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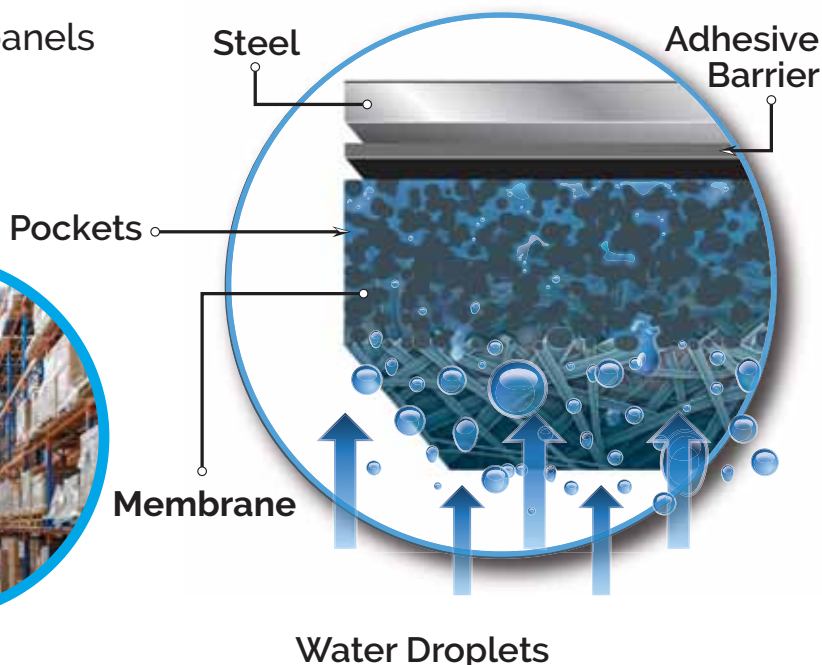
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Cover design by Tom Nelsen



Show off your outstanding projects on social media to grab the attention of potential customers. *Courtesy of Graber Post Buildings' Facebook page.*

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## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

*What additional topics would you like Rural Builder to cover in 2020?*

Drop me a line at [karen@shieldwallmedia.com](mailto:karen@shieldwallmedia.com) or mail to Rural Builder Editor, P.O. Box 255, Iola, WI 54945

## FEBRUARY PREVIEW

- State of the Industry
- Frame Building Expo: New Products On Exhibit
- Project of the Month



e-mail the editor at  
[karen@shieldwallmedia.com](mailto:karen@shieldwallmedia.com)

Check our website, the Construction Magazine Network:  
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# Nominations Sought for Rural Builder Hall of Fame

EVERY YEAR SINCE 1982, RURAL BUILDER MAGAZINE has awarded the Rural Builder Hall of Fame honor to individuals who have helped to advance the post-frame industry. Since the program's inception, there have been 122 awards given.

This year, for the first time, we are opening up the nomination process to readers of *Rural Builder*. Because you are part of the industry, you are directly impacted by the work these people have put into making post frame a viable and progressive occupation. We welcome your voice in this decision.

On page 6 is a place where you can write in your nominations. We have them separated into three categories (Manufacturer/Supplier, Contractor, and Educator). Please supply as much information you can about the nominee and why you feel they deserve induction into the Hall of Fame. Final voting will be made by existing Hall of Fame members and Shield Wall Media staff. The winners will be notified and invited to the Awards Banquet at the Frame Building Expo in Des Moines, Iowa, on February 27.




A list of individuals already in the Hall of Fame are listed so you can avoid nominating them again: Once a member, always a member.

Thank you for your input. **RB**



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# Nomination Form

1. Name of nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's address, email, or phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Any background information about the individual:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons this person should be a candidate for the Hall of Fame:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name of nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's address, email, or phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Any background information about the individual:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons this person should be a candidate for the Hall of Fame:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name of nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's address, email, or phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Any background information about the individual:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons this person should be a candidate for the Hall of Fame:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**DEADLINE:** December 31

**Email your nominations to [karen@shieldwallmedia.com](mailto:karen@shieldwallmedia.com)  
 or mail to Rural Builder Hall of Fame,  
 PO Box 255, Iola, WI 54945.**

## Rural Builder Hall of Fame Inductees: 1982-2019

1982 Bob Moore	1988 Bill Bickert	1996 David Bohnhoff	2004 Jerry Wille	2012 Steve Eversole
1982 Ed Bahler	1989 Doug Deniston	1996 Dick Zimmerman	2004 Leo Shirek	2012 Ted L. Funk
1982 John Pedersen	1989 Frank Woeste	1996 Roger Oimoen	2004 Vince Draper	2013 Dwayne Borkholder
1982 Marvin Hall	1989 Jim Frame	1997 Clyde Wynn	2005 Bill Koenig	2013 Stephen Pohl
1982 Russell Lehe	1989 Jon Schwichtenberg	1997 Gary Anderson	2005 Bob Lee	2013 Wayne Schrock
1982 Walter Behlen	1990 Ben Klauer	1997 Randy Wanta	2005 Earl Erickson	2014 John Hill
1983 Bob Rowe	1990 Bill McMahon	1998 Gerald Riskowski	2006 Pat Murphy	2014 Al Geisthardt
1983 Walt Keller	1990 Brian Holmes	1998 Jim Peters	2006 Stan Brickl	2014 Rick Stowell
1984 Art Muehling	1990 Frank Lessiter	1998 Robert L. Skaggs	2006 Tim Royer	2015 Larry Edema
1984 Carl Kroh	1991 George Eberle	1998 Tom Boston	2007 Glen Thomsen	2015 James T. Knight
1984 Freemon Borkholder	1991 H.B. Manbeck	1999 David Pogradt	2007 Bill Thul	2015 Douglas Overhults
1984 George Squires	1991 Leo Souder	1999 James Walter	2007 Steve Hoff	2016 Dave Brakeman
1984 Jim Picha	1992 Dwaine Bundy	1999 David Kammel	2008 Gerald Richardson	2016 Mike Brugger
1985 B. G. Perkins	1992 Jack Walters	2000 Pat McGuire	2008 Arthur Shirk	2016 Jim Simon
1985 Ben Boehler	1992 Pete Loveland	2000 Robert Graves	2008 Louis Albright	2017 Glen S. Graber
1985 Bill Friday	1993 Henry Getz	2000 Robert Resch	2009 Ray Bucklin	2017 Kenneth J. Guffey
1985 Gayle Merrill	1993 Neil Meador	2001 Gil Friesen	2009 Tom Wick	2017 Joseph M. Zulovich
1986 Bruce McKenzie	1993 Thomas 'Tem' McElroy	2001 Jerry Johnson	2009 Eugene Thiede	2018 Mike Burkholder
1986 Don Farris	1994 Calvin O. Cramer	2001 Kifle Gebremedhin	2010 Robert Brisky	2018 Sam Cottrell
1986 Pete Kohl	1994 John F. Wick	2002 Barry Bahler	2010 Tom Koch	2018 Joe Harner
1987 Dave Maupin	1994 Karl Brickl	2002 Larry D. Jacobson	2010 Daniel Hindman, Ph.D.	2019 Paul Boor
1987 Don Jedele	1994 Karl Brickl	2002 Rich Paul, Jr.	2011 Kenneth K. Kistler	2019 Jim Dobrzynski
1987 Harry Bott	1995 Donald Bender	2003 Jay D. Harmon	2011 Rick Bragg	2019 Dan McFarland
1988 Bill Uphoff	1995 Paul Hinshaw	2003 Ron Sutton	2011 L. Bynum Driggers	
1988 Calvin Baird	1995 Virgil Hartje	2003 Steve Mikkelson	2012 John R. Darrah	



