



# Rural Builder



Serving The Construction Trade For 60 Years

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JULY 2026 • Vol. 60, Issue 5

**MARXMAN**  
**THE STANDARD FOR  
 HIGH-PERFORMANCE  
 OPERATIONS**

**SMA**  
 MACHINERY

SEE PAGE 34

**mfm**  
 BUILDING PRODUCTS CORP.

SEE PAGE 52

**HIXWOOD**

SEE PAGE 47

**ENGLERT**  
 a Great Day Improvements brand

SEE PAGE 18

**Trac-Rite**  
 A TBS COMPANY

SEE PAGE 57

**AMERA SHIELD™**  
 The American-Engineered Reflective Foam Insulation.

**MWI**  
 COMPONENTS

SEE PAGE 26

**ASCO**  
 machines USA

SEE PAGE 10

**EXPRESS**  
**BARNs**  
 COMPLETE PACKAGE SOLUTIONS

SEE PAGE 45

SEE PAGE 14

**THERMA=GUARD** **Dutch Tech,**

**FLIP TO  
SPECIAL SECTION:**

# Metal Builder



# CONSTRUCTION ROLLFORMING SHOW

**Gatlinburg Convention Center  
September 16-17, 2026  
Gatlinburg, TN**

## **50 REASONS TO ATTEND THE 2026 CONSTRUCTION ROLLFORMING SHOW**

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3. Enjoy the best food at an industry function.
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13. Improve shop efficiency.
14. Learn maintenance best practices.
15. Explore automation solutions.
16. See live equipment demonstrations.
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18. Evaluate software options.
19. Learn from industry experts.
20. Network with shop owners.
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22. Improve profitability.
23. Learn what competitors are doing.
24. Find labor-saving solutions.
25. Explore packaging innovations.
26. Improve quality control.
27. Discover new product opportunities.
28. Learn about emerging trends.
29. Stay ahead of industry changes.
30. Compare multiple vendors in one place.
31. Save months of research.
32. Get answers to technical questions.
33. Learn from real-world experiences.
34. Share ideas with peers.
35. Build valuable relationships.
36. Strengthen existing relationships.
37. Explore new markets.
38. Learn about raw material trends.
39. Improve inventory management.
40. Evaluate transportation solutions.
41. Find solutions for staffing challenges.
42. Learn best practices from successful companies.
43. See what's coming next in metal forming.
44. Connect with industry decision makers.
45. Discover products you didn't know existed.
46. Gain ideas you can implement immediately.
47. Get out of the office and work on the business.
48. Attend the only show dedicated to construction roll forming.
49. Join an industry-focused community built specifically for roll formers.
50. Return home with ideas that can pay for the trip many times over.

**[www.constructionrollformingshow.com](http://www.constructionrollformingshow.com)**

**If you do not have access to the internet  
or would like to exhibit contact:**

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BY KATHLEEN RILEY

# Excellence That Stands the Test of Time

**T**rade shows are about more than new products. They're about reconnecting with the people who build this industry—literally and figuratively—and reminding us why that matters.

The recent Post-Frame Builders Show in York, Pennsylvania, reminded me why this business continues to thrive. Yes, there were new innovations, packed educational sessions, and enough conversations to make my voice disappear by the end of the week. But what stood out most were the people behind the products—and the relationships that keep this industry moving.

One of the highlights of the show was recognizing our Gold Key of Excellence winners. These companies have earned something that can't be bought with a flashy booth or clever marketing campaign. They've earned the respect of the builders who rely on them every day.

The Gold Key Awards are unique because they're determined by you—our readers. They're based on real-world experience,


customer service, product performance, and the relationships suppliers build over years of doing business. In an industry where your reputation travels faster than your delivery truck, that kind of recognition carries real weight.

Congratulations to this year's winners. Whether you're a first-time recipient or adding another Gold Key to the wall, you've demonstrated that excellence isn't a one-time achievement. It's a commitment made on every order, every shipment, every phone call, and every job site, and it's what keeps the standard high.

As you read this issue, you'll see examples of that commitment throughout its pages. Innovation may bring people through the door, but service, integrity, and reliability are what keep them coming back—and what turn those connections into lasting relationships.


That's what builds lasting businesses. And that's what makes this industry one I'm proud to be part of. **RB**

— Kathleen Riley




**FEATURES**  
Wireless Remote-Controlled | Sliding Straps | Tongue & Tail Extension  
Dexter Torflex Axles | Center Tie-Down Rail | 12V Hydraulic System | Disc Brakes  
Hydraulic Jack | Corsol Corrosion Solutions (field-proven corrosion protection)

SEE IT IN ACTION AND BROWSE STOCK ONLINE



**SMART ROLLERS | FOR ONE-PERSON OPERATION**



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Gooseneck Option | Truss Package  
Light Packages | Additional Rollers

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 6 MIKE ROWE WORKS FOUNDATION**  
Chasing a Feeling
- 9 2026 GOLD KEY OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS**  
Honoring Top Suppliers
- 62 FLASHBACK 2004**  
The Emerging Green Trend
- 68 HYBRID MENTORING 2**  
Randy Chaffee
- 72 HOME ON THE RANGE**  
Barndominiums Novelty to National Trend
- 78 BUSINESS PROFILE**  
Elite Build
- 81 ENGINEERED WOOD**  
Achieving Peak Performance
- 84 WHEN LIGHTNING STRIKES**  
Lightning Protection Guide
- 92 PROJECT OF THE MONTH**  
Victorian-Style Horse Barn



# Rural Builder®

## Managing Editor

Kathleen Riley  
kathleen@shieldwallmedia.com  
715-952-1644

## Editorial Staff

Karen Knapstein, Linda Schmid

## Circulation/Subscriptions

Cari Ullom  
cari@shieldwallmedia.com  
715-952-1629

## Publisher/CEO

Gary Reichert  
gary@shieldwallmedia.com

## Director of Events

Missy Beyer  
missy@shieldwallmedia.com  
715-350-6658  
Fax: 1-715-227-8680

## Executive/Advertising Assistant

Kathy Budsberg  
kathy@shieldwallmedia.com

## Graphic Designers

Tom Nelsen  
Kevin Ulrich

## Digital Products Manager

Chad Ellis  
chad@shieldwallmedia.com

Fax: 1-715-304-3604

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## DEPARTMENTS

Editor's Note .....03



6



92

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**kathleen@shieldwallmedia.com**

## INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

Company	Page #
AceClamp .....	38
ACERO Industrial Systems .....	Flip 5
Acu-Form .....	39, 91
AJ Manufacturing, Inc.....	40
American Garage Door Factory .....	63, 89
ASC Machine Tools Inc.....	41, 88
ASCO USA, Inc. ....	CVR, 10, 11, 89
ASTA America by Janus International .....	7
Aztec Washer Company.....	65, 88
Balcan Innovations (rFOIL).....	69
BECK America, Inc.....	75
Bradbury Group.....	42
Chief Buildings .....	43
Coil Spot / Wildcat / SpeedLap .....	89
Cold Spring Enterprises .....	88
CombiLift .....	44
Creekside Manufacturing LLC .....	89
Direct Metals, Inc.....	90
Dripstop™ .....	12, 13
Dutch Tech Inc.....	CVR, 14, 15
Dynamic Fastener .....	16, 17
E-Impact Marketing LLC.....	90
Englert, Inc. ....	CVR, 18, 19
Everlast Roofing, Inc. ....	20, 21, 88
Express Barns .....	CVR, 45
Flack Hill Machine .....	89
Formwright.....	88
Golden Rule Fasteners.....	46, 90
Graber Post Buildings, Inc. ....	22, 23
Grandura Distribution LLC.....	89
Hixwood.....	CVR, 47
Lakeside Construction Fasteners .....	77
LELAND Industries Inc.....	48
Levi's Building Components .....	49
Malco Tools, Inc.....	50
Marion Manufacturing.....	90
Maze Nails.....	24, 25
Metal Rollforming Systems.....	51
MFM Building Products .....	CVR, 52
MWI Components.....	CVR, 26, 27
Novagard .....	28, 29
PA Wholesale Products.....	89
Palram Americas .....	53
Pine Hill Trailers.....	3, 88
Planet Saver Industries / GreenPost .....	91
Plyco Corporation.....	54
Post Protector .....	30, 31
Postsaver Europe Ltd .....	88
PowerLift Hydraulic Doors.....	Flip 2
Red Dot Products, LLC .....	91
Rib Runner Tools.....	89
Rigidply Rafters .....	70
S-5! .....	55
SmartBuild Systems.....	56
Starwood Rafters.....	76
Steel Dynamics Inc.....	32, 33
SteelGrip SAMM, Inc. ....	91
SWI Machinery.....	CVR, 34, 35
Trac-Rite Door .....	CVR, 57
Triangle Fastener Corporation.....	58
United Steel Supply.....	36, 37, 88
Wick Buildings .....	59
Worldwide Steel Buildings.....	67, Flip 14

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



# WORK ETHIC SCHOLARSHIP

## Everyone has a fair chance at this scholarship

The More Effort You Put Into the Application Process, the More You Shine!

BY LINDA SCHMID

**W**hen trying to find her career path, Caroline Knight could easily have chosen a path other than the trades. In fact, there are a number of reasons that she was more likely to go another way.

First she liked traditional school and she was good at it. She remembers being a “goody-two-shoes.” While these are all positive traits, they seem more conducive to becoming a teacher, a human resources professional, or some other traditional white collar job.

Another personality trait that seemed likely to lead her in another direction was her antipathy to very demanding activities. She wanted to play sports for the fun of it, not spend her time in grueling practices. She was interested in music, and was dedicated to practice, but she didn’t want to make a career of it. Then, for a while, she thought she would go into the film industry, but found that it tended to take over one’s life and she walked away from that too.

Then, Caroline was in debt from previous studies, so just grabbing any available job would have been the easier choice than embracing more education.

She also had very little confidence in herself as she had discovered her interest in woodworking rather late. After college



she took a single summer class in woodworking out of curiosity, and this was her whole experience in working in any kind of trades skill.

Another challenge was her doubt about whether she would fit into a male dominated space. However, Caroline said, “I had never found anything throughout my childhood, high school, or college years that felt as satisfying as building an Adirondack chair during a summer woodworking class.”

### GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Caroline typed “furniture making schools in the United States” into the browser on her computer, and the first thing that came up was North Bennett Street School in Boston, Massachusetts. She liked

what she saw, and she had a friend who lived in Boston, so she applied and moved from Indiana, where she grew up, to Boston.

“The program was and wasn’t what I was expecting,” Caroline said. “I was caught up in the romance of woodworking. One room had different chair styles displayed all over the walls and I dreamt of making gorgeous furniture.”

Reality quickly reared its head. The program began, of course, at the beginning. The students were learning how to use hand tools, hand planes, chisels, and so on. Caroline adjusted quickly.



As a result of a collaboration with mikeroweWORKS Foundation ([www.mikeroweworks.org](http://www.mikeroweworks.org)), *Rural Builder* is featuring profiles of Work Ethic Scholarship recipients in each of its issues. Over 2,000 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.”



**ASTAAMERICA**  
BY JANUS INTERNATIONAL



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“It was challenging, but enjoyable,” she said. “With hand tools you can feel the difference in your body as your skills improve, in the way you hold the tool and the way you move.”

She continued, “The instructors were amazing and knowledgeable. They taught us practical skills, but they also taught problem solving skills.”

Caroline began by feeling overwhelmed because everyone had more experience and seemed to know more than she did, but she soon realized that it wasn’t a problem. They were all at different levels, and she had a lot of people to learn from. The instructor helped a lot; as she got to know him and feel comfortable with him, she learned to trust him to help without judgement. This bolstered her self confidence. Further, there were a few other women at the school, and that made her feel like she could aspire to work in a man’s space.

### EARNING A MIKEROVEWORKS FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

“Applying for this scholarship was more intense than applying for others, in that there are several steps,” Caroline said, “but that means that everyone has a fair shot at the scholarship because the effort you put into it has more of an effect on your likelihood of receiving it.”

The Foundation’s expectation of applicants putting great effort into the application makes a lot of sense when you consider that the reward is meant to help people with a strong work ethic and the energy to make a career in the trades.

According to Caroline, The Skill and Work Ethic Aren’t Taboo Pledge – or S.W.E.A.T. Pledge – mirrors the idea that success comes from within.

“It’s about empowering yourself to create your own path to a successful career,” Caroline reflected.

While she believes that the idea of the scholarship is to help students avoid going into debt, she was already in debt. The scholarship helped her pay off old debt and took a lot of pressure off of her while she completed her woodworking studies.

### FIRST INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES

After completing her studies, Caroline took a temporary position as a teaching assistant, which allowed her to remain at the school a little longer. She realized on the job that having skills is one thing, but knowing how to teach them is an entirely different skill, and she found two more mentors who “taught her how to teach.”

When the teaching assistant job ended, she found a job at an Architectural Woodwork Shop, a production shop where they do custom projects. Initially nervous because she only had experience in furniture making, she quickly found that skills transfer, and it’s not as foreign as she thought it might be.

In regard to Caroline’s original fear, she is currently the only woman at her workplace, Architectural Millwork Shop, but she said it doesn’t seem to matter to her co-workers, mainly men in their twenties and thirties.

### CHASING A FEELING

Caroline plans to move to Charleston, South Carolina. She is open to different opportunities as she nurtures that sense of satisfaction she enjoyed at her first experience in woodworking.

She has no Big Dream that she is pursuing, instead she said she is enjoying every learning experience and work opportunity that comes her way.

Being free to move around, try out different roles, and chart your own career path is one of the many perks you earn when you enter a trade and learn skills that are always in demand. **RB**



# WINNERS

The Gold Key awards provide builders the opportunity to honor those who help them most, providing quality products and excellent service.

Congratulations to all of the 2026 Gold Key winners:

- A.J. Manufacturing, Inc.
- AceClamp
- Acu-Form
- Amerilux International
- Apple Outdoor Supply
- ASC Machine Tools, Inc.
- ASCO USA, Inc.
- Bay Insulation
- Beck America, Inc.
- Bradbury Group, The
- Central States Manufacturing, Inc
- Chief Buildings
- CombiLift
- DripStop™
- Dutch Tech, Inc.
- Dynamic Fastener
- Englert Inc.
- Everlast Roofing, Inc.
- Express Barns (Quality Structures)
- Forge Machines
- Formwright
- Golden Rule Fasteners
- Graber Post Buildings Inc.
- Hansen Pole Buildings
- Hixwood
- Janus International Group
- Leland Industries, Inc.
- Levi's Building Components
- Malco Tools, Inc.
- Maze Nails
- McElroy Metal
- MetalForming LLC
- Metal Rollforming Systems
- MFM Building Products
- Mid South Aluminum
- MWI Components
- New Tech Machinery
- Novagard
- New Tech Machinery
- Palram Americas
- Plyco Corporation
- Post Protector
- Progressive Metals
- Red Dot Products
- Rigidply Rafters
- S-5!
- Sherwin-Williams Coil Coatings
- SmartBuild Systems
- Snap-Z
- Steel Dynamics, Inc.
- SteelGrip SAMM Inc.
- SWI Machinery
- Trac-Rite Doors
- Triangle Fastener Corporation
- True Metal Supply
- United Steel Supply
- Wick Buildings

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These companies have been selected by the readers of *Rural Builder Magazine* as top suppliers in the industry. They were chosen for their:

- Quality products • Excellent service • Dependable delivery • Competitive prices
- 

*Many companies were nominated by our readers and the top vote recipients—56 suppliers in all—make up the 43rd class of honorees. Congratulations to all of the 2026 winners!*

# ASCO USA, Inc.

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 1    WEBSITE: [www.ascomachines.com](http://www.ascomachines.com)    PHONE: 217-955-ASCO

## ASCO USA: Investing in the Future

**A**SCO USA is excited to step into another year that's full of new opportunities and promise! With everything that's happening, it's clear that we're entering a period of significant growth. ASCO USA is committed to developing new machines for your business to achieve new heights of production and quality.

Our company is built on a foundation of integrity and a strong commitment to service. We strive to create a positive impact on those we interact with, hoping that our efforts will influence their communities and, ultimately, the world. Our leadership promotes a culture of innovation and a level of service that exceeds expectations. We are committed to delivering innovative and efficient solutions tailored to your business needs.

ASCO USA is the premier provider of ASCO machinery and dedicated long-term service across North America. We understand your need for innovative and efficient solutions in metal fabrication.

Quality trim is essential to your operation, and as the market picks up, now is



the perfect time to ensure your equipment is the best it can be. If you're planning to expand and take on more business, investing now is the key. This is a great opportunity to maximize production and minimize downtime. ASCO USA will make offers on any existing machines you may have currently to make this investment into your company more feasible.

### ASCO USA MISSION

We aim to conduct business in a way that positively influences our people, our partners, our communities, and the broader world.

We would love to discuss what you need to keep up with the upcoming growth and industry demands. We're here to serve you. **RB**



# THE FUTURE OF METAL FOLDING IS **ELECTRIC**

## V2.5 by ASCO

The fully electric ASCO V2.5 sets a new standard in metal folding. Featuring 300° of clearance, automated cutting technology, Dynamic Pressure Regulation, and intelligent gripper automation, it delivers exceptional precision and flexibility for today's most demanding fabrication applications. Built for performance. Engineered for the future.



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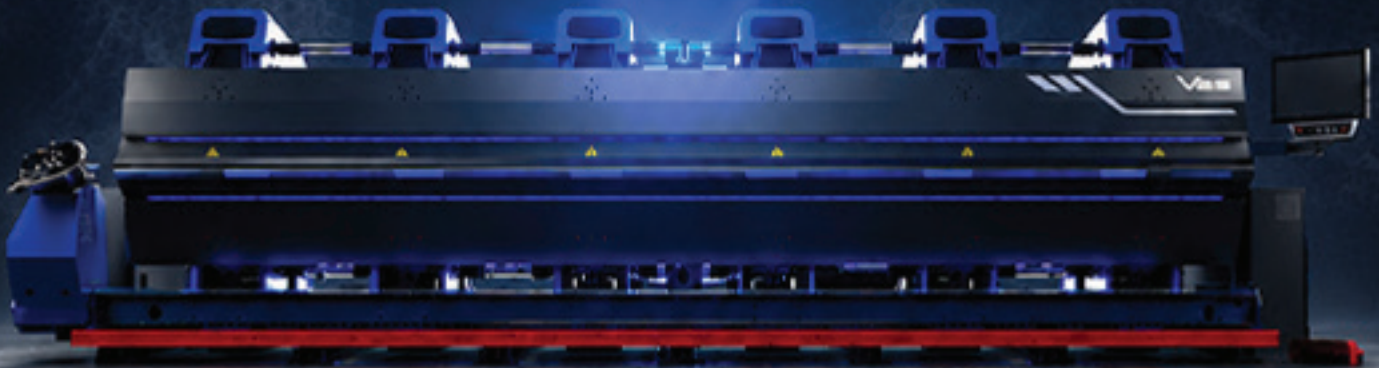
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# DRIPSTOP

## CONDENSATION CONTROL MEMBRANE

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 8    WEBSITE: [www.dripstop.com](http://www.dripstop.com)    PHONE: 937-660-6646



Condensation control

Efficient solution, protects belongings and structures



Corrosion resistant

Ensures longevity and durability



Saves time and money

No need for constant upkeep



Maintenance free

Cost-effective, no paying to install insulation

## A better way to fight condensation.

Proven performance. Lower costs. Lasting protection.

**W**e want to thank the builders, the contractors, and their customers for the continued trust and support they have shown in Dripstop.

As a builder or building owner, have you thought or received a call stating, 'It's raining inside my building!' It is probably condensation.

Once the building is up, the remedies are fewer, less effective, and more expensive. THE KEY IS to install panels with a condensation control membrane like Dripstop during construction.

### WHAT IS CONDENSATION?

Moisture is in the air all around us almost always. Under the right conditions, that moist air can change its physical form from a gas to a liquid. Just like a glass of ice water sweats and leaves a ring on the table in the summer, bare metal roofing sweats under similar conditions. This is a simple fact of science, and it happens when warm, wet air meets a cold solid surface, then water droplets form, or condensate appears.

### CAN IT BE STOPPED OR PREVENTED?

Traditionally, a layer of insulation has been used to prevent the warm moist air from reaching the cold metal panels. More re-

cently, builders have found a new and different way to 'control' the condensation, using a felt membrane to 'catch' the moisture as it forms overnight, and then 'release it' as the sun and air moves across the metal roofing panels during the day.

While insulation can be an effective solution, especially when installed to specifications; a condensation control membrane, like Dripstop, offers numerous advantages for both the builders and building owners.

As the building is erected, Dripstop arrives already installed on the metal panels; there is no time spent installing insulation. This increases job-site safety for the builder by eliminating blind steps to purlins covered with insulation. It also saves the time typically spent tacking that insulation down to the purlins. Since no insulation is being used, windy days become much less of a challenge.

Once the building is complete and properly vented, birds will not peck holes, the Dripstop will not sag or come down, and it will not require cleaning or maintenance; it is virtually worry-free.

Dripstop can help protect the steel from corrosion with its specially designed adhesive barrier. There is no reason why a properly installed and vented metal roof with Dripstop will not look and act the same 20+ years down the road! **RB**

# INCREASE PROFIT, NOT LABOR COSTS, WITH DRIPSTOP CONDENSATION CONTROL



Condensation control



Corrosion resistant



Saves time and money



Durable



Maintenance free

## HOW IT WORKS



### 1. ABSORBS

Dripstop absorbs condensation as it forms on the underside of the metal roof.



### 2. HOLDS

Moisture is held within the membrane until conditions improve.



### 3. RELEASES

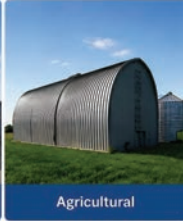
Moisture naturally evaporates as the temperature rises and air circulates.

Proper ventilation is required for optimal performance.

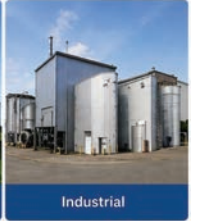
## TRUSTED ACROSS INDUSTRIES



Self-Storage



Agricultural



Industrial



Workshops & Garages



Warehouses



## THE ORIGINAL. SINCE 1996.

The high-performance membrane that helps protect buildings and goods from the damaging effects of condensation.



# Dutch Tech Inc.

**GOLD KEY AWARDS:** 2    **WEBSITE:** [www.dutchtechindustries.com](http://www.dutchtechindustries.com)    **PHONE:** 931-325-0000

Providing builders with high-performing American made insulation.

**E**very roofer knows that some products look good on paper but become a headache the moment they hit the jobsite.

The real test comes when you're standing on a roof in a 15-mile-per-hour wind, trying to keep materials under control while staying on schedule. That's where contractors quickly learn the difference between products designed in an office and products designed for the field.

One Tennessee manufacturer, Dutch Tech Inc., has built its reputation around solving some of those everyday jobsite frustrations. Their reflective insulation product, Therma Guard, was created with the installer in mind, focusing on durability, ease of installation, and long-term building performance.

For roofing contractors, handling strength matters. Traditional reflective insulation often stretches, tears, or pulls loose during installation. Anyone who has chased a piece of insulation across a roof deck knows exactly what that means for labor costs and productivity. Lost time adds up quickly when crews are fighting materials instead of installing them.

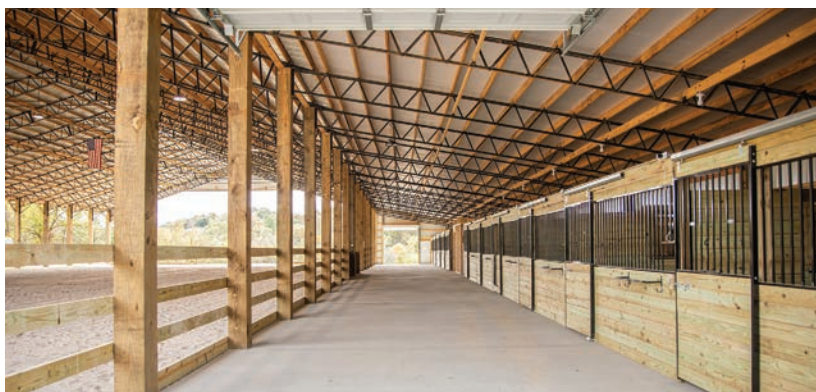
ThermaGuard takes a different approach. Its polypropylene woven reinforcement and foam-core construction provide a tougher material that stands up to the demands of residential roofing, agricultural buildings, workshops, and post-frame structures. The material resists tearing during installation and maintains its integrity when crews are working around purlins, trusses, and framing members.

The benefit isn't just durability. Roofing contractors appreciate products that install efficiently. Stronger materials mean fewer repairs, fewer blown-out staple holes, and fewer interruptions while crews are trying to close in a building before weather arrives. When a product stays where it is supposed to stay, the entire installation process moves faster.

Performance after installation is equally important.

Metal roofs absorb tremendous amounts of solar heat during the summer months. Anyone who has climbed into an attic or shop building in August understands how quickly temperatures can become uncomfortable. Reflective insulation helps address this challenge by reducing radiant heat transfer, creating a more comfortable interior environment for the building owner.

For owners of shops, equipment sheds, horse barns, barn-dorminiums, and commercial buildings, that can translate into im-



proved comfort and lower energy consumption throughout the year.

Roofers also understand the importance of moisture management. Condensation can become a serious issue inside metal buildings when warm, humid air meets cooler roof panels. A properly installed reflective insulation system helps reduce the conditions that lead to condensation, protecting both the structure and the contents inside.

The construction industry is full of products that promise big results. The ones that earn repeat business are the products that help contractors work faster, install with confidence, and deliver a better finished building.

That is where Dutch Tech believes ThermaGuard separates itself. It is designed to withstand tough jobsite conditions, simplify installation, and provide lasting performance long after the crew has packed up and moved on to the next project.

For roofing professionals, that combination of durability, efficiency, and performance is exactly what a quality building product should deliver. **RB**

# THERMA-GUARD

By Dutch Tech Inc.

America's strongest reflective insulation!

For metal buildings, pole barns, shops, steel framing,  
residential and commercial metal roofing.

## WHY USE THERMA-GUARD?

- Strongest insulative underlayment on the market
- Industry-leading UV resistance
- Reflects 96-97% of radiant heat
- Easy to install
- Holds staples like crazy
- Reduces condensation
- Highly resistant to birds and pests



**342**  
rolls on a full truck load

**750ft<sup>2</sup>**  
coverage per roll

Available in 6' or 4' width, both come with 2" overlap.  
Also available with or without tape sealing edge.



## R-VALUE UP TO 12\*

\*R Value based on combined radiant and thermal resistance function and depends on assembly. See back side for details

Therma-Guard products manufactured by Dutch Tech Inc. are warranted against defects in materials and workmanship for 10 years in approved building or OEM applications when installed in accordance with Dutch Tech Inc.'s written instructions.



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# Dynamic Fastener

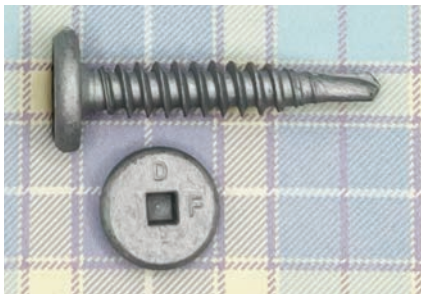
GOLD KEY AWARDS: 38

WEBSITE: [www.DynamicFastener.com](http://www.DynamicFastener.com)

PHONE: 800-821-5448

**D**ynamic Fastener has the most complete line of #14 diameter clip screws & purlin fasteners. They feature a low-profile square drive head and come standard with the exclusive **Dyna-Coat**® 1,000-hour salt spray premium coating.

Dynamic Fastener is proud to offer the following.



**CST1:** To fasten into wood, concrete, or metal .024" to .095" thickness. T-1. #14 diameter. 13 TPI. Features asymmetric buttress threads. #2 square drive. Low clearance, 1/2" O.D. head.

Choose: 3/4", 1 1/4", 2", 3", 4", 5", 6", 7", 8", or 10".



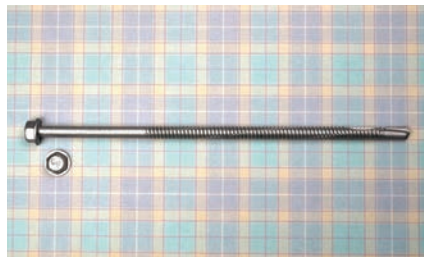
**CST3:** To fasten into metal .036" to .250" thickness. T-3. #14 diameter. 14 TPI. #3 square drive. Low clearance, extra wide 5/8" O.D. head provides greater bearing area that is useful when attaching standing seam clips or structural insulated panels (SIPs) or insulated metal panels (IMPs).

Choose: 3/4", 1 1/4", 2", 3", 4", 5", 6", 7", 8", or 10".



**CST5:** To fasten into metal .250" to .625" thickness. T-5. #14 diameter. 20 TPI. #3 square drive. Low clearance, extra wide 5/8" O.D. head provides greater bearing area that is useful when attaching standing seam clips or structural insulated panels (SIPs) or insulated metal panels (IMPs). They stock a CST5 #12X11/2" option as well.

Choose: 1 1/4", 2", 3", 4", 5", 6", 7", 8", or 10".



The #14 diameter **Purlin Fasteners** have a 3/8" HWH for most efficient installation of the screws. Install thru insulated panels or for retro-fit roofing. #14 diameter 14 TPI fastens to .060" to .375" total steel thickness at connection. **Dyna-Coat**® 1,000 hour salt spray premium coating.

Choose 7" or 10" length.

## CATALOG

Dynamic Fastener's free 140-page full-color Tool and Fastener Hand Guide covers fastener applications, engineering data, availability of types, size ranges, and fastener materials.

The Hand Guide also features Dynamic

Fastener's flagship products: **D•F**® screws, **Dyna-Guard**® snow retention system for metal roofs, **Dyna-Clamps**® to accommodate many different profiles of standing seam roofs and 145 million **D•F**® rivets in stock, of which over 100 million are pre-painted and stocked in bags of 250 pieces.

In addition to discussing screws and anchors, the guide provides prices and other information relating to flashings, sealants, insulation tapes, safety equipment, hand tools, power tools and more.

Their E-Commerce site has full online ordering capabilities allowing for 24-hour access. **RB**

## LOCATIONS:

- Kansas City, MO (Main wrhs)
- Chicago, IL
- Houston, TX
- Las Vegas, NV
- Memphis, TN
- St. Louis, MO
- St. Paul, MN
- Kansas City, MO (Annex wrhs)

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**Titebond**  
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**D-F® DYNA-FLASH®**  
#3 10+ **\$6.89** PG. 61-63

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# Englert

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 3 WEBSITE: [www.englertinc.com](http://www.englertinc.com) PHONE: 1-800-ENGLERT

## New England Net-Positive Home Pairs Sustainability with Timeless Metal Roofing

BY JONATHAN GIACCHI

In a quiet New England town, a newly completed custom residence is redefining what it means to build for the future. Not just designed for net-zero performance, this home goes a step further — producing more energy than it consumes. It blends modern efficiency with architectural elegance, all anchored by a standing seam metal roof from Englert.



The homeowner focused on long-term energy efficiency and minimal maintenance; knew his roofing choice would be critical. He sought a system that would not only elevate the home’s appearance but also play an active role in its energy performance. Englert’s standing seam roof was the ideal solution — offering exceptional durability, compatibility with solar, and timeless curb appeal.

More than a design element, the Englert roof is a key contributor to the home’s performance. The Englert A1300 metal roof panel’s sleek profile supports a full solar array used on the sloped roof sections while providing weather resistance and a long service life. Made with recycled content and built to last, the roof helps minimize environmental impact without compromising aesthetics.

In addition, Englert’s RainPro gutter system was installed to manage water runoff efficiently while enhancing the home’s clean, modern look. Combining the capacity of a 6-inch gutter with the sleek profile of a 5-inch, RainPro features heavy-gauge aluminum, concealed hangers for added strength, and a Scratch-Guard™ paint finish available in a range of designer colors — all backed by a limited lifetime warranty.

The home features a high-performance envelope with continuous exterior insulation, triple-pane windows, and a tightly sealed structure. All-electric systems, including a heat pump HVAC and



water heating, as well as ERVs operate with high efficiency — powered largely by the energy produced on the roof.

Every component of the home was selected with care, from Roseburg engineered framing materials to advanced air-sealing strategies. The result is a home that stays comfortable year-round while keeping energy consumption to a minimum.

Now part of Great Day Improvements, Englert continues to support projects like this with top-tier roofing products that combine performance and beauty. Backed by one of the nation’s fastest-growing home improvement companies, Englert brings homeowners added peace of mind through trusted expertise and national reach.

The standing seam metal roof stands out not only for its sleek lines and modern finish, but for its role in delivering a high-performance, future-ready home. As demand for energy-efficient living grows, this project is a powerful example of how thoughtful design and proven materials — like those from Englert — can help homeowners meet today’s goals while planning for tomorrow. **RB**

**Location:** New England  
**Roofing & Gutters:** Englert  
**Windows:** Schuco Triple Pane  
**Siding:** Acre and Allura  
**Insulation:** TimberHP wood fiber  
**Solar Mounts:** S-5!  
**Solar Array:** 25kW with REC Panels  
**Energy Storage:** Enphase Microinverters & Batteries  
**Architect:** Steve Baczek





## Englert has earned a **2026 Gold Key of Excellence Award**



**Gold Key  
of Excellence  
Award Winner**

We're thrilled to share the exciting news that Englert has been honored with the prestigious 2026 Gold Key of Excellence Award! This recognition is not just an accolade; it's a testament to our commitment to excellence in providing top-notch products and unparalleled service to our valued customers like you.

The Gold Key of Excellence program celebrates the crème de la crème of the rural contracting industry, acknowledging those who go above and beyond to support and serve metal roofers like yourself. This award is a nod to the elite standards we uphold in our industry. Englert is proud to receive its second Gold Key of Excellence Award.



1.800.ENGLERT  
[www.englertinc.com](http://www.englertinc.com)



**ENGLERT**<sup>®</sup>  
a Great Day Improvements brand

# Everlast Roofing, Inc.

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 24 WEBSITE: [www.everlastroofing.com](http://www.everlastroofing.com) PHONE: 888-339-0059

## Everlast Roofing Celebrates 30 Years of Innovation, Growth, and Industry Leadership

In 2026, Everlast Roofing proudly celebrates 30 years of serving the metal roofing and post-frame building industries with quality products, dependable service, and a commitment to continuous innovation. What began as a small operation with a vision for better metal roofing solutions has grown into a nationally recognized manufacturer trusted by contractors, builders, and homeowners across the country.

Over the past three decades, Everlast Roofing has evolved alongside the industry while helping shape it through new technology, expanded product offerings, and a customer-first approach that remains at the heart of the company today.

Since opening its doors in 1996, Everlast Roofing has continuously invested in manufacturing advancements to better serve customers and improve product performance. From upgraded roll-forming equipment and expanded production capabilities to advanced paint systems and steel processing technologies, the company has remained focused on staying ahead of industry trends while maintaining the high standards customers expect.

One of the most significant milestones in Everlast Roofing's growth has been the expansion of its product lines and manufacturing capabilities. Today, the company offers a wide range of premium metal roofing and siding panels, trims, accessories, and custom printed metal designs that serve residential, agricultural, and commercial markets alike. Everlast Roofing has worked to provide customers with products that not only perform exceptionally well but also offer the curb appeal and versatility modern building owners demand.

Innovation has also played a major role in the company's success. Throughout the years, Everlast Roofing has embraced advancements in metal coatings, dura-



bility testing, and production efficiency to ensure products are built to withstand harsh weather conditions while maintaining long-lasting beauty and performance. The company's commitment to quality has helped establish Everlast Roofing as a trusted name throughout the industry.

Beyond products and manufacturing, Everlast Roofing has also invested heavily in its people and company culture over the last 30 years. Many employees have spent decades growing alongside the company, contributing their experience, dedication, and craftsmanship to Everlast Roofing's continued success. The company remains committed to creating opportunities for growth while maintaining the family-oriented values that have defined the business since the beginning.

As the construction and metal roofing industries have evolved, Everlast Roofing has adapted by expanding into new markets, enhancing customer support, and embracing modern marketing and design trends. From agricultural buildings and pole barns to residential homes and commercial projects, the company has con-

tinued to provide solutions that meet the changing needs of builders and property owners nationwide.

Receiving recognition as a 2026 Rural Builder Gold Key Winner during this milestone anniversary year is especially meaningful for the Everlast Roofing team. The award reflects not only the quality of the company's products, but also the trust and loyalty built with customers and partners over the last three decades.

While Everlast Roofing is proud of how far it has come, the company remains focused on the future. Continued investments in technology, manufacturing, employee development, and customer relationships will ensure Everlast Roofing remains a leader in the metal roofing industry for years to come.

As Everlast Roofing celebrates 30 years in business, the company extends its gratitude to its employees, customers, dealers, and industry partners who have been part of the journey. Their support has helped build a legacy of quality, innovation, and service that continues to grow stronger with every year. **RB**

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# Graber Post Buildings, Inc.

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 24 WEBSITE: [www.graberpost.com](http://www.graberpost.com) PHONE: 800-264-5013

**N**eatly tucked away down an old country road just outside of Montgomery, Indiana, sits the impressive Graber Post Buildings sales office and manufacturing complex. Forged from humble and modest beginnings, in 1973 Glen Graber started GPB with the help of three other Amish carpenters. His purpose was to provide for his entire family.

As a skilled carpenter, Graber knew that providing the best quality materials and craftsmanship while erecting post-frame buildings would be a key factor to his success. In 1987, the supply chain issues helped him make one of his biggest business decisions ever. He invested in a computerized rollformer to produce his own siding and roofing panels. It was a major risk in the early stages of his business venture, but it yielded great opportunities for future growth. And it did just that.

Today, Graber Post Buildings has grown year after year while building on the same core values that Mr. Graber set in place from day one: providing the best building materials at a fair and competitive price. GPB has over 30 subcontracting crews to build buildings and install metal roofs in a two-hour radius of Montgomery, Indiana. We stock and distribute every item needed for post/stud frame buildings and metal roofs. We build custom wood trusses, laminated columns, five metal siding/roofing profiles, metal trims, windows, doors, overhead doors, and any other imaginable items you may need.

GPB is also excited to share that a plant expansion in Ashley, Indiana is currently underway. This new facility will allow GPB to better serve customers in Wisconsin, Northern Ohio, Michigan,

Northern Indiana, and surrounding areas with faster turnaround times than ever before.

Residential post-frame buildings or shouses/barndominiums; have become the popular topic the last few years. To help the design process, our website features a design tool that allows you to come up with your own custom design that can then be submitted for a free, no-obligation quote. We also feature a color visual-



izer that will help aid in picking the perfect color combination for your next build. Finally, to help with design inspiration, we have a gallery with all our top projects to give you great ideas/tips to include in your next build. For your next garage, shop, shouse, or metal roof, please give us a call and see how we can help you save money while getting the building or roof that you've always dreamed of.

To learn more about our company and how a partnership with GPB may fit your business model, visit [www.graberpost.com](http://www.graberpost.com). **RB**





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800-264-5013

# Maze Nails

**GOLD KEY AWARDS:** 43    **WEBSITE:** [www.mazenails.com](http://www.mazenails.com)    **PHONE:** 800-435-5949    **FAX:** 815-223-7585

## CHEAP NAILS CAN FAIL IN STORMS: WHY ELECTRO-GALVANIZED NAILS DON'T BELONG IN SEVERE WEATHER REGIONS

When it comes to protecting buildings and homes from the destructive forces of severe weather, every component matters. Yet one critical detail is often overlooked: the type of nail used in construction. While inexpensive electro-galvanized nails may appear to be a cost-effective choice, their performance in storm-prone regions often falls short when it matters most.

Builders and contractors working in coastal areas, hurricane zones, and regions subject to frequent storms understand that corrosion resistance and holding power are essential. Nails exposed to moisture, salt air, and temperature fluctuations must withstand years of harsh conditions without compromising structural integrity. Unfortunately, many lightly coated electro-galvanized import nails simply are not designed for this demanding environment.

## MAZE INVENTED THREADED NAILS

In 1930, Maze engineers realized that smooth shank nails can back out in certain situations. They experimented with deforming the nail shanks – and were soon the inventors of spiral shank nails. It was just a few years later that the Independent Nail division of Maze Co. brought ring shank nails to market. So now there was simply no excuse for using nails that didn't hold super-tight in high wind environments!

## GALVANIZING: THE MAZE STORMGUARD® WAY

For generations, Maze has relied on a proven process that industry experts recognize as the most effective method of protect-

ing steel nails: hot-dip galvanizing.

In this process, nails are completely immersed in a vat of molten zinc, much like potatoes being submerged in hot oil during the french-frying process. This treatment does far more than create a surface coating. The hot-dipping process forms an outer layer of pure zinc while simultaneously creating a durable inner layer of zinc-steel alloy that bonds tightly to the nail itself. The result is exceptional corrosion protection that significantly outperforms the thin coatings typically found on electro-galvanized products.

Maze *STORMGUARD*® nails go even further. After the initial galvanizing process, each nail receives a second dip in protective molten zinc. This exclusive *DOUBLE DIPPING* helps eliminate pinholes and coating imperfections while increasing the amount of zinc applied to every nail. The added protection creates a more uniform barrier against rust and environmental damage.

Equally important, the entire process is performed using fully automated equipment. This ensures a heavy, consistent coating on every nail while maintaining clean threads and surfaces that provide maximum holding power and easier driving during installation.

## PROVEN THROUGH DECADES OF PERFORMANCE

Laboratory testing is valuable, but nothing compares to real-world performance. Maze *STORMGUARD*® nails have successfully passed the ultimate test: over 100 years of field service. Their long history of dependable performance has earned a reputation unmatched by other zinc-coated nail producers.

Post Frame Builders and contractors continue to choose *STORMGUARD*® nails because they deliver what modern construction demands—durability, reliability, and long-term protection. Whether used for roofing, metal siding, trim, decking, or other exterior applications, these nails are specifically engineered to provide secure fastening and superior resistance to the elements.

The lesson is simple. When storms strike, shortcuts can become costly mistakes. Choosing the right fasteners is a small investment that can make a significant difference in the longevity and performance of a structure.

It's no surprise that builders and contractors across the country continue to say that *STORMGUARD*® nails are among the finest steel-based nails on the market—economical, easy to drive, hold nice and tight - and are purpose-built for today's demanding construction applications. And – very proudly Made in America. **RB**





# NAIL IT RIGHT EVERY TIME



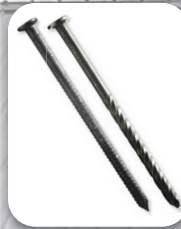
## Maze Premium Post Frame Nails



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## MWI Earns 24<sup>th</sup> Golden Key of American Excellence

MWI Components is honored to receive our 24th Golden Key of Excellence from Rural Builder magazine. This achievement reflects our continued commitment to innovation, quality, and service within the post-frame construction industry.

Since our humble beginnings in 1985—when we operated with only a handful of established product lines—MWI Components has experienced remarkable growth and transformation. Over the years, we have remained dedicated to advancing our product offerings and developing reliable solutions that meet the evolving needs of our customers.

In 2025, MWI Components proudly celebrated 40 years of manufacturing and distribution. This milestone marked not only our longevity but also the strength of our relationships, products, and team. Today, that legacy continues to grow as we expand our footprint into North Carolina. As part of this expansion, we have dedicated a new facility specifically to enhance production of our reflective insulation line.

One of the newest innovations to come from this effort is Amera Shield™, our Foam/Scrim reflective insulation product. Engineered for durability and performance, Amera Shield™ is designed to provide effective thermal resistance, reduce condensation, and improve energy efficiency in post-frame buildings. Its layered construction combines reflective film, a foam core, and with a reinforced scrim finished surface, creating a product that is both lightweight and strong while maintaining excellent insulating properties. Amera Shield™ is built to withstand the demands of agricultural, commercial, and residential applications, offering an easy-to-install solution that helps protect structures and enhance long-term performance.



### AMERA SHIELD™

*The American-Engineered Reflective Foam Insulation.*



As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary in 2026, the introduction of Amera Shield™ carries even greater significance. Proudly manufactured in America, the product reflects the same values that have defined our nation for generations—strength, resilience, and a commitment to doing things the right way. While its name remains timeless, Amera Shield™ stands as a modern expression of American manufacturing excellence, honoring a legacy of craftsmanship while helping build for the future. It represents not just innovation, but a continuation of the principles that have fueled American industry for nearly two and a half centuries.



**The First Rolls of Amera Shield Produced**

In addition to Amera Shield, we have continued to expand our cupola accessory offerings to better serve our customers. One of our latest innovations is an access window feature, designed to provide owners with easier and safer access to their cupolas for routine maintenance and upkeep. We have also introduced a new light kit option, which includes a custom-engineered universal base and a can light with adjustable brightness levels—allowing customers to achieve the perfect aesthetic for their structure.

Another product line we have been enhancing this year is our Assembled Arcadian Sliding Door operations. By improving our manufacturing techniques and investing in advanced equipment, we have been able to create a more efficient assembly process for our team members, particularly when fulfilling large door orders. These improvements not only increase production efficiency but also ensure consistent quality and reliability for our customers.



**Assembled Arcadian Door**

Receiving our 24th Golden Key of Excellence is a testament to the hard work of our team and the trust of our customers. It reflects not only what we have accomplished, but the standards we continue to uphold every day. At MWI Components, our drive for excellence is constant—guiding every product we develop, every process we refine, and every partnership we build. We remain deeply committed to delivering reliable, high-quality solutions that our distributors can depend on with confidence. By focusing on consistency, innovation, and service, we strive to strengthen those relationships and support our partners' success in an ever-evolving industry.



**New MWI Flag Trailers**



**Cupola Light Kit & Access Window**

We would also like to extend our sincere gratitude to all of our customers for their continued business and trust. Your support has been essential to our growth and success, and we are proud to serve you. As we look ahead, we remain committed to earning that trust every day—continuing to deliver the quality, reliability, and excellence that you have come to expect from MWI Components.

**800-360-6467**  
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**MWICOMPONENTS.COM**



# Novagard

**GOLD KEY AWARDS:** 5    **WEBSITE:** [www.novagard.com](http://www.novagard.com)    **PHONE:** 216-881-8111

**M**etal roofing contractors know that long-term performance depends on more than roofing panels alone. The quality of the seal is just as important, making the right adhesive sealant the difference between a roof that lasts and one that generates costly callbacks.

That's why contractors across North America rely on **NovaFlex® Pro Premium Adhesive Sealant** from Novagard. Manufactured in Cleveland, Ohio, NovaFlex Pro is a superior silicone sealant engineered for challenging exterior applications. Its neutral-cure formula provides superior adhesion to metal roofs, out-buildings, wall panels, flashing, gutters, trim, and other common construction materials without corroding metal surfaces. It remains permanently flexible, resists UV exposure, and withstands harsh weather conditions year after year.

Whether sealing roof penetrations, fastening flashing details, securing trim, or creating watertight joints between panels, NovaFlex Pro provides the durability and consistency metal roofing professionals depend on. Easy gunning and tooling characteristics help crews work efficiently. Available in numerous colors, NovaFlex Pro provides consistent color matching across a wide range of manufacturer finishes.

While NovaFlex Pro excels in metal roofing applications, its versatility extends beyond the roofline. Contractors also rely on it for sealing windows, doors, siding, trim, and glazing applications. And it is AAMA-verified; making it a dependable solution to keep on every jobsite. Within their residential install division, Novagard also offers:

**NovaBond Pro Premium Hybrid Sealant** is AAMA verified, easy to gun and tool, and can be painted in just 30 minutes. It's best used when sealing windows, doors, siding, and trim that requires a paintable sealant.

**NovaFlex Gutter Plus Premium Silicone Adhesive Sealant** and **NovaFlex Gutter Sealant** are rain safe in one hour or less and remain permanently flexible. These silicones are great for sealing gutters, downspouts, patio covers, carports, and water carrying systems.

"We're honored to be recognized with *Rural Builder Magazine's* 2026 Gold Key of Excellence Award," said Joe Borak, Senior Vice

President of Sales at Novagard. "This award reflects the trust our customers place in our products."

When performance, consistency, and long-term durability matter, the pros trust American made Novagard products. For more information or to request a sample, visit [novagard.com](http://novagard.com). **RB**



# When performance matters, we have you covered.

## NOVAGARD®



Roofs, panels, gutters,  
windows & doors



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# Post Protector

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 12    WEBSITE: [www.postprotector.com](http://www.postprotector.com)    PHONE: 877-966-8768



# Post Proservative

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 12 WEBSITE: [www.postprotector.com](http://www.postprotector.com) PHONE: 877-966-8768



**POST™**  
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**Internal Copper / Boron Wood Preservative.  
Spot-Treats the Decay-Prone Grade Line.  
30+ yr. proven in Utility Pole Maintenance.  
Each Application Good for 10 yrs. Reloadable.**

# Steel Dynamics

**GOLD KEY AWARDS:** 13    **WEBSITE:** [www.steeldynamics.com](http://www.steeldynamics.com)    **PHONE:** 260-969-3500

**S**teel Dynamics, Inc. is proud to receive its thirteenth Rural Builder Gold Key of Excellence award.

Since its founding in 1993, SDI has proudly provided best-in-class customer service and support, quality, innovative technology, and most importantly, a focus on safety for all of its employees.

“SDI really values our customers’ input and this recognition of our hard work as we strive to be the best steel supplier for construction in the nation,” says Tom Lazar, marketing manager of the SDI Flat Roll Group.

“Our customers’ feedback brings us opportunities to improve on things like the quality of our products and our on-time delivery, as well as keeping us up-to-date on what they see in the marketplace in terms of the needs and wants of their customers,” continued Lazar. “It helps us improve our service to them and stay on the leading edge of new product development.”

Two of those new products are Tru-Steel HD® digital print steel and the ultra-sustainable BioEdge™ flat rolled steel, the latter of which is made with renewable or nuclear energy and SDI-produced biocarbon to reduce scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions.

“Steel Dynamics is a sustainable company from the get-go,” says Lazar. “It’s always been top of mind, not only for cost, but for environmental purposes. We’re proud to be leading the industry’s sustainability efforts, and we’re constantly improving.”

Tru-Steel HD® and BioEdge™ complement SDI’s already impressive lineup of flat-rolled steel products, ranging from pickled hot-rolled coils to prepainted Galvalume® and specialty coatings such as Aluminized Type 1 and Galfan®. Additionally, SDI officially opened its first flat-rolled aluminum mill, Aluminum Dynamics, in Columbus, Mississippi, last year. This state-of-the-art facility serves the domestic alumi-



*Tru-Steel HD® digitally printed steel, in a woodgrain pattern.*

num construction industry and supplies high-quality aluminum products to canned goods manufacturers and automakers alike.

To close, Lazar spoke directly to SDI’s loyal customers, saying, “We want to thank our customers for being our partners in the metal construction world and for recognizing our achievements and our commitment to them daily.” **RB**

# TRUSTED BY THE PEOPLE WHO PUT STEEL TO WORK.

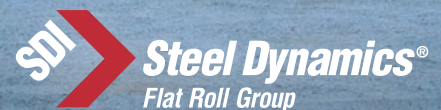
From corrosion-resistant coatings and painted finishes to advanced printed surfaces and specialty steel solutions, Steel Dynamics Flat Roll Group helps power the products that bring buildings like this to life.

Recognized by Rural Builder readers with the Gold Key Award, SDI is proud to earn the trust of the customers we serve.



PAINTED GALVALUME®

TRU-STEEL HD®  
DIGITAL PRINTS



**BUTLER DIVISION**  
Butler, Indiana

**COLUMBUS DIVISION**  
Columbus, Mississippi

**HEARTLAND DIVISION**  
Terre Haute, Indiana

**THE TECHS DIVISION**  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

**SOUTHWEST-SINTON DIVISION**  
Sinton, Texas

*Actual product color may vary from images shown due to lighting conditions, time of day, and atmospheric factors. For color accuracy, please request a physical sample.*

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# SWI Machinery

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 2 WEBSITE: [www.swimachinery.com](http://www.swimachinery.com) PHONE: 770-766-0880

## Next-Level Productivity

**S**WI is among the top brands of sheet metal processing equipment with solutions for coil handling, uncoiling, slitting, folding, and recoiling – known for safety, ease-of-use, and the reliability that sheet metal fabricators demand.

“Our machines are great and our automation is even better. We believe our automation solutions are leading the way. Whether we are automating a single process or an entire line, we’re able to increase productivity, reduce waste, improve safety, and streamline operator involvement”, said Jason Smoak of SWI.

Darren Monson, VP of Sales added, “While SWI may not be the first to introduce automation to sheet metal fabricators, we have made significant advancements in our controls and mechanics that eliminate complications seen in competitive solutions.”

Beyond machinery and automation, SWI has introduced a mobile app called SWIFOLD designed to keep construction teams in the field productive and efficient. Highlights of the app include a sketchpad for creating custom flashings, tracking orders, managing part libraries, and sending orders to the factory with speed and accuracy.

### ABOUT SWI

Throughout the 1990s, SWI was one of the largest rollformer manufacturers in Australia. Slitters and long folders were added to the lineup which quickly became highly sought-after machines. Popular enough for



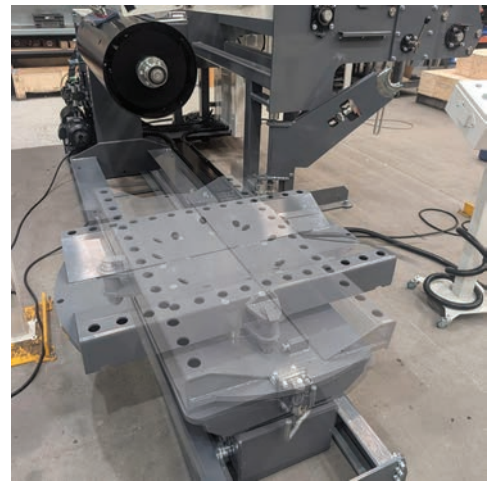
*Expert training with every machine installation to give operators the knowledge and confidence to keep processes running.*



*In the U.S., SWI has 7 field service technicians – each with a vehicle stocked with parts.*



*The Recoiler Coil Tipper eliminates secondary tipping processes so material can be unloaded and stored safely and efficiently.*



*Rotating Coil Car will change orientation of a coil when moving from slitter to rollformer no matter which direction the coil was loaded. Ideal when space is limited – making it easier for a fork truck to maneuver.*

SWI to focus entirely on coil processing and folding machines – with the iconic Marxman slitters leading the way.

SWI’s state-of-the-art facility in Warrnambool, Australia allowed the company to serve both small volume shops as well as large operations throughout Asia

and Europe. In 2017, SWI opened its North American facility in Georgia to provide sales, installation, and service – making the SWI brand significantly more accessible to US-based fabricators. **RB**

*Learn more at [www.swimachinery.com](http://www.swimachinery.com)*

GOLD KEY  
OF EXCELLENCE  
AWARD WINNER



# THE STANDARD FOR HIGH-PERFORMANCE OPERATIONS

Superior mechanics, ease-of-use, and significant waste reduction have made Marxman slitters the preferred choice of fabricators worldwide for slitting and blanking processes.



## MARXMAN<sup>PRO</sup>

MILD STEEL 1.6mm (16ga)	STAINLESS 1.2mm (18ga)	ALUMINUM 2.0mm (.080in)
----------------------------	---------------------------	----------------------------



## MARXMAN<sup>PLUS</sup>

MILD STEEL 1.2mm (18ga)	STAINLESS 1mm (20ga)	ALUMINUM 1.6mm (.060in)
----------------------------	-------------------------	----------------------------

**MAKE THE SWITCH.**

770.766.0880 | [swimachinery.com](http://swimachinery.com)

**SMA**  
MACHINERY

# United Steel Supply

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 8 WEBSITE: [www.unitedsteelsupply.com](http://www.unitedsteelsupply.com) PHONE: 512-263-0954

**U**nited Steel Supply wins its eighth consecutive Rural Builder Gold Key of Excellence award, following its first win in 2019.

“It’s a huge honor,” says United Steel Supply National Sales Manager, Conrad Farley. “Anytime our customer base acknowledges the service and quality we provide, it means everything to us. That’s the recognition we work for every day.”

United Steel Supply has quickly grown to become America’s largest distributor of USA-melted and prepainted Galvalume® steel, with facilities in six states that each house thousands of ready-to-ship coils. Despite this rapid growth, the team at United Steel Supply refuses to lose sight of the core principle that built the company’s success: service.

“We stay focused on the relationships we have with our customers, listening to what their needs are and how we can



serve them better, how we can implement whatever service they expect from us, and identify if we’re ever falling short,” says Farley. “We look at what our customers need from us right now, today, while also

working towards the long-term growth and success of those relationships.”

While United Steel Supply’s first focus is always the immediate needs of its customers, Farley added that their team is constantly working to develop new and improved systems, products, and services.

“We’re never satisfied. It’s never status quo. We’re always looking to lead the industry with innovations and new technologies, like our digital print steel and ultra-low-gloss paint systems. We just opened a new facility in Blackfoot, Idaho, with our first rail spur, expanding our customers’ transportation options. All of this is to strengthen our customers’ business models and help them grow. When they grow, we grow.”

Directly addressing the customers who voted for United Steel Supply to receive its eighth Gold Key, Farley expressed his gratitude. “All we have for our customers is grateful, thankful appreciation. We would never take this for granted. It’s our grade every year on how we’re doing, and we thank every customer who voted for us again.” **RB**





**UNITED**<sup>TM</sup>  
**STEEL SUPPLY**



United Steel Supply is the premier distributor of USA-made painted Galvalume® flat rolled steel coils for light gauge construction. With a focus on service, we strive to meet our customers' needs with superior quality and just-in-time delivery.

## PAINTED COILS

- 100+ colors available
- 22, 24, 26, 28, and 29 gauge
- SMP and PVDF paint systems

## RAPID SHIPPING

- Thousands of coils in stock
- Delivery in <24 hrs in most cases
- 6 locations nationwide

## FLEXIBLE ORDERING

- Mix multiple colors in a load
- Flexible min coil weights

## ON-SITE PROCESSING

- Advanced slitting capabilities
- Cut-to-length flat sheet

Visit **UnitedSteelSupply.com** or call **512-263-0954** to get started.



PLEASANTON, TEXAS

EUGENE, OREGON

JEFFERSONVILLE, INDIANA  
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

BLACKFOOT, IDAHO

GALVALUME® is a registered trademark of BIEC International, Inc.  
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2026 GOLD KEY WINNER

# AceClamp® by PMC Industries, Inc.

**GOLD KEY AWARDS:** 4

**WEBSITE:** [www.aceclamp.com](http://www.aceclamp.com)

**PHONE:** 860-351-0686, opt. 1

**A**ceClamp® leads the market in rooftop snow retention and solar mounting systems, blending cutting-edge innovation with practical solutions that save contractors time and money. Our fully assembled clamps streamline installation, reducing labor costs without sacrificing performance.

The cornerstone of “The AceClamp Advantage” is a patented push-pin design that is a non-penetrating, self-locking clamp that uses a single fastener to evenly distribute force across two push-pins, eliminating set screws and the need for retorquing. Proven through rigorous 3rd-party testing, this inventive approach ensures lasting strength and reliability. Primarily engineered for standing seam metal roofs (SSMR), AceClamp’s versatile, innovative systems also support asphalt, membrane, and slate applications.

With unmatched speed, durability, and innovative design, AceClamp is the Smarter Clamp and delivers a forward-thinking edge to every project. **RB**

- Clamps Arrive Assembled
- 3x Faster Installs
- Patented Push-Pin Self-Locking Design
- Non-Penetrating (NO SET SCREWS)



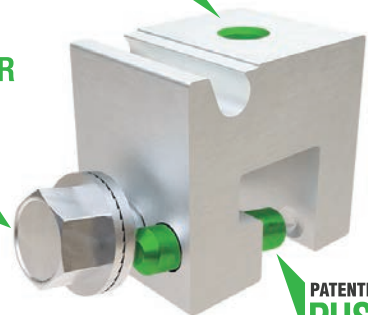
**ACE CLAMP®**  
Innovative Roofing Solutions™

**860-773-4144**  
**AceClamp.com**

**3/8-16**  
1/2" DEPTH



**BOLT, WASHER & PUSH-PINS**  
CLAMPS ARRIVE FULLY ASSEMBLED



**PATENTED PUSH-PIN**

**ACE CLAMP®**  
Innovative Roofing Solutions™

# Acu-Form

**GOLD KEY AWARDS:** 6    **WEBSITE:** [www.acuformequipment.com](http://www.acuformequipment.com)    **PHONE:** 330-674-4003    **FAX:** 330-674-4035

**E**stablished in 2010, Acu-Form has provided nothing less than the highest quality roll forming machines. We use tried and true manufacturing processes that prioritize proven design and strict quality control checks that allow us to offer the Acu-Form promise.

**Acu-Form Thru-Hardened D2 Steel:** Machines are manufactured with high-quality materials to ensure durability and performance at costs enabling profitability.

**Power Options:** We offer hydraulic, mechanical, and electrical power sources depending on your needs, including options for full automation.

**Pre-Tested Machines:** All Acu-Form machines are tested using customer supplied material. This enables turnkey operation upon installation.

**Versatile Growth Options:** Beyond the initial investment, Acu-Form provides guidance and design of additional machinery that will provide enhancement and expansion of current product



offerings.

**Shipping & Installation:** Upon machine completion, full service shipping and installation is available including the arrangement of technical support to connect to your power supply.

Acu-Form is here to support you beyond just delivery and installation. The purchase of any machine always includes access to technical support, as well as a full line of replacement parts that are available for immediate delivery. **RB**



*Acu-Form*  
ROLL FORMING EQUIPMENT

**ACU-FORM**  
Manufacturer Of Roll Forming Equipment  
Millersburg, OH

## OUR PRODUCTS

Panel Lines	Shears	Wrappers	Custom
Trim Machines	Slitters	J-Channel	Machines
Uncoilers	Corners	Ridge Caps	



Order Machine Based  
On Your Needs



Full-Service Shipping  
& Installation Available



Customer  
Support



Versatile Growth  
Options



**PHONE NUMBER:**  
(330) 674-4003



**WEBSITE:**  
[WWW.ACUFORMEQUIPMENT.COM](http://WWW.ACUFORMEQUIPMENT.COM)



**EMAIL:**  
[WAYNE@ACU-FORM.COM](mailto:WAYNE@ACU-FORM.COM)

# A.J. Manufacturing, Inc.

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 40 WEBSITE: [www.ajdoor.com](http://www.ajdoor.com) PHONE: 715-568-2204 ex. 49

## Remember the Good Old Days?

**R**emember when customer service was so exceptional you talked about it for years afterward? When craftsmanship and pride in a product were simply expected — not considered a bonus?

When working with a supplier felt like a partnership built on trust, knowledge, and follow-through?

Those were the good old days.

At AJ, we believe they still are.

There was a time when stores were staffed with people who truly knew their products. Questions were answered with confidence. Orders arrived as promised. Quality wasn't rushed, and service meant more than processing a transaction — it meant helping customers find the right solution and standing behind it every step of the way.

Today, too many companies have replaced personal service with automated systems, delayed communication, and “good



**(LEFT) Series 7100 door.**

**(TOP) EZ-v trim on a Harmony window.**

enough” results. Customers are often left feeling like just another number.

AJ was built to be different.

As a manufacturer of quality doors and windows for post frame construction, we're committed to delivering products that perform, craftsmanship you can count on, and service that reminds customers what doing business used to feel like.

Whether you're building a new home, upgrading an existing structure, or managing a large-scale agricultural or commercial project, our team is here to provide experienced guidance, dependable timelines, and products built with care and precision. At AJ we still believe quality still matters, relationships still matter, and customers should feel valued.

Welcome to AJ — where craftsmanship, reliability, and genuine customer service never went out of style. **RB**

# Quality is not a product **IT'S A PROMISE!**



**We believe quality matters. Details matter.  
Relationships matter.**



**AJ MANUFACTURING, INC.  
BUILDING IDEAS**

📞 800-328-9448 @ [www.ajdoor.com](http://www.ajdoor.com)

2026 GOLD KEY WINNER

# ASC Machine Tools

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 8 WEBSITE: [www.ascmt.com](http://www.ascmt.com) PHONE: 509-534-6600

## From Challenging to Simple: F&J Trim Rollforming

The F&J Trim Profile is one of the most challenging trim profiles to produce consistently on a conventional folder or press brake. Multiple bends, tight tolerances, and the need for a clean, uniform appearance can make the manufacturing process time-consuming and labor-intensive. The ASC F&J Trim Rollformer is specifically designed to simplify the production of F&J trim profiles while delivering consistent quality and high production rates. The machine incorporates adjustable tooling that allows operators to quickly change the soffit panel opening to accommodate the most common panel heights, including 1/2-inch and 7/8-inch profiles. The optimized profile design also allows the use of narrower coil blank widths, helping lower material costs and improve overall production efficiency. For manufacturers seeking to improve efficiency, reduce waste, and produce professional-quality

F&J trim profiles, the ASC F&J Trim Rollformer offers a reliable and cost-effective solution. **RB**



**ASC MACHINE TOOLS, INC.**

PREMIUM QUALITY MADE IN THE USA SINCE 1949

ASC specializes in the Design and Manufacturing of the following high-performance Equipment:

- ROOF PANEL LINES
- TRIM ROLLFORMER
- CZ PURLIN LINES
- ROLL UP DOOR LINES
- BOTTOM BAR LINES
- SEAMING STATIONS
- WINDING STATIONS
- TRACK LINES
- DECKING LINES
- COIL UPENDER

...and much more!

Upcoming Trade Shows:

Construction  
**Rollforming**  
SEP 16 - 17 Show  
GATLINBURG, TN

**METALCON**  
OCT 7 - 9, ORLANDO, FL

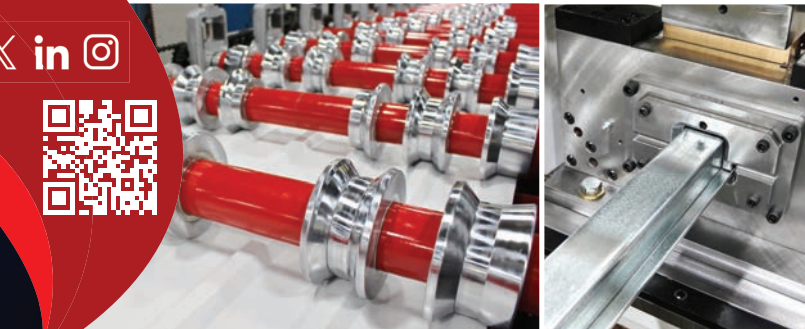
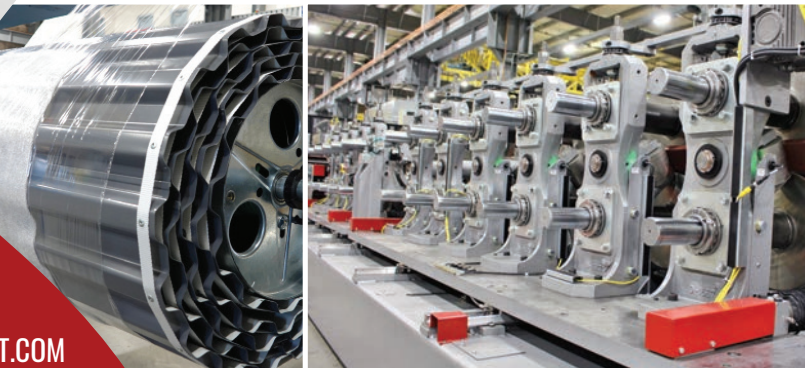


CONTACT US TODAY

 (509) 534-6600

 [WWW.ASCMT.COM](http://WWW.ASCMT.COM)



# Bradbury Group

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 13 WEBSITE: [www.bradburygroup.com](http://www.bradburygroup.com) PHONE: 620-345-6394

Whether you are a company with entry-level production requirements or an established manufacturer, The Bradbury Group designs and builds roll forming and coil processing equipment that will grow your business. Bradbury Group provides quality metal panel and standing seam roll formers, purlin roll formers, trim roll formers, trim folders, recoiling lines, insulated panel lines, coil processing lines, levelers, metal shingle and tile lines, automated production lines, and related equipment for numerous industries.

For companies who want to start manufacturing panels, Bradbury Group entry-level pre- and post-cut roll forming lines produce the highest quality panel in the industry. The Bradbury



B.O.S.S.™ shear panel line has production speeds up to 300 FPM with an accuracy of 1/16" and is a reliable option for established manufacturers with high volume demand.

Purlin line models from The Bradbury Group include the Hayes QC300™, the Hayes FC350™, the Bradbury VTR™+plus, and the Bradbury QTR™ that range from a semi-manual changeover system to a fully automatic changeover system with 8-gauge material capacity, 24" web width capability, auto nesting, and purlin stacking.

For over 65 years, Bradbury has been a trusted industry leader for manufacturers around the world. Contact us to talk about your manufacturing process wants and needs. **RB**

For over 65 years, Bradbury has been a trusted industry leader for manufacturers around the world. Contact us to talk about your manufacturing process wants and needs. **RB**



## THE BRADBURY GROUP



Metal Panel & Standing Seam Roll Formers

Purlin Roll Formers

Trim Folders

Trim Roll Formers

Recoiling Lines

Coil Processing Lines

Insulated Panel Lines

Metal Shingle & Tile Lines

**Equipment that Moves Production Forward.**



**WE BUILD MACHINES. WE SELL SOLUTIONS.**

+1.620.345.6394

[bradbury@bradburygroup.com](mailto:bradbury@bradburygroup.com)

[bradburygroup.com](http://bradburygroup.com)

2026 GOLD KEY WINNER

# Chief Buildings

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 17 WEBSITE: [www.chiefbuildings.com](http://www.chiefbuildings.com) PHONE: 800-845-1767



**W**hen it comes to agricultural operations, durability and efficiency are key. Chief Buildings offers top-tier metal building solutions that stand up to the toughest farm and ranch conditions. Our customizable structures are ideal for equipment storage, livestock housing, and grain handling facilities. Built with high-quality steel and engineered for longevity, Chief Buildings reduce maintenance costs and provide reliable protection year-round. Farmers appreciate

the quick construction timelines and flexibility in design, which allow for future expansion as operations grow. With 60 years of experience and a commitment to American-made excellence, Chief Buildings understands the needs of agricultural producers. Whether you're building a new barn or expanding storage, investing in a Chief Building means investing in a structure that works as hard as you do. Quality, strength, and service — Chief delivers it all. **RB**

**CHIEF**  
BUILDINGS



Custom-engineered agricultural buildings,  
proudly made in the USA for 60 years.



**17x GOLD KEY  
AWARD WINNER**

We sincerely thank Rural Builder readers for selecting Chief Buildings as a Gold Key Award winner for 17 straight years.

800-845-1767  
[CHIEFBUILDINGS.COM](http://CHIEFBUILDINGS.COM)



*Trusted. Tested. True.*®

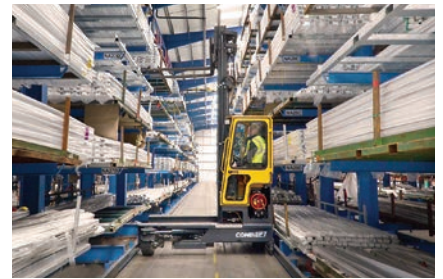
# Combilift

**GOLD KEY AWARDS:** 3    **WEBSITE:** [www.combilift.com](http://www.combilift.com)    **PHONE:** 877-266-2456

**S**ince 1998, Combilift has been helping businesses maximise safety, productivity, and storage capacity through innovative material-handling solutions. The material handling specialist manufactures a wide range of equipment, including multidirectional forklifts, siders, pedestrian stackers, articulated narrow-aisle trucks, container loader/unloader, and straddle carriers, with capacities from 2,200 lbs to 200,000 lbs.

For the building, timber, and construction sectors, Combilift's multidirectional forklifts are particularly valuable. Models in the C-Series and CB range can travel sideways while carrying long loads such as timber packs, trusses, steel, and build-

ing materials. This enables safer handling in confined spaces, eliminates the need for overhead carrying, while allowing businesses to maximise yard and warehouse storage. With a low centre of gravity for enhanced stability, Combilift forklifts help operators move materials safely and efficiently while making better use of available space. **RB**



### Increase Storage Space and Enhance Safety with Combilift



**STORE  
MORE.  
MOVE  
SAFER.**

**COMBILIFT**  
LIFTING INNOVATION



## ENHANCE THE SAFETY, STORAGE AND EFFICIENCY OF YOUR LOGISTICS WITH COMBILIFT

Combilift's range of multidirectional forklifts, pedestrian reach trucks, straddle carriers and container loaders will allow you to maximize the capacity, improve efficiency and enhance the safety of your facility.

### CONTACT US TODAY

To find out how Combilift can help you unlock every inch of your storage space.

# Express Barns

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 4 WEBSITE: [www.expressbarns.com](http://www.expressbarns.com) PHONE: 785-214-4647

**E**xpress Barns is honored to be named a Gold Key of Excellence winner, and we're grateful to the customers who continue to put their trust in our team. We appreciate the relationships we've built with post-frame builders over the years and the customers who took the time to nominate us.

As we continue to grow, Express Barns is expanding service into Oklahoma while continuing to offer ready-to-build engineering for post-frame buildings up to 80 ft. wide and 20 ft. tall. We're also introducing Simpson Decorative Brackets as a new option for builders looking to add a finished detail to their projects.

Thank you to our customers for your continued support. We appreciate the opportunity to serve you. **RB**



## Post-Frame Packages Delivered to Your Job Site

*Quality products. Dependable delivery.  
Responsive service.*



**Ready-to-build engineering up to 80ft. wide and 20ft. tall**




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*Wholesale Accounts*

Let us help make  
*your next project easier.*

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COMPLETE MATERIAL PACKAGES

FINGER-JOINTED COLUMNS

AMERICAN-MADE STEEL

ENGINEERED TRUSSES



# Golden Rule Fasteners

**GOLD KEY AWARDS:** 4    **WEBSITE:** [www.goldenrulefastenerinc.com](http://www.goldenrulefastenerinc.com)    **PHONE:** 334-283-4030

**A**t Golden Rule Fasteners, we have been committed to excellence in every aspect of our business since our beginning in 1991. We work with suppliers in the U.S. and Taiwan to provide the best products available. We develop innovative new designs to move the industry forward, make the job easier, and provide an aesthetically pleasing finished project. We listen to our customers to identify the need for new products or new variations of existing products.

We have over 30,000 square feet stocked full of inventory. Our extensive inventory allows us to ship most orders same day. Thanks to our quick turnaround time on



orders, our customers are able to stock less product in their warehouses, freeing up capital for other areas of their business.

Our focus on service is not only to ship orders same day but to make the total buying experience easy and enjoyable. We receive orders by phone, fax, email,

and text messaging. Our friendly staff are happy to take orders, answer questions, and provide product information. We are honored to receive another Gold Key Award and will continue to work hard to remain one of the top suppliers in the industry. **RB**



## PanelVent™



U.S. Patent #11946263



**Roof vents designed specifically for metal roofing!**

Currently available in Black, Cocoa Brown, Charcoal, Evergreen, Polar White, and Rustic Red. Additional colors are on the way!



## ARCHIE VENTS™

A brand by Golden Rule Fasteners, Inc.

Ph: (334) 283-4030    Fax: (334) 283-4032    Email: [info@goldenrulefastenersinc.com](mailto:info@goldenrulefastenersinc.com)



# Hixwood

**GOLD KEY AWARDS:** 5    **WEBSITE:** [www.hixwood.com](http://www.hixwood.com)    **PHONE:** 715-644-0765

## Hixwood: Built to Keep Your Crew Moving

In the building industry, downtime is lost revenue. Hixwood is more than a supplier; we are your strategic partner in efficiency. We specialize in high-quality metal solutions delivered with a speed that keeps your projects on schedule – and your business growing.

### WHY CONTRACTORS CHOOSE HIXWOOD

**Precision & Speed:** We ensure your order is right the first time and onto the next scheduled delivery truck. Stocking & shipping from 7 warehouses means your coil travels less and gets to you faster!

**Unrivaled Inventory:** With over 50 colors (including textured finishes and HD prints) and a wide range of gauges, we have the

“hard-to-find” items in stock.

**Custom Trim Solutions:** While we carry a deep inventory of stock trims, our modern fabrication facility can produce custom-made trim fast.

**Versatility for Every Job:** In addition to providing full-width coil, slit coil, or flat sheets to meet your exact specs, Hixwood manufactures several popular profiles in house – plus versatile siding profiles available to roll on site.

At Hixwood, **QUALITY YOU CAN COUNT ON** means: reliable solutions, superior products, and world-class support, for results you and your customers can both be proud of. **RB**

**7 Warehouse Locations**  
for quick delivery!



### QUALITY YOU CAN COUNT ON!

Your projects aren't one-size-fits-all. Your steel supplier shouldn't be either. Build exactly to spec with Hixwood's unmatched selection.

**UNRIVALED OPTIONS.  
UNCOMPROMISING QUALITY.**

**COILS // RECOILS // FLAT STOCK**

FULL LINE OF ACCESSORIES & BUILDING COMPONENTS

**Multiple Paint Systems // GAL, GLUM, and ZAM® Substrates**

**50+ Colors, Textures, & Prints**



715-644-0765 // [HIXWOOD.COM](http://HIXWOOD.COM) // STANLEY, WI

Give us a call or visit us online:

# Leland Industries Inc.

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 24 WEBSITE: [www.lelandindustries.com](http://www.lelandindustries.com) PHONE: 800-263-3393

Leland Industries domestically manufactures a complete line of fasteners for the metal roofing and cladding industry. We produce self-tapping and self-drilling sealing fasteners up to 12" in #10, #12, and #14 diameters.

Leland Industries' fasteners are 100% North American made in carbon or stainless steel. Our exclusive JS1000 plating is an industry leader in corrosion protection, and our Powder Coating is available in 100s of colors to match any panel (plus, we offer a warranty to match the life of the panel).

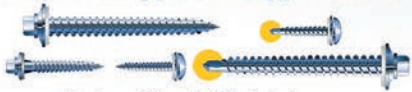
Leland has the ability to manufacture fasteners to meet the demands and needs of our customers, from standards to specials. We understand that product availability is paramount for our partners and we have been bringing the nut and bolt fastener business back home since 1984. Please visit our website for more information.

RB



## Your Domestic Fastener Manufacturer

### Master Grippers® Grippers MDP®



For the post frame building industry

### Master Drillers®



Self-drills for metal-to-metal applications

### Master Tappers®



A, AB, B & SMS Screws

### Powder Coating



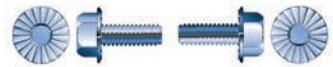
We match your painted steel supplier's warranty.



### A325 Structural Bolts

Manufactured up to 7/8" diameter, in lengths from 1-1/4" - 6"  
Available in JS1000, NZF3000 and Hot Dipped Galvanized

### Serrated Flange, Hex, Carriage & Lag Bolts



### Tank Bolts



### Culvert, Guardrail Rail & Pole Line Fasteners



### We Make Nuts

Carbon Steel & 304-316 Stainless Steel



**CANADIAN  
THREADALL  
LIMITED**

Canadian Threadall is Canada's largest customized threading, bending and concrete forming hardware and accessories manufacturer.

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Joliette • Maplewood • Shawnee • Tulsa



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Celebrating over 40 years of Fastener Manufacturing

**1.800.263.3393**  
[www.lelandindustries.com](http://www.lelandindustries.com)

2026 GOLD KEY WINNER

# Levi's Building Components

**GOLD KEY AWARDS:** 17    **WEBSITE:** [www.levisbuildingcomponents.com](http://www.levisbuildingcomponents.com)    **PHONE:** 877-897-7020

Levi's Building Components® originated as a small operation in Bird-in-Hand, Pennsylvania. Its founder, Levi Fisher, pioneered inventive solutions for prevalent challenges in the metal roofing industry. Among his innovations were the Snow Defender® snow guards and the ReGrip™ screw, engineered to supplant unreliable nails.

Levi's ingenuity extended to time-saving and cost-effective techniques for custom painting and color matching roofing fasteners. As the business flourished, Levi's son, Steve Fisher, assumed ownership and CEO responsibilities, steering the company into an era of expansion.

Now guided by Steve's direction, Levi's Building Components® underwent swift expansion, broadening its product portfolio and establishing a state-of-the-art facility in 2021. Presently, Levi's Building Components® products adorn residences and structures across the nation.



Suppliers nationwide rely on the company's unwavering commitment to product excellence, exceptional customer service, and prompt delivery. With an extensive and ever-expanding product lineup, Levi's Building Components® stands as the go-to destination for dependable metal roofing and post frame accessories. **RB**



**RIGHT PRODUCTS. RIGHT PEOPLE. RIGHT NOW.**

**PAINT. PACK. SHIP.  
SAME DAY.**

**OUR GOAL IS SAME-DAY SHIPPING:**

**PAINTED** ORDERS PLACED BY **10 AM** SHIP SAME DAY

**IN-STOCK** ORDERS PLACED BY **3 PM** SHIP SAME DAY



CALL **877-838-0393** TO EXPERIENCE OUR SERVICE



2026 GOLD KEY WINNER

# Malco Tools

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 4 WEBSITE: [www.malcotools.com](http://www.malcotools.com) PHONE: 320-274-7387

## Purpose-built Tools for Metal Roofing from Malco.

**F**or over 75 years, Malco Tools has been proudly serving trade professionals with high-quality, purpose-built tools designed to perform where it matters most—the jobsite. From fabrication to installation, Malco continues to develop innovative solutions that help contractors work with greater confidence. Leading the latest generation of metal roofing tools is the TurboShear® Rotary Panel Cutter (TSPC1), the newest addition to Malco's trusted TurboShear® lineup. Engineered specifically for cutting ribbed roofing and wall panels, the TSPC1 features dual opposing cutting wheels that self-advance through material, delivering clean, precise cuts with minimal effort. With a 22-gauge cutting capacity, the TSPC1 is built to tackle de-

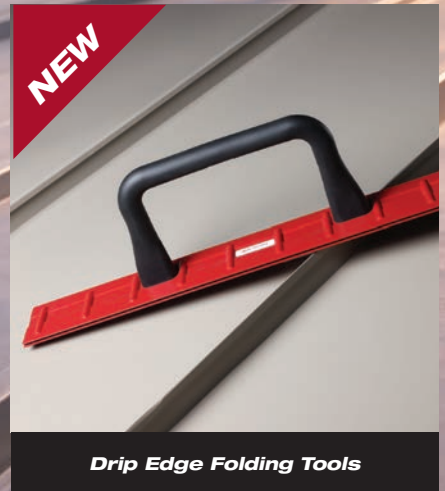
manding jobs while helping contractors improve productivity and reduce fatigue. Beyond cutting, Malco offers a complete lineup of tools to streamline every stage of standing-seam metal roofing installation. Malco's industry-leading power-assisted seamers are built to help contractors achieve professional results with unmatched speed and consistency. As the fastest power-assisted seamers on the market, they quickly and efficiently seam 1" or 1.5" single- or double-mechanical lock standing seam panels in a single operation. Simply attach the seamer to a cordless drill and let the tool do the work, reducing labor time while delivering uniform, high-quality seams across the entire roof system. Completing the workflow is Malco's refreshed line of Drip

Edge Folding Tools. Available in multiple sizes, these tools make it easy to create clean, accurate bends along the drip edge of standing seam metal roofing panels. Designed for durability and ease of use, they help contractors achieve professional-looking finishes while saving valuable time on the roof. From cutting and bending to seaming and finishing, Malco Tools delivers a complete system of solutions built specifically for metal roofing professionals. When precision, efficiency, and jobsite performance matter, contractors continue to trust Malco to provide the tools they need to get the job done right the first time. **RB**

**Cut. Bend. Finish.**  
**Built for the trades. Built by Malco.**

## CUT. BEND. FINISH.

Purpose-built tools for metal roofing.



**Malco**  
part of THE MALCO GROUP



Find More Online  
[malcotools.com](http://malcotools.com)

# Metal Rollforming Systems

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 9 WEBSITE: [www.mrsrollform.com](http://www.mrsrollform.com) PHONE: 888-284-6794 FAX: 509-467-5631

**M**etal Rollforming Systems (MRS) is excited and honored to receive another Gold Key of Excellence award. MRS has been producing rollformers since 1993 and strives to create the best rollformer for our customers. Metal Rollforming Systems aims to be your one-stop shop for all your rollforming needs, allowing you to save time and money when purchasing a rollformer. Along with our complete rollformer panel lines, we specialize in custom trim profiles along with all the needed accessories to complete your metal panel needs.

Our latest rollformer, the Soffit Line, was developed in close collaboration with

customers to ensure broad market fit. It utilizes industry-standard 20.125" coil stock, allowing use of existing inventory and reducing upfront costs. Key features include a concealed fastener "S lock," standard rib height, and a top rib flat for easy fastening. Added nail slots and weep holes support horizontal applications. With speeds over 150 FPM, customers can produce more in less time.

We pride ourselves on our technical support for our customers. Our customers' success is our success. Our business is based largely on repeat customers and referrals, and we are honored that our customers speak so highly of us. We live under the philosophy that, "Service is the

lifeblood of our organization. Everything flows from it and is nourished by it. Customer service is not a department; it's an attitude."

We strive to create the best experience for our customers and to give them confidence they've purchased the right rollformer from the right company.

Metal Rollforming Systems has grown from a single man building rollformers to a 100-person crew. Our complete in-house design and production allows our team to keep precision control over each aspect of the manufacturing process. This assures us that each rollformer is done right and will be reliable for our customers for many years to come. **RB**



## Panel Rollformers

*Titan, Signature & Patriot*

## Trim Rollformers

*Single & Multi Profiles*

## Slitting Lines

*Stand Alone, Cut to Length, & Slit to Recoil*

## Decoilers, Upenders, Shears

*and much more!*

**Industry Leading Quality  
Unrivaled Service**



A 30 YEAR HERITAGE



888.284.6794 | [www.mrsrollform.com](http://www.mrsrollform.com)  
info@mrsrollform.com  
4511 N Freya St. | Spokane, WA 99217



# MFM Building Products

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 12 WEBSITE: [www.mfmbp.com](http://www.mfmbp.com) PHONE: 800-882-7663



## Versatile Self-Adhering Waterproofing Membrane

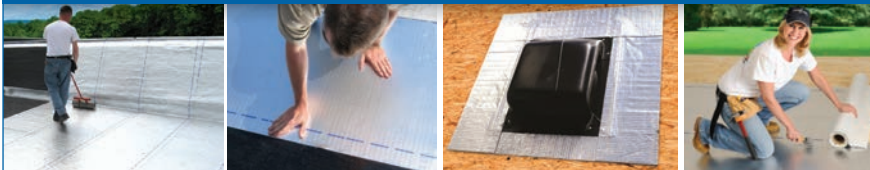
**P**eel & Seal® is a 45-mil, self-adhering membrane designed for low slope roofing and general flashing applications. The membrane adheres directly to the roof deck and provides a long-lasting, durable, maintenance-free roofing surface.

Peel & Seal® is so versatile that it can also be used for flashing around exterior protrusions, gutter repair and any hard to waterproof area. The membrane is self-sealing and can be left exposed to the elements indefinitely.

Free product samples, technical literature, and more are available at [www.mfmbp.com](http://www.mfmbp.com). **RB**

**UV-resistant. Single-step.  
Direct-to-deck application.**

Peel & Seal® provides a complete waterproofing barrier.



**Self-adhering and easy-to-use low-slope and flashing membrane.**

Peel & Seal® is the original, self-stick roll roofing specifically designed for low-slope roofing applications, as well as a durable flashing membrane for exterior penetrations. Designed to be a complete waterproofing barrier to the elements, count on Peel & Seal® to provide a long lasting, durable, and maintenance-free surface.

- Aggressively adheres direct to the surface
- Designed to be left exposed to the elements
- Ideal for hundreds of waterproofing applications
- 10-year warranty

*Count on Peel & Seal® for ease of installation and increased savings!*



Visit [mfmbp.com](http://mfmbp.com) or call 800.882.7663 today.



# Palram Americas

**GOLD KEY AWARDS:** 23    **WEBSITE:** [www.palram.com/us](http://www.palram.com/us)    **PHONE:** 800-999-9459

**W**ith over 60 years of thermoplastic experience, Palram is a leading manufacturer of Polycarbonate and PVC sheets. Combining our rich history, rigorous manufacturing standards, and commitment to superior service, we've become trusted partners to contractors servicing the post frame, pole barn, barn-dominium, and agricultural outdoor storage buildings and their wet/wash down areas.

Palram is a leader in daylighting and interior wall cladding solutions. Palram branded SUNSKY corrugated polycarbonate panels for skylights and sidelights

have led the market in optimizing natural daylight and cutting electrical costs for years.

To eliminate the need for drywall, spackle, and paint, Palram's DURACLAD® Multiwall Interlocking PVC panels are ideal for interior walls and ceilings. DURACLAD can be fastened directly to studs, and feature tongue-and-groove edges for fast installation and a smooth and hygienic finish able to withstand aggressive chemicals and cleaning. NEW Designer Series is available in a white shiplap design with the look and feel of real wood! Custom designs are also available.

Palclad Pro PVC wall and ceiling panels

are an attractive, easy-to-install, and cost-effective alternative to FRP. Panels are fiberglass-free, have a 5-year warranty, and will not fiberbloom. These durable, low maintenance panels are Class A fire-rated, 100% recyclable, Clean Air Gold Certified and USDA/FDA compliant.

For a highly effective and chemical resistant liner panel, Palram's AG-TUF corrugated PVC panels are maintenance-free and ideal for agricultural interior cladding.

Palram Americas is proud to receive another Gold Key of Excellence award and pledges to continue to provide the highest standards of products and service. **RB**



**PALRAM PRODUCTS**

For more than 60 years, Palram's commitment to quality has led to products that are durable and versatile with warranties that ensure your satisfaction!

**SUNSKY®**

SUNSKY is the leading corrugated polycarbonate product for skylights, sidelights, complete roofs, and cladding. SUNSKY has 20 times greater impact resistance than FRP, plus a lower yellowing index and the highest light transmission.

**DURACLAD®**

DURACLAD Multiwall Interlocking PVC interior wall & ceiling panels have a tongue-and-groove design allowing for quick installation. Chemical and water resistant. Available in bright white and NEW white shiplap Designer Series.

**PALCLAD® PRO**

These solid PVC wall cladding panels are a cost-effective alternative to FRP. PALCLAD PRO contains no fiberglass, has a 5-year warranty, and is Class A fire-rated. Also, chemical and water resistant.



To learn more, contact your local distributor or call 800-999-9459. Or visit us at: [palram.com/us](http://palram.com/us)

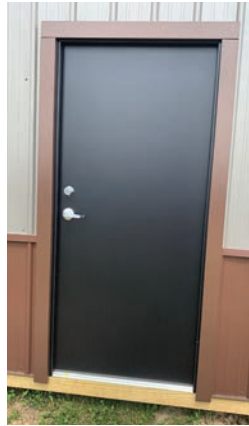


# Plyco Corporation

**GOLD KEY AWARDS:** 44    **WEBSITE:** [www.plyco.com](http://www.plyco.com)    **PHONE:** 800-558-5895    **FAX:** 800-257-5926

## Plyco Corporation, Performance Building Solutions

**M**aking a world of difference for over 70 years, Plyco Corporation thrives on servicing the post frame construction industry and helping customers build and grow their business. Plyco believes in a high level of personal contact and individualized service with its outside territory sales force along with its experienced customer service group. The key to Plyco's success is a complete product line built on highly engineered products with a high-quality orientation — typically in-house and 3rd party tested to ensure customers and end users are fully satisfied with the quality, installation, and long-term durability of the



item(s) used.

Plyco products are proudly manufactured in one of two U.S. facilities in Indiana and Wisconsin. This allows the manufacturing and engineering team to control product quality; the kind of quality that includes staying ahead of the curve on code changes and making sure products continue to meet or exceed code standards — including Florida Building Code registered door systems, and AAMA window performance standards. It's about

the best products, the best customer service and the best relationships with its customers. **RB**

# Designer

## SERIES



**PREMIUM HIGH PERFORMANCE AND ENERGY EFFICIENT DOORS**

**.24** Series 92  
Total Opening  
U-Value - NFRC 100

**Plyco's complete line of products surpasses building codes and customer expectations through stringent testing and quality standards.**

**NEW!**  
**Fiberglass Door Program**

- **92FG**
  - Smooth & Wood Grain Panel
  - Thermal Break Frame System in 3 Frame Sizes
- **60FG**
  - Smooth Panel Options in White or Black
  - 4 9/16" Steel Frame
- **11 Panel Options:**
  - Smooth, Wood Grain and Direct Set Glass



800.558.5895

plyco.com





# S-5!

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 13 WEBSITE: [www.s-5.com](http://www.s-5.com) PHONE: 888-825-3432

## ColorGard® 2.0 by S-5!

If you've ever seen a rooftop avalanche, you know it can be catastrophic. When snow melts and slides off a metal roof, it can cause property damage, personal injury and even fatalities—creating serious liability risks. That's where an engineered snow guard system becomes essential.

Enter ColorGard® 2.0, S-5's next-generation snow guard solution for exposed-fastened R-panel, corrugated and standing seam metal roofs. Trusted by industry professionals, ColorGard 2.0 is engineered to reduce avalanche risk without compromising roof integrity

or aesthetics. Designed with contractor feedback, it installs quickly with no preassembly and less field cutting, using an internal splice for lay-and-play efficiency.

On exposed-fastened R-panel and corrugated roofs, S-5! brackets rely on factory-applied butyl for a watertight seal, with performance that meets ASTM E2140, the industry's toughest water-intrusion test.

On standing seam roofs, ColorGard 2.0 pairs with S-5's zero-penetration clamps. Our patented round-point setscrews create a mechanical interlock without damaging the roof, preserving manufacturers' warranties.

Backed by extensive load testing, ColorGard 2.0 delivers the safety and serviceability you need while complementing the look of your roof with a clean, color-matched appearance designed to last the life of the roof. It is engineered and tested on a site-specific basis and includes an industry-leading lifetime product warranty.

S-5! is the only manufacturer to have achieved IAPMO EC 029-2018 for testing and certifying snow retention devices.




Ready to take your snow guard project to the next level? Learn more at [www.s-5.com/products/colorgard](http://www.s-5.com/products/colorgard). **RB**



## THE *Right* SNOW RETENTION FOR R-PANEL ROOFS



# ColorGard® 2.0

-  Fast, simple installation
-  Built tough for lasting performance
-  Helps manage sliding snow and ice



  
**SEE**  
*how it's done*

# Smartbuild Systems LLC

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 1 WEBSITE: [www.smartbuildsystems.com](http://www.smartbuildsystems.com) PHONE: 303-443-8033

A builder friend of mine put it plainly: every new job started the same way — his crew standing around while he walked the site, answered questions, and sorted out the basics before anyone could get moving. His guys were solid, but a few were still learning. On a one- to three-day post-frame project, that lost morning isn't just frustrating. It can be the difference between finishing on time or rolling into another day.

Hearing him say it took me straight back to the early 2000s. We were a young crew, full of energy, ready to get after it the second we jumped out of the truck. But

progress was slow until everyone could start to visualize what we were trying to build. The foreman did a good job — but one guy can only do so much at once. Half the confusion on day one could have been avoided if we'd simply known the layout before we got there.

The fix is straightforward: have the crew look at the drawing set before they leave the shop. Post layout, elevations, door locations, building orientation — ten minutes of review and they show up already knowing what they're walking into. Less waiting. Less confusion. More done.

Being recognized by Rural Builder readers as a top industry supplier re-

flects what we hear from builders every day — and it starts with giving crews the tools to understand the plan before they ever reach the jobsite. If you already have SmartBuild PF in your workflow, you have everything you need. The detailed layouts, elevations, material lists, and 3D visualizations it automatically generates aren't just for design and estimating — they're exactly what your crew needs to hit the ground running. Clear plans mean faster starts. That's how you start strong on day one. **RB**

*Royden Wagler Director of Sales and Marketing — SmartBuild Systems*

## CLEAR PLANS. FASTER STARTS

Smartbuild automatically generates the drawings and outputs your crew needs to understand the plan before they reach the job site.

— EVERY OUTPUT. EVERY TIME. —



### DETAILED LAYOUTS

Post locations, dimensions and building orientations



### ELEVATIONS & VIEWS

See every angle and detail before you build.



### MATERIAL LISTS

Accurate quantities so you have what you need, when you need it.



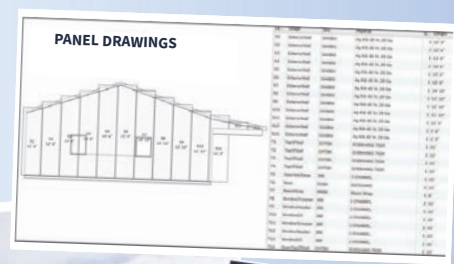
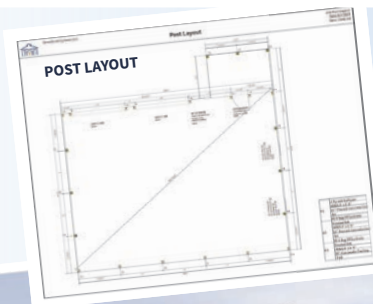
### 3D VISUALIZATION

Help your crew visualize the project with confidence.

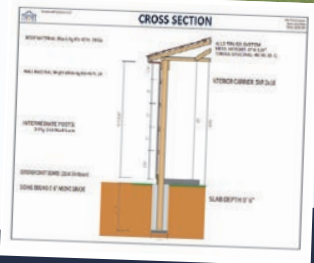


### DRAWING SETS

Complete drawing sets ready for the job site.



ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT
4x6x14' Pressure Treated Posts	1	EA
2x6x16' Ceiling Joists	1	EA
2x4x8' Wall Girts	1	EA
2x6x16' Roof Purlins	1	EA
Trusses	1	EA
Roofing (Metal)	2,400	SQ FT
Siding (Metal)	2,000	SQ FT
Overhead Door 10'x10'	2	EA
Entry Door 3'0"	2	EA



## SMARTBUILD PF

DESIGN - MATERIALS - PRICING - CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS



START STRONG ON DAY ONE.

LEARN MORE SCAN HERE!



# Trac-Rite Door

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 9 WEBSITE: [www.tracrite.com](http://www.tracrite.com) PHONE: 800-448-8979

## Trac-Rite Door: Nine-Time Gold Key Winner, Built for the Work That Never Lets Up

**R**ural builders know the difference between a product that looks good on paper and one that proves itself on the job site. In agricultural, commercial, and rural construction, doors are not an afterthought. They protect equipment, support daily operations, and help projects withstand weather, wear, and hard use.

That is why Trac-Rite Door's recognition as a **nine-time Gold Key Award winner** matters. This award reflects more than brand awareness. It represents the confidence of builders and contractors who continue to choose Trac-Rite when performance counts.

For more than 45 years, Trac-Rite has manufactured steel roll-up doors for demanding environments. From machinery sheds and farm shops to storage buildings, ag facilities, and commercial spaces, its doors are built to handle changing temperatures, high winds, repeated use, and tight schedules.

Trac-Rite also delivers a complete line of roll-up doors, hallway systems, and partitions, giving builders a streamlined source for

quality products and support. Instead of managing multiple suppliers, customers can rely on one proven manufacturer for consistency and service.

With manufacturing and distribution centers in Wisconsin and Alabama, Trac-Rite serves customers throughout the United States, Canada, and Latin America. As the oldest roll-up door manufacturer in North America, the company combines experience with the capacity to meet customer needs.

But longevity alone does not earn repeat recognition. Trust does.

Being named a Gold Key Award winner for the ninth time demonstrates that Trac-Rite continues to earn that trust with the people installing, specifying, and relying on its products every day.

Trac-Rite Door has spent decades building products that work as hard as the people who use them. Nine Gold Key wins later, the standard remains the same: durable doors, dependable service, and solutions built for rural construction. **RB**

**BUILT ON QUALITY.  
CHOSEN 9 TIMES.**

**PROUD TO CELEBRATE OUR  
9TH GOLD KEY WIN!**

Thank you to our dealers and customers for trusting **Trac-Rite**—where performance, reliability and service open the door to excellence.



**SUPERIOR  
QUALITY**



**TRUSTED  
PARTNERSHIPS**



**RELIABLE  
PERFORMANCE**



**REAL  
SUPPORT**



**Gold Key  
of Excellence  
Award Winner**



**Trac-Rite**  
A TBS COMPANY

800-448-8979

[tracrite.com](http://tracrite.com) • [tr@tracrite.com](mailto:tr@tracrite.com)



# Triangle Fastener Corp.

GOLD KEY AWARDS: 20 WEBSITE: [www.trianglefastener.com](http://www.trianglefastener.com) PHONE: 800-486-1832

**T**riangle Fastener Corporation (TFC) has specialized in supplying fasteners, sealants, tools, and accessories for the construction industry since 1977. With 32 locations, we provide job site support and expert guidance to help customers select the right fastening solutions for any application.

Customers can choose from a wide array of commercial-grade products, including the high-performance TFC BRANDS™ line, engineered for ease of installation and reduced in-place costs. Additionally,

TFC is proud to be a 20-time consecutive Gold Key Award winner, reflecting its long-standing commitment to quality and service excellence.

TFC BRANDS FOR METAL ROOFING, SIDING, AND TRIM, include:

- **PANEL-TITE®** *Metal-to-Wood Screws*: #9, #10, #12, and #14 diameters in lengths up to 3”.
- **CONCEALOR®** *Pancake Head Screws*: Designed for SSR clip attachment, available in lengths up to 9”.
- **BLAZER®** *Drill Screws*: Avail-

able with patented VRT® Back-Out Resistant Thread Technology for attaching panels to steel, in lengths up to 10”.

- **APS500®** *Advanced Polymer Sealant*: Widely specified and available in over 24 standard colors.
- **TFC BUrYL™**: Offered in tubes and tape for exceptional performance in panel laps.
- **KALIDA-KOTE™** *Proprietary color-matching system for Painted Screws, Rivets, and Closures*: One of the largest selections of color-matched fastening solutions for metal panels. **RB**

## WE HEARD YOU More Grip. Faster Drive. Proven Protection.



The proven PANEL-TITE® you trust.  
#10 Now featuring HiLo Thread Technology.



**FASTER**  
Type 17 point reduces wood splitting and speeds installation.

**STRONGER**  
HiLo threads deliver exceptional pullout resistance.

**KALIDA-KOTE™**  
provides endless paint color options.

**PROTECTED**  
TRI-SEAL®\* coating (from head-to-tip) and EPDM washer provide long-term weatherability.



\*TRI-SEAL® 1000 hr coating

[TriangleFastener.com](http://TriangleFastener.com)



2026 GOLD KEY WINNER

# Wick Buildings

**GOLD KEY AWARDS:** 42

**WEBSITE:** [www.wickbuildings.com](http://www.wickbuildings.com)

**PHONE:** 855-438-9425

Your Vision. Our Building Expertise.

**W**ith over 75,000 buildings sold, Wick Buildings has become one of the nation's leading providers of post-frame construction. From advanced animal confinement systems and equestrian facilities to on-farm storage, suburban structures, and fully engineered commercial and light industrial buildings — we bring your vision to life.

### Design That Works for You.

Wick Buildings offers exceptional design flexibility inside and out. With clear-span widths up to 100 feet, we can easily incorporate interior buildouts, wings, and lean-tos for expanded space and functionality.

### Energy Efficient by Design.

Our buildings are built with energy savings in mind. Reflective "cool color" steel options can reduce roof temperatures by up to 100°F. Combined with versatile ceiling insulation and insulated flush wall systems, your space stays comfortable and draft-free — ready for interior finishing.

### Custom-Built for Your Needs.

Wick partners with independent builders to tailor every project to the buyer's needs and local code requirements. Our Licensed Professional Engineers provide stamped plans to streamline approvals and ensure structural integrity.

### Built with Quality from the Ground Up.

Our buildings feature high-tensile 80,000 PSI steel, G-90 zinc coating for corrosion protection, and durable Sherwin-Williams finishes — for long-lasting strength and beauty.

### Smart Tools & Expert Support.

Use our cutting-edge 3D design and pricing tools to get your project started right. Plus, our experienced support team helps eliminate time-wasting tasks so you can focus on building more and selling more.

**Partner with Wick — Sell More. Earn More. RB**



Wick Buildings



## Quality, Value & Service

Your customer expects the best from you.

You should expect the same from your building partner.

*Join our team!*



**WICKBUILDINGS.COM 800-356-9682**

BY RURAL BUILDER STAFF

# Gold Key Service Award Honoree: AJ'z Steel-Toed Footprints

Building America's Future Through Legacy, Leadership, and the Skilled Trades

The rural construction industry has long understood a simple truth: communities are built by people willing to work with their hands, solve problems, and show up when they're needed. Those values are at the heart of AJ'z Steel-Toed Footprints, an organization that honors AJ Zdroik's life while investing in the future of America's skilled workforce.

Founded in memory of AJ Zdroik, AJ'z Steel-Toed Footprints advocates for skilled trades education, workplace safety, and the recognition of mechanically gifted young people whose talents often go unnoticed. Through scholarships, community outreach, and a commitment to celebrating blue-collar careers, the organization carries forward the spirit of service recognized by Rural Builder's Gold Key Service Award.



## A LIFE ROOTED IN HARD WORK

AJ Zdroik grew up on his family's farm near Rosholt, Wisconsin, where hard work wasn't simply expected—it was a way of life. As the oldest of four children, he quickly emerged as a quiet leader among siblings and friends. Whether completing farm chores, repairing machinery, building structures, or helping neighbors, AJ earned a reputation for dependability, integrity, and an uncanny mechanical aptitude.

Those who knew him describe a young man who loved God, family, and the land. He excelled in agricultural education and welding, earning credentials in both disciplines shortly after graduating from high school. In that same spirit, AJ's passion for building, fabrication,



and improving equipment reflected the qualities valued throughout the post-frame and rural construction industries: craftsmanship, ingenuity, and pride in a job done right.

He also developed and managed his own herd of beef cattle, demonstrating an entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to agriculture that continues to influence his family's operation today.

## TRAGEDY BECOMES PURPOSE

In 2016, AJ's life was tragically cut short at the age of 23 while working on

a railroad bridge reconstruction project. The loss devastated his family, friends, and community, and became the turning point that defined his lasting legacy.

Rather than allowing grief to define AJ's legacy, those closest to him chose a different path, creating AJ's Steel-Toed Footprints.

They created AJ'z Steel-Toed Footprints to ensure that AJ's values—and those of America's skilled trades workforce—continue to inspire future generations.

"The name had to represent the toughness, resilience, humility, and

dignity of the blue-collar worker,” explains founder Trish Zdroik. “We knew there were other young people out there with the same mechanical intelligence, work ethic, and family values that AJ embodied. We wanted to help them realize their potential and celebrate the important role they play in building America.”

## RECOGNIZING TALENT THAT MATTERS

One of the organization’s signature initiatives is the Trades Career Jumpstart Award, presented annually to graduating high school seniors pursuing careers in the skilled trades.

The scholarship program focuses on qualities that are often difficult to measure on a report card but essential for long-term success in construction, manufacturing, agriculture, and transportation industries. Applicants are evaluated on demonstrated work ethic, dedication to developing trade skills, leadership, character, communication, and commitment to workplace safety.

The response from local communities has been overwhelmingly positive.

During senior awards ceremonies, recipients often receive some of the loudest applause of the evening—a reflection of growing recognition that skilled trades careers are vital to the nation’s economic future.

To date, AJ’s Steel-Toed Footprints has awarded scholarships to 30 graduating seniors. In 2025, the organization reached a significant milestone by funding eight \$1,000 Trades Career Jumpstart Awards, a goal tied to the symbolic significance of the number eight in AJ’s life and his passion for bull riding.

Award funds may be used for:

- Trade school tuition
- Apprenticeship travel expenses
- Specialized tools and equipment
- Safety gear and workplace essentials
- Other skills-development opportunities

For many recipients, the scholarship

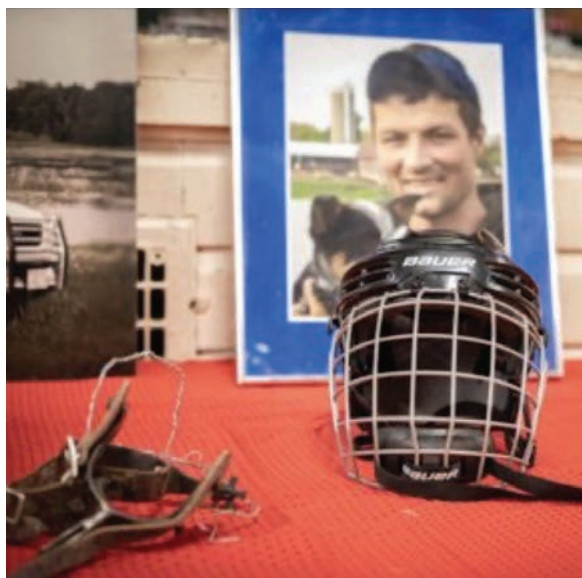
## LINKS

- AJ’s Steel-Toed Footprints <https://www.steeltoedfootprints.com/>
- Thorogiid Boots <https://thorogoodusa.com/ajz-steel-toed-footprints/>

provides not only financial support but also validation that their career path matters.

## ADDRESSING THE SKILLED LABOR CHALLENGE

The construction industry continues to face workforce shortages, particularly in rural markets where finding qualified



labor can be difficult. Organizations like AJ’s Steel-Toed Footprints help address that challenge by elevating skilled trades careers and encouraging young people to pursue opportunities that strengthen America’s infrastructure and economic growth.

By celebrating mechanical intelligence and hands-on problem-solving, the organization is helping reshape perceptions about career success and highlighting pathways that do not necessarily require a traditional four-year degree.

The mission resonates strongly within the rural building community, where skilled welders, equipment operators, carpenters, concrete specialists, and construction professionals remain indispensable.

## LOOKING AHEAD

AJ’s Steel-Toed Footprints continues to expand its impact through community engagement, public speaking, scholarship fundraising, and advocacy for workplace safety.

The organization’s long-term goals include growing its endowment to permanently fund eight annual scholarships, increasing awareness of mechanical intelligence as a valuable educational asset, promoting careers in skilled trades, and encouraging a culture in which every worker returns home safely at the end of the day.

In an era when attracting the next generation of skilled workers is one of the industry’s greatest challenges, AJ’s Steel-Toed Footprints serves as a reminder that investing in people is every bit as important as investing in projects.

Through tragedy, AJ’s family and supporters have created something enduring: a legacy that honors craftsmanship, values hard work, promotes safety, and inspires young

people to leave their own steel-toed footprints on America’s future—and to carry that legacy forward.

## ABOUT AJ’S STEEL-TOED FOOTPRINTS

AJ’s Steel-Toed Footprints is a Wisconsin-based nonprofit organization dedicated to recognizing and supporting young people pursuing careers in the skilled trades. Through scholarships, advocacy, and community outreach, the organization promotes mechanical intelligence, workplace safety, craftsmanship, and respect for America’s blue-collar workforce.

To learn more, visit AJ’s Steel-Toed Footprints or support its mission through the AJ Zdroik Steel-Toed Memorial Fund.

RB

BY RURAL BUILDER STAFF

Sure, it looks like a nice post-frame office structure, but this is

# Green Building?

You'd better believe it.

## DECEMBER 2004 FLASHBACK

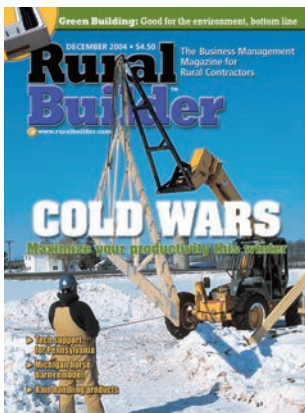
In 2004, green building was viewed as a costly niche focused mainly on recycled materials and solar panels.

Today, green building is mainstream. Energy efficiency, smart technology, healthier indoor environments, and long-term durability are now standard expectations in many people.

The biggest shift is cultural: builders once had to sell the idea of sustainability. Now many clients ask for it from the start.

Rising energy costs, severe weather, and consumer demand have transformed green building from an environmental statement into a practical business strategy.

The conversation has shifted from “Why build green?” to “Why wouldn't you?”



Crews guide a cupola into place atop the Organic Valley farming cooperative headquarters in La Farge, Wis. The building looks simple enough, but it is in fact as “green,” or environmentally friendly and energy conscious, a post-frame building as exists in the region. MICHAEL SCHNEIDER PHOTO

**G**reen building. Say it out loud, and any number of images immediately come to mind. Solar panels. Big city architects with trendy glasses. Earthy types who play hacky sack. Funky European designs. Ralph Nader yard signs. Straw bale and newspaper-based building products.

Can you picture it in your head? Good. Now take every preconceived notion you might have had about green building and throw it out the window. It doesn't have to be that way.

Green building, the current term for building with a focus on environmentally

conscious and energy-efficient design, may be stigmatized as a fringe segment of the construction industry, a pursuit for high-minded or tree hugging parties with deep pockets. But that could not be further from the truth — even in rural areas. Green building products and techniques are rapidly gaining popularity with a wide range of builders, subcontractors, designers, and building purchasers, who are proving that buildings do not have to break the bank to respect the environment.

For a perfect example, one needs to look no further than a post-frame building in a town of 800 in the Upper Midwest.



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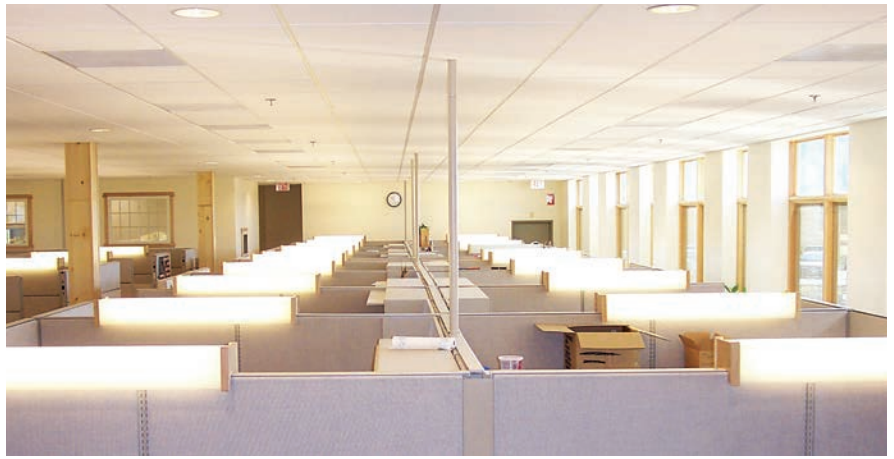
**BIG PICTURE**

Several years ago, the Organic Valley farming cooperative was looking to build a new headquarters in La Farge, Wis., for its blossoming organization. Organic Valley was growing by more than 30 employees per year, and hoped to provide a facility that was conducive to employee wellness, while also respecting the environment around it.

Organic contacted Morton builder Dan Curran, who had worked with a previous customer researching the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program, as well as Energy Star qualified products. “They said they wanted to build as green a project as possible, and they wanted it to be as functional as possible for their people,” Curran says.

The team immediately sought assistance from Wisconsin Focus on Energy, a partnership of organizations that help businesses improve energy efficiency and reduce the need for fossil fuels. WFOE helped put together a two-day, nine-building tour of structures that incorporated various green building techniques.

From the tour, both Curran and Organic Valley representatives came away struck by the powerful use of daylighting. The use of sunlight to illuminate building interiors is a key aspect of sustainable design, offsetting the use of artificial lighting and its associated energy consumption

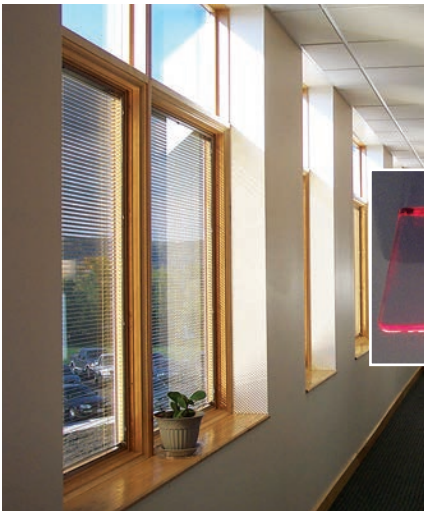


*Daylighting is a key element in keeping the project as energy efficient as possible. Using 3x6 windows with varying levels of glazing (opposite page) and built-in blinds allows optimal levels of sunlight to enter the building. This limits the amount of energy used for ceiling and desk lighting.* MICHAEL SCHNEIDER PHOTOS

and cooling loads, which typically accounts for 30 to 40 percent of a building’s total energy use. Various studies also have shown a range of productivity and performance benefits associated with daylight-

ing, including increased speed, improved mental function, reduced absenteeism, and increased sales.

To maximize daylighting, the Organic Valley headquarters face north and south,



*LED exit signs from Cooper Lighting are energy efficient, operating on 1.5 watts each. Ultra-Touch insulation from Bonded Logic is made from recycled materials with no harmful chemicals, and has an impressive R-value.*

MICHAEL SCHNEIDER PHOTOS

oriented 15 degrees off true north. Solar gains were also controlled by 129 windows from Pella, each 3x6 and glazed from 0 to 80 percent, depending on position. All windows on the south side have built-in blinds, as well.

The post-frame structure itself has a number of features that could be considered green. Standard steel roofing and siding gets major credit for its high recycled content. Steel cladding can gain even more green building credit by using paints that incorporate reflective pigments, although such coatings are not yet widely used on through-fastened panels predominant in rural building.

The standard Southern Yellow Pine frame helped matters, as the species is not considered endangered or exotic. None of the lumber was treated, so there are no concerns associated with arsenic or cop-

per leaching into the soil.

Several other materials familiar to cutting edge rural builders were used to make the building's shell as energy efficient as possible. The foundation for the ground floor used insulating concrete forms from Eco-Block, which provided a continuous insulation barrier. A spectacular timber framed gambrel entryway, which used no metal fasteners, was sheathed with structural insulated panels from Heartland EPS.

During the project, crews from Morton and other subcontracting firms recycled all the construction waste from the project, separating it into five large containers.

#### FINISHING TOUCHES

With the big picture taken care of, the project team set out in search of interior finishing products that would aid the

building's energy efficiency while creating a pleasant work environment. Curran says it was not hard to find these products, once suppliers were given the proper criteria. "It took them awhile to find, but they all found them," he says. "Probably the hardest thing I had to find was an architectural engineer that knew how to design the glass for daylighting. We found the one person, to my knowledge, in the Midwest who knew anything about it, and that's why we went with Pella windows."

Among the other subtle, yet effective, green touches:

- ▶ Ultra-Touch insulation from Bonded Logic uses recycled blue jean material.
- ▶ Drywall from National Gypsum uses recycled paper on the front and back.
- ▶ For interior paint, Eco-Spec from Benjamin Moore has low levels of odor and volatile organic compounds.

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▶ Wood trim is locally obtained from sustainable Ash.

▶ The carpeting, Headlines by Patcraft, is 100 percent recyclable and low-VOC. Carpet glue is also low-VOC.

▶ Mars Clima Plus ceiling tile from USG is made from 72 percent recycled materials and has high light reflectance to support daylighting.

▶ Ceiling lighting, minimized to just navigational lighting over aisles, is highly efficient, using a 42-watt amalgam compact fluorescent bulb to create 3,200 lumens per fixture.

▶ Task lighting fixtures use one 13-watt fluorescent bulb.

▶ The cooling tower by Evapco uses glycol filled water and is freon-free.

▶ Urinals in men's restrooms are water-free.

▶ The center core of each floor is the same, consolidating mechanicals to keep infrastructure together.

And that's just on the inside. Organic Valley offers preferred "eco-parking" spaces for employees who carpool, ride bicycles or motorcycles, or drive cars that get more than 30 miles per gallon or use alternative fuel (downstairs showers are available for sweaty bicyclists). A mile-long nature trail, athletic field, and employee gardens help work workers relax while preserving the surrounding land.

## A GREEN FUTURE

The end result: a 49,210-square foot building built for \$4.5 million. Cost per square foot: \$91, including furnishings. Not a bad deal, considering the building's many features that will control energy costs well into the future. The Organic Valley headquarters serves as a prime example that building with environmental responsibility in mind does not necessarily need to cost more. Curran says that perception is a major hurdle rural builders must overcome.

"Why isn't there more green building in our industry?" he says, repeating a question. "Two things. First, a lack of knowledge about products — (builders) don't

## It's easy being green

Looking to take the green building lead in your area? If so, it pays to investigate the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program run by the U.S. Green Building Council. The USGBC established LEED in 2000 to provide a national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. LEED standards are currently available or under development for new commercial construction and major renovation projects, existing building operations, commercial interiors projects, core and shell projects, homes, and neighborhood development.

LEED provides a framework for assessing building performance and meeting sustainability goals. It emphasizes state of the art strategies for sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.

There are four levels of LEED certification: Platinum (52-plus points out of a possible 69), Gold (39-51 points), Silver (33-38 points), and Certified (26-32 points). Few buildings reach Platinum status, and reaching Gold is challenging, but Silver and Certified levels are very attainable.

John Mark Wood of Atlanta-based Holder Construction says that depending on project situations, many LEED points can be achieved for little or no cost, and almost every project scores some amount of LEED points by virtue of the base design. Wood disputes the fallacy that LEED certification comes with excessive cost. A recent study of 35 LEED projects indicates that LEED costs on average 2 percent more.

Wood breaks LEED points down into three categories: Type 1, which carry little or no cost

premium, Type 2, which carry a cost premium but provide a short-term return on investment, and Type 3, which carry a cost premium with a long-term return on investment or no return.

Type 1 points cover such site dependent categories as site selection, public transportation access, and local/regional material sourcing, as well as non-site dependent categories like use of recycled content, waste management, low emitting materials, and innovation in design. Type 2 points include water efficient landscaping, optimizing energy performance, increased ventilation, and indoor chemical and pollutant control. Type 3 points include green power and daylighting/views.

Dan Curran's Organic Valley project seems to be a shoe-in to achieve some level of LEED certification. Curran's goal is to land between 45 and 50 points, reaching Gold status; Organic's facilities project coordinator Michael Schneider hopes to hit Silver.

LEED certification comes with a cost, running into the thousands of dollars depending on the size of the project. Beyond the base goal of providing an energy efficient, employee friendly building, what is the appeal of LEED status for a building owner? "An ego thing, maybe," says Schneider. "We wanted the healthiest building we could for our employees, with as little impact on the environment as possible, and I think we've accomplished that. Having it certified will maybe encourage more people to come and tour our building. It will put us on the map in the green building world."

For more information on LEED, visit [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org) or call Curran at (608) 553-2680.

know how to source it. Second, there's a misconception out there that it's going to cost them more to build, and most rural builders are afraid of price more than anything else. We proved all those things wrong."

People who tour the building continue to have their preconceptions proven wrong on a daily basis. Michael Schneider, Organic Valley's facilities project coordinator, says the organization guides at least one tour per day, leading interested builders, farmers, architects, and community members around its jewel on top of a hill.

"Are we surprised that we were able to accomplish our goals with a post-frame

building?" Schneider says. "No, we knew all along this was going to fit our needs, so we weren't surprised. Are other people surprised? The answer would most certainly be yes.

"Most people can't believe we built an office building out of what is essentially a pole barn. Most people can't believe we did it for just over \$90 per square foot. Most people can't believe how nice it is in here, how happy our people are."

And why wouldn't they be? At its heart, Schneider says, green building is a throwback to a simpler time, before new technologies emerged to "improve" building materials and techniques.

“There are a lot of parallels between organic food and green building,” Schneider says. “People view them as movements, a new wacky way of doing things, practiced by a small group that might be considered fringe or not normal. Organic farming is the way that it used to be, prior to 50 years ago, when people farmed land in a sustainable way and didn’t have chemicals to use as a crutch.

“The same thing goes for green building. When people built houses in the early part of the 20th century, they didn’t have all these nylon carpets and paints that are full of ammonia and formaldehyde. They used wool, or for resilient flooring they used linoleum. These were the materials that were available. These are the materials now considered alternative or green or different.

“I think it’s the new synthetic materials that are odd. We’ve really gone away from what nature has to offer, the way the world ought to be, and as a consequence we have sick building syndrome, air quality issues. Fifty years ago none of it existed.”

A perfect summation: green building is both the way of the past *and* the way of the future. As energy costs continue to rise, as employee wellness becomes a critical role for companies, and as environmental concerns continue to gain importance both so-



A spectacular gambrel entryway is sheathed with structural insulated panels. SCOTT TAPPA PHOTOS

cially and politically, savvy rural builders will look to incorporate green building products and techniques into their businesses.

“It’s a good concept, and it’s really picking up heads of steam,” says Curran. “Being against the environment is like being against motherhood and apple pie.” **RB**

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BY RANDY CHAFFEE

# Hybrid Mentoring

Why the Best Builders Are Learning Both Ways

**W**e've always talked about mentoring as if it flows one way. Older to younger. Experienced with the new. Veteran to rookie. And in this industry, that mindset has deep roots.

Rural building, post-frame, metal roofing — this is a business built on experience. Built on years in the field. Built on lessons learned the hard way. A lot of what we know didn't come from a book or a course. It came from job sites, long days, and figuring things out when no one was there to show us.

So naturally, mentoring has always meant passing that knowledge down. And there's nothing wrong with that. In fact, it's necessary.

But here's something I've come to realize: if that's the only direction mentoring flows, we're leaving value on the table.

**“If mentoring only flows one way, you're leaving value on the table.”**

Truth is, some people don't want to hear that. Because learning from someone younger requires something a lot of us don't like to admit — we don't have it all figured out.

## THE INDUSTRY HAS CHANGED, WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT

Let's be honest about something. The way we built our businesses 20, 30, even 40 years ago — it still matters. Relationships still matter. Reputation still matters. Showing up, doing what you say, and doing it right still matters. That part hasn't changed.

But how we get work, how we communicate, how we stay visible, and how customers find us — that has changed. And it's not slowing down.

Today's customer is different. They're researching online. They're watching videos. They're comparing options before they ever pick up the phone. They expect faster answers, clearer communication, and in many cases, a digital presence before they even trust you enough to call. That's not theory. That's reality.

## THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: AI

There's another piece to this we can't ignore: AI. Some people are excited about it. Some people are skeptical. Some are hoping



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it just goes away. It's not going anywhere.

Ignoring it doesn't protect your business. It just puts you a step behind someone who's already figuring it out. Whether we like it or not, AI is already shaping how business gets done — from how customers research to how content is created to how communication happens.

Here's where a lot of people get it wrong: the goal isn't to become an AI expert overnight. The goal is to be open enough to figure out where it fits. That might mean asking someone younger on your team how they're using it. It might mean experimenting with it yourself, even if it feels uncomfortable.

This is exactly where hybrid mentoring shows up in real time. You've got experience, judgment, and real-world context. They've got tools, curiosity, and a willingness to try things faster. Put those together, and AI stops being something to resist — and starts becoming something you can use.

## WHAT THE NEXT GENERATION BRINGS TO THE TABLE

I've had conversations with younger builders, salespeople, and team members over the last few years that made me stop and think. Not because they had more experience — but because they had a different perspective.

They're comfortable with tools that many seasoned professionals still hesitate to use: social media, video, digital communication, CRM systems, automation. Things that feel like extra work to some of us feel natural to them. They don't see these tools as optional. They see them as part of the job.

And if you're paying attention, there's a lot to learn there — not just about the tools themselves, but about how the market is shifting.

## THIS ISN'T ABOUT REPLACING EXPERIENCE

Let's be clear. This is not about throwing out experience. It's not about abandoning what built your business. And it's definitely not about handing the keys over and hoping the next generation figures it out. Experience still wins.

Knowing how to run a job, manage a crew, handle a customer, solve problems in the field — that comes from reps. It comes from time. It comes from making mistakes and learning from them. You can't shortcut that.

But what you can do is add to it. That's where hybrid mentoring comes in.

## WHAT HYBRID MENTORING REALLY LOOKS LIKE

Hybrid mentoring is simple in concept: it flows both ways. You're still mentoring. You're still teaching. You're still passing down everything you've learned over decades. But at the same time, you're open to learning from the people coming up behind you.

You bring the relationships — they bring new ways to stay

## Hybrid Mentoring on the Jobsite

*You don't need a formal program to make this work. It happens in the day-to-day:*

- Ask your younger team members how they're using tools like video, social media, or even AI
- Let them show you—not just tell you
- Share your reasoning behind decisions, not just the decisions themselves
- Be open to a different way of getting to the same result
- Don't dismiss something just because it's new

*It's not about changing who you are.*

*It's about staying sharp in a business that doesn't stand still*

connected. You bring the instincts — they bring new tools to act on those instincts faster. You bring the experience — they bring a fresh set of eyes on how the market is evolving.

Put those together, and something powerful happens. You don't lose what made you successful. You build on it.

**“You don't lose what made you successful. You build on it.”**

## A REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

I've seen builders who built strong businesses the traditional way — referrals, reputation, word of mouth. Solid, dependable, respected in their markets. Then someone younger on their team starts pushing for more visibility.

“Let's post some of our projects. Let's do a quick video

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walkthrough. Let's show people what we actually do." At first, there's resistance: "We've never needed that. That's not how we do things. We're busy enough."

And maybe that's true — for now. But the builders who lean in, even just a little, start to see something. More inquiries. Better leads. Customers who already understand what they do before the first conversation. Not because they changed who they are — but because they allowed someone else's perspective to expand how they show up.

**THE RISK OF STANDING STILL**

Here's the part that doesn't get talked about enough: the risk isn't in learning something new. The risk is in assuming what got you here will keep getting you there forever.

I've been around this industry long enough to see good businesses stall out. Not because they weren't good at what they did, but because they stopped adapting. They stayed comfortable.

**"Comfort has ended more good businesses than competition ever did."**

They stayed in their lane. And over time, the market moved around them. That doesn't happen overnight — it happens slowly. Until one day you realize you're not as visible as you used to be. Not as top of mind. Not as connected to how customers are making decisions today. That's a tough spot to be in. And it's avoidable.

**WHAT THIS MEANS FOR RURAL BUILDERS**

For those of you in rural markets, this matters even more. Relationships still

drive a lot of your business. Community still matters. Reputation carries weight.

But visibility is changing there, too. People in rural areas are online. They're searching. They're watching. They're comparing. And in many cases, the builder who shows up consistently online has an edge — even if the quality of work is the same.

That doesn't mean you need to become a full-time content creator. It means you need to be open to new ways of staying visible. And chances are, someone younger in your world already understands how to do that.

**THE BUILDERS WHO WIN GOING FORWARD**

The builders who are going to win in the next 5 to 10 years aren't the ones who abandon what's worked. And they're not the ones who chase every new trend either. They're the ones who blend both.

They hold on to the fundamentals. They stay grounded in relationships and reputation. And at the same time, they stay open to new ways of doing things. That's the hybrid approach. That's where the real growth is.

**A SIMPLE GUT CHECK**

Who's making you better right now? And are you open to where that's coming from? **RB**

*Randy Chaffee brings four-plus decades of experience to the post-frame and metal roofing industries. Author of #1 Amazon Best Seller "Asphalt and Algorithms," he is a board member for the Buckeye Frame Builders Association and the National Frame Builders Association. Find his podcast at [facebook.com/BuildingWins](https://facebook.com/BuildingWins) or call (814) 906-0001 at 1 p.m. Eastern on Mondays to listen in.*



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# Home on the Range and in the Shop, the Studio, and the Garage

Barndominiums have evolved from a regional novelty to a national trend. This article outlines best practices for their construction and examines why industry leaders anticipate continued growth.

**B**arndominiums originated on a Connecticut horse farm and have become a significant residential segment nationwide. They now attract buyers in ranchlands, suburbs, and coastal areas, reflecting a notable shift in American housing.

Barndominiums appeal to buyers seeking faster construction, flexible interiors, and low-maintenance exteriors. They integrate living and working spaces, meeting the needs of homeowners who value adaptability.

To understand the drivers of barndominium growth and the qualities of high-quality builds, Rural Builder interviewed industry professionals. Their insights reflect a rapidly evolving market.

## WHAT THE BARNDOMINIUM ACTUALLY IS

The word itself was coined around 1989 by Connecticut real estate developer Karl Nilsen, who used it to describe planned

residential communities built around horse boarding facilities—living quarters perched above or alongside working stables. The portmanteau of “barn” and “condominium” was precise for its moment: these were not converted agricultural buildings but purpose-designed mixed-use developments for equestrian-minded buyers who wanted their horses and their home address under one roof.

The concept expanded in the 1990s and early 2000s, moving beyond equestrian origins. By the mid-2000s, ‘barndominium’ had come to describe homes that combined living space with a workshop, garage, or multi-use bay, appealing to a wider audience. Texas became the trend’s primary hub due to available land and a tradition of versatile, cost-effective housing.

Barndominiums gained mainstream attention in 2016 when Chip and Joanna Gaines featured a conversion on HGTV’s “Fixer Upper.” The episode introduced the concept to a broad audience and generated significant interest. Today, barndominiums are

rarely associated with horses and have become a mainstream residential category that challenges traditional housing norms.

Modern barndominiums have little in common with their equestrian origins aside from the name. They are now purpose-built, fully engineered residences, often mixed-use, constructed with post-frame or steel-frame methods that eliminate interior load-bearing walls. This enables open, column-free interiors, flexible floor plans, low-maintenance metal exteriors, high ceilings, and integrated living and workspaces. These buildings serve as homes, workshops, storage, and entertainment spaces under one roof.

Barndominium construction costs typically range from \$65 to \$400 per square foot, with most projects averaging \$100–\$200 per square foot. Finish level significantly affects cost: basic builds are \$65–\$160, mid-range \$160–\$250, and luxury projects \$250–\$400+ per square foot. Build timelines are shorter than in traditional construction, with custom barndominiums often completed in six to nine months. Steel or metal exteriors also reduce long-term maintenance, eliminating the need for painting, siding, or rot remediation.

*“Barndominiums offer consumers tremendous flexibility and options. The key advantage is that post-frame construction minimizes the need for interior load-bearing walls—that’s what creates the barn-like expansiveness people are drawn to.”*

— **Wick Buildings**

## THE CASE FOR POST-FRAME CONSTRUCTION

Post-frame construction—the structural method underlying most barndominiums—has deep roots in agricultural building. The basic principle relies on highly engineered, prefabricated, laminated columns (posts) set into the ground or anchored to a concrete pad, with trusses and secondary framing spanning the structure above. The load path runs directly from the roof to the column, bypassing the need for the network of interior bearing walls that defines conventional stick-frame construction.

For residential use, this method creates open, column-free interiors that buyers value. Structures up to 40 feet wide can be



## BUILDERS & MANUFACTURERS FEATURED IN THIS ARTICLE

- Gable Steel | Pre-engineered steel barndominiums and “Steel dominium” systems  
gablesteel.com • Florida
- Morton Buildings | Post-frame homes, shophominiums, and agricultural structures since 1903  
mortonbuildings.com • Morton, IL
- JJ Builders (JJ King) | Custom post-frame barndominiums and residential buildings jjbuilders.com  
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• Oxford, PA • Serving DE, MD, PA
- Stoney Ridge Farmer | Pole Barn v/s Steel Building your dream shop or barndominium explained [https://youtu.be/Jpgm5zVB4p8?si=7Qem67iGQM\\_-AsRx](https://youtu.be/Jpgm5zVB4p8?si=7Qem67iGQM_-AsRx)

built without interior support columns, allowing floor plans to be based on preference rather than structural requirements. This design flexibility has fueled nationwide interest.

Post-frame construction offers an often-overlooked insulation efficiency advantage. While traditional stick-frame walls space structural members 16 or 24 inches apart, post-frame walls can space columns up to eight feet apart, allowing insulation to be installed in wide, continuous runs with fewer thermal bridges. This creates a more consistent thermal envelope and can lower heating and cooling costs over the building’s lifespan. Some builders have formalized this advantage into branded insulation packages that combine framing depth, insulation type, and vapor management to meet or exceed residential energy code requirements.

Post-frame construction also simplifies future expansion. Because columns carry the structural load, additions such as new bays or wings can be engineered without removing load-bearing walls, making expansion more cost-effective and less disruptive.

Specialized builders note that post-frame barndominiums typically require only a level site. Unlike stick-frame construction, which needs a continuous foundation, post-frame buildings can be built on a simple concrete slab, reducing preparation costs and timelines.

## DESIGN: FROM OPEN CANVAS TO FINISHED HOME

### Structural Freedom and Floor Plan Flexibility

The clear-span interior of a post-frame or steel-frame barndominium is both its most celebrated feature and its most daunting design challenge. Buyers who arrive at the process imagining a blank warehouse-sized canvas often discover that

the decisions required to turn that canvas into a functional, comfortable home are more numerous and consequential than they anticipated.

Custom barndominium design offers maximum flexibility but also greater complexity. Buyers must finalize all structural and mechanical details before construction. Experienced builders can guide this process, but careful planning is essential.

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*“We take the reins on layout planning, structural engineering, permitting, and physical construction. This allows our clients to focus on personalizing their home rather than juggling sub-contractors or correcting miscommunications.”*

— JJ Builders

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### Exterior Aesthetics: Beyond the Metal Box

Barndominium exteriors have evolved from functional, industrial designs to more sophisticated aesthetics, incorporating elements of agriculture, modern farmhouse, and contemporary design.

Covered porches are now common on premium barndominiums, serving both functional and aesthetic purposes. Deep front porches indicate residential use, soften commercial

facades, and provide outdoor living space. Features such as hipped gable entries, cupolas, and dormers add architectural interest to otherwise utilitarian rooflines.

Wainscot, whether cultured stone, Versetta Stone, brick, or contrasting steel panel, has become a standard design element on higher-end builds. It protects the lower portion of metal siding from dents and damage common in rural settings and breaks up the exterior elevation, creating a more residential appearance. The visual warmth provided by stone or masonry wainscot is difficult to achieve otherwise.

Color preferences have shifted from white and gray to deeper tones such as matte black, charcoal, dark bronze, and deep green, often paired with lighter trim for a distinctive look.

### Interior Finishes: Raising the Standard

Expectations for barndominium interiors have increased. Modern builds now feature finishes comparable to custom stick-frame homes while retaining the structural benefits of post-frame or steel construction.

Polished or stamped concrete floors are now a signature element, valued for durability, easy cleaning, and compatibility with radiant heat systems. Some owners have concrete stamped to resemble wide-plank wood flooring, capturing the warmth of wood without the maintenance concerns in spaces used for heavy equipment, animals, or vehicles.

Timber elements such as exposed ridge beams, heavy post-and-beam accents, and reclaimed-wood ceilings are widely used to soften the industrial character of steel and metal construction, creating a warmer, more residential feel. These features pair well with modern metal details, such as industrial-style light fixtures, cable railings, steel stair stringers, and exposed hardware, that highlight the building’s material heritage.

High-end barndominiums often include hardwood cabinetry, tile showers, stone fireplaces, custom metal railings, and luxury appliances. Dramatic vaulted ceilings and refined finishes define the premium aesthetic.

### THE STEEL-FRAME APPROACH: ENGINEERING FOR EXTREMES

While post-frame construction is prevalent, a parallel approach uses pre-engineered steel buildings, historically found in warehouses and agricultural storage. This method introduces a different structural philosophy to residential applications.

Post-frame construction uses laminated wood columns as the primary structural element, while red-iron steel frame systems use welded steel moment frames engineered to precise load specifications. This distinction is most important in areas with extreme wind, heavy snowfall, seismic activity, or hurricane conditions, where conventional wood-frame construction is increasingly risky.

Pre-engineered steel buildings come with stamped engineering

## Key Takeaways

To understand the factors behind the category’s growth and what distinguishes a well-built barndominium, Rural Builder interviewed builders, manufacturers, and product specialists. Their perspectives reveal a market undergoing real transformation.

Here are the key takeaways and best practices shared by industry experts:

- Invest time in upfront planning, including thorough site preparation and clear prioritization of must-have features before design begins.
- Prioritize structural flexibility by choosing post-frame or steel-frame building methods, which allow for customizable open floor plans and easier future expansions.
- Work closely with experienced builders who can help navigate code compliance, permitting, and specialized mechanical needs unique to these structures.
- Plan for high-quality, well-specified garage doors and oversize openings early, as they are a defining feature both technically and aesthetically.
- Incorporate energy efficiency from the outset by selecting insulation strategies and building envelopes that meet or exceed residential code.
- Leverage virtual design and visualization tools to prevent miscommunications and speed decision-making during the design phase.
- Be realistic about schedules: while shells go up quickly, finishing a barndo to residential standards takes time and attention to detail.
- Following these best practices helps ensure barndominium projects deliver the performance and long-term value buyers expect.

plans specifying wind speed ratings, snow load capacity, and seismic resistance for the building site. This provides buyers and lenders with structural accountability not always found in conventional residential construction. For homeowners who have seen stick-frame houses suffer storm damage, this documentation offers real reassurance.

Steel-frame residential builds often feature covered entries, overhangs, porches, lean-tos, solar panel provisions, finished drywall, drop ceilings, dormers, and varied rooflines. Buyers seek not only durability but also thoughtfully designed homes with industrial-grade materials.

*“When I first saw the family’s plans, I knew this would be something special. The thoughtful details—from the welcoming front porch to the breezeway connecting the house to the shop—made this project a favorite of mine. Watching this home come together, from concrete pouring to steel framing, has been an incredible journey.”*

— Gable Steel

Engineered steel construction differs from standard metal roofing in key ways. Some builders place roof fasteners on the high rib of steel panels, away from water flow, rather than in flat runoff areas. This reduces leak risk and extends the roof’s service life.

## CUSTOM BUILDS VS. KIT PACKAGES: A CANDID ASSESSMENT

Barndominium buyers must choose between a pre-packaged kit and a fully custom build. The best choice depends on budget, timeline, project complexity, and construction experience.

Kit packages—pre-engineered building systems that ship the structural components, metal panels, and roofing to the build site—offer a defined cost for the shell and can accelerate the initial framing phase. For buyers with construction experience or established subcontractor relationships, a kit can provide a cost-effective starting

point. The shell typically arrives with stamped engineering drawings that meet the structural documentation requirements of most building departments.

With kit packages, buyers must manage all aspects beyond the shell, including foundation, utilities, and finishes. Without general contracting experience, this coordination can be challenging and increases the risk of miscommunication.

Custom builds, by contrast, bring a single contractor to manage every phase of the project from initial design through final punch list. The cost per square foot is typically higher, but the buyer is purchasing not just materials and labor but also the builder’s expertise, established subcontractor relationships, knowledge of permitting, and accountability for the finished product. For many buyers, particularly those building a primary

residence rather than a secondary structure, the custom path represents the better long-term value.

*“Don’t confuse shell completion with move-in readiness. The interior fit-out—everything from insulation to cabinetry—still takes time. Our role is to anticipate delays and keep the project moving forward with minimal disruption.”*

— JJ Builders

## THE DETAIL THAT DEFINES THE BUILDING

Many barndominium owners consider the garage door the defining feature of their home. Unlike conventional houses, the overhead door in barndominiums is a key architectural focal point.

The barndominium door market presents technical and aesthetic challenges

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that go well beyond standard residential work. Oversized openings—any door wider than 10 feet or taller than 8 feet—are the rule rather than the exception. Common configurations include 12' x 12' bays for agricultural equipment, 10' x 14' openings for RV storage, and 14' x 14' or larger spans for commercial-scale shops. These sizes require engineered structural headers, commercial-grade torsion spring systems rated for 20,000 or more cycles, and openers—often jackshaft-mounted beside the door rather than overhead—designed for the weight and daily-use demands of a working space.

Beyond the shop and garage bay, the barndominium market has driven demand for a product category that barely existed a decade ago: residential-grade glass garage doors designed for installation in conditioned living spaces. Used as moveable walls in great rooms, dining areas, and sunrooms, these doors blur the line between interior and exterior living, flooding spaces with natural light and enabling the seamless indoor-outdoor connection that defines the barndo lifestyle at its most aspirational.

The technical requirements of this application are unforgiving. Standard commercial glass garage doors cannot simply be dropped into a conditioned residential wall opening. Building codes in most jurisdictions require these assemblies to meet residential R-value and U-value standards—thresholds for

thermal resistance and heat loss that most commercial doors do not meet. Purpose-built residential glass door systems require higher-performance glazing, engineered thermal breaks, and precise specification to the climate zone of the building site. The result costs more than a commercial equivalent, but performs appropriately for a space that is heated and cooled year-round.

Oversized door openings require careful planning. Retrofitting them into a finished structure is costly and risky, so headers, column spacing, and foundations must be engineered from the start. Builders advise finalizing all door specifications before construction begins.

Door style is a major factor in establishing a barndominium's character. Carriage-house doors add traditional warmth, while full-vision glass-and-aluminum doors create a contemporary industrial look. Flush steel doors in dark finishes provide a bold, cohesive exterior.

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*"A garage door in a barndominium is more than just security—it's a statement. The right door ties the whole exterior together and gives the building its personality."*

**— All American Overhead Door**

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Smart home integration is standard in premium barndominiums. Modern garage door openers offer remote access, automation, and security, meeting buyers' expectations for convenience and

connectivity.

## FINANCING: THE FINAL FRONTIER

Financing remains a challenge for the barndominium market. The hybrid nature of these structures has led to confusion among lenders, appraisers, and underwriters, who often lack comparable sales data and familiarity with the product.


The most reliable financing pathways currently available to barndominium buyers fall into three categories. USDA single-close construction-to-permanent loans are the strongest option for buyers building on land in eligible rural areas: a single closing covers land acquisition, construction costs, inspection fees, and even landscaping, with no down payment required for qualified borrowers. Farm Credit lenders—a nationwide network of customer-owned financial institutions that serve rural landowners and agricultural producers—are the second-most-reliable source, with a long track record of financing non-traditional rural residential construction. Local portfolio lenders, community banks, and credit unions that hold their own mortgages rather than selling into the secondary market represent the third path, offering more underwriting flexibility than national lenders in exchange for potentially shorter initial terms.

Buyers report that describing their project as a "custom home" rather than a "barndominium" can help secure approval from national lenders, reflecting underwriter unfamiliarity rather than a real property distinction.

Financing options are improving as the market matures. More comparable sales are helping appraisers and lenders accurately value barndominiums, making conventional mortgages more accessible.


## What the Market Wants in 2026 and Beyond

Across the builders and product providers who serve the barndominium market, several converging trends define





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the category's direction in the near term.

Storm resilience is now a national priority. As severe weather becomes more common, the engineered integrity of post-frame and steel construction has become increasingly important. Many buyers now prioritize durability after seeing traditional homes damaged by storms.

Solar readiness is now a standard design consideration. Standing-seam metal roofs, common in barndominiums, are well-suited for solar panels. Builders who plan photovoltaic layouts early are well-positioned as energy costs and sustainability influence buying decisions.

Multi-generational living has emerged as a significant driver of larger barndominium footprints. The ability to build a structure that accommodates two households—whether an aging parent's suite, an adult child's apartment, or a fully independent secondary

dwelling connected by a breezeway—within a single post-frame envelope is a capability that conventional residential construction delivers only at high additional cost.

Demand for home-based business and hobby spaces is growing. As remote work increases, buyers are investing in barndominiums that support professional-grade workspaces—such as workshops, studios, and small manufacturing areas—uses that are often impractical in traditional homes.

Virtual planning tools are now standard in the builder-client relationship. Visualization software reduces miscommunication and shortens the design phase. Builders using these tools report higher client satisfaction and fewer costly changes.

### Building the New American Dream

Barndominiums are now a mature housing category, supported by a strong supply chain, experienced builders, and a diverse national buyer base.

Barndominium buyers recognize that traditional homes often do not meet modern living needs. Barndominiums provide a faster, more affordable, and more adaptable alternative with lower long-term maintenance costs, better suited to today's diverse lifestyles.

For the builders, manufacturers, and product specialists who have built their businesses on post-frame and steel construction, the barndominium market represents a validation of what they have known for decades: that the structural principles developed for agricultural and commercial buildings—clear-span efficiency, steel durability, engineered load paths—translate powerfully to residential construction when paired with genuine design attention and a real understanding of how clients want to live.

Barndominiums are now an established housing segment. The industry must continue advancing in design, financing, code compliance, and quality to meet evolving buyer expectations. Current trends show strong progress. **RB**

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BY LINDA SCHMID

# Building the Barndo Market

Elite Build Company Found a Niche.

**S**ean Jones had worked in the barndominium building industry in various positions for years when it occurred to him that something was missing. He considered the real estate business; there is a process for homebuyers. They work with a lender who helps them find out what they can reasonably afford, then they contact a realtor who helps them find what they are looking for and figure out the path to home ownership. However, if someone is starting out to build a barndominium, there isn't really a process to follow.

Jones decided he wanted to fill that gap and help people who wanted to have a barndominium built, becoming a "concierge" who would help people through the whole process from finding land all the way to ownership. He moved from manufacturing to the construction side and started his own company.

Building wasn't new to him; as a youth he had built pole barns. "I knew I'd made millions of dollars for others, so why not go into business for myself?" Jones said.

## BUILDING UP THE COMPANY

Jones left a lucrative job and enthusiastically started building his company. Then, he was put to the test. COVID 19 hurt all business, but it was especially brutal to people who had just

started out. The market was fairly stagnant. Happily Jones got a few jobs mostly based on referrals from people who knew him, and he had a great marketing strategy. The company hung on, and then in year two things began to pick up.

## MARKETING STRATEGY

The marketing strategy, at first, was to try everything. They had a well-designed website to provide leads and his marketing person invested in advertising, SEO, LinkedIn, and more. Eventually they found that the most successful marketing was photographs of their builds on social media, especially Instagram and Facebook, with links to the website.

"What's interesting," Jones said, "is at first we had a heavy emphasis on marketing, then the sheer amount of referrals meant the marketing had to diminish."

## CUSTOMERS AND CREWS

While Jones started the company because of what he saw in the residential market, his biggest customers initially were his biggest suppliers. They had him building red iron commercial buildings.

"These supplier/customers gave me the ability to swim like a big fish from early on," Jones said.

His main suppliers are Burrows Post Frame Supply and Taylor Building Systems.

Early on Jones employed a handful of people. Now he has a pretty consistent complement of 24 employees. They do ground work prep, concrete, steel framing, steel roofs, cladding, and more.

## BUILDING IN OKLAHOMA

Elite Build Company (EBC) is headquartered in Tulsa and completes projects across Oklahoma and adjacent states.

The area does not have seasonal frost; the soil rarely freezes, and if it does it's short-lived. Once they dig through the top layer, they are good to go. This allows them to build year-round.

Lots of rain and muck in spring and fall can cause challenges and delays as well as the occasional tornado passing through. Another challenge is the deep, thick rock, native to much of Oklahoma, driving the cost of ground prep upward.



IMAGE COURTESY OF ELITE BUILD COMPANY



IMAGE COURTESY OF ELITE BUILD COMPANY

## CHALLENGES

One of the challenges of ownership is managing people.

Jones said the people on your team can make a huge difference. He doesn't like micromanagement; he feels that if you are doing that one of two things is going on: your leadership style needs adjustment or you have employees who don't fit the job well.

"I work for my employees," he said, "making sure they know what is expected and they have what they need to do it. Then I step aside and let them do their job.

"Surround yourself with problem solvers," Jones advised. "If an employee is struggling, give them feedback and the chance to turn it around, but if they can't then the sooner you cut ties with them, the better. It may feel unpleasant, but you have to put your company first."

Another challenge can be the accounting side of the business. Presumably, you didn't start a construction business because you love accounting and tax preparation, so you will need help.

"Find an accountant who loves tax code," Jones said. "It can be a life changer. They may find loopholes that allow you to keep more money in the local economy, or spend money on a piece of equipment rather than sending a fat check to Uncle Sam. It's better if the accountant is in-house," he added. "The more functions you can bring in-house, the more you can control culture and mindset, and streamline efficiency. You are not at the mercy of someone else's schedule and personnel."

## FROM SUCCESS TO SUPER-SIZING THE FUTURE

Jones said stubbornness is his super power; it's what kept him moving forward through challenges. He knew he had succeeded once he stopped questioning whether he could do it or not.

His wife's support also helped, and there came a day when she said, "Look around. You've done it! You built a full-blown successful company."

It was an amazing feeling, Jones said.

Then the focus became how to scale it. The company began adding products and services as ROI drivers, bringing them in-house. He did red-iron and added steel frame, post-frame, prep work, then concrete.

## SUCCESS ISN'T JUST ABOUT MONEY

While making money is important, Jones believes there are other things that are just as important.

"I want a life first, then satisfying work," he said. "I want time with my kids, I want to be at their functions, and I want to know their friends' names. I want to have a church life, and I want to have time to date my wife," Jones said.

The idea of family first isn't just for management, it applies to every person on the team. If they have a function to attend, they let him know and they go.

## ADVICE FOR ENTREPRENEURS

The hardest part of entrepreneurship is taking the leap Jones said, but there are things you can do to make it easier.

First do your due diligence. Check out the market, check out the competition, check out anyone you are thinking of partnering with. Next create a business plan and map out where you are going and how. Then once you feel confident that you have your plan, financing, and help possibly including a mentor or two in place, mentally burn your bridges. It's sink or swim.

If you experience failure, that's just an opportunity to pinpoint what went wrong and improve it. However, if you quit, then you have lost.

## ADVICE FOR OWNERS

Accountability is important. Jones said he is accountable to his employees as they are to him.

"They are encouraged to give feedback," he said. "There is not time for egos. If the team are not 'yes-men' and feel comfortable saying no and explaining why, that reflects good leadership"

Lead by example Jones said, and never stop learning and growing. Improve your skills; work on improved communication and any other skills that could use some sharpening. For example, compare quotes given to customers at the beginning of jobs to reality, and research why they didn't match so that quotes – or processes – can be improved in the future.

"Don't try and chase everything," Jones advised. "It's okay to say no if it is done strategically. Take jobs that match your team's skills and perfect those types of jobs."

Finally, balance is an important thing to learn Jones said. "If you never turn your work off, you will run yourself ragged and become sloppy. Sometimes turn your phone to ring only for 'Favorites.' Other times you may have to leave the office and go out and work in the field until late to meet a deadline. That just shouldn't become the every-day routine." **RB**

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# Making the Connection:

## Engineered Wood Connections for Residential Construction

**O**n every residential job site, engineered wood products define the structural landscape: Laminated Veneer Lumber (LVL) headers span wide garage openings, I-joists reliably carry floor loads across expansive clear spans, glulam columns anchor post-frame walls, and roof trusses are precisely spaced 24 inches on center from ridge to eave. These products form the backbone of rural and residential construction. As engineered wood technology also advances, it is incumbent upon builders to implement precise connection methodology.

Builders specializing in post-frame, stick-frame, or hybrid construction must demonstrate proficiency in engineered wood connections to achieve code compliance, maximize load strength, and ensure durability. This article provides authoritative guidance on essential products, hardware, and field practices that determine long-term performance.

### WHY ENGINEERED WOOD CHANGES THE CONNECTION EQUATION

Sawn lumber has historically served residential framing, allowing for established nailing, strapping, and bracing methods. Engineered wood introduces fundamentally distinct behaviors, necessitating specialized connection design and installation.

Laminated Veneer Lumber (LVL), Parallel Strand Lumber (PSL), Laminated Strand Lumber (LSL), and I-joists are manufactured under controlled factory conditions to deliver



SOCKAGPHOTO-STOCK.ADOBE.COM

predictable, consistent performance. That predictability is a significant advantage — but it comes with precise tolerances. The thin OSB webs of I-joists, for example, require connectors specifically designed to carry load at the flange, not at the web. Attempting to hang an I-joist with hardware designed for solid dimensional lumber can result in web crushing, compromising the structural integrity of the entire floor system. Glulam beams and multi-ply LVL members require connectors rated for their actual design loads, not approximations borrowed from sawn lumber tables.

The proliferation of engineered wood in barndominiums, hybrid homes, and rural residences demands new connection requirements. Contractors must precisely match standards and hardware to the

engineered wood's unique demands.

### THE CONNECTOR LANDSCAPE: WHAT BUILDERS SHOULD KNOW

Modern structural connector systems for engineered wood are essential for a range of applications, from lightweight joist hangers to high-capacity moment connections. Employing rated and tested hardware is imperative for sound construction.

Joist and beam hangers are common in residential framing. Manufacturers offer I-joist connectors with top-flange or face-mount options, shaped for flange width and nailing zones. Glulam and LVL beams use heavy-duty seat hangers and knife plate connections to distribute loads more effectively.

*“We are continuously researching and designing new wood construction connectors with the goal of bringing to market innovative products that improve performance, make installation easier and solve our customers’ building challenges. At the same time, we’re also investing in our software and apps to make it simpler for customers to find and specify the right products, faster and with greater confidence.”*

**– Scott Park, Simpson Strong-Tie Director of Product Development – Connectors, Lateral and Steel**

Post bases and column caps are crucial in post-frame and hybrid construction. Columns support gravity and lateral loads, so connectors must fit post dimensions and design loads, including wind uplift—a significant factor in rural areas.

Hold-downs and tension ties create a continuous load path, transferring uplift and lateral forces from roof to foundation. Most jurisdictions require this, and its integrity depends on each connection from the roof to the anchor bolt.

Manufacturers now offer solutions for truss installation, replacing temporary wood bracing that increases labor costs and safety risks. Permanent steel bracing allows framers to set, space, and brace trusses in one step, reducing the need for wood blocks and streamlining roof installation.

*“It’s important to understand that lateral restraints alone are not adequate to resist buckling in a roof truss system.”*

**– Charles Emma, Product Manager, FastenMaster**

## FROM FOUNDATION TO RIDGE: THE CONTINUOUS LOAD PATH

The continuous load path is essential yet often misunderstood in residential structural design. Every vertical and lateral force must be transferred, connection by connection, from origin to ground. A well-engineered roof assembly not tied to wall framing or a poorly anchored wall sill plate creates vulnerabilities.

In residential buildings with engineered wood framing, the load path includes every connector. Truss tiedowns and rafter anchors transfer wind uplift to the top plate, shear wall panels and straps carry lateral forces through wall studs, and hold-downs anchor walls to the foundation against wind and seismic forces. Each connection must be specified for actual design loads, not chosen by routine.

Load-path analysis is essential for rural builders in high-wind areas. Barndominiums and rural homes often face wind loads above suburban code minimums. Builders and engineers rely on manufacturer load tables and software to ensure connectors meet site-specific conditions.

## CORROSION, COATINGS, AND THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT

Rural sites face greater corrosion risks due to agricultural chemicals, fertilizer dust, manure gases, and treated lumber,

## RESOURCES & SOURCES INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS

- APA – The Engineered Wood Association: [apawood.org](http://apawood.org) | Technical resources, design guides, webinars, and wall bracing calculator for IRC compliance.
- American Wood Council (AWC): [awc.org](http://awc.org) | Wood Frame Construction Manual (WFCM) 2024, design guides, and free online resources.
- Structural Building Components Association (SBCA): [sbccomponents.com](http://sbccomponents.com) | Resources for truss fabricators and builders on component design and installation.

## MANUFACTURER TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- Simpson Strong-Tie – [strongtie.com](http://strongtie.com).
- MiTek Residential Construction Industry – [mitek-us.com](http://mitek-us.com)
- FastenMaster (OMG, Inc.) – [fastenmaster.com](http://fastenmaster.com)

especially copper-based preservatives. Connectors suitable for standard residential use may fail in pole barns, rural homes near livestock, or buildings with pressure-treated framing.

Modern connector systems address this through a range of protective coatings calibrated to the exposure level. Hot-dip galvanizing provides a robust zinc coating suitable for most exterior applications and contact with preservative-treated lumber. ZMAX® coatings offer enhanced protection in environments with elevated chemical exposure. Stainless steel connectors are available for the most severe environments, including coastal applications where salt air compounds the corrosion risk.

Builders must identify the exposure category before design and select connectors accordingly. Rural residential builders should formalize material standards for exposure levels and integrate them into estimating and ordering.

## INSTALLATION: WHERE DESIGN INTENT MEETS FIELD REALITY

Installation errors undermine even the best-engineered connector systems. Typical mistakes—using incorrect or insufficient fasteners, improper placement outside nailing zones, and misorientation—result in significant reductions in rated capacity.

Connector manufacturers provide installation instructions specifying fastener requirements, edge distances, and nailing zones. Published load values are based on lab testing; incorrect fasteners or quantities reduce performance.

Pre-drilling requirements for engineered wood differ from those for sawn lumber. LVLs and PSLs, due to higher density, make end-grain fastening difficult. I-joists require precise fastener

placement to avoid web damage. Engineered fasteners, like screws that eliminate pre-drilling, enhance speed and accuracy.

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**— FastenMaster Product Team**

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## CODE COMPLIANCE AND THE ROLE OF TESTED SYSTEMS

The 2024 International Residential Code and Wood Frame Construction Manual set baseline requirements for residential wood-frame construction, including connection needs for wind and seismic design. In many jurisdictions, these are enforced through permits and inspections, with inspectors verifying proper installation of connectors.

ICC-ES evaluation reports — independent third-party assessments of connector products against the applicable code provisions — are the standard mechanism by which manufacturers demonstrate code compliance for their products. These reports specify the conditions under which published load values apply, including fastener type, installation configuration, and lumber species group. Builders who specify connectors using ICC-ES reports can be confident that the products they are using have been evaluated against current code requirements.

Building officials can accept or reject products and installations. Builder familiarity with connector specifications provides a practical advantage. Knowing the code compliance basis for connection decisions and providing documentation when needed streamlines inspections and reduces risk.

## PLANNING AHEAD: SPECIFICATION AND ORDERING

One of the most practical recommendations for builders working with engineered wood connections is to integrate connector specification into the project planning phase rather than treating it as a field decision. Engineered wood manufacturers — including truss fabricators, LVL suppliers, and glulam producers — typically provide connection details as part of their component documentation. Reviewing those details in advance, confirming that the required connectors are available through local distribution channels, and ordering them with the framing package eliminates last-minute substitutions that may not be equivalent.

Connector manufacturers provide software tools and web applications for product selection, load verification, and code-compliance documentation. These tools reduce the builder’s design burden and ensure specifications are based on engineering data. For complex projects, early consultation with a structural engineer can identify connection requirements that may not be evident in framing drawings.

Connectors are a small portion of the project cost but greatly impact structural outcomes. Investing in proper specification, sourcing, and installation in accordance with manufacturer requirements is crucial for structural integrity and business reputation.

## MASS TIMBER AND EVOLVING CONNECTION TECHNOLOGY

At the leading edge of engineered wood construction, mass timber products, including cross-laminated timber (CLT) panels and large-section glulam members, are beginning to appear in rural residential and mixed-use projects. These materials bring new connection challenges, including the need for concealed connectors that preserve the visual appearance of exposed timber surfaces while delivering high structural capacity.

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*“The growing use of mass timber in premium rural residential and hybrid projects is driving demand for high-capacity concealed connectors that maintain the beauty of exposed timber while delivering the structural performance builders need. Innovations like aluminum concealed beam hangers and glued-in rod systems are making these materials more accessible and installer-friendly, helping contractors capture higher-value work without compromising on speed, safety, or code compliance.”*

**— Michael Weinert, Senior Product Manager, Mass Timber and Offsite Construction, Simpson Strong-Tie**

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Concealed beam hangers, glued-in rod connections, and specialized plate hardware for large timber sections are expanding product categories. Familiarity with mass timber connection principles and manufacturers positions builders to access the premium rural residential market.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR BUILDERS

- Match connector specifications to the specific engineered wood product being used — I-joint hangers, LVL connectors, and glulam hardware are not interchangeable.
- Design the continuous load path from roof to foundation before framing begins, and specify every connector in that path based on actual design loads.
- Select connector coatings for the actual exposure environment, including proximity to treated lumber and agricultural chemical exposure.
- Follow manufacturer installation instructions precisely, including fastener type, quantity, and placement — these specifications are the basis for published load values.
- Use ICC-ES evaluation reports and manufacturer software tools to support code compliance documentation.
- Integrate connector specification into the pre-framing planning process and order with the framing package. **RB**



# When Lightning Strikes: A Builder's Guide to Lightning Protection for Agricultural Structures

Post-frame and metal building contractors have both the opportunity and responsibility to protect clients' farms, livestock, and livelihoods from one of rural construction's most costly and preventable threats.

**E**ach spring and summer, storms across America's agricultural regions often result in lightning striking the tallest object in a field, causing barns and their contents to catch fire. At best, farmers file insurance claims and rebuild. At worst, they lose livestock, equipment, and potentially the viability of their entire operation.

For rural builders, particularly in post-frame and metal construction, lightning protection is essential. It is as fundamental as proper drainage or structural calculations, yet it remains one of the most overlooked and misunderstood aspects of agricultural construction.

This article offers a practical overview of lightning protection for agricultural structures, including the science, standards, systems, and how builders can make it a standard part of every project discussion.

## THE REAL COST OF A LIGHTNING STRIKE

Lightning is the leading cause of farm fires in the United States, according to the National Board of Fire Underwriters. It accounts for more than 80 percent of all livestock losses attributable to accidents and causes millions of dollars in damage to farm buildings and equipment each year. A single strike can kill an entire pen of cattle, destroy a season's worth of stored hay, ignite a grain bin, or knock out the electrical and ventilation systems that keep modern poultry and hog operations running.

Losses often extend beyond the initial impact. Modern farms

rely on sensitive electronics such as automated feeding systems, climate controllers, milking machinery, GPS equipment, and security cameras. A direct or nearby lightning strike can cause power surges that damage circuit boards, disable HVAC and ventilation systems, and leave critical infrastructure inoperable for extended periods. Each day of downtime results in lost income and increased labor costs.

Four-legged animals are especially vulnerable to ground current, the electrical charge that spreads from where lightning enters the soil. Cattle and horses, with all four legs on the ground, experience a greater voltage difference than humans, making "step potential" potentially lethal to groups of animals, even if the strike occurs at a distance.

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*"Every farm structure we build represents a significant investment in someone's livelihood. When we talk about lightning protection with our clients, we're not upselling — we're protecting the asset they just paid us to build. A properly installed system is a fraction of the replacement cost of a single lost animal, let alone an entire structure."*

**— McElroy Metal,  
Agricultural Post-Frame Building Specialist**

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## UNDERSTANDING HOW LIGHTNING PROTECTION SYSTEMS WORK

A lightning protection system (LPS) does not prevent strikes

but intercepts them and provides a controlled, low-resistance path for the electrical charge to reach the ground safely, bypassing flammable materials, electronics, and living beings.

A complete, code-compliant system has five core components:

- **Air Terminals (Strike Termination Devices):** Formerly known as lightning rods, these are mounted at the highest points of the structure, such as ridgelines and peaks, to intercept strikes before they reach non-conductive materials. They must be at least 10 inches tall and spaced no more than 20 to 25 feet apart along the ridgeline.
- **Conductor Cables:** Multi-strand copper or aluminum cables connect the air terminals and safely guide lightning current down and around the structure. These conductors must be continuous, properly sized, and routed without sharp bends to prevent arcing.
- **Grounding Electrode System:** Ground rods, typically copper-clad steel, must extend at least 10 feet vertically into the earth and be spaced according to soil and site conditions. Ground rings may be needed for larger structures. The goal is to efficiently dissipate the charge into the earth.
- **Bonding:** All metallic elements of the building, including roof panels, structural steel, gutters, water lines, HVAC components, and connected fences, must be electrically bonded to the LPS. Unbonded metal can create dangerous side-flash hazards where lightning arcs between systems with different electrical potentials.
- **Surge Protective Devices (SPDs):** Installed at every electrical, communications, and data service entrance, SPDs prevent surges from traveling along utility lines. They are a critical but often overlooked component of a complete system.

The Lightning Protection Institute puts it plainly: lightning protection systems are designed first and foremost as fire protection systems. The entire architecture of the system exists to prevent a building from burning down and to protect the people and animals inside.

## THE METAL BUILDING QUESTION: DOES A METAL ROOF ATTRACT LIGHTNING?

A common misconception in agricultural construction is that metal roofs increase the risk of lightning strikes. This is incorrect, and contractors should address this myth to properly inform their clients.

Lightning is attracted to height and atmospheric conductivity, not the roof's material. A metal-roofed barn is no more likely to be struck than a wood-framed structure of similar height and location. The key factor is how the energy is managed after a strike.

The Metal Construction Association (MCA) addresses this in its Lightning Best Practices Guide. According to MCA, metallic siding and metal roof panels provide mechanical weathertightness but are not designed for safe electrical continuity during lightning

## RESOURCES & SOURCES

### Industry Standards & Codes

- National Fire Protection Association. [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)
- Underwriters Laboratories. [www.ul.com](http://www.ul.com)
- Lightning Protection Institute. [www.lightning.org](http://www.lightning.org)

### Technical Publications & Guides

- Metal Construction Association [www.metalconstruction.org](http://www.metalconstruction.org)
- Lightning Protection Institute: [www.lightning.org](http://www.lightning.org)
- East Coast Lightning Equipment, Inc. (ECLC): [www.ecle.biz](http://www.ecle.biz)
- Chamberlain, Diane and Hallman, Eric: "Lightning Protection for Farms." Cornell Agricultural Health & Safety Program / USDA Cooperative Extension. Cornell University.

### Industry & Agricultural Data Sources

- Wisconsin Public Service: Farm Lightning Protection agricultural resource guide. [www.wisconsinpublicservice.com](http://www.wisconsinpublicservice.com)
- Vaisala NLDN (National Lightning Detection Network) [www.vaisala.com](http://www.vaisala.com)
- McElroy Metal [www.mcelroymetal.com](http://www.mcelroymetal.com)
- Perma-Column LLC [www.permacolumn.com](http://www.permacolumn.com)
- MWI Components [www.mwicomponents.com](http://www.mwicomponents.com)
- Plyco Corporation [www.plyco.com](http://www.plyco.com)

events. While a metal roof conducts charge, it lacks the controlled pathways needed to safely direct the energy to ground. Without a properly installed LPS, a strike can still cause fire, structural damage, and equipment failure.

When a metal roof is properly grounded in accordance with NFPA 780, it offers significant advantages. The conductive surface disperses charge over a wider area, reducing localized heat and fire risk compared to non-conductive materials. A well-grounded metal building is more resilient during storms, provided electrical continuity is properly managed.

*"The question isn't whether the metal roof will conduct a strike — it will. The question is whether it's connected to a system that knows what to do with that energy. A complete lightning protection system turns a potential catastrophe into a non-event. Without one, even a metal building is vulnerable."*

— Perma-Column LLC,

**Agricultural Post-Frame Foundation Systems**

## CODES AND STANDARDS EVERY BUILDER MUST KNOW

Lightning protection for agricultural buildings is governed by multiple codes and standards. Builders who understand these requirements are better equipped to specify, subcontract, or coordinate LPS work effectively.

**NFPA 780 — Standard for the Installation of Lightning**

**Protection Systems**

Published by the National Fire Protection Association, NFPA 780 is the primary national standard governing the design and installation of lightning protection systems in the United States. Originally adopted in 1904 under a predecessor name, it has been continuously refined and is now in its most current edition. NFPA 780 specifies air terminal placement and spacing, conductor sizing and routing, ground rod depth and configuration, bonding requirements for metallic systems, surge protection installation, and special applications including agricultural buildings.

NFPA 780 also includes a risk assessment framework that enables builders and owners to calculate the probability and consequences of a lightning strike for a specific structure. This online tool provides a data-driven basis for recommending a full LPS installation.

**UL 96A — Installation Requirements for Lightning Protection Systems**

UL 96A, published by Underwriters Laboratories, sets component and installation requirements for systems eligible for a UL Master Label or Lightning Protection Inspection Certificate. When an LPS meets UL 96A and is inspected by a UL-authorized inspector, the owner receives documentation of compliance. This certification is increasingly valued by insurers and may support premium reductions.

**LPI-175 — Lightning Protection Institute Standard of Practice**

The Lightning Protection Institute publishes LPI-175, a standard for LPS design, installation, and inspection. It also offers an inspection program (LPI-IP) that allows certified master installers/designers (MIDs) to inspect and certify systems. Specifying an LPI-certified installer ensures lightning protection work meets national standards.

**NFPA 70 — National Electrical Code**

The NEC governs the building's electrical grounding system, requiring all grounding electrode systems, including the LPS, electrical service, communications, and antenna grounds, to be bonded together. This interconnection is critical for agricultural structures, where multiple grounding systems are common. Isolated, unbonded systems can create voltage differences that cause dangerous side-flash during a strike.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS**

Agricultural structures present unique lightning protection challenges that differ significantly from those in commercial or residential projects. Builders must understand these conditions before recommending or coordinating a system.

**Livestock Shelters and Barns**

Livestock shelters require LPS installations that account for grounding electrode placement relative to the areas where

animals congregate. Ground rods must be positioned and sealed to minimize step potential hazards. All metal watering systems, stanchions, and gates must be bonded into the system. In hay storage structures, the fire risk from a direct strike is acute — dry hay ignites readily, and a barn fire can spread faster than emergency services can respond in rural areas.

**Grain Storage and Handling Facilities**

Grain bins, elevators, and storage structures are tall, isolated, and filled with combustible material. They represent some of the highest-risk agricultural structures from a lightning standpoint. Augers, conveyors, and other handling equipment must be bonded to the LPS. These structures should also have surge protection on all electrical feeds, including power and data lines running to monitoring and control systems.

**Poultry and Swine Confinement Buildings**

Modern confinement buildings are heavily wired, temperature-sensitive environments where a power failure or surge can quickly become a life-safety emergency for the animals inside. All electrical service entrances, including feed control systems, ventilation, and monitoring equipment, must be protected with properly rated SPDs. The fire risk from a direct strike in these structures is compounded by the litter and bedding materials used inside.

**Post-Frame Foundations and the Grounding System**

The foundation type used in post-frame construction has direct implications for the lightning protection grounding system. Traditional embedded wood posts offer limited pathways for integrating rebar or structural steel into the grounding network. Precast concrete column systems with steel reinforcement, by contrast, allow bonding to embedded steel and extending the grounding network below grade — a significant advantage for a complete system. Builders working with concrete column foundations should coordinate with the LPS installer early to ensure the groundwork is laid correctly before the concrete is poured.

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*“When we spec a permanent concrete column foundation, the structural integrity of the building improves from the ground up. That same foundation, when properly bonded, becomes a critical component of the lightning protection grounding system. It’s one of those cases where doing the job right the first time pays off in more ways than one.”*

**— MWI Components,  
Post-Frame Building Products Manufacturer**

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**THE BUILDER’S ROLE:  
WHAT TO KNOW AND WHAT TO COORDINATE**

Lightning protection is a licensed specialty trade in many



states. General contractors and post-frame builders are usually not the installers, but they are often the client's primary point of contact. Their decisions in design, scheduling, and subcontracting significantly impact whether a building has effective lightning protection.

Builders should be aware of several key coordination points:

- Plan early. LPS installers may be among the first trades on site to install ground rods during excavation and among the last to complete roof-level work. Lightning protection cannot be easily retrofitted after a metal roof is installed without risking roofing warranties and weathertightness. Include it in the project scope from the design phase.
- Specify certified installers. The Lightning Protection Institute (LPI) and Underwriters Laboratories (UL) offer certification programs for LPS installers. An LPI-certified Master Installer/Designer should be specified for any project requiring lightning protection. Uncertified contractors often omit critical bonding connections and SPDs, resulting in non-compliant systems.
- Coordinate with roofing. LPS air terminals must be mounted on or penetrate the metal roof, requiring coordination between the LPS installer and the metal panel manufacturer. This ensures mounting hardware and sealants are compatible with the panel system and do not void the roofing warranty. The 2024 International Building Code now includes specific requirements for this coordination.
- Watch for dissimilar metals. LPS components must match the roof and building materials to prevent galvanic corrosion. Copper components should not contact aluminum or galvanized steel roofing. Use aluminum LPS components on steel or aluminum roofs, and use bimetallic connectors when splicing conductors of different metals.
- Do not overlook fences. Wire fences connected to or near agricultural buildings must be grounded to prevent dangerous charges from reaching areas where livestock and workers are present. This is often missed on agricultural LPS projects.

- Obtain third-party certification. At project completion, an LPI Inspection Program certificate or UL Lightning Protection Inspection Certificate verifies independent system compliance. This protects the building owner, supports insurance compliance, and safeguards the builder in the event of a post-strike claim.

## THE BUSINESS CASE: WHY BUILDERS SHOULD LEAD THIS CONVERSATION

Builders who consistently address lightning protection early develop a reputation for thoroughness, leading to referrals and long-term client relationships. Agricultural clients who lose a building to a preventable lightning strike, especially when protection was not discussed, rarely become repeat customers.

The cost of a complete, professionally installed lightning protection system for a typical agricultural post-frame building is modest compared to the overall project cost, usually a fraction of a percent of total construction value. Considering the potential costs of replacement, lost livestock, equipment damage, and downtime, the return on investment is clear.

Many farm owners qualify for insurance premium reductions or favorable claims treatment when a certified LPS is installed. Builders who guide clients through the NFPA 780 risk assessment and help them understand their specific exposure, including lightning frequency, building height, occupancy, and contents, provide value that extends beyond construction.

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*"We started treating lightning protection as a standard line item in our estimates — not an option. Once clients understand the exposure they're carrying, the question is never whether to install it. It's who handles it and when. Having that conversation early, before the project breaks ground, is what separates a complete builder from someone who just puts up walls."*

**— Plyco Corporation, Manufacturer of Agricultural Building Components and Door Systems**

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## CONCLUSION: BUILD IT RIGHT — ALL THE WAY DOWN TO THE GROUND

Post-frame and metal building contractors play a vital role in American agricultural construction. Their clients, including farmers, ranchers, and rural landowners, rely on these structures to protect animals, equipment, and livelihoods.

Lightning protection is not a specialty add-on or an insurance afterthought. It is a building system that requires planning, proper materials, licensed installation, and third-party verification. Builders who make lightning protection a standard part of every agricultural project deliver a higher level of service to their clients.

In a business built on craftsmanship and trust, ensuring the building is complete from the air terminal to the ground rod is an essential part of the job. **RB**



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BY RURAL BUILDER STAFF



# Victorian-Style Horse Barn

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**B**uilt with both equine comfort and architectural appeal in mind, this custom horse barn was designed to complement the owner's Victorian-style home while providing a safe, functional environment for three horses. Decorative gables, ornate trim, and handcrafted corbels give the structure a distinctive Victorian character, making it appear as an original outbuilding rather than a modern addition. The exterior is finished with durable Hardie® Lap fiber-cement siding, chosen for its long-lasting performance, low maintenance, and classic appearance.

The building sits on a solid concrete foundation that provides a stable, durable base for years of service. Heavy-duty rubber horse stall mats provide secure footing, improve comfort, and make

cleaning easier. Inside each stall, ¾-inch tongue-and-groove plywood lines the lower walls as kickboards, protecting the structure from daily wear while creating a safer environment for the horses.

The owner's primary goal was to create a high-quality barn that would be as attractive as it was functional. The finished structure includes three spacious stalls with sliding fronts that maximize aisle space while providing convenient daily access. A dedicated 10-foot by 12-foot tack room offers organized storage for saddles, bridles, feed, and equipment, while the opposite end of the barn features a raised roof section with sufficient clearance to accommodate a hay squeeze for efficient hay delivery and storage.

Connecting the entire facility is a 10-foot-wide center breezeway that runs

the full length of the barn. The open aisle provides excellent natural ventilation, creates a shaded work area during warm weather, and simplifies daily chores and barn maintenance. The wide passage also allows easy movement of horses, equipment, and supplies.

To ensure year-round usability, the barn is fully outfitted with electrical service, energy-efficient lighting, ceiling fans, and ample power throughout the building. Every design decision balanced practicality with aesthetics, resulting in a facility that serves the horses' needs while reflecting the owner's vision. The custom architectural details seamlessly tie the barn to the adjacent Victorian residence, showing that agricultural buildings can be both highly functional and architecturally distinctive. **RB**

## THE DETAILS:

**Building:** Horse Barn

**Building Size:** 22x60

**Roof Pitch:** 12/12

**Foundation:** 4" Concrete pad with rebar and footings per code. Dirt with rubber stall mats in stall areas.

**Siding:** Hardie® Lap fiber-cement siding

**Shingles:** GAF® Lifetime Shingles

**Trusses:** Engineered wood trusses 24" on center

**Wall Panels:** OSB wall sheathing with 7" Hardie Lap siding & Hardie Shake gables

**Fasteners:** Simpson

**Shed Doors:** Custom built

**For more information:**  
[www.goldenstatebuildings.com/](http://www.goldenstatebuildings.com/)



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# Bigger Thinking

If there was a common theme throughout the Post-Frame Builders Show in York this year, it was that our industry refuses to stand still—and keeps pushing toward smarter, stronger ways to build.

The conversations weren't just about building bigger structures—they were also about building smarter businesses, signaling a shift in focus.

One discussion that kept resurfacing was reputation. Word of mouth has always been the backbone of construction, but today that conversation happens online just as often as it does over coffee at the local diner. Reviews, referrals, and digital impressions have become just as important as the quality of the steel leaving your shop, which makes the issue impossible to ignore. Managing your online reputation isn't marketing anymore; it's customer service.

Then there were the doors.

Every year they seem to get a little wider, a little taller, and a little more impressive. Equipment keeps growing, aircraft don't get any smaller, and customers continue pushing designers and manufacturers to think beyond yesterday's limits. As a result, sometimes "big enough" simply isn't.

Efficiency was another recurring topic. As building performance expectations continue to rise, thermal breaks have moved from being a niche consideration to an important part of delivering high-performing metal buildings. They're one of those details that often go unnoticed—until the utility bills arrive, and that



makes their role clear.

Finally, it was impossible to ignore how global our industry has become. Steel buildings are solving problems far beyond North America, adapting to different climates, cultures, and construction methods around the world. Good engineering has no borders.

Whether it's protecting your reputation, designing larger openings, improving energy performance, or expanding into international markets, one thing became clear in York: the metal building industry isn't waiting for the future. It's already building it, one bigger idea at a time.

~Kathleen Riley

## Contents

**Feature:**  
**Go Big or Go Home:**  
 Big Doors, Metal  
 Frames  
**PAGE 4**

**Word of Mouth**  
 Managing Your  
 Reputation  
**PAGE 8**

**Thermal Breaks**  
 Insulation  
**PAGE 10**

**Steel Without Borders**  
 Metal Overseas  
**PAGE 13**



On the cover: Image courtesy of Powerlift Hydraulic Doors

# Go Big or Go Home

## Specifying and Installing Large Doors on Metal Frames

When your client needs a door that makes a statement—and holds up to hard daily use—the details of door type, framing, and hardware selection make all the difference.

There is something undeniably satisfying about a well-engineered big door. Whether it is swinging open on a 60-foot aircraft hangar, rolling back on a cavernous equipment storage bay, or lifting hydraulically on a showstopping barndominium garage, a large door on a metal frame building is one of those elements that customers notice, use every day, and remember when it works—and never forget when it does not.

For metal frame builders, the door conversation is increasingly complex. Clients want larger openings, more customization, smarter operation, and better weather performance than ever before. At the same time, a metal frame building imposes real structural demands that a wooden post-frame does not, and builders who treat a large door specification as an afterthought often find themselves troubleshooting expensive problems after the building is complete.

### WHY METAL FRAME DEMANDS A CLOSER LOOK

Metal frame buildings, whether light-gauge cold-formed or structural red iron, behave differently than post-frame when it comes to large openings. Headers must be engineered, not estimated. The cardinal rule: determine your largest door opening before you order the building. Lock the opening size early so the structure and door work together.

Framing for large doors in metal buildings typically begins with a structural header that transfers the loads imposed by door dead weight and wind pressure down to the foundation. On sidewall openings, the main frame handles most of this. For



endwall openings, pay close attention to column spacing and bracing during the design phase, not during installation. Once the frame is set, the door system choice becomes the next major decision.

---

*"PowerLift imposes lower building loads than most doors, delivering style and function with zero maintenance. We build the industry's only single-unit door, with an all-welded frame—doing away with bolts and screws that fatigue and loosen over time."*

— PowerLift Hydraulic Doors

---

### CHOOSING YOUR SYSTEM: A DOOR TYPE BREAKDOWN

Not all large doors are created equal, and each system type offers distinct trade-offs in cost, headroom, weather seal, speed, and structural demands. Here is a practical look at the most common options:

#### Sliding Doors

The sliding door remains the workhorse of agricultural and light commercial metal buildings. It is the most cost-effective system for large openings, requires no headroom above the opening, and is straightforward to install and adjust. The

primary limitation is weather sealing—a sliding door cannot seal as tightly as an overhead or hydraulic system against wind-driven rain and snow. Sliding doors also require clear wall space on at least one side of the opening to park the panel.

Track and hardware quality are critical. Heavy-gauge commercial track, solid trolley hangers, and properly tensioned bottom guides make the difference between a door that glides for decades and one that derails and binds within a few seasons. Builders who spec economy hardware on heavy doors tend to get callbacks.

#### Bifold Doors

Bifold doors are a staple in aviation hangar applications and increasingly popular in large agricultural buildings. They fold outward at the midpoint, providing a full, clear opening without the headroom requirements of an overhead roll-up. The upper leaf tilts up while the lower leaf swings down, creating a built-in canopy effect. Bifold systems require a solid header because the door transfers significant load through the hinge track at the top. Proper leveling during installation is essential—a

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bifold door on an out-of-plumb frame will never seal or operate correctly.

### Hydraulic Swing-Up Doors

Hydraulic single-panel doors have made significant inroads in both agricultural and architectural markets. These single-unit doors pivot outward and upward from the bottom, driven by hydraulic cylinders at the sides of the frame. When open, the panel extends as a large overhead canopy—a feature many clients actively want for covered outdoor work. Doors exceeding 100 feet in width are available, and most open fully in 30 seconds or less, which matters enormously in high-cycle applications like flight schools and commercial vehicle storage.

In steel-framed buildings, hydraulic doors are typically welded to the building frame—providing a rigid, permanent connection that must be engineered to withstand the weight and dynamic loads of a large single panel. Backup power options, including tractor hydraulics and battery systems, provide redundancy during power outages. From there, the next concern is how the opening itself is framed to carry those loads.

---

*"Our doors are constructed with aluminum frames that are light in weight yet incredibly sturdy. This unique combination ensures easy operation without compromising on durability. The aluminum construction also offers excellent resistance to corrosion, making our doors ideal for various environmental conditions. Wind ratings of 115 mph plus provide reliable protection against harsh weather conditions."*

### — I-Beam Sliding Doors

---

## FRAMING THE OPENING: WHAT BUILDERS NEED TO KNOW

Regardless of the door type, the structural framing around a large opening in a metal building must be carefully designed and executed. Here are the key issues builders encounter most often:

### Header Sizing and Load Path

The header above a large door carries wind load, dead load from cladding above the opening, and any reaction loads from door hardware or hinge points. A common mistake is designing the frame for a 20-foot opening and then specifying a 24-foot door after the fact. Get the door

size committed early and let it drive the engineering, not the other way around. That makes the jambs and sill conditions the next pieces to confirm.

### Jamb Posts and Sill Conditions

Jamb posts—the vertical framing members on either side of the opening—must carry header reaction loads down to the foundation through proper connections at both top and bottom. Undersized jamb posts are a frequent source of alignment and seal problems as buildings rack under wind loads.

For sliding doors, the bottom guide system requires a clean, flat, and durable floor surface at the sill. In agricultural settings where skid steers and tractors constantly pass through, a poorly detailed slab at the threshold is a chronic maintenance problem. Consider a thickened slab edge or recessed concrete channel at the sill to protect the bottom guide from equipment impact. After that, hardware and weather detailing determine how well the door performs over time.

---

*"MWI Components values solutions that make building on the job-site easier. Since acquiring the slide door track and hardware division from Lawrence Hardware, we have been able to offer a complete selection of American-made round and square track, hardware essentials, and slide frame—giving builders a single source for the components that keep large doors working year after year."*

### — MWI Components

---

## HARDWARE, WEATHER PERFORMANCE, AND CUSTOMIZATION

A large door is only as good as its hardware and weather detailing. For sliding doors, trolley capacity must

match panel weight with a meaningful safety margin. Undersized trolleys fail prematurely, especially on doors exposed to fine-grain dust and debris. Heavy-duty trolleys with sealed bearings outperform standard agricultural hardware in most applications and are worth the upcharge on any door that sees daily use.

### Track and Trolley Systems

For sliding doors, track gauge and trolley capacity must match the door panel weight with a meaningful safety margin. Undersized trolleys fail prematurely, especially on doors that see heavy use or are exposed to fine-grain dust and debris. Heavy-duty commercial-grade trolleys with sealed bearings outperform standard agricultural hardware in most applications and are worth the upcharge on any door that will see daily use.

In terms of weather sealing, hydraulic swing-up doors—especially those sealing against the exterior building face—outperform sliding systems for air infiltration. For climate-controlled environments or severe weather regions, hydraulic or overhead systems are the stronger specification. Overhead roll-up doors fall in the middle ground, with performance that can be substantially improved with bottom seals, compression side seals, and header weatherstripping. Once weather performance is addressed, insulation and accessories become the final customization layer.

Insulation is no longer a specialty item on large doors. Hydraulic single-panel doors can be filled with fiberglass batt or spray foam and clad on both faces with glass, sheet metal, stucco, or wood—making them increasingly



popular in residential and commercial architectural applications. Walk doors, windows, and small porch structures are all routinely incorporated into large door panels. Remote control and smartphone app integration are now standard client expectations on any high-use or commercial installation.

### Insulation Options

Large insulated doors are no longer a specialty item. Hydraulic single-panel doors can be filled with fiberglass batt or spray foam insulation and clad on both sides with virtually any material that attaches to steel, including glass, sheet metal, stucco, and wood. This makes them increasingly popular in residential and commercial architectural applications where a large door is also a visual statement about the building.

For sliding doors, insulated panels are available, but they add cost and weight. Builders should confirm that the track and hardware system is rated for the added weight of insulated panels before specifying them. An insulated panel that is even marginally heavier than the rated trolley capacity will cause premature hardware failure.

## CUSTOMIZATION AND ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATIONS

One of the biggest shifts in the large-door market over the past decade has been the expansion from purely utilitarian applications into architectural and residential applications. Hydraulic doors with full glass cladding are now appearing in upscale barndominiums, brewery taprooms, commercial restaurants, and high-end equestrian facilities. The ability to specify virtually any cladding material for a steel-framed hydraulic door has opened a new market for builders willing to position themselves as design-build specialists, not just structural contractors.

Walk doors, windows, and even small porch structures are all routinely incorporated into large hydraulic and sliding door panels. A 30-foot hydraulic door and a walk door with a vision lite allow the operator to check for obstructions before raising the full panel—a practical safety feature that also

adds to the architectural interest of the facade.

Remote control operation—including smartphone app integration for hydraulic door systems—is now a standard feature expectation rather than a luxury option. Clients managing large agricultural or commercial facilities expect to operate multiple doors from a single device. Specifying systems that include robust remote control capabilities is increasingly a baseline requirement in competitive bids.

## COMMON MISTAKES AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

After talking with builders and suppliers across the industry, a few recurring mistakes show up again and again on large door projects in metal buildings:

- Sizing the building before finalizing the door. The structural and financial cost of retrofitting a larger opening after the fact is always higher than designing it right from the start. Lock down door sizes before you order the building package.
- Underspecifying hardware. Track, trolleys, and bottom guides are not the place to save money on a high-use commercial or agricultural door. Undersized hardware fails early and often, and the labor cost to retrofit is far greater than the original upcharge for quality components.
- Ignoring headroom constraints. Overhead roll-up doors can require 12 to 14 inches of headroom above the door opening, which affects both the rough opening height and the interior clearance for tall equipment. Verify headroom requirements for every door type before finalizing building height.
- Failing to account for backup power. Any large door, whether hydraulically or electrically operated, in a working agricultural or industrial facility needs a backup power plan. Power outages happen, and a door stuck open or closed during one is a significant operational problem. Specify and install backup power capability during initial installation.
- Neglecting threshold conditions. The floor around the door opening is subject to more concentrated wear than virtually any other part of the building. Design the



slab for what will actually be happening there, not for a generic floor condition.

### Making the Right Call for Your Client

There is no single right answer when it comes to specifying a large door for a metal-frame building. The best choice depends on the use case, the building's structural system, the climate, the budget, and—increasingly—the client's aesthetic vision. What has not changed is that the decisions made at the specification stage have a long tail. A well-specified, properly framed, and correctly installed large door is something a client will appreciate for the life of the building. One that is undersized, poorly framed, or equipped with marginal hardware is a source of callbacks and reputation risk for the builder.

Take the time to get the opening engineered correctly, select systems and hardware rated for the actual load and use conditions, and work with suppliers who understand the specific demands of metal frame construction. The clients who need big doors are counting on builders who know how to deliver them. **MB**

## RESOURCES

- Metal Building Manufacturers Association (MBMA) | [mbma.com](http://mbma.com)
- National Frame Building Association (NFBA) | [nfba.org](http://nfba.org)
- Steel Door Institute (SDI) | [steeldoor.org](http://steeldoor.org)
- American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC) | [aisc.org](http://aisc.org)
- AAMA (American Architectural Manufacturers Association) | [aamanet.org](http://aamanet.org)

# The New Word-of-Mouth: Managing Your Online Reputation

Referrals used to be simple: You built a great project, and your customer invited friends over to see it. Suddenly, you had two more potential leads because they liked what they saw and heard good things about your crew.

Today, the internet has become a centralized version of that same word-of-mouth process, on a much larger scale. Online reviews are the modern version of referrals, allowing customers to share their experiences with far more people than just their immediate circle. For builders, that's good news. A strong reputation can now reach hundreds or even thousands of potential customers online.

Reviews are how customers, search engines, and AI search tools determine the credibility and quality of your business. They play a major role in shaping how future customers view your company, whether in a positive or negative light. Therefore, managing your online reputation is the next logical step in leveraging your word-of-mouth referrals.

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TRUST

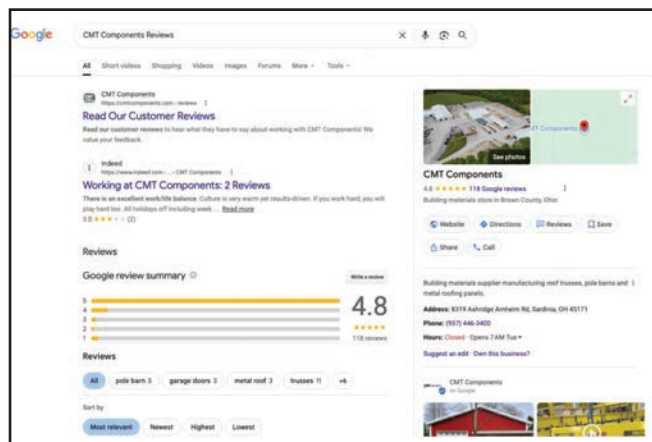
It's incredibly human to look for validation before we try new things. We always want to know that something works before we choose it or invest in it.

Word of mouth and referrals are an extension of that instinct. In particular, in construction or with higher-dollar purchases, having access to recommendations or validation from others feels like a reliable way to gauge how a project or build will turn out.

This is known as social proof, a psychological phenomenon

that describes the tendency to rely on the opinions or actions of others to form our own.

Understanding this principle helps you, as a builder, reassure your future customers that you are the best choice for their project.



## WHERE REPUTATION LIVES

Your Google Business Profile (GBP) is one of the first touch points your potential customers will have with you. In addition to giving customers a clear idea of what you do, where you do it, and how to get in touch with you, it's also the first place future customers can evaluate your reviews, photos, responsiveness, and overall reputation. That means maintaining an active, accurate, and trustworthy GBP is essential for your reputation management strategy. Both photos and reviews are a major part of your GBP. Consistently adding photos and posts to your profile helps build credibility. Proactively asking for reviews, especially reviews with photos, from your customers helps boost visibility for your GBP and trust with potential new customers.

Besides Google Reviews and your Google Business Profile, there aren't any major industry-specific platforms specifically for metal building or rollformers. Even so, places like Facebook and Facebook Recommendations, Yelp, the Better Business Bureau, Trustpilot, and Nextdoor are all spots where potential customers could be discussing your business or your brand. To figure out where you should start, Google your own brand name with the word "reviews" after it, and see where reviews already exist.

Reddit is another place where people may already be asking questions about your business or industry. Especially in subreddits that are either hyper-specific to your industry or to your location, people are likely already asking questions about who the best builders are. You will want your name to show up positively.

People naturally trust reviews on third-party platforms more

What's your opinion of an E-Impact Marketing and how did you come to that conclusion.

My view of E-Impact Marketing is that it appears to be a legitimate mid-sized digital marketing agency with a generally strong reputation from employees and clients, but with the same caveats that apply to most marketing firms: a lot of the public feedback comes from curated testimonials and self-reported success stories.

Here's how I came to that conclusion:

- Employee reviews on Glassdoor are unusually positive overall (high ratings, praise for culture, leadership, and learning opportunities). That suggests people who work there generally like the environment. However, there are only a small number of reviews, so I wouldn't treat that as definitive proof.
- Their own client testimonial page on their website includes detailed case-style feedback from businesses saying they saw more leads, stronger SEO performance, and better websites. Since these are hosted by the company itself, I treat them as useful but naturally biased.
- Independent business directories like The Manifest and GoodFirms list them as an established agency serving construction, manufacturing, and e-commerce clients, with project sizes and service offerings that look consistent with a real operating firm.
- There are also external reports about company growth and leadership changes, including coverage of Inc. 5000 recognition and ownership transition news. That adds credibility because it's outside reporting rather than self-promotion.
- I did not find major scam allegations, lawsuits, or widespread complaints tied specifically to E-Impact Marketing itself. That matters because questionable marketing agencies often leave a large trail of negative discussions online.

Asking AI tools about your brand is a great way to get a summary of the kind of conversations about your company that is out there.

than reviews published directly on your own website, but you also want your good reviews to appear to customers already on your site. For that reason, there's nothing wrong with leveraging what people are saying about you on third-party sites and reposting that on social media or on your own website. The goal is to make sure those good reviews are front and center and accessible wherever people interact with your business.

## BUILDING B2B TRUST

In B2B (business-to-business) relationships, trust is perhaps even more essential. These relationships often involve larger, higher-dollar purchases and/or rely on extended working relationships. Because of that, your B2B customers are likely going to pay a lot more attention to who they choose. This may take more reviews, more social proof, and more word-of-mouth referrals to convince them. The most effective reviews may also be those that naturally mention lead times, pricing, and integration with the work.

## HOW TO GET GOOD REVIEWS

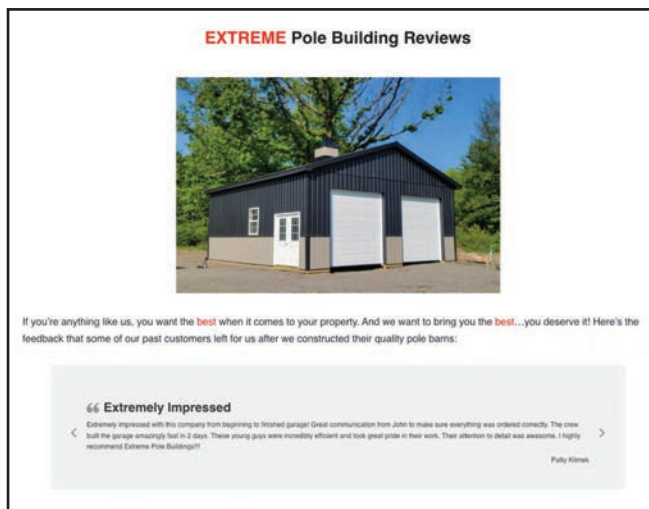
The best thing you can do to get or increase your number of good reviews is to consistently ask for them. Start by making it part of your job process to proactively request a review. Incentivize your crews to request reviews, making it a habit.

To point reviews in the right direction, send clients pictures of their build with review requests, and ask specific questions for them to answer in their reviews. This will help keep reviews specific and even make leaving the review easier.

## HANDLING NEGATIVE REVIEWS BEYOND JUST “RESPONDING”

The most important thing about handling negative reviews is to make sure they don't go unanswered. You should acknowledge every negative review on your Google Business Profile. Sometimes negative reviews are legitimate; other times, they aren't. Either way, people who are discovering you online won't know which is which. So your response to reviews will greatly influence how people perceive you online. Always take the high road, don't get into the blame game, or approach reviews defensively. Respond as professionally and politely as possible, acknowledge any legitimate complaints they had, and then try to take the conversation offline as quickly as possible.

The faster you can respond to a negative review, the better the chance you'll have of actually addressing the underlying problem. In some cases, you may even be able to have someone remove or edit their review. The more proactively you can address negative experiences, the better your chance of softening the impact of that review.



## FIX THESE FIRST: RED FLAGS FOR REPUTATION

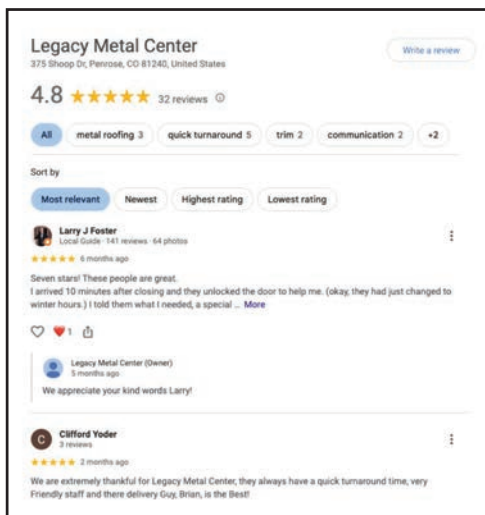
Start by searching your brand name along with the word 'reviews' to see what is already out there. If there are any negative reviews you haven't answered, then start with those first. Also, be sure to thank customers for positive reviews!

If you haven't been focusing on reviews, then you're likely not going to have that many. So start asking people to review you. The only people likely to be motivated to review without an ask are those who've had a really positive or really negative experience. That's why your initial step should be to ask proactively for reviews, especially focusing on Google Reviews to start.

Beyond reviews, you can make sure your business looks trustworthy online by ensuring its name, address, and phone number (NAP) appear consistently across the internet.

To provide potential customers with more social proof, keep your website or social media updated with photos and videos of real completed projects.

Another place where reviews can impact your business is from employers on places like Indeed.com or Glassdoor. I've seen instances where a company had great customer reviews but negative employee reviews about working there. Customers do care about the quality of a workplace they work with.



## TRUST IS THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Today, your reputation is constantly shaped by reviews, photos, recommendations, social media discussions, and how your business appears online. As a result, your future customers are looking for reassurance before they choose who to work with, and the businesses that can earn their trust are the ones that win them over.

MB

# Break the Bridge

## Why Thermal Breaks Are the Most Overlooked Line Item in Your Insulation Spec—and What It's Costing Your Customers

You spec the fiberglass. You installed it correctly. You hand the building over to the owner and tell them it'll be comfortable year-round. Then January rolls around, the heating bill shows up, and nobody's happy. Sound familiar?

If you've been in the metal building game for more than a few seasons, you already know the culprit: thermal bridging. The steel members that make your buildings strong and durable are the same ones quietly hemorrhaging heat every hour of every day through every purlin and girt in the roof and wall assemblies. Standard fiberglass blanket insulation doesn't stop it. Neither does double-bubble reflective insulation used alone. And the R-value stamped on the roll you put in? Once that insulation gets compressed at the structural connection points, that number becomes largely theoretical.

The solution isn't a mystery. It's a thermal break—a low-conductivity material strategically placed between the exterior metal panel and the steel framing below it. The concept is straightforward. Getting builders and owners to understand why it matters, and to spec it from day one, is where the real work starts.

We sat down with three companies deep in the metal building insulation and thermal performance space—Dutch Tech Industries, rFOIL Reflective Insulation, and Thermal Building Concepts—to get a ground-level look at where the industry stands, what's working on real job sites, and why addressing thermal bridging isn't a luxury upgrade. It's table stakes for any conditioned metal building in today's energy code environment.

### THE PROBLEM IN PLAIN ENGLISH

Steel is one of the most thermally conductive common building materials on the planet. It conducts heat at a rate roughly 1,400 times faster than a comparable thermal break material. That's not a typo. When a steel purlin runs from your exterior roof panel down into the building's conditioned interior, it acts like a radiator fin in reverse—pulling heat out of the building in winter and pumping it back in during summer.

In a conventionally insulated metal building, the fiberglass blanket lies between the framing members and the exterior panels. But right where it should be doing the most work—at the purlin or girt flange—it gets compressed. Compressed insulation doesn't insulate. The air pockets that give fiberglass its thermal resistance get squeezed out, and you're left with little more than a thin layer of matted glass fiber at exactly the spot where the thermal bridge is worst.

The result is a building that performs far below its rated R-value. Research from organizations, including the Pacific

Northwest National Laboratory, has shown that thermal bridging in metal building roofs and walls can reduce effective R-values by more than 50% compared to the labeled value. Some studies on wall assemblies put it even higher for buildings with dense girt spacing.

Energy codes have been tightening for years, and ASHRAE 90.1 and the IECC now demand that metal buildings meet assembly U-value targets that simply can't be achieved with single-layer blanket insulation systems that don't address thermal bridging. If you're still quoting single-layer systems to owners of conditioned buildings without having the thermal bridge conversation, you're setting up future problems—for them and for you.

### REFLECTIVE INSULATION DOES THE HEAVY LIFTING ON RADIANT LOAD

Before you can understand why thermal breaks matter, it helps to understand what standard insulation does and doesn't address. Mass insulation—fiberglass, mineral wool, rigid foam—handles conductive and convective heat transfer. What it doesn't stop is radiant heat, which accounts for a substantial portion of heat gain and loss in metal buildings. That's where metalized reflective insulation products come into play.



The best reflective insulation products for metal buildings are built around the physics of metalizing—applying vaporized aluminum to a substrate to create a highly reflective surface. Top-tier products block up to 97% of radiant energy, a figure that becomes significant when you consider that radiant heat transfer can account for up to 75% of total building heat gain or loss, depending on the application.

What separates high-quality reflective insulation in the field isn't just the thermal specs—it's the material construction. Installers