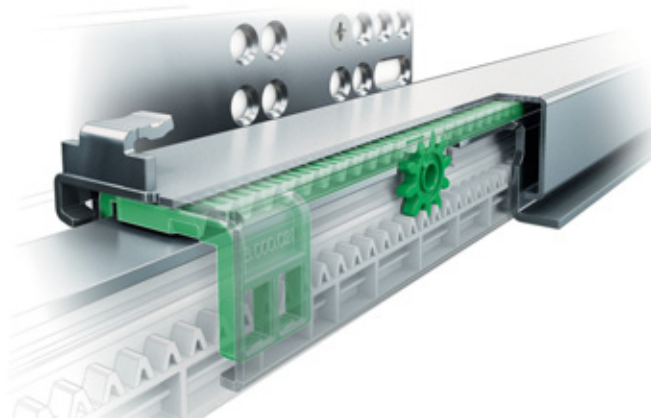
enables more precise and controlled operation of a wide variety of hydraulic attachments.

www.mecalac.com/en/

■ GRASS AMERICA HIGHLIGHTS DYNAPRO, THE PREMIER UNDERMOUNT DRAWER SLIDE

Grass America, a supplier of functional hardware for the cabinet industry, highlights its Dynapro product, the premier undermount slide for drawer applications. This synchronized, soft-close, full extension slide moves with a slight pull and gentle push, providing an efficient, effective, and concealed solution for various cabinetry needs.

Grass engineering has taken every aspect of the slide’s operating motion into account. Dynapro, known for its smooth running performance and quiet kinematics, utilizes an integrated rack and pinion system. This technology allows the slides to move in tandem with one another, improving glide, reducing noise, and preventing the drawer from binding when closing. Dynapro, rated for loads up to 132 lbs with its heavy-duty model, is suitable for drawer applications up to 48” wide, with no additional synchro-



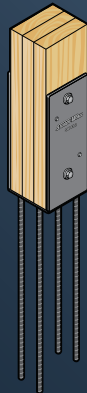
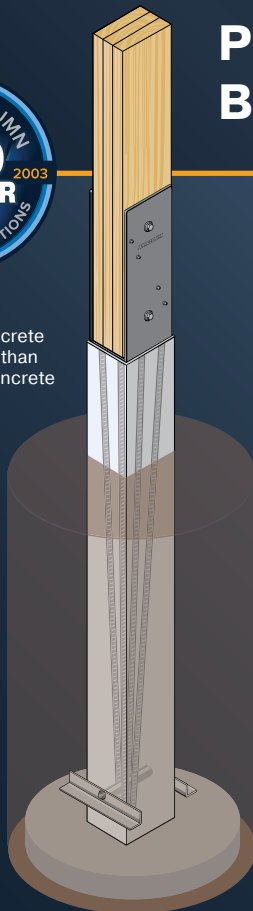
nization hardware required.

The powerful slide operates smoothly and evenly over abrasion-resistant nylon rollers that keep the drawer face level and support the drawer box as it is extended. Its German-made soft-close damper brings the drawer to a gentle rest, even under

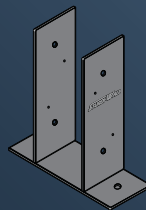
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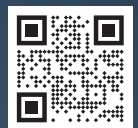
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NEW PRODUCTS

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grassusa.com

■ WAYNE DALTON INTRODUCES NEW WOOD GRAIN IMPRESSIONS FINISH COLLECTION TO CLASSIC STEEL MODEL 8300

An innovation in garage door design, the Wayne Dalton Classic Steel Model 8300 has high-resolution digital print finishes that achieve the look of real wood without sacrificing the durability of steel. The natural beauty of real wood is captured in meticulous detail through digital scanning technology, allowing design engineers to digitally construct a true non-repeating wood grain pattern.

"The value these doors bring to homeowners is through the roof. They feature an unbelievably upscale look, while benefiting from the Classic Steel collection's long-lasting durability and low maintenance construction," Wayne Dalton Product Manager Chris Williams said.

Classic Steel Model 8300 is now available in four new Wood



Grain Impressions finishes: Cedar Plank, Beachwood Plank, Carbon Oak Plank and Medium Oak Plank. This innovative technology prints the wood grain design directly on the steel, garage door surface. This allows homeowners and building owners alike to customize their Wayne Dalton Model 8300 garage door with elevated "wood" panels.

www.wayne-dalton.com

RB



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RB SEPTEMBER 2023

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“OUR BARN WAS ORIGINALLY BUILT in 2010. Living in South Louisiana, hurricanes are always a possibility and have become a part of life! Unfortunately, our barn took a hit in 2020 for Hurricane Delta. The entire middle aisle was completely destroyed! We were blessed to have had Toby and his National Barn Co. crew (part of the original 2010 crew) return for the repair job! Fast forward to 2023 when we decided to upgrade our bumper pull camper to a toy hauler and realized our opening wasn't quite tall enough. National Barn to the rescue once more for a minimal adjustment to the front clearance and doors to allow the measurement needed for our new camper. Our barn is so much more than just a barn to us. Of course, it houses all of our outdoor toys and needs, but it has been the life of many parties hosted for family and friends. If walls could talk, she'd have so many stories to tell!”

— Trent & Lana Menard
Cow Island, Louisiana **RB**



THE DETAILS:

BUILDER:

- National Barn Company

LOCATION:

- Cow Island, Louisiana

SIZE:

- 60' x 60' x 20' raised center isle with a 60' x 20' roof extension
- Center isle is 30' wide

ROOF PITCH:

- 3:12

LUMBER:

- Burrows Post Frame Supply, 6' x 6' and nail laminated columns
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METAL AND TRIM:

- Burrows Post Frame Supply Quadra
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DOOR:

- Plyco Series 95

WINDOWS:

- 3'x3' Atrium fixed window

BARN DOORS

- 25'x13' split sliding door.
- 4'x8' single slider door Hardware Western products
- 12'x12' framed opening

CUPOLAS

- Plyco

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BY RURAL BUILDER STAFF

■ VELLIQUETTE NAMED PRESIDENT OF LAKESIDE CONSTRUCTION FASTENERS

Lakeside Construction Fasteners, Inc. has promoted Eric J. Velliquette to President. Eric has been with Lakeside Construction Fasteners for 10 years, during which time he held the position of Vice President Sales & Marketing, proving himself expanding the LCF family brand of products throughout the USA and internationally.

Before joining Lakeside Construction Fasteners, Eric had previously worked as the Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Atlas Bolt & Screw Company, a Marmon Holdings Inc. company, one of largest fastener manufacturing-distributors in the USA servicing the metal building industry. During his tenure with Atlas, Eric earned an MBA and selected as an Adjunct Professor at Ashland University's College of Business, located in Ashland, Ohio.

Kyle Lane, CEO of the Lakeside Group of Companies and co-owner along with John Lane, welcomed Eric into his new position, saying he is "confident LCF will continue with a strong future, poised to reach even greater heights under Eric's leadership."

■ MALCO PRODUCTS NAMES REBECCA TALBOT AS VP OF MARKETING

Malco Products, a leading solution developer and manufacturer of a variety of high-quality tools for the HVAC and building construction trades, has announced that Rebecca Talbot has joined the company as its new vice president of marketing.

As leader of Malco's marketing team, Talbot will oversee, develop, and implement Malco's marketing strategy and efforts to increase brand and market position in order to achieve short- and long-term organizational goals. Talbot comes to Malco with a broad base of marketing accomplishments and professional experience, including positions at DeepRoot Green Infrastructure, Resideo (Honeywell) and Lakeland Companies. She holds a bachelor's degree from Metro State University and a Master of Business Administration degree from Georgia Southwestern State University.


Talbot will succeed Nancy Gunnerson, Malco's director of marketing, who recently retired after a 34-year career with Malco. During Gunnerson's time at Malco, she oversaw several innovative programs, including a new e-commerce tool, customer loyalty program and influencer relations campaigns, that contributed to the company's current record-breaking growth. She was also recognized by Twin Cities Business Magazine as a Notable Woman in Manufacturing in 2021.

"We are very excited to welcome Rebecca to our team, and also wish Nancy a wonderful retirement after an incredible 30+ year career at Malco," said Rich Benninghoff, president and CEO of Malco Products. "With Rebecca's strong leadership and B2B marketing expertise, Malco will continue to expand its marketing strategies and capabilities to evolve with the changing wants and needs of the marketplace while staying true to our values and history."






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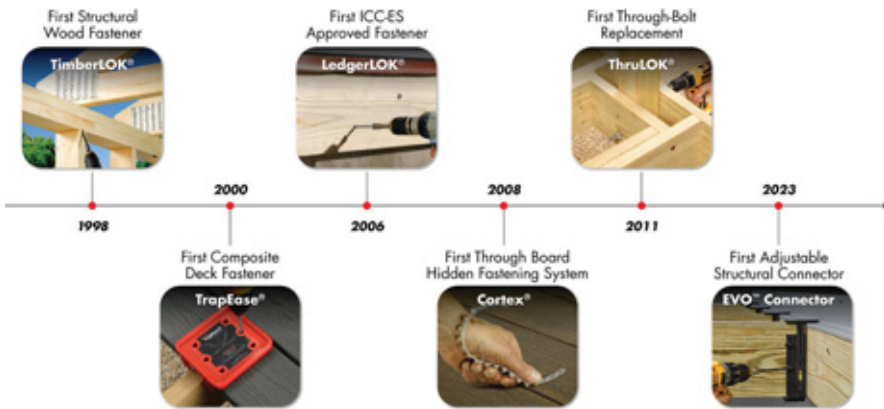
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■ FASTENMASTER REACHES 25TH ANNIVERSARY

FastenMaster, a division of OMG, Inc., is celebrating 25 years of providing professional building contractors with innovative products and fastening solutions that make work faster, easier and more efficient. Established in 1998, FastenMaster created the category of structural wood-to-wood screws with the introduction of TimberLOK, a heavy-duty wood screw designed to eliminate the need to predrill when attaching two pieces of wood together. It was the first of what has become the very popular 'LOK Line'

SUPPLIER NEWS



of structural wood-to-wood fasteners for residential applications, and solidified FastenMaster's focus on providing PRO-Driven solutions.

Since that beginning, FastenMaster has continued to differentiate itself by continually soliciting contractor feedback, and then developing highly engineered solutions that help improve installation productivity while delivering a premium finish. Through this process, they have revolutionized the industry with several breakthrough products.

"By actively listening to our PROs, FastenMaster has helped contractors achieve great success by offering them the very best solutions on the market," said Web Shaffer, senior vice president and general manager. "Developing productivity solutions through innovation has been our north star during the past 25 years and

we expect to deliver even more new and innovative solutions to the market in the next 25 years."

■ TRIANGLE FASTENER ACQUIRES FASTENER BUSINESS SEGMENT OF CSS

Triangle Fastener Corporation announced that as of July 1 it had acquired a segment of the Connective Systems & Supply, Inc. business that focused on fasteners for roofing, metal building, and mechanical contractors in and around Denver. CSS has been a leading provider of fasteners and products to construction industry professionals since its founding in 1985. This segment of their business is supported by approximately 20 employees in two locations who achieved \$15 million in sales in 2022.


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TFC's plans for long-term business growth by developing branch locations in the western United States and expanding our catalog of proprietary TFC-branded products," TFC said in a statement. "In addition to the pending opening of a location in San Antonio, Texas, the integration of CSS assets will bring us to a total of 27 U.S. locations, and a marked increase in our presence in the central and western United States."

Triangle Fastener Corporation was founded as a single location in 1977 in Pittsburgh and has established more than two dozen locations and three distribution centers across the U.S. **RB**



Check out Rural Builder Magazine online:
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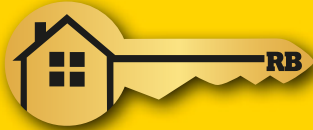
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CELEBRATING THE RURAL BUILDER GOLD KEY WINNERS

The July issue of Rural Builder unveiled this year's winners of Gold Key awards, the annual program in which Rural Builder readers select their favorite companies to honor their products and customer support. Several companies sent in photos with their Gold Key plaques. Congratulations and thank you!



Randy Gifford and Andrea Layng of Quality Structures / Express Barns.



The 10th Gold Key Award for S-5! prompted this team photo.



Levi's Building Components team members with their Levi's Building Components 2023 Gold Key Award.

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CSI: The Good & Bad (not ugly)

OUR MID-YEAR SURVEY INCLUDED QUESTIONS about concerns and additions for the remainder of 2023. Some things remained constant across “All Respondents,” “Post-Frame Builders,” and “Metal Building Builders,” Agricultural Builders,” and “Rural Builder Subscribers,” but there were some interesting differences.

All groups listed four of the top five things being added in 2023 as the same. All were planning to add Support Employees and Construction Employees. The lowest spot Employees found was Number 4, for Construction Employees for Metal Builders. All categories also included Manufacturing Equipment and New Products or Building Types. The fifth spot was either adding Trucks or Jobsite Equipment.

The Concerns were even more similar. Inflation, Interest Rates, and Finding Employees were the top three. Four and Five were mostly Cost of Materials and Retaining Employees. Metal Building Builders had Domestic Politics and Policy as the #5 concern.

Some nuggets looking at the data.

Agricultural Builders seemed the most positive across the groups. The level of concern was comparable, but the percentage of builders increasing the specific items was higher.

One great piece of news is that the concern regarding supply chain issues dropped way down the list. Supply Chain issues were listed as a major concern by 48% of respondents in the October 2022 survey. In the current survey, the number dropped to 20%.

TOP 5 LIST

WHAT IS BEING ADDED IN 2023

All Respondents		Post Frame		Metal Buildings	
Employees - construction	33%	Employees (support)	38%	Employees (support)	35%
Employees - support	33%	Employees (construction)	31%	New products or building types	30%
New products or building types	30%	New products or building types	31%	Manufacturing equipment	30%
Manufacturing equipment	28%	Manufacturing equipment	28%	Employees (construction)	28%
Trucks	25%	Trucks	25%	Jobsite equipment	28%
		Agricultural		Rural Builder Subscribers	
		Employees (construction)	41%	Employees (construction)	32%
		Employees (support)	38%	Manufacturing equipment	28%
		New products or building types	35%	Employees (support)	24%
		Manufacturing equipment	35%	New products or building types	24%
		Trucks	31%	Jobsite equipment	36%

CONCERNS

All Respondents		Post-Frame		Metal Buildings	
Inflation	59%	Inflation	59%	Inflation	60%
Interest rates	51%	Finding employees	56%	Interest rates	56%
Finding employees	49%	Interest rates	53%	Finding employees	49%
Cost of materials	45%	Retaining employees	41%	Cost of materials	40%
Retaining employees	32%	Cost of materials	38%	Retaining employees	33%
		Agricultural		Rural Builder Subscribers	
		Finding employees	59%	Inflation	58%
		Inflation	53%	Finding employees	56%
		Interest rates	50%	Interest rates	54%
		Cost of materials	47%	Cost of materials	46%
		Retaining employees	41%	Retaining employees	36%

SEPTEMBER 2023

Metal Builder

RURAL BUILDER MAGAZINE SPECIAL SECTION

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Robins Joins SWM Team

H! My name is Mark Robins and I am a new assistant editor here at Shield Wall Media. For the past two months, I have been fulfilling editorial duties at Frame Building News, Rural Builder, and Garage Shed Carport Builder.

I have experience in writing about construction, especially metal, having worked up to last April as an editor at Modern Trade Communications and then Kenilworth Media. As an editor, I've been involved in technical publishing for over 25 years and have bylined more than 300 full-length feature articles, most dealing with technical, manufacturing and construction developments.

My duties now include writing full-length feature articles columns, departments and special reports, prospecting editorial content, helping to produce our magazines and keeping an eye

on industry happenings.

Are there some article topics you'd like our team to address? Email me at mark@shieldwallmedia.com and let me know how we can help solve your biggest challenges.

As I grow and develop in this new position, I look forward to partnering and helping to further develop relationships with you, our Shield Wall Media readership. I look forward to seeing you at industry events and trade shows like our Construction Rollforming Show and METALCON.

— Mark Robins



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On the cover: Photo by PSMJ/McBoat Photography

METALCON Highlights & Educational Programming

METALCON announces its program lineup for this year's annual conference and tradeshow scheduled from Wednesday, Oct. 18 to Friday, Oct. 20 at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

From intensive pre-show workshops beginning on Tuesday, Oct. 16 to 35+ free educational sessions conveniently located inside the exhibit hall to inspiring keynotes, top industry experts will share their knowledge with attendees who are eligible to earn nearly a year's worth of continuing education credits (CEUs), including AIA learning units among others.

The only global event dedicated exclusively to the application of metal in design and construction is brought to you by 2023 sponsors: Mill Steel Company (premier level), CIDAN Machinery Inc., (platinum level), US Steel (diamond level) and others, along with long-time partner, the Metal Construction Association (MCA).

Keynote speakers for this year's show include contractor and Denver business owner Rico León, HGTV host of "Rico to the Rescue," presenting "HGTV's Rico to the Rescue: Real Life Scenarios — From Nightmares to Dreams Come True" on Wednesday, October 18 at 10:00 a.m. He will share some of his most unforgettable experiences and lessons learned from residential construction projects gone wrong and then turned around.

Then, on the following day at the same time, Ken Simonson, chief economist of the Associated General Contractors (AGC) of America, with 40+ years of experience analyzing, advocating and communicating about economic and tax issues, will explore the current state and outlook for construction in his keynote, "Construction Outlook for 2024: Forbidding or Reason for Cheer?"

A variety of special focus areas are planned, including:

THE ARCHITECT'S EXPERIENCE

Back for a third consecutive year and brought to you by PPG Industries, this "show-within-a-show" over two days is focused on the use of metal as a design and construction component, specifically to help architects, designers, specifiers and engineers solve tough architectural, structural, environmental and building performance challenges.

Offering exclusive education sessions specific to design professionals, attendees will hear from respected thought leaders, award-winning architects and industry experts, including featured keynote morning kick-off sessions. On Wednesday, October 18 beginning at 8:30 a.m., Christopher Sotiropulos, vice president of stadium operations joins Gary Edgar, manager of architectural specifications and industrial coatings of PPG to present "Designing for Las Vegas: A Full House of Finishes for Allegiant Stadium to Enhance, Protect & Cool." Sotiropulos will



METALCON returns to the Las Vegas Convention Center in October. PHOTO BY MCOBAT PHOTOGRAPHY

share what it took to build — and maintain — this \$1.9 billion stadium as well as its ongoing sustainability initiatives.

Then, the next day at the same time, architect and author Stefan Al will delve into the world of architectural innovation and its profound impact on skylines worldwide in his keynote, "Steel and Skylines." Drawing from his acclaimed book "Supertall," Al will share insights from the realm of skyscrapers, shedding light on the emergence of a new generation of towering structures that defy conventional limits in terms of height and design. Additionally, he will highlight the unceasing evolution of Las Vegas Boulevard as he explores the developments of resort design contributing to the city's distinctive character. Based on his book "The Strip: Las Vegas and the Architecture of the American Dream," he uncovers the dynamic changes that have shaped this iconic destination while contemplating the importance of sustainability in its ever-evolving architectural landscape. Registrants of the Architect's Experience can stop by the pavilion lounge area.

METALCON TRAINING ZONE (BOOTH #6071)

New this year and sponsored by Sherwin-Williams, the

METALCON Training Zone provides a hands-on demonstration and training area for contractors, remodelers and others who want to sharpen their skills and deliver their best, most efficient and cleanest work when installing various metal roof offerings and systems. Featuring a variety of mock-ups and materials including aluminum, copper, painted steel zinc and even some exotic materials, training will focus on proper detailing and utilization of the right tools (offered in both English and Spanish). See page 6 for more on the METALCON Training Zone.

WOMEN OF METAL CONSTRUCTION!

Also new this year, women of metal construction are welcome to join their peers before the show kicks off on Wednesday for a morning filled with the perfect blend of breakfast, networking and discussion at the ENVY at the Renaissance Hotel. Gather alongside fellow inspiring women and listen and learn from peers who are shaping the industry. “Metal and Mimosas” is sponsored by ATAS International, CIDAN Machinery, MetalCoffeeShop, the MRA (Metal Roofing Alliance) and METALCON.

METL-SPAN LAS VEGAS PLANT TOUR

Metl-Span, a Nucor® company, invites general contractors, installers and architects to an exclusive plant tour at its Las Vegas facility. Learn from this leading North American manufacturer of insulated metal panels (IMP)s just how they are made on Thursday, October 19 from 8:00-10:30 a.m. (transportation provided). This exclusive experience includes breakfast, networking, a plant tour and an education session “Designing with Commercial/Industrial Insulated Metal Wall Panels” presented by industry expert Kira Rogatnik (earn 1 AIA HSW credit). Learn more at metalcon.com/exclusive-plant-tour.

THE IMP ALLIANCE EDUCATION CENTER (BOOTH #1115)

The MCA IMP Alliance (leading manufacturers, material suppliers, and resellers) presents a special seminar, “Insulated Metal Panels – Installation and Handling Best Practices,” on best practices and common mistakes made during the unloading, staging and storage of bundles.

NRCA PROCERTIFICATION® DEMO (BOOTH #7077)

NRCA’s engaging demo will introduce what metal panel and metal shingle roof system hands-on assessments look like in its NRCA’s national certification initiative, which certifies experienced installers in specific roof system installations. Learn more at nrca.net/procertification/mc.

LEARNING CENTERS

Check out METALCON’s FREE education sessions! These 60-minute sessions from 11:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Wednes-

METALCON

Wednesday, Oct. 18 to Friday, Oct. 20
Las Vegas Convention Center • metalcon.com

METALCON is the largest international event in the metal construction and design industry. Established in 1991, it’s the only annual tradeshow and conference devoted exclusively to the application of metal in design and construction. Each year, contractors, architects, developers, owners, installers, fabricators, manufacturers and suppliers from more than 50 countries attend and 200+ leading companies exhibit. Produced by PSMJ Resources, Inc., in partnership with the Metal Construction Association.

day and Thursday are organized into three centers on the show floor: Best Practices, Technical Know-How and Sustainability. Attendees can earn up to 12 hours of CEUs. Additionally, METALCON continues to offer in-depth workshops this year on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the show to provide cutting-edge education and training, which cannot be found elsewhere. For a small fee, attendees will be armed with new information, fresh ideas and strategic direction to address some of the major issues facing the construction industry today, including:

- Metal Roof Installation Training Certificate Program
- Rollforming for the Metal Construction Industry
- Metal Roofing from A (Aluminum) to Z (Zinc)
- Low Slope Detailing Workshop – Certificate Course
- Mergers & Acquisitions Essentials Workshop
- RaiNA Installer Training for Rainscreen Assemblies

And in the Best Practices Learning Center, a special “State of the Industry” panel presentation led by members of the MCA will take place on Wednesday, October 19 at 3:45 p.m. to discuss current and future opportunities and challenges facing the metal construction industry.

GIVING BACK

Each year, METALCON gives back to the local community where the show takes place. This year, METALCON is partnering with America’s Fund, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping veterans in all branches of the military. The program was created to direct urgently needed resources and financial support to injured and critically ill members of the U.S. Armed Forces along with their families and is a self-funded program of the Semper Fi Fund (metalcon.com/giving-back).

“We look forward to returning to Las Vegas, a great destination for METALCON. We have a lot of hands-on training opportunities, new educational programming and fabulous keynote speakers,” said Judy Geller, METALCON Show Director. “Make sure to stop by The Deck, conveniently located near registration, to meet show management, network or take a break.” **MB**

Introducing the METALCON Training Zone

Sherwin-Williams, Sheridan Tools sponsoring opportunity for contractors to get hands-on experience



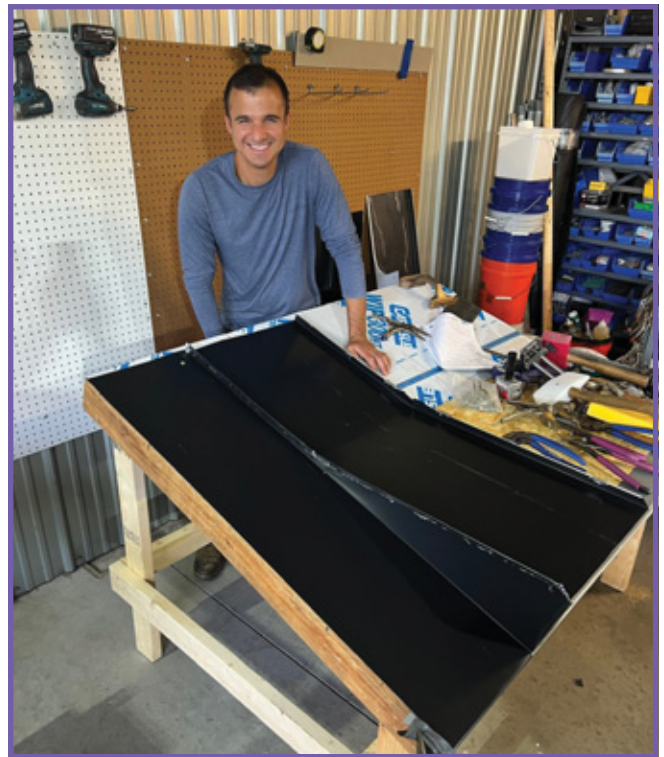
Working out details in paper at a bilingual VM ProZinc training in Mesa, Arizona.

In an effort to continue metal's decade-long trend of gaining roofing market share, METALCON is doing its part to develop more qualified metal roofing installers. The 2023 METALCON tradeshow floor will include a METALCON Training Zone, offering a hands-on learning opportunity for roofing contractors with any or no level of experience working with metal.

The 2023 show is scheduled for October 18-20 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Show staff recently announced that booth space is being added again and attendee registration is more than double what it was last year.

"With exhibit and attendee numbers on the rise, this show provides us with a great opportunity to offer installation training to metal roofing installers," says Judy Geller, Vice President of Trade Shows/METALCON. "Even more importantly, this training will be available to those with no experience with metal but are interested in adding metal roofing to their product line."

The METALCON Training Zone will feature demonstrations and education using a variety of mock-ups and materials including painted steel, aluminum, zinc, copper and other natural metals. Training will focus on proper detailing and utilization of the right tools to enhance skills of contractors and remodelers, en-



Individual advanced 24-gauge painted steel detail training in Reading, Pennsylvania. PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN SHERIDAN, SHERIDAN TOOLS.

abling them to deliver their best, most efficient and cleanest work when installing various metal roofing systems.

"We're working out the schedule, but we're planning on having continuous training all three days of the convention," says John Sheridan, owner of Sheridan Tools and organizer of the METALCON Training Zone. "We'll have mock-ups with several various details to work on and there will be training in English as well as Spanish. Roofing materials are coming from several generous manufacturers and Sheridan Tools will be providing tools for the METALCON Training Zone."

Among the manufacturers donating metal roofing materials for use in the METALCON Training Zone are Drexel Metals, McElroy Metal, and VMZinc.



Copper advanced detail training in Burlington, North Carolina.



Bilingual VM ProZinc Training in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

The METALCON Training Zone is sponsored by Sherwin-Williams, which recently introduced its MetalVue program. The coating manufacturer has invested years in the development of MetalVue, a program that has evolved into an in-depth and comprehensive tool kit for contractors.

“We’re working on finding ways to help contractors grow their business by getting into metal,” says Mark MacDonald, with Sherwin-Williams. “Research shows there is a real opportunity to create a significant share shift from asphalt shingles into metal roofing. MetalVue offers business process change, services and software to help contractors make that transition. It provides the framework for their business to be successful.”

Part of that success is being able to install a watertight metal roofing system, so training is a significant step for contractors. MetalVue is sponsoring the METALCON Training Zone. The mockups will provide some basic details involved in the installation of a watertight metal roofing system. Almost all metal roofing manufacturers offer training specific to their products.

Jim Bush is the Vice President of Sales and Marketing at ATAS International, a leading metal roofing and wall panel manufacturer, located in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Bush has overseen numerous training sessions at METALCON and at various ATAS locations.

“First and foremost is safety,” Bush says. “One should always follow the current OSHA safety practices when installing metal. Following safety, my best advice is to always follow the manufacturer’s standard details. While there are often five right ways to treat individual details, there certainly are details used that may not be appropriate for the system or geographical location of the building. If a contractor deviates from the manufacturer’s recom-

mendations, it is often a reduced level of liability for the manufacturer in the event a problem does occur in the future.

“As the attention to detail is the greatest challenge when getting involved in any new materials, understanding the basics of the materials and proper tools to be used with the systems is a must. Also, while materials are highly aesthetic in nature, in many cases the functionality of the system is hidden from view. As metal provides some of the longest service life expectations of any roofing material, the proper installation is key to the long-term performance. While not overly complicated to install, they are not easily corrected if something is done improperly.”

ABOUT SHERWIN-WILLIAMS’ METALVUE PROGRAM

The MetalVue program was developed to help metal roofing manufacturers and contractors sell more residential and commercial metal roofs. As an industry leader in metal roof coatings, Sherwin-Williams is dedicated to growing the metal roofing industry and the share of business for its partners faster than the current rate of growth. To achieve this, Sherwin-Williams has designed and developed a suite of services that can be marketed through the customer/value chain, including distributors, contractors and installers.

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MCA, METALCON Offer Opportunities for Next Generation

Any industry is only as good as its people. Sustaining success requires experienced industry veterans as well as the ability to attract, educate and develop a younger and more diverse workforce to eventually move into leadership roles within their companies and industry.

Like a lot of industries, the metal construction industry is facing the challenge of retiring leaders with not enough replacements waiting in line to fill that void. Innovative ideas from future leaders have to be a valuable asset when making a difference in the continuing growth of the metal construction industry. That's why the Metal Construction Association (MCA) and METALCON (produced by PSMJ Resources) have launched the Future Leaders Program — to attract, educate, connect and develop those eventual industry leaders.



Mark Carlisle, Industry Marketing Manager
— Construction at United States Steel Corp.



Bridget Jammoul, Market Manager at Therm-All

“The opportunity to leverage METALCON brings great value to the program,” says Jeff Henry, MCA Executive Director. “Our objective is to increase the technical and business acumen of those new to the metal construction industry.”

Henry anticipates the partnership with METALCON will eventually develop into a broad curriculum available to educate industry newcomers about the nuances of doing business in the industry, as well as the use of metal in construction. The METALCON team has hand-picked a selection of education sessions that will be beneficial to future leaders attending METALCON in October. MCA, working with METALCON, offers additional future leaders sessions virtually through METALCONLive! and dedicates webinars several times a year.

“Attracting a diverse variety of people to foster community and open their network will be the key to the success of the Future Leaders Program,” says Bridget Jammoul, Market Manager at Therm-All. “Not only folks from all areas, functions and levels within the industry, but people from all walks of life, too.”

There are opportunities to learn and grow with the industry by being an active association member. Members that



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Ryan King, National Sales Manager at CIDAN Machinery

continue to learn more about the metal construction industry are more valuable to their own companies.

“What we need, more than anything else, is to get people new to the industry involved,” says Mark Carlisle, Industry Marketing Manager – Construction, U.S. Steel. “This isn’t an age-discrimination thing. It’s good for anyone new to the industry to become engaged with other member companies. It doesn’t matter if they are early in their careers or the middle of their careers.

“Company leaders need to bring these people to meetings and trade shows, put them to work learning the industry. The more they know, the more they can help their company and the industry. The goal should be to get these people engaged to keep the MCA relevant.”

The mission of the MCA is to promote the use of metal in the building envelope through marketing, education and action on public policies that affect metal’s use. The success of one member becomes the success of all.

PSMJ, the producers of METALCON, partnered with MCA to launch the Future Leaders Program. Online and in-person events are continuing opportunities for metal construction professionals who have the desire to develop skills needed to advance. (More can be learned at www.metalconstruction.org.)

“Metal construction, or really all

Future Leaders Program Education Sessions At METALCON 2023

Below is a list of METALCON education sessions relevant for Future Leaders. Future Leaders (under 40 years of age) can save \$50 on any METALCON registration package with the code FLMC when they register. (All sessions are one hour in length unless otherwise noted.)

- Metal Roof Installation Training Certificate Program (1/2-day workshop)
- Rollforming for the Metal Construction Industry (1/2-day workshop)
- RAINA Installer Training for Rainscreen Assemblies (1/2-day workshop)
- Metal Roofing from A (Aluminum) to Z (Zinc) (1/2-day workshop)
- KEYNOTE: Construction Outlook for '24: Forbidding or Reason for Cheer?
- Better Together: Creating Connectivity in a Divided World
- Understanding the Customer Experience & Digital Transformation
- Accounting Doesn't Have to Suck!
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- Sealant and Adhesive Technology for Metal Applications
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construction, may not be as appealing as industries like tech,” says Ryan King, National Sales Manager at CIDAN Machinery. “I think this program attracts new, younger talent into our industry through education, mentoring, networking and more. It will also get those younger people already in our industry to think about their career and company’s future.

“Like most industries, our current leaders are baby boomers and Gen X. Boomers are mostly near or already retired. Gen X are mostly our leaders now, but millennials are already stepping into leadership roles. Gen Zs are now 11-26 years old and they, too, are part of, or soon entering the workforce. I believe this program will help shape the leaders of the future and bring new blood into our industry.”

Jammoul believes it’s an easy decision to become involved.

“To me, a future leader has nothing

to do with age,” she says. “It’s a moniker that says, ‘I’m passionate about this, I’m invested in this and I’m here to stay.’ A collective group with that mindset is sure to add value to the metal construction industry. Small ways, such as reverse-mentoring senior leadership members on a topic like the use of AI to increase sales team efficiencies, to potentially larger ways, such as cross-collaborating on product or service offerings. I think the sky’s the limit here.”

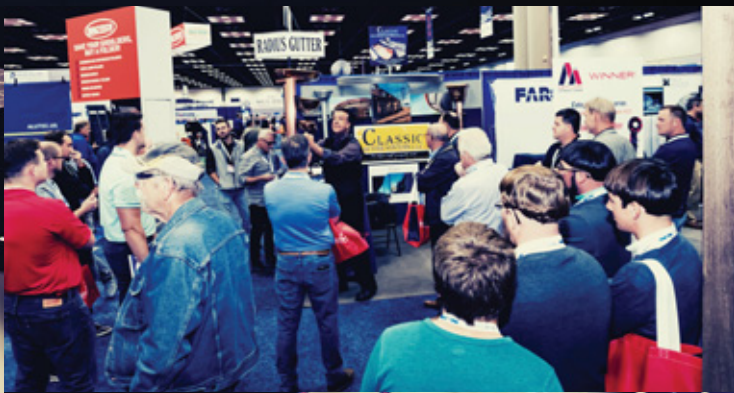
Jammoul says she wants to connect with people who are excited about the present and future landscape and who are in it for the long haul.

“We live in a fast-paced world,” King says. “I think more MCA members need to encourage their hungry and driven people to get more involved. We also need to offer workshops and networking for future members to learn from the boomers and Gen X and other speakers.” **MB**

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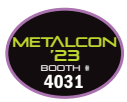
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Rollforming Show Returns to Cincinnati

Get the Metal-Forming Information You Need September 27-28

The fourth installment of the Construction Rollforming Show is heading back to Cincinnati in September. Slated for Wednesday and Thursday, September 27-28, at the Duke Energy Convention Center, the event will once again provide attendees with opportunities to speak directly with the suppliers and manufacturers that help roll formers not only get the job done, but help make their businesses more profitable and more successful.

The Construction Rollforming Show isn't a show for contractors; there won't be any "cash and carry" bargains. Show developer Gary Reichert explains, "The Construction Rollforming Show is designed for small roll formers — not small contractors. If you need to learn about metal forming or speak directly with manufacturers who sell in pallet, container or truck-load lots, this show is for you."

It is also the perfect opportunity for anyone who is considering making the transition to manufacturing their own metal trims, gutters, roof and wall panels — perhaps in order to create their own post-frame building kits. Attendees can learn what it takes to get started and how you can be competitive and successful in this essential industry.

The CRS is an event that was developed specifically for construction metal formers. Attendee registration includes all-access to educational sessions, exhibits, a complimentary social hour, and one-on-one conversations with industry insiders.

Educational sessions will be held both days of the show. For example, Rob Bowlin, AmeriPak, will lead a session on



Construction Rollforming Show 2023

preparing metal panels so they won't be damaged during shipping, while Frank Schiene of Metal Rollforming Systems will teach about roll-forming machine maintenance.

The educational sessions also include general business topics. Randy Chaffee, Source One Marketing, who has more than four decades of successful sales experience, will be leading sessions each day of the show; he will present "Working a Show on Both Sides of the Aisle" and "Hybrid Selling." Chaffee will also be recording his popular "Building Wins" podcast at the show.

Other Education Session Topics:

- Which Panel Rollformer Meets Your Needs?

- Digital World: Podcasts, Social Media
- Coil Basics
- Hybrid Selling
- Trim Brakes and Folders
- Coatings and Warranties
- Automated vs. Manual Material Take-Offs
- State of the Industry
- The Importance of Associations

All sessions are allotted enough time for question and answer sessions following the presentations.

In addition to educational sessions, as of this early writing, more than 50 suppliers and manufacturers are confirmed to exhibit, and the show expects to sell out floor space before the end of June. Attendees can speak one-on-one with coil and fastener suppliers, equipment manufacturers, component manufacturers, and more, which means you'll get all the information you need to make informed decisions.

Metal-forming machines will be on dis-

play on the expo floor; some will even be demonstrating operation. Hershey's Metal Meister, SWI Machinery, and Formwright (New Tech Machinery) will all have equipment set up for up-close inspection. Star 1 Products will also be performing demonstrations of its felt applicator.

If you form light gauge metal used in post-frame construction, metal buildings, carports, metal roofs or gutters — or you are looking to get into metal forming — you can't afford to miss the 2023 Construction Rollforming Show.

Learn more and watch for updates at the website constructionrollformingshow.com.

SHOW HOURS & LOCATION

The Construction Rollforming Show expo floor will be open from 12:30-5:30 p.m. Wednesday, September 27 and 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Thursday, September 28. Educational sessions will be held from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday and 9-11 a.m. Thursday. The schedule will allow attendees to get the most out of your attendance.

Attendee preregistration costs just \$50 and covers everything the show has to offer, including access to the expo floor and entry to all educational sessions. (The cost at the door is \$75, but still includes access to all show features.) To preregister: rollformingmagazine.com/construction-rollforming-show-registration, or see the QR code on page 23.



Questions about exhibiting at the Construction Rollforming Show can be directed to Missy Beyer, Shield Wall Media Director of Shows. She can be reached at missy@shieldwallmedia.com or 920-216-3007. The official Construction Rollforming Show host hotel is once again the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza (35 W Fifth St., Cincinnati), which is conveniently located across the street from the Duke Energy Convention Center. The street address of the Duke Energy Convention Center is 525 Elm St., Cincinnati, OH 45202. **MB**

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TOP 10 REASONS TO ATTEND THE 2023 CONSTRUCTION ROLLFORMING SHOW



The 2023 Construction Rollforming Show provides a one-of-a-kind opportunity for business owners and employees to gain knowledge specifically designed for the roll-forming industry. The following are the Top 10 reasons why business owners, managers, and key team members should attend the 2023 Construction Rollforming Show in Cincinnati September 27-28.

1 Gain knowledge of industry trends and forecasts. Trade show attendees learn from experts and peers about what is happening in their industry and what is expected to happen in the next 12-24 months.

2 Gain knowledge of new products and services. Manufacturers are constantly developing new products and features that help their customers improve productivity and efficiency. Trade

show attendees learn about the latest products and features that can give them a competitive advantage.

3 Learn about legal, regulatory, and compliance changes. What new laws and regulations have been implemented over the past year? How will these changes affect your business and what steps can businesses take to succeed?

4 Gain knowledge of how other businesses operate. Trade show attendees meet their colleagues and discuss how their businesses operate and what challenges they are facing. By doing so, attendees learn how other businesses improved efficiency and solved problems. Attendees can use this information to improve their own efficiency and solve their own problems.

5 Gain knowledge about your competition. The roll-forming industry is constantly changing. Attendees can learn what their competition is doing. Who bought new equipment? Who opened a new location? Who went out of business?

6 Build relationships with key vendors and even order products from them, face-to-face. Vendors can be invaluable partners. Trade show attendees get face-to-face time with multiple key vendors — in a single location — and establish relationships that will help their business succeed. You can even create an order with a real, live person.

7 Build relationships with colleagues in the industry. Getting to know colleagues in the roll-forming industry is a great reason to attend this trade show. Attendees can meet colleagues from other regions and have a resource to “bounce ideas off of” in the future. For example, if a business owner is considering investing in new equipment, that owner can contact another business owner they met at a trade show to get input on the pros and cons of specific types or pieces of equipment.



8 Build relationships with your team. Many businesses send their key employees to trade shows. This is a great opportunity for key team members to get involved in the industry, learn about new products and practices, and meet key vendors. It also provides an opportunity for those team members to feel like an important part of the business and to build relationships with other team members away from the office.

9 It's time to be inspired. Trade shows provide a great reason to get out of the office for a few days. When an owner or manager is in the office, most of their time is spent dealing with immediate issues. Trade shows provide an opportunity to step away from daily responsibilities and focus on the big picture and future goals and strategic plans for the business.

10 Visit the Queen City. Cincinnati is where “Midwest friendliness meets Southern charm.” The free Connector Streetcar travels a 3.6-mile loop through the heart of the city. There are 18 stops located along the first phase of the route, which are one to two blocks from downtown hotels and three blocks from the Duke Energy Convention Center.

Trade shows provide a unique opportunity to gain targeted industry knowledge and to meet colleagues in the roll-forming industry. It only happens once per year – so don't miss it! **MB**



Convincing the Eye

Steel Dynamics debuts new digitally printed steel

Printed steel to feign the look of wood or camo is certainly not a new concept, but now Steel Dynamics (SDI) has entered the market with a game-changing new generation of technology. The steelmaker's Butler, Indiana, team spent 2-1/2 years developing the digital designed product, Tru>Steel HD. It entered the market last September 2022, and has been making its way around the trade show circuit to expanding audience appeal.

Don Switzer, Manager of Sales, Steel Dynamics Flat Roll Group, explained that Tru>Steel HD was originally targeted to the garage door market. It has, however, caught the eye of rollformers and building contractors who see the emerging market for wall panel, both interior and exterior, an ideal fit for the specialty coil.

One customer is using it to create a log cabin effect using steel, working with SDI



400 DPI scans create realistic images of wood that can be manipulated to add additional elements prior to being transferred to metal. SDI PHOTO

to incorporate a realistic look of chinking.

Graber Post Buildings assisted SDI with selecting images that would be most receptive to the board and batten niche. "Graber Post did a fantastic job," Switzer said. "They were actually our first Galvalume customer, and also our first painted

Galvalume customer, and now they were our first digital print customer."

It is too soon to show off a board and batten building that incorporates the new wall product, but Trent Wagler at Graber Post noted that a display of Tru>Steel HD drew strong interest among visitors to their booth at the Frame Building Expo in February. With the popularity of board and batten spreading rapidly, he thinks Tru>Steel HD will follow. "We had a small sample of cedar gray on our table, and it caught quite a few eyes. We had a lot of good feedback. We had a lot of people stop in, pick it up, feeling it and asking questions about it. I do think it was a hit."

He said the company ordered a small quantity of Tru>Steel HD initially to gauge its reception. It sold out prior to the Expo, prompting them to reorder.

The product is also available through United Steel Supply that services the construction market. They are stocking four to six colors to start and have already sold out their first orders and have reordered.



Graber Post Buildings was consulted to help develop digital prints that would appeal to the growing popularity of board and batten siding. Graber installed some of the wood, rough sawn cedar in gray, for an office conference room shown here. GRABER POST PHOTO

What's different about Tru>Steel HD

Switzer explained that the historical system for making designer steel used rotogravure, common in the newspaper and magazine world. Manufacturers essentially take a photo and create a pattern of art that is transferred to the steel on etched rollers. "Depending on the diameter of the roll, that pattern repeats every 29 to 31 inches," he said, adding: "When you want to design in the true character of wood, you're somewhat limited. If you would want to put a knot or a mark in the wood, it would repeat every 29 to 31 inches."

Some customers wanted SDI to enter that market, but SDI saw too many disadvantages and realized that a new frontier in digital printing was evolving.

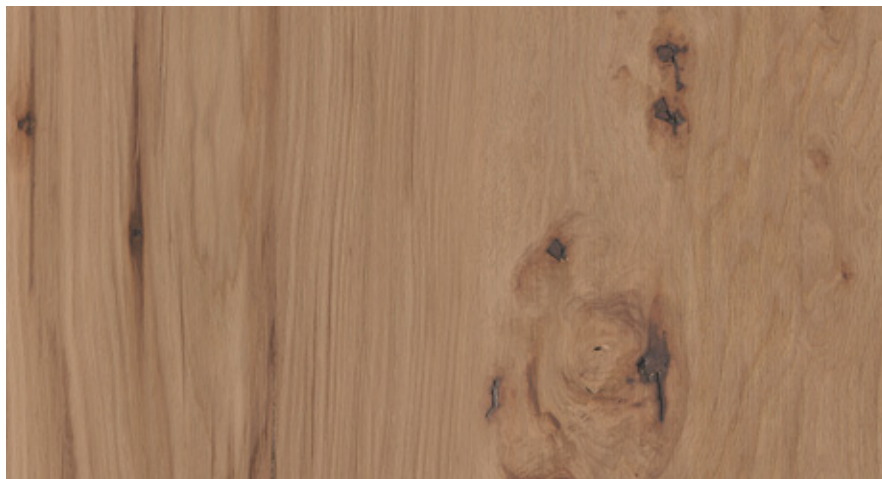
"Four or five years ago we began studying digital printing," Switzer said. "We waited for the technology to advance before moving ahead."

Instead of starting with a photograph, SDI's system — which the company's own team of experts developed — uses high tech 3-D scanners and real wood for its wood-grain designs. "It takes hours and hours to take the scan and develop that image," he described. "Then we transfer that image and work it with our creative team, and basically form that image into a pattern our customers are looking for."

The image can be quickly adjusted to add or delete elements of design or to adjust colors. It can run on a size range of coil from .015-.030 x 36"-60" wide. One of its best assets is that the image is repeatable over and over again without image degradation.

Unlike the rotogravure system that requires the coil to go through the process twice when color is added, the digital system allows for the change to be integrated immediately into the digital design. This also allows a single coil to accommodate multiple images.

"We thought that would provide customers a better look, that custom look they were looking for. And the [repeating pattern] would be significantly longer," Switzer continued. "The advantage of our system is that we have up to a 32-foot re-



Close-up of Tru>Steel HD in Natural Hickory. SDI PHOTO

peat. That allows you to put in knots and grain and images that make the product look so much more realistic, with more depth of image ... we can put knots in, we can take knots out, we can do things that really make the product very, very unique. When you etch a roll in the historical system, you're stuck with what's on that roll."

To withstand the elements for exterior use, Tru>Steel HD is finished with an electron beam clear coat barrier protection. The paint system carries a 20-year limited warranty at this time.

SDI has developed more than a dozen stock images of wood and camouflage, including but not limited to rough sawn cedar in natural, weathered, and distressed, oak, walnut, hickory, and pecky cyprus. In the pipeline is weathered barn siding and more.

Tru>Steel HD is the first print-designed

product made by a steel mill in North America. Forerunners have all been third-party. Switzer said it is a premium product but is competitive with printed steel elsewhere in the marketplace.

The current products are focused on vertical application, but SDI anticipates that roofing will follow.

Part of the charm of the new steel is that consumers can have the look of wood without some of its adverse properties, and it also ticks all the boxes for "green." SDI makes all its steel in electric arc furnaces using at least 80% recycled steel, "so we are replacing wood, which is not recyclable, and we're replacing it with a product that can be recycled at end of life," he said.

In addition, the electron beam coating and curing systems developed for the process have no VOCs and related adverse environmental issues. **MB**



SDI bought the equipment to create Tru>Steel HD, but not the process. The process was developed by a team at SDI over the course of two-and-a-half years. SDI PHOTO



Living With Metal

Residential Opportunities Abound as New Technology and Labor Shortages Converge

Necessity appears to be once again mothering invention. And invention deserved better because it has been doing amazing things.

Improvements in both light-gauge steel (LGS, also known as cold-formed steel) and its engineering, plus fantastic new software that helps LGS manufacturing machines create ready-made metal walls and panels, have given builders and contractors the ability to erect an affordable residential building in half the time of a stick-built home.

The reasons why the US hasn't moved in this direction are part cost, part practicality and part stubbornness. But as the labor market continues to weigh heavily on building timeframes, and as labor costs start to outweigh materials, faster solutions like metal-framed homes are starting to become a more serious option for builders and home buyers.

The Digital Future

Thomas Reed is a regional manager for

Howick Ltd, which manufactures machines that create metal framing, or in its own words from its website, "Precision light steel roll-forming technology framing modern construction."

There is a learning curve that we won't detail here, but a builder or contractor does need to first consider the investment into software and people who can run it. "A lot of my clients are using Revit through Autodesk, and use different software programs that have applications that sit inside of Revit," Reed said.



That investment will be supported by Howick and the other machine manufacturers and we won't detail its costs and timeframe in this article. But once a company starts utilizing this kind of product, and starts sending finished framing to its builders, the benefits are significant.

It can involve complex computer programming, obviously, but the benefits aren't complicated: The machine creates exactly the metal parts that the software asks for, and the software also tells everybody working on the job exactly what their job is and how it's done, down to tiny fractions of an inch.

In the past and even sometimes today, the contractors and tradespeople don't know what each other are doing, or they're relying on a GC who better have incredible communication skills. "This type of software forces that discussion,"

Reed said, because the plans everyone receives are going to incorporate the necessary and proper measurements.

"If you have an HVAC contractor that has to run through a particular part of the building, these software applications can create that access way, and show how it could be framed," he said. "In contrast to somebody building a house out of stick, when they have an electrical contractor come in, the software can show where all service holes are to be, and the electrical contractor can even have input on the front end as needed so that the machine provides all those service holes for wire pulls on the front end. This saves time and money and is applicable to all the trades."

With software and programs like this, "All of the stakeholders — your owner and all your general contractors and your subcontractors — can come together and

understand the design and learn what they own, in real time. And if changes are made, everybody is aware. That's the biggest thing that modeling and automation are helping to change the way business is done. You don't have a ton of change orders."

The Production Process

So what does the machine do, exactly, and where does the metal framed panel get created and assembled? If you own a Howick machine, that machine helps create the panels (you might call them frames) at the factory or in the warehouse, and those panels are then shipped for assembly on-site.

"The most efficient way is to create your panels — whether it's a wall panel, a roof



A warehouse assembly like this photo taken from a Howick video would be perfect for a Lunch & Learn.

truss, or an open web floor joist—in the factory,” Reed said. “Those will get labeled according to the job and they come out with shop drawings, and it comes out as a totally assembled panel. I have some clients who install their windows, doors and sheathing on the panel and deliver it that way to site.

“Most of the time the insulation is happening on-site; some of our contractors actually just spray foam right on-site.

“I would imagine someday getting a true SIP panel done, where it’s completely done with your electrical and everything done inside, and (in the future) some people will start insulating or spray foaming in the factory, as well.”

Cost of Metal vs. Wood

Keith Dietzen, the founder, CEO, and owner of software company SmartBuild Systems, remembers the 1990s when Hurricane Andrew caused a near-doubling of wood prices. “There was a movement toward metal, but it didn’t stick,” he said.

As commodity prices and scarcity problems have wreaked havoc in the recent past, Dietzen has seen some builders attempting to move toward all-metal buildings in residential construction, but it’s not a huge shift at this point. “Light-gauge framing is still largely commercial and isn’t yet creating an impact in residential or high-end garages or sheds,” he said.

Conditions are ripe for a change, though. We know a metal building will be

worth more because it’s going to be stronger and last longer. We also know that it will cost more, at least in terms of materials.

So how much more does this new way of building homes cost versus stick-built? In raw materials, 10% to 15% more than stick-built is Reed’s estimate, though with raw materials fluctuating so much in recent years, that’s hard to assess.

Central Steel Group creates metal buildings of all kinds and is moving more and more into residential. As opposed to a builder or contractor that uses a Howick (or similar) machine to create a custom building, Central Steel Group is headed toward mass-producing metal homes. COO Jay Lara said that in their calculations, with the processes they’re developing, the all-metal buildings they can produce will be less expensive in cost per square foot than typical wood-framed construction, in large part because the production labor is so significantly reduced.

Labor Challenges

Builders and contractors who have a long history and expertise in stick-built construction have not moved toward all-metal buildings in part because their crews have little to no experience in those areas. “The biggest problem that everybody has in post-frame, and in all-metal buildings, is getting help,” Dietzen said. “They can’t expand their crews.”

That’s where speed and ease of assembly come in. Reed said he has clients who

can be ready for drywall in 10 days. Lara said “our house packages can be installed in under one week on a level concrete slab. Shorter construction time frames and erection time mean substantial labor cost savings to the homeowner.”

And even when the commodity markets settle to normalcy, that labor shortage won’t be solved, and it is increasingly going to affect home prices. Said a Central Steel Group flyer created for people considering an all-metal residence, “We are selling a solution to a problem and the problem is that housing is not affordable for a large contingent of the population.”

Storms and Wood vs. Metal

Another reason that metal may have a strong future in residential and high-end outbuildings is its ability to be more stormproof than wood. The big bad wolf apparently taught us little. In many areas of the country, we built with wood, and it blew down. And we rebuilt with wood, and it blew down again. And we rebuilt with wood ... you get the picture.

So regions like Florida, some of which are literally disaster areas because of hurricanes, have a strong future in stronger structures, whether that be metal, or SCIPS (Structural Concrete Insulated Panels), or something to be invented yet. Central Steel Group says its state-of-the-art steel tubular engineering allows them to offer Risk Category II buildings.

Reed knows of one company that’s about to assemble literally hundreds of metal homes for a subdivision in Florida — and their construction is expected to take only a few months. They’ll sell for a relatively affordable price of \$300k or so, and he fairly observed that you couldn’t build 2-by-4 stick homes in that quantity in that amount of time, and even if you could, they wouldn’t be storm-resistant.

Does This Technology Eliminate Jobs?

Reed made an interesting point about the future of tradespeople and where the



Light Gauge vs. Structural Steel Construction

By Brett McCutcheon
Beck America & ET&F* Fastening Systems

Steel has an outstanding strength-to-weight ratio and flexes with force, which is why it's commonly used for large construction projects. Steel is the ideal material for high rise buildings because it can withstand high winds, earthquakes and other stressors. Due to its strength, steel frames require fewer vertical supports, which in turn makes them more cost effective. Steel is also considered an eco-friendly material because all steel products contain recycled steel, and in framing, they typically contain a minimum of 25%.

There are two options when it comes to steel framing: light gauge and structural steel.

[Ed. Note: Since most of our Metal Builder audience would only use light-gauge steel, we'll only include that section of this article here.]

Light-Gauge Steel

This steel is cold formed, which creates long, thin sheets that are then shaped into guided "C" or "Z" patterns capable of holding heavy loads. Light gauge supports come in a galvanized finish of zinc, aluminum or a combination of the two. For this construction process, a load-bearing wall is constructed first, then interior partitions and exterior cladding follow.

Light gauge is most commonly used in residential or light commercial construction as an alternative to wood framing. It's similar to wood in that little cutting and sizing is required on the job site because the studs are manufactured to precise lengths. However, light gauge steel won't rot, warp, burn or harbor insects like wooden frames. Due to their strength, light gauge steel frames also require less studs because they can be placed further apart. In general, light gauge will produce less waste, which is more environmentally friendly and more cost effective than alternatives like wood. Its main disadvantage is in case of fire, rather than burning, the steel structure will lose some of its stability and there is potential for collapse.

labor shortages are headed. Do these machines and their automation and prebuilt-framing capabilities replace workers? Is this technology forcing people out of work?

Perhaps on the surface that seems logical, but in actuality, those workers aren't there to be replaced. They have been leaving of their own accord, and their children aren't going into the trades.

What these new systems and these machines do is enable forward-thinking builders and contractors who want to be great at the next big thing to take a leap forward. "We take this skilled labor that's out there today that is committed in their trade, and we enable them to look at projects in a much different way," Reed said. "And we're taking previously non-skilled labor and enabling them to adapt so quickly to digital fabrication. People are finding their way of erecting a building or home much quicker, and so there's much more satisfaction in the end product."

Lunch & Learn

So how does the industry proceed to show builders and contractors this new way of doing things? "The best thing you can ever do is Lunch & Learns," Reed said. "Bring in the local code enforcers, general contractors, and subcontractors and walk them through a sub-assembly. I have one client that actually built a completely

framed house in a factory and brought in the subs to show them."

Reed said the first step is to demonstrate the software and how it interacts with the machine, then take them to a warehouse build, where they can see how their jobs will be easier with metal framing and the software that goes with it, and the code officials can see first-hand why these are obviously ready for approvals.

"I have one client down in South Carolina called Synergy Steel and they started out with residential," Reed said. "Now they're doing multifamily, hotels, and a variety of other buildings. They have eight of our machines. Lunch & Learn is how they did it. They brought in architects, engineers, code authorities, contractors, and general contractors, and educated them.

"The other thing they did, which was very important on their part and not everybody's going to do this at first, but they created their own internal university, where they not only train their employees how to erect the house right at their factory location, they would also bring all those other stakeholders and show them how it's done."

For some companies, the future is now.
MB



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HOWICK EVENT BRINGS TOGETHER CONSTRUCTION LEADERS

Howick Ltd, the manufacturer of light steel roll-forming technology, brought its STEEL HORIZONS construction industry showcase to Boston in June. More than 100 of construction industry leaders gathered at the Autodesk Technology Center for speakers and presentations about the future of construction along with a tour of the Autodesk facility.

As a long-term collaboration partner with Autodesk, Howick hosted a live demonstration of the Howick X-TENDATM 3600, now resident at the Technology Center. This system manufactures game-changing telescopic light steel framing components for interiors that are extendable in any direction, dramatically cutting the time it takes to install internal walls and ceiling frames. Speakers at the event included:

- Allison Scott, Autodesk: Design and tech innovation.
- Dave Cooper, Cooper Metal Works: Industrialized construction.
- Brandon Ionata, StrucSoft: BIM.
- Magdalena Kowalczyk, Autodesk: Future of construction tech.
- Amy Marks, Queen of Prefab: Rethinking building products and sustainability.
- Scott Mitchell, STUD-IO: "AI as Client" installation.
- Amr Raafat (Windover Construction) & Hamish Coubray (Howick): Tech and teamwork.
- Jim Stoddart, Autodesk: Generative workflows.
- And Russell Wills, MODLOGIQ: Offsite manufacturing.

Learn more about the Howick event on the website found at steelhorizons.com.

HOWICK SURVEY REVEALS OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSTRUCTION SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS

Howick Ltd recently undertook a global Construction Software Survey, providing valuable insights into the brands of software in use, how those tools are being used, and how they might

be improved for the benefit of users.

The survey was completed by 242 leaders in the construction industry. It explored the overall usage of construction technologies like framing automation and CNC-driven technology. It looked at how the take-up of software changed by sector. Then it delved into specific categories, including architectural design, MEP design, framing detailing, engineering analysis, cloud-based BIM, and the usage of 2D and 3D technology.

The survey findings provide significant insights to benefit users and software developers. While the use of technology in the industry is increasing, the results revealed limitations and many challenges to be addressed, as well as opportunities for future development to encourage further adoption.

There were several common themes highlighted in the overall responses relating to desired features and functionality:

1. The desire for improved integration and collaboration between different tools to enable seamless integration, so users can collaborate and share information easily.
2. Streamlined workflows and the automation of repetitive tasks such as structural calculations and design, as well as the use of AI and cloud services to speed up the design process, saving time and increasing efficiency.
3. Improved user interfaces and design capabilities so the software is easier to use and more intuitive.
4. There is a desire for software to integrate better with Building Information Modelling (BIM) tools, and to work with a wider range of file types and other software.

Learn more including what software developers need to improve upon on the website at www.howickltd.com/stories/construction-software-survey-insights.

MBCEA HONORS MEMBERS, NAMES BUILDINGS OF THE YEAR

The Metal Building Contractors and Erectors Association (MBCEA) presented two member awards at its 54th Annual MBCEA Conference, held in May in Nashville.

The Robert and Beverly Ketenbrink "Oil Can" Service Award was given to Keith Wentworth for his dedication and service to the metal building industry. Greg St. Clair was honored as a new member of the MBCEA Pioneers Club for his 33 years of service in the industry.

The MBCEA also announced its 2023 Building of the Year winners. The overall winner was the Terminal F roof retrofit project at the Port of Miami, undertaken by Lemartec Builders of Coconut Grove, Florida. It included a metal building and roof from Varco Pruden Buildings of Memphis.

Among the other winners was a renovation and reroof in Pennsauken, N.J., that featured buildings, metal roof, and metal wall panels by Metal Sales Corporation and American Buildings. **MB**