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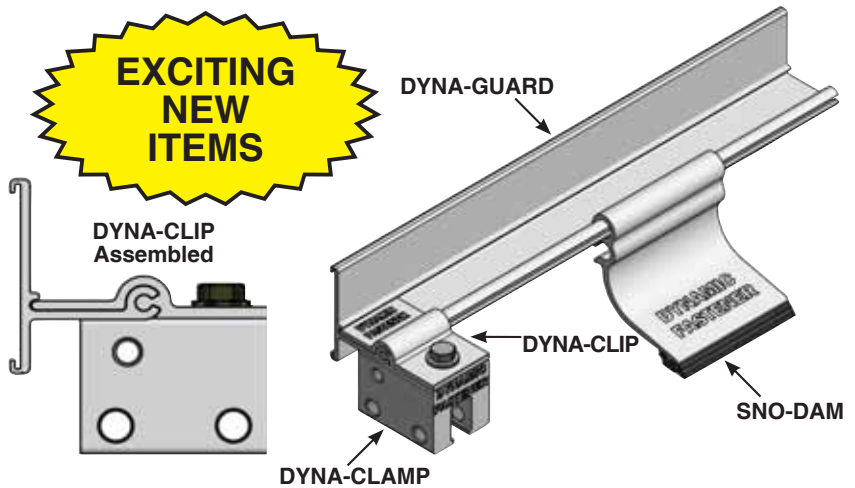
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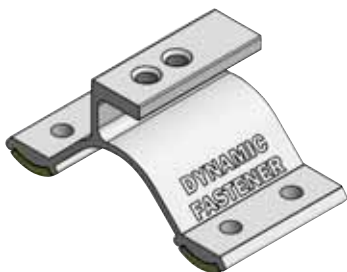


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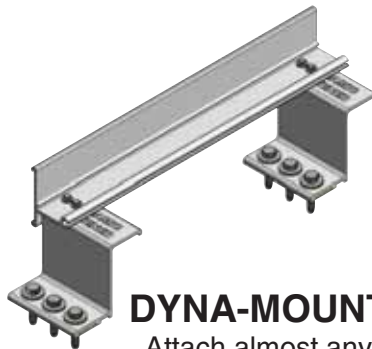
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## industry news

BY RURAL BUILDER STAFF

### California Flips Switch To Solar

With the turning of the calendar page to 2020 comes the enactment of the California Building Code requirement that all new-construction California homes of three stories or less will need to include a solar energy system.

Recent building statistics estimate solar energy systems were included on approximately 15,000 new California homes each year. California averages 75,000-80,000 new homes built per year. The implications have builders and home buyers concerned; buyers face significantly increased home prices (although they can expect incremental savings over the lifetime of the home) and builders — stuck in the middle — face supply shortages as the demand for solar energy systems swells to more than five times the previous demand for new installs.

Time will tell what the overall impact will be on the California housing market.

RB

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Choose an eye-catching an attractive photo for your business's Facebook cover photo. This Wick Buildings cover photo showing an Illinois event venue racked up nearly 100 "likes," many comments, and nearly a dozen shares. Each reaction and interaction means more brand awareness. [Hornbaker Gardens, Princeton, Illinois.]

# Getting Social

## Do's & Don'ts Of Using Social Media To Promote Your Business

**ACCORDING TO THE FINDINGS** of the Pew Research Center (PRC), in 2005, 5 percent of American adults used at least one social media platform.<sup>1</sup> As of June 2019, that figure has climbed to 72 percent.

Young adults were early adopters of social media technology, but older adults have come on board in recent years. According to the PRC's most recent study, 69 percent of adults aged 50-64 use social media on a regular basis.

The actual numbers of social media users are staggering. According to each platform's performance reports: LinkedIn has more than 575 million users; Snapchat reported it had 210 million active daily users in Q3 of 2019; Twitter estimated its monthly active users at 68 million in the United States; in the first quarter of 2019, Pinterest reported it had 291 million monthly active users; Instagram had 1 billion monthly active users in its latest report; and the granddaddy of them all: as of June 2019, Facebook reported its daily active users at an estimated 1.59 billion. That's right – billion ... with a "b."

Millions of businesses recognize the potential for connecting with new customers via social. The ABC Supply Pro Council offered valuable advice for competing on social media: "There are 90 million small and medium-sized businesses on Facebook, and one in three internet users go to social media to learn information about businesses, so Facebook and Instagram are great options for contractors looking to connect with potential customers," the Pro Council said.

With so many potential customers actively using social media every day, if you don't have some sort of presence on the

social platforms, you may be inadvertently taking yourself out of the running for building projects.

"Social media is a great way to raise awareness of your business," the Pro Council continued. "You can share photos from the jobsite of completed projects to show potential customers the work your team is capable of doing. Homeowners do a lot of research before choosing a contractor, and one of the first things they often do is go to social media to learn about the experiences of others."



Including images and video in social media posts results in the best engagement. Graber Post Buildings, Inc. posted this house on their Facebook feed. The post included this photo, plus 10 others, and resulted in 167 reactions, 35 shares, and 23 comments — one of which was a request for a quotes to build.





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BY KAREN KNAPSTEIN

**ORGANIC VS. PAID REACH**

Any discussion of business promotion through social media will include the terms “organic reach” and “paid reach.” Organic reach refers to the number of people who see and act on your content without you paying for distribution. Organic reach includes people who see your posts through shares and like notifications, and people who see your content on your Facebook page. Paid reach includes the people who see your content as a result of paid promotions. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Pinterest all have marketing options that will guarantee your posts get in front of more eyes. If you’re tackling social media alone, you may want to wait before shelling out dollars for paid reach until you hone your skills and make your messages engaging enough to have a return on your investment.

**BEST PLATFORMS FOR BUSINESS**

Social media, in a nutshell, are websites and applications that allow users to participate in social networking and create and share content. Signing up is free (supported by advertising) and they are designed so users can create deeper, more meaningful relationships with friends, family, or even strangers around the

world. While there are many social media platforms and apps available, there are a modest handful that construction companies will find most beneficial for promoting their businesses. The key platforms businesses should gravitate to are Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Twitter, and Instagram. For the sake of brevity and space, we’ll focus primarily on Facebook, which is the figurative 800-pound gorilla of social media platforms.

**FACEBOOK IS KING**

When it comes to the number of users, clearly Facebook is the leader by far. It has the largest and most qualified audience that contractors and builders want to tap into. Morgan Arwood, Membership Director for the National Frame Building Association (NFBA), recommended Facebook as the most qualified social media platform for construction businesses: “Facebook is where people are looking for advice and referrals. It’s the most widely used [platform] used by a seasoned demographic with money to spend.” She recommended builders look at Facebook first. “It has a more experienced crowd,” and the chances of being seen by someone who would be able to fund a project like a horse barn, shed, or hobby shop are better than on the other social media platforms.

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### FEAR OF NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

Some businesses make the decision to stay off social media out of concern that former clients may use it to post negative comments. Sometimes bad things happen to good companies. If someone has it in their mind to post negative comments about a business, they're going to do it regardless of whether or not that business is on social media. If the business is on the platform, that business can face it head-on and diffuse it. The ABC Supply Pro Council advises, "While a negative review is disappointing, it also presents

already been active on social media for years. Graber Post's Trent Wagler said his company started using social media in 2013. The company is currently using Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to showcase completed projects. "We love to show the great craftsmanship of our

crews. We also make posts to notify our social media audience of any monthly specials, closeouts, or other sales that may be coming up."

Wick Buildings first entered social media using Pinterest and Facebook many years ago said Bret Buelo, Manager,



Video is a powerful tool when it comes to grabbing the attention of social media users. This video from Graber Post Buildings showing 100-foot clear span trusses being built garnered 61 reactions and more than 40 shares.

an opportunity to showcase your customer service. Thank the customer for their feedback and let them know how you'll make things right." If possible, take the conversation off of social media, but post how the issue was resolved.

### COMPANIES ALREADY LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA

You might have more to say than you think on social media. The ABC Supply Pro Council said, "Between sharing project photos and providing company services and updates, there are many positives to your business being on social platforms."

Graber Post Buildings and Wick Buildings are two companies that have

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BY KAREN KNAPSTEIN

Marketing & Technical Services. “Shortly after that, we began to post videos on YouTube and followed that with blogging, Twitter, and LinkedIn.” Many of these companies’ posts get hundreds of reactions and shares, which add to the organic reach of each post.

**GROWING YOUR PRESENCE**

“One way that you can bolster your company’s social media presence is by sharing posts from industry associations on your company’s own pages,” advised the ABC Supply Pro Council. “These organizations are often respected by your customers, so sharing content your customers know they can rely on will make them more likely to trust your company as well. By interacting with industry associations on their pages, your company’s name could show up in front of people who are looking for a builder or contractor.”

Growing that presence can also attract qualified job applicants to your door. “Nearly 80 percent of job applicants use

social media in their search, so posting job opportunities on Facebook or LinkedIn is a good way to reach them,” they said. “Posts about your company’s culture, such as information about training you offer your employees, photos from a holiday party, or a message congratulating an employee on a work anniversary, can give potential job applicants an idea of what it would be like to work for your company. This content can give job seekers valuable insight that a job posting might not.”

**GETTING STARTED: SOCIAL MEDIA DO’S & DON’TS**

All you need to create a Facebook business page is a personal Facebook account. Fill out all the relevant information (Facebook provides prompts for this information), making sure to link back to your website if you have one. You want your page to be engaging and look professional.

Arwood advised you can start out slow and learn as you go. “By starting

Facebook, you don’t have to post every day. Grow your network at your own pace,” she said. “Do your homework. You want to have a cover photo and a profile picture. Your profile picture should always be your logo. Your cover photo can be your product or a secondary message.”

“A common mistake that companies make is starting a page but never posting,” said the ABC Supply Pro Council. “While you don’t have to post every day, it’s important to post regularly to build awareness and credibility for your company. Have a plan for what you’ll post, so you’re not scrambling to come up with a post at the last second. Decide who will be in charge of posting to your social media pages, and make a schedule for what topics you’ll post about and when,” they advised.

Creating compelling social media posts can be tricky. You have to remember people on social media aren’t there to be hit up with sales pitches. Your social media presence should be genuine and engaging without being overly commercial. “Don’t over-promote yourself,” recommended Arwood. “Your content doesn’t always have to be about yourself but it can always be relevant to your demographic.”

“Social media channels help drive potential customers to your website,” said the Pro Council. “Social media is also an easy place to share your website’s content, like photos, information about your services, and customer testimonials. When sharing a link from your website on social media, be sure it’s visually appealing by including a photo.”

**PICTURES ARE PERFECT**

Everyone is in agreement that including images and video in social media posts results in the best engagement. “In today’s world it seems people would rather see a nice picture or watch an informative video before reading a bunch of text,” said Wagler. Facebook, Pinterest, and



*Morgan Arwood of the NFBA recommends using a company logo for your business’s profile picture and your cover photo should be your product or a secondary message.*



Instagram are all ideal visual platforms to show off what you can do. "Images and videos are 40 times more likely to get shared on social media than content without a visual," the ABC Supply Pro Council reported.

While making regular posts is recommended, don't overdo it. "Don't wear your audience out," recommended Wagler.

To keep track of who is posting what, when, the NFBA's Arwood recommended creating a calendar. It also means monitoring who is posting on your page and responding to your posts. "If someone has a bad experience, address it immediately," Arwood said. "Publicly address it so it's not hanging out there. If it means you owe them an apology, give them one. Be honest and transparent."

Buelo added, "Don't underestimate the time doing good social media takes, and don't get hung up on the number of 'fans' your social accounts have – the research says that the interaction is key, not the number of fans your advertising has bought."

**MARKETING ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

Sam Beiler, co-founder of Boostpoint, a company that specializes in helping small and medium-sized roofing companies not get lost or left behind in the digital space, had his professional start working for his family's roofing business when he

was just a teenager. The family developed a self-propelled trailer for handling debris (the Equipter). Once the Equipter was ready for serious marketing efforts, Beiler switched from swinging a hammer to marketing the innovative trailer that remedies the roofing debris issue.

Beiler explained, "Equipter was a solid product, but we needed to figure out marketing and getting it out into the world." Social media played a large part in helping them grow the Equipter Company. Founded two years ago as the roofing company's marketing division, Boostpoint helped grow Equipter from a 12-person company to a company that now employs more than 50. "Our business growth was fueled by social media marketing and trade shows," Beiler said.

In talking with fellow roofing companies, Beiler discovered that the companies knew they needed to be on social media, but didn't know where to begin. "Everyone knew about the social media opportunity, but when I actually asked them, they weren't leveraging it. What I found was the 'how' was missing," Beiler said. "There wasn't an easy way for most roofing companies to figure out how to leverage the ad platforms themselves or go to a marketing agency to figure it out for them."

In January 2019, Boostpoint split off to become its own company, independent from Equipter. Beiler says Boostpoint's

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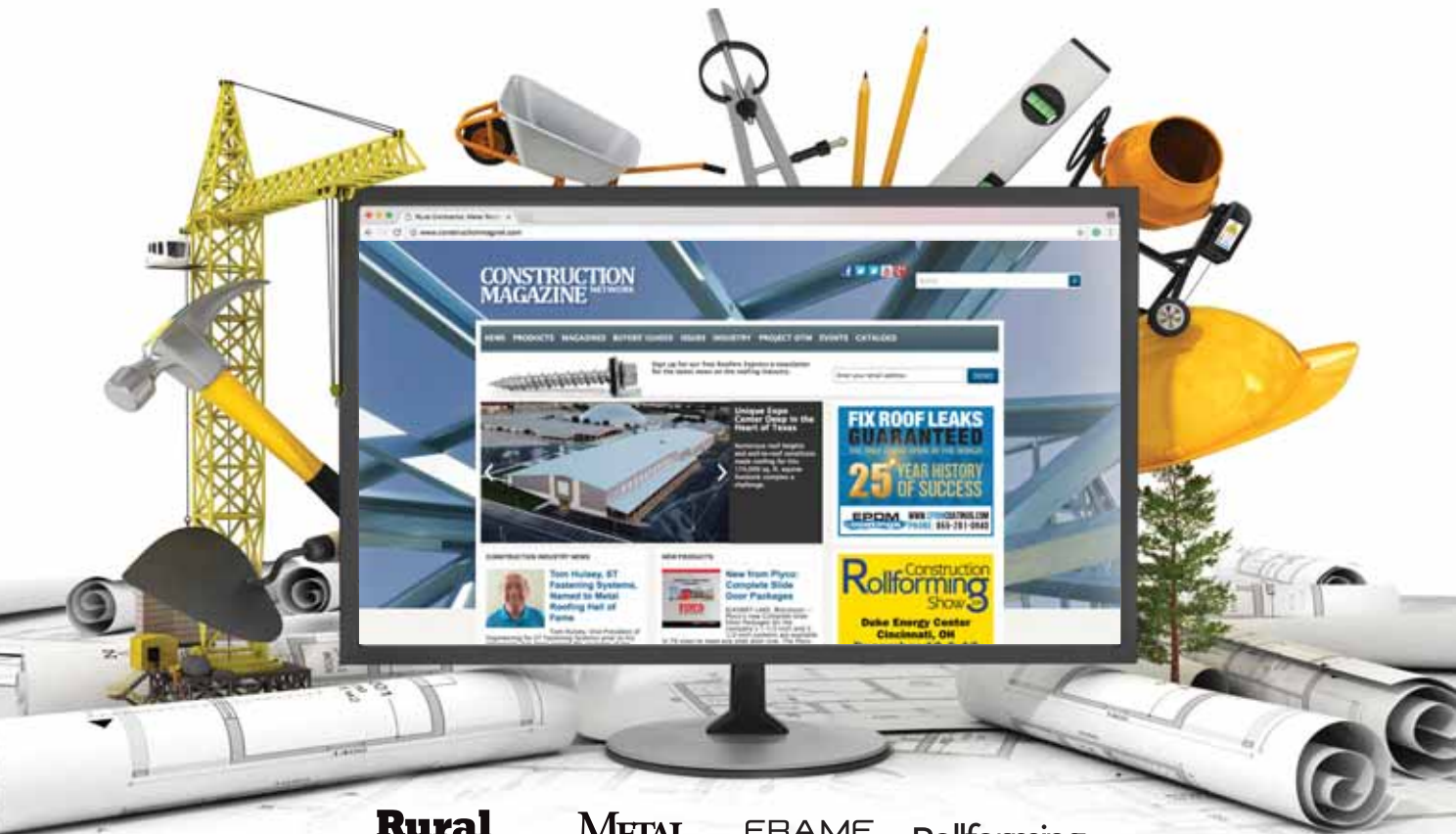
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mission is to help small businesses grow with the macro shift to digital so they're not left behind. It developed a templated digital service that small companies can use to target potential customers and generate leads.

In the current social media landscape, Beiler said Facebook is the place where any sort of contractor would get the most return on investment (ROI) out of their advertising dollars. He said if contractors can master two things, they will be happy with their Facebook marketing efforts. The first thing is targeting. If a company can get themselves in front of the right target audience, they will be satisfied with the results. Facebook is capable of targeting an audience down to a one-mile radius; you just need to tell it where you would like your post shown. (Imagine if your next three jobs were within a mile or two of the job you're currently working on.)

When it comes to specific ways roofing companies can use social media platforms, Beiler suggested running engaging Facebook ads that will appear in the neighborhoods in which the roofing companies are currently working. For example, if a company is doing a roofing job in a neighborhood, people are seeing their trucks in that area; they already have some degree of familiarity. Beiler explained there's an easy way to create a connection between your company and potential customers: "Create a 15-second video with a smartphone or a drone, saying something like, 'We're working in your neighborhood and offering free roof inspections over the next two weeks.'" He said by posting it on Facebook and targeting that specific area (the neighborhood), you're creating a post relevant to potential customers. "It's relevant to the viewer and the contractor," Beiler explained. "You're building urgency with an offer like that without offering a discount."

The second thing is creating engaging content that doesn't feel like an ad. Billboard-type posts, TV- and postcard-type ads don't work well on social media because Facebook users aren't on the platform to look at commer-

cials. However, simple videos created with a smartphone that tell the audience how you can solve a problem for them are engaging and can elicit action from that audience. Facebook marketing is an extension of your sales effort, he said, but it's more personal. "To create engaging content, add action photos of people working, close-up photos, or videos. You can use selfie-style videos to provide valuable pieces of information to customers while out on a job. You don't have to hire a professional to do this. Use a smartphone to take photos or videos at different jobs your roofing business has," suggested Beiler.

**WHAT ABOUT YOUTUBE?**

While not a social media platform, having a presence on YouTube can also be beneficial to construction companies. Anyone can launch their own channel; it's easy, and it's free. "YouTube is a great way to get your videos uploaded," said Arwood. "Then distribute your videos through social media platforms. And you're able to respond, like, and comment right on YouTube, too."

**NOT ON THE WEB? YOU CAN STILL BENEFIT**

Word of mouth is a powerful thing that businesses on the web and off will benefit from. A good word from customers who are happy with your services and products goes a long way. Beiler explained, "If I'm a company with no digital presence, there's still some value

you can get out of social media. Your customers are still on those platforms and your potential customers are still on those platforms." People are always asking for recommendations on social media. "They could ask their customers, if they're happy with their service, to recommend their company on Facebook or on the Nextdoor platform," he said.

Howie Scarborough of SnoBlox-Snojax summed up the need for a social media presence: "I think most suppliers have learned that they have to compete in the digital space as well as print, it's just finding the right balance to effectively engage your demographic."

**ASSISTANCE WITH SOCIAL MEDIA**

If you would like to learn more about what you can do to create a meaningful and effective social media presence for your company, NFBA Membership Director Morgan Arwood can be reached at [marwood@nfba.org](mailto:marwood@nfba.org). Also, ABC Supply's Freedom Programs offer assistance in creating websites for construction businesses. You can also get business-building tips on the ABC Supply blog at [abcsupply.com/blog](http://abcsupply.com/blog). Learn more about social media marketing by watching Boostpoint's YouTube channel (<https://bit.ly/33DHy5j>) or by visiting [boostpoint.com](http://boostpoint.com). **RB**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/#who-uses-social-media>

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- GSSI Sealants, Inc.: Butyl Rubber Sealant Tape
- Marco Industries: Weather-Tite Metal Roof Sealant
- Chief Buildings: Building Packages
- Trachte Building Systems: Self-Storage Building Packages
- Wick Buildings: Building Packages
- AkzoNobel: Metal Coil Coatings
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- MWI Components: Doors
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- CannonBall:HNP: Horse Stall Systems
- Roll Former Corporation: Perf Units
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 70-79  
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- Trim & Flashings
- Insulation/Moisture Control

*(continued on next page)*

(continued from previous page)

**How many years has your company been in business?**

- Less than 5 years
- 5-9 years
- 10-14 years
- 15-19 years
- 20-29 years
- 30-39 years
- 40-49 years
- 50-59 years
- 60+ years

**How many employees does your company have?**

- Fewer than 10
- 10-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51+

**In which region do you do the most business?**

- Northeast (CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT)
- Southeast (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)
- North Central (IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI)
- South Central (AR, KS, LA, MO, OK, TX)
- Northwest (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY)
- Southwest (AZ, CA, CO, HI, NM, NV, UT)

**Are your company's projects mostly:**

- Design/build — one firm.
- Design/bid/build — architecturally driven.
- Company managed with subcontractors.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- My company does not build.

**Check all that apply: For which of the following is your company a dealer/supplier?**

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- Ventilation products
- Fasteners and/or adhesives.
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**Check all that apply: Which of the following did your company build in 2019?**

- Ag Buildings
- Residential Buildings
- Municipal Buildings
- Garages
- Carports
- Sheds
- Storage Buildings

**Which of the following did your company build the MOST of in 2019?**

- Ag Buildings
- Residential Buildings
- Municipal Buildings
- Garages
- Carports
- Sheds
- Storage Buildings

**What is your company's dollar volume for annual sales:**

- Less than \$100,000
- \$100,000-\$500,000
- \$500,000-\$1,000,000
- \$1,000,000 - \$5,000,000
- \$5,000,000-\$10,000,000
- More than \$10,000,000

**What factors are your greatest obstacles to success?**

- Finding Qualified Workforce.
- Cost of Materials.
- Quality of Materials.
- Logistical Issues.

**Compare 2019 to 2018. Was your business:**

- More successful in 2019 than 2018.
- The same success in 2019 as 2018.
- Less successful in 2019 than 2018.

**Looking ahead to 2020, do you believe your business will be:**

- More successful than 2019.
- The same as 2019.
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William A. Lotz, P.E., is a Consulting Engineer based in Acton, Maine. He is an expert witness in forensic engineering and construction inspection. Lotz has written more than 250 articles and papers, some of which have been published in the ASHRAE Journal, the Engineering News Record, and New England Builder. He can be reached at 207.636.2625.

# Moisture Issues In Metal Buildings

## Part 1

**MY CONSULTING PRACTICE MAINLY CONSISTS OF INSPECTING “WET” BUILDINGS** of all kinds from homes to factories, from Maine to Honolulu, including California, Idaho, Texas, Iowa, New York, and everywhere in between — including Canada! I have a lot of fun. There are so many ways to screw up a building. Over the years I have consulted on over 2,000 wet buildings. All of the wet buildings that I consult on have humidity levels above 30 percent in buildings north of St. Louis.

Also, the majority of the moisture problems I see are caused by the owners; a few are caused by the architect. It is rare to find a moisture problem caused by the contractor but they are always the first to be sued by the owner.

The moisture problems — usually rain indoors during the cold weather — is the result of excessive indoor humidity.

The water vapor (humidity) inside the building during cold or even cool weather finds all of the holes in the fiberglass insulation vapor barrier. It then condenses on the cold steel roof and rains down into the building. The “holes” in the vapor barrier facer are caused by penetrations of the structural braces, HVAC systems, lights, sprinklers, etc. Also a significant leak occurs in the “folded and stapled” joints in the vapor barrier facer.

The good news is that fiberglass insulation, after it dries out, is as good as new. The thermal value returns to normal. The drying occurs during the hot summer weather. Fall is the best time to correct the cause of the problem — the excessive humidity.

So what are the usual causes of the excessive humidity? I’m so glad you asked!

### DIRECT-FIRED HEATERS

A direct-fired heater is a heater where there is no vent or chimney and the products of combustion (carbon dioxide and water vapor) are vented into the occupied space. A one million BTU heater (either propane or natural gas), over a 24-hour period, puts a ton or more (2,000 pounds) of water vapor into the building.

Where does this ton of water go? It finds all



Insulation facer has sagged because the fiberglass is saturated with water. All photos by William A. Lotz



We slashed the above facer and the water poured out.

of the vapor barrier facer holes, quickly travels through the fiberglass, and condenses on the steel deck. Then it rains. These units are great for my consulting business!

Let’s Calculate:

Natural Gas (Methane CH<sub>4</sub>) when burned produces 2 cubic feet of water vapor for every cubic



foot of gas.

Propane Gas (C3H8) when burned produces 4 cubic feet of water vapor for every cubic foot of gas.

*(From the North American Combustion Handbook)*

When you burn one of these hydrocarbon gases, the fuel chemically combines with the oxygen in the combustion air to form water vapor (H2O). For a typical 1 million BTU/hr. natural gas burner the combustion process releases approximately 90 pounds of water per hour. In a 24-hour period that adds up to over a ton of water that a direct-fired unit puts into the building. Propane produces twice as much water vapor than natural gas on a pound per pound basis. Propane is heavier than natural gas but has a higher BTU content:

Propane=8.45 cubic feet per pound, hence: 48 pounds per million BTU.

Natural Gas=23.61 cubic feet per pound, hence: 42 pounds per million BTU.

Calculating the quantity of water vapor in the exhaust gas for a million BTU burner in 24 hours:

<p><b>PROPANE:</b>  <math>48 \text{ lbs} \times 4 \text{ lbs H}_2\text{O} \div \text{lb of propane} \times 24 \text{ hrs} = \text{over 2 tons of water}</math></p> <p><b>NATURAL GAS:</b>  <math>42 \text{ lbs} \times 2 \text{ lbs H}_2\text{O} \div \text{lb of natural gas} \times 24 \text{ hrs} = \text{over 1 ton of water}</math></p>
--

So depending upon the fuel, burning 1 million BTU/hour in a direct-fired unit puts between 1 and 2 tons of water vapor into the building per 24-hour day. Waving a magic wand over the unit is not going to change this. The magic wand approach is taken by some manufacturers of direct-fired heaters.

**FRESH POURED CONCRETE**

For several months after a concrete floor is poured, during the curing process, the concrete gives off water vapor to the building interior. This is frequently the cause of dripping when the floor has been poured in November and December. This is made worse when someone uses a torpedo heater (direct fired) in January and February to heat the building under construction.

**DIRT FLOORS**

Dirt floors in a building act like an infinite humidifier. This is a frequent problem in health clubs or tennis buildings when somebody forgets to put a heavy-duty polyethylene vapor barrier under the floor.

**MOTHER NATURE**

In the Southern U.S., Gulf Coast, Florida, up the East Coast to Myrtle Beach, the excessive humidity comes from outdoors.



*Typical holes in the vapor barrier face resulting in condensation.*



*More holes in face resulting in condensation.*

If the insulation vapor barrier system is inadequate and/or was full of holes, things get very wet and moldy.

**ARCHITECTS**

When was the last time you saw an architectural drawing with details on how to seal the vapor barrier at wall/ceiling junctions? Or wall/foundation junctions? Or etc., etc.? I made

## problems & solutions

several trips to Western Iowa where the lack of insulation/vapor barrier details on a hospital building cost \$10 million to fix. We had the contractor remove every brick on the walls, the black soaked gypsum board, as well as the saturated fiberglass. The walls had to be rebuilt from the exterior with just sheet rock between the contractor and the hospital patients. That's one project the architect will never forget.

### MISCELLANEOUS

There are countless other sources of water in buildings that result in excessive humidity: humidifiers, water on the floor, water used in the process of building, pools, ice rinks, roof leaks from ice dams, etc.

### MOLD

No discussion of wet buildings is complete without the issue of mold. The technical term is fungus. Some people get scared silly when they think there is fungus in their building. Their first phone call is to a lawyer.

There are good fungi, like bleu cheese, mushrooms, and yeast. Reportedly there are over 100,000 different fungi. Some molds are deadly, some are good to eat (see above). I have met



*A costly mistake: This joint was never sealed.*

a few people who are hypersensitive to many types of mold. Young children and some old fogies (like me?) can be quite sensitive to some molds. Several years ago after consulting on a very moldy Texas nursing home I went home and spent nine days in a hospital. I did not charge my client for those nine days.

That being said, most molds are not a big deal.

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Well, hasn't this been fun — reading about some of the (expensive) issues of wet buildings. The good news is all of these sources of moisture problems have solutions.

On one metal building in Fargo, North Dakota, the solution to the interior rain was to turn on the switch to the existing ventilation fans. Other buildings, the solutions were not so simple. On others, lawyers were hired and juries were called.

In Part 2, in an upcoming edition of *Rural Builder*, we will discuss the solutions to wet metal building problems.

Lastly, let me assure you, from my experience, buildings constructed of concrete and wood will have moisture problems that can be very expensive to fix. These problems basically have the same causes I have discussed above. **RB**



*Water on the floor evaporates, the water vapor finds holes in the vapor barrier, and it rains inside the building.*

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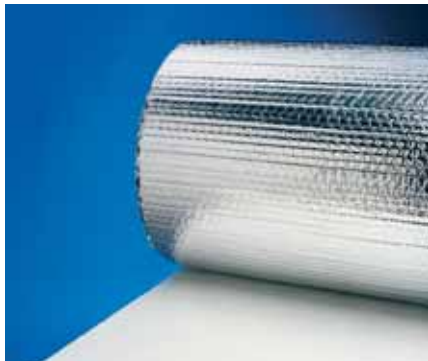
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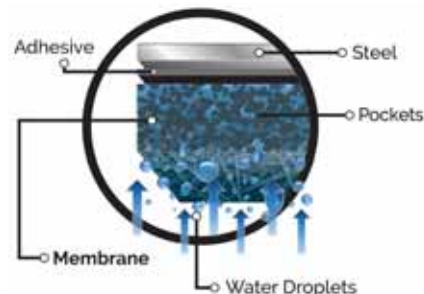
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# Ventilation

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## ST Fastening



ST Fastening Systems supplies its MultiVent and MultiVent10 closures for those applications requiring airflow on metal roofs. Open-cell foam MultiVent, 3 feet in length, and woven polyester MultiVent10, 10 feet in length, allows as much as 98 percent free airflow through the material. However, it prevents wind-driven rain from penetrating the material when compressed. The designs are universal for both, with adhesive applied for easy field installation. MultiVent can be used on angled roof applications and MultiVent10 for ridge cap applications.

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## Avoid Costly Ventilation Mistakes

**THERE ARE MANY THEORIES BEHIND THE IMPORTANCE OF ROOF VENTILATION.** Some argue that roof ventilation is only important in warmer climates. Some would also argue that as long as you have a few vents in the gables of your house, then you are properly vented.

Due to these and many more mixed approaches to roof venting, it may become easy to ignore the importance of proper roof ventilation; including how it should be designed, constructed and implemented.

Sadly, ignoring proper roof ventilation can become a costly mistake to the homeowner's structure. It can cause mold, ice dams and higher heating and cooling bills.

Improper ventilation can also damage a contractor's reputation. If a homeowner encounters issues with their roof or attic, they will usually blame these issues on the roofing contractor.

### ADDRESSING ROOF VENTILATION PROPERLY

So, how can we address these issues with roof ventilation?

This is the first article in a series on proper roof ventilation. In this first article we look at several principles on why we should properly ventilate roofs, and in future articles we will address the proper way to do it.

So, why is proper roof ventilation so important?

### COLD CLIMATES

In a cold climate, the main goal is to keep your roof cold to prevent ice dams.

We have all seen the damage ice dams can do to a roof and the leaking it can cause. Proper ventilation helps keep the roof from getting too warm by removing warm air that rises from the conditioned living space below.

If this warm air is not removed, it warms the roof, which can begin melting the snow and start the subsequent thaw/freeze cycle.

Proper roof venting also removes humidity that moves from the conditioned living space to the attic. This helps prevent mold and other moisture issues.

### WARM CLIMATES

In a warm climate, ventilation is critical to removing warm air from the attic. This warm air is often the result of a hot solar-heated roof.

It also helps keep moisture out of the attic, particularly if you live in an area with thunderstorms, heavy precipitation and wind. Hopefully your roof doesn't let moisture in, but a small leak can quickly cause damage where proper ventilation can help minimize the damage.

Roof ventilation in warm climates also has a financial advantage. Keeping warm air out of the attic will result in less strain on the home's cooling system. This results in lower cooling costs, and more money stays in the homeowner's pocket.

### MIXED CLIMATES

In a mixed climate, which covers much of the United States, proper ventilation provides the benefits of both cold and warm climates depending on the season.

In the wintertime, you don't have to worry about ice dams on the roof. And, in the summertime, you can enjoy lower cooling bills with a moisture-free attic, no matter what the weather brings.

Proper roof ventilation applies to every climate and should not be ignored. Please see the next edition for proper ventilation techniques when working with an unconditioned attic!

*Article contributed by Snap-Z. Contact Snap-Z at 406-781-0615.*



Mark Battersby has more than 35 years experience in small business issues, tax and financial matters. Contact him at 610-789-2480 or MCBatt12@Earthlink.net.

# IRS Releases New Guidelines For Taking Bonus Write-Offs

**JUST IN TIME FOR TAX SEASON**, new guidelines have been released by the IRS for rural building businesses that want to take advantage of the current 100 percent write-off for equipment, fixtures and even some real estate. What's more, the IRS will now allow any business that failed to take advantage of these write-offs to retroactively claim them.

The 100 percent additional first-year depreciation deduction generally applies to expenditures for movable fixtures, furniture, safes, equipment, computers and other business assets that have no permanent connection to the building housing the building operation and that are depreciable over 20-years or less.

While the 100 percent bonus write-off created by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) has helped lower the tax bills of builders and contractors who have purchased assets for their businesses, it may not be the best strategy for everyone.

## A "BONUS" WRITE-OFF

After extensive changes, the rules now contain a 100 percent first-year deduction for business property placed in service during the tax year. Prior to the passage of the TCJA, business property eligible for 100 percent "bonus" depreciation included depreciable assets with a tax life or "recovery period" of 20 years or less. Other property eligible for the 100 percent write-off included computer software and so-called "qualified improvement property" where the original use began with the building business.

A significant benefit of the 100 percent bonus depreciation deduction is there is no maximum amount or phase-out limitation, nor is there a taxable income limitation on business taking the deduction. In other words, almost unlimited bonus depreciation deductions can be used even if they create losses.

The 100 percent deduction applies to property acquired and placed in service after September 27, 2017, and before the temporary rule expires. In later years, the 100 percent bonus deduction is gradually phased down (i.e., to 80 percent in 2023, 60 percent in 2024, 40 percent in 2025, and 20 percent in 2026). To ignore the bonus depreciation, however, an election must be made for an entire class of property (i.e., all five-year property), not by specific assets.

## USED PROPERTY

The new guidelines not only clarify the requirements for qualifying property, but now also include used property. In fact, the law not only increased the additional first-year write-off from 50 percent to 100 percent of the cost, it also made most used property eligible.

Another change eliminated the "original use" requirement, allowing a builder or contractor to now take advantage of bonus depreciation on used property acquired during the tax year. This property may not have been used previously by the business and cannot have been acquired from a related party or in a tax-free transaction such as a swap or like-kind exchange.

Under the rules, "use" is defined as having a "depreciable interest in the property at any time prior to such acquisition." This rule applies whether or not depreciation has been previously claimed.

Although the definition of "previous use" is very broad and the rules do not consider "used property" to be a separate class for opting out of bonus depreciation, are the benefits resulting from the 100 percent write-off for used property worth the hassle of tracking?

After all, the new guidelines outline the requirements for used property while, at the same time, raise questions and place new burdens on unwary building business owners and managers. It now appears the rules will require tracking every used asset ever owned by the shop or business from before the passage of the TCJA until such time as bonus depreciation is phased out or the used property rules are changed.

Naturally, if the property is so-called "listed" property, it must be used more than 50 percent of the time in order to qualify for bonus depreciation. Listed property consists of automobiles and other personal property — with the notable exception of computers which are no longer listed property and not subject to the 50 percent business-use requirement.

## THE RETAIL GLITCH

Prior to the passage of the TCJA, the tax law allowed deductions for so-called "qualified leasehold improvements," "qualified retail improvements," and "qualified restaurant property" that otherwise would have to be depreciated over 39-year periods. With a 15-year life, improvements to leased property as well

## Bonus

write-offs created by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act may not be the best strategy for everyone.



as retail or restaurant improvements qualified for both bonus depreciation and the Section 179, first-year expensing write-off. But, no longer.

The TCJA eliminated the three subclasses of qualified property, leaving only so-called “Qualified Improvement Property” (QIP). Introduced in 2016, Qualified Improvement Property refers to any improvement made to a building’s interior. Improvements do not qualify if they are attributable to the enlargement of the building, an elevator or escalator or the internal structural framework of the building. The definition of QIP was also broadened to include roofs, HVAC systems, fire and protection alarms, and security systems.

Unfortunately, until the tax law is changed, QIP continues to have a 39-year life, and remains ineligible for the 100 percent bonus write-off. That’s right, under the new rules, QIP continues to have a 39-year life. Fortunately, while the 100 percent bonus depreciation doesn’t apply, the Section 179 first-year expensing election can be used.



## DON'T FORGET SECTION 179

Is it better to take the 100 percent bonus depreciation or use the Section 179 first-year expensing deduction? If the taxable income of the building business is greater than the potential Section 179 write-off, the answer is bonus depreciation. After all, Section 179 write-offs cannot result in a loss.

Thanks to the so-called “Section 179” rules, builders and contractors have historically been able to immediately deduct the cost of equipment and other business assets purchased for use and placed into service in their operations. What’s more, this deduction can also be used for purchases of used equipment.

The TCJA increased the dollar limits on the Section 179, first-year expensing write-off to \$1 million (up from an inflation-adjusted \$510,000). What’s more, the investment-based ceiling now kicks in only when expenditures for expensing-eligible property exceeds \$2.5 million (up from \$2,030,000).

These ceilings remain in effect through 2022 after which they will gradually phase-out until the 2027 tax year when the prior depreciation schedules are slated to kick back in. And,

no, a building business cannot select specific assets to claim Section 179.

## IN OR OUT

Bonus depreciation is optional, but it is not a question of taking or not taking the 100 percent write-off. Choosing not to use the 100 percent depreciation deduction requires the builder or contractor to do so on their operation’s timely filed tax return.

A valid election out of bonus depreciation can be made by filing a statement for an entire class of property. A recent IRS ruling (Rev. Proc. 2019-33) does not specifically limit the revocation to property within a class, only that the property be acquired and placed in service after September 27, 2017.

The IRS is now allowing businesses to make a late election out of 100 percent bonus depreciation — or to revoke a previously made election out for any tax year ending after September 28, 2017. The IRS is providing this new option because earlier guidelines explaining the ins-and-outs of the TCJA’s 100 percent bonus depreciation weren’t issued on a timely basis.

The late election out of 100 percent bonus depreciation applies only to property within a property “class” acquired and placed in service after September 17, 2017. Although some property placed in service in 2017 when the law was passed may be eligible for 100 percent bonus depreciation, the old 50 percent rate applies to property placed in service before September 28, 2017.

Ordinarily, builders or contractors choosing to make a late election out of bonus depreciation, or revoke a previous election out, were required to file a letter requesting IRS permission, a request based on reasonable cause. The new rules for opting in or out dispense with this requirement.

Obviously, owners or operators of building businesses must view their particular situation to determine whether it makes sense to take advantage of the new IRS relief for an earlier year — or in the current tax year.

## CAVEAT: EXPENSING IS NOT ALWAYS THE BEST OPTION

Write-offs, whether for all of the fixtures, equipment or other business property acquired during the tax year or for specific classes of property, may not always be the best option for a business. Although the write-offs under the TCJA are helping building businesses that have purchased new fixtures or equipment defray out-of-pocket costs with significantly larger tax deductions in year-one, it may not always be the best strategy.

After all, that immediate expensing deduction drops the book value or basis of the business asset to zero. If the asset is sold, any amount up to the purchase price will be ordinary, fully taxable income. Spreading the expense through annual depreciation deductions will reduce taxable income down the road when the building operation or business may be more profitable and have higher tax bills.

Professional assistance may be needed to weigh the benefits of 100 percent bonus depreciation, the new lookback option, or decide whether Section 179 might be a viable option. Or, would ignoring the faster write-offs be the most profitable course of action for the building business? **RB**

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# The 'Ultimate Man Cave'

Builder Creates His Own Dream Workshop

**TWO YEARS AGO, BUILDER DENNIS LEE, PULLED UP HIS TENT STAKES IN KENTUCKY AND MOVED TO FLORIDA.** He may be familiar to some of you: He was the recipient of the first “World’s Best Crew Foreman Award” back in 1984, which was bestowed by this magazine when it went by the name of *Farm Building News*.

You might say building is in his blood; he worked with his father, National Frame Builder’s Hall of Fame inductee Robert E. Lee, for close to 20 years before starting his own business. Dennis said, “I’ve grown up in the post-frame industry; as a good friend once commented, I was ‘Born to Barn!’”

Dennis now sells steel-skinned SIP panels for Structall Building Systems and he recently finished his own “ultimate man cave,” where he restores antique motorcycles and pickup trucks. Of the building, he enthuses, “After 40 years of building these for other people, I finally got to do one for myself.”

And it was almost “by himself,” too. “I actually framed the entire frame and

installed all of the sidewall and roof panels entirely by myself. I had a small scissor lift and screwed an electric winch to the ridge beams to winch the roof panels up.”

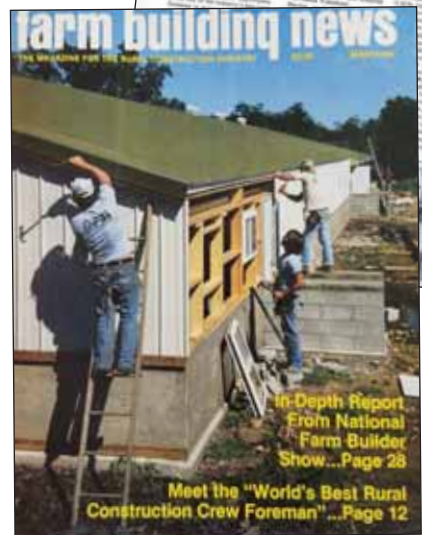
The building measures 30 feet by 48 feet and has 12-foot side walls with an 8-foot side porch. The roof has a 6:12 pitch and two functioning dormers, along with a 4-gabled cupola.

He started with a laminated post-frame/timber-frame “skeleton” wrapped with Structall’s steel-skinned SIPs panels. The Structall SIP panels are made with 26ga steel skins rather than OSB, and they are finished with AkzoNobel’s Ceram-A-Star coating, insuring their longevity. The Snap-N-Lock design means the panels snap together, eliminating any need for spline material at the panel joints. He used a “peel and stick” underlayment from Tamko under the roofing to act as a gasket between the two metal surfaces.

“It is engineered to withstand 150 MPH winds,” he says. “The biggest advantage is that the SIPs act as the pur-

lins/girts, insulation, sheeting, and interior finish all in one step. With the SIPs envelope, the building is like a walk-in cooler. I put a small window AC unit in one of the upper windows just as a test. It cooled the entire building down to 76 degrees when it was 95 degrees outside.”

As the pictures show, with the timber frame skeleton, the building is ready for a second floor; Dennis says he plans to add one in the near future. **RB**





## THE DETAILS:

**Building:** Dixie Building Systems

**Building Size:** 30' wide by 48' long; 8' side porch; 12' side walls

**Features:** Anderson Silverline Windows; Structall Building Systems SIPs; CannonBall walk doors; Clopay garage doors (Dennis Lee applied cross-bucks with custom bent trim by Central States); Tamko underlayment; Central States Galvalume siding and roofing/wainscot (Metallic Copper, Kynar paint). Floor: Eagle acid-etch stain in Bronze, topped with two coats of Eagle high-gloss clear sealer and six coats of Eagle floor wax. Key Supplier: Paul Travis, Travis Metals, Almo, Kentucky.



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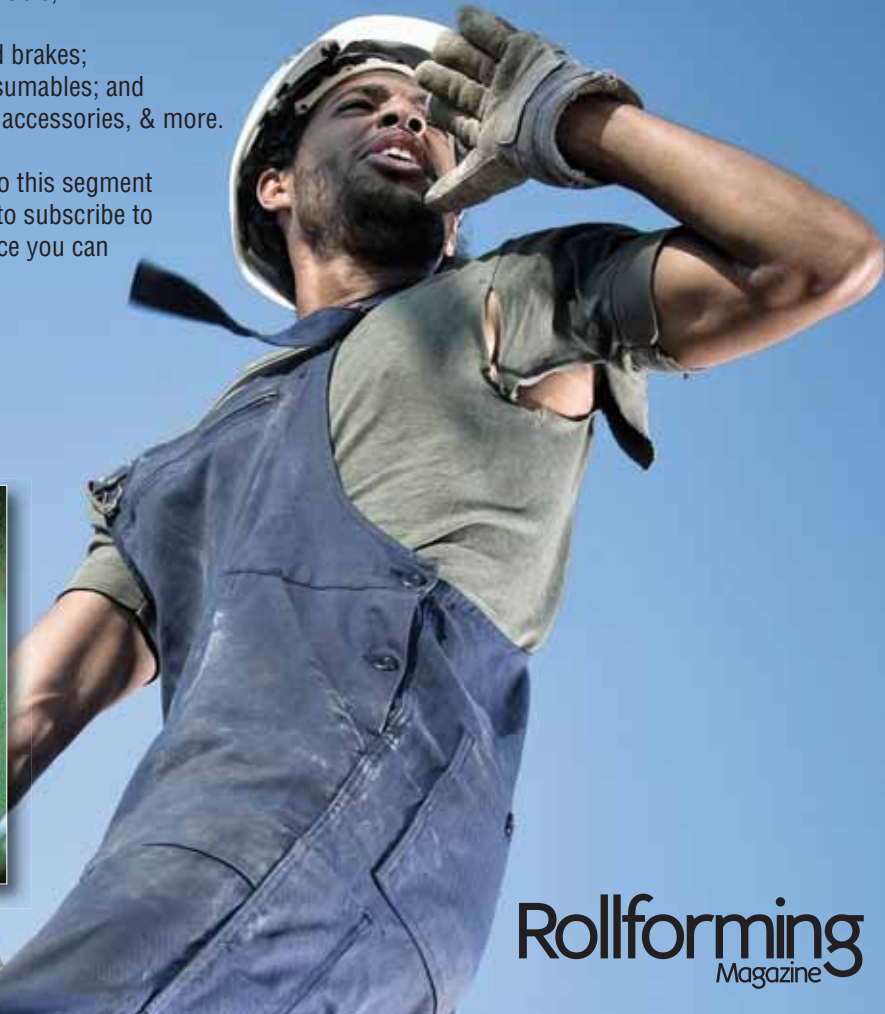
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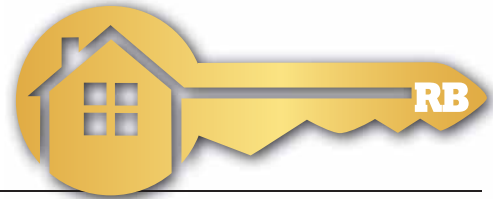
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| <input type="checkbox"/> A.J. Manufacturing            | <input type="checkbox"/> Graber Post Buildings         | <input type="checkbox"/> Palram Americas               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ABC Supply                    | <input type="checkbox"/> GRK Fasteners                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Perma Column                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Akzo Nobel Coatings           | <input type="checkbox"/> H&H Metals                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Plyco Corporation             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ASC Machine Tools             | <input type="checkbox"/> H&H Metals                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Post Protector                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atlas Bolt & Screw            | <input type="checkbox"/> Hansen Pole Buildings         | <input type="checkbox"/> Richland Laminated Columns    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Becker Specialty Corporation  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hershey's the Metal Meister   | <input type="checkbox"/> RigidPly Rafters              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boral                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Holmes Lumber                 | <input type="checkbox"/> S-5!                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Borkholder Buildings          | <input type="checkbox"/> Ideal Building Fasteners      | <input type="checkbox"/> Schweiss Doors                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bradbury Company              | <input type="checkbox"/> Innovative Energy, Inc.       | <input type="checkbox"/> Semmler Systems, Inc.         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burrow's Post Frame Supply    | <input type="checkbox"/> Keim Lumber                   | <input type="checkbox"/> SFS intec                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cannonball:HNP                | <input type="checkbox"/> Klauer Manufacturing Co.      | <input type="checkbox"/> Shear-X                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central States Manufacturing  | <input type="checkbox"/> Leland Industries             | <input type="checkbox"/> Simpson Strong-Tie            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classic Equine Equipment      | <input type="checkbox"/> Lester Building Systems       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sno Gem, Inc.                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleary Building Corp.         | <input type="checkbox"/> Levi's Building Components    | <input type="checkbox"/> Snobar                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Covertech/rFoil               | <input type="checkbox"/> Mac Metal                     | <input type="checkbox"/> SnoBlox-Snojax                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DBCI                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Marco Industries              | <input type="checkbox"/> ST Fastening Systems          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DECRA Roofing Systems         | <input type="checkbox"/> Maze Nails                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Star Building Systems         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Metals                 | <input type="checkbox"/> McElroy Metal                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Starwood Rafters              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drip Stop                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal Rollforming Systems     | <input type="checkbox"/> Steel Dynamics                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dura Coat (Axalta)            | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal Sales Manufacturing     | <input type="checkbox"/> Sukup Manufacturing           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dynamic Fastener              | <input type="checkbox"/> MFM Building Products         | <input type="checkbox"/> Swenson Shear                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> East Coast Fasteners          | <input type="checkbox"/> Mill Steel                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Triangle Fastener Corporation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EDCO Products                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Morton Buildings              | <input type="checkbox"/> United Steel Supply           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Panel Structures (EPS) | <input type="checkbox"/> MWI Components                | <input type="checkbox"/> Valspar                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Everlast Roofing, Inc.        | <input type="checkbox"/> National Hardware             | <input type="checkbox"/> Varco Pruden Buildings        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fabral                        | <input type="checkbox"/> North Star Metals Mfg.        | <input type="checkbox"/> Western Products of Indiana   |
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|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Novagard Solutions            |  |

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**Then nominate up to three suppliers in the spaces provided below.**

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2. Company Name & Location \_\_\_\_\_

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Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

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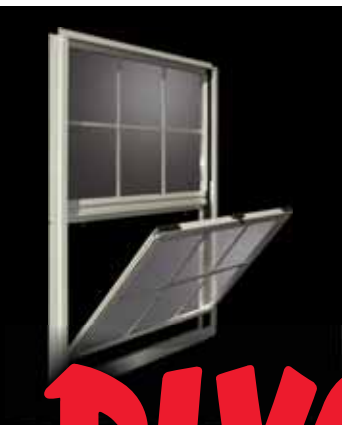


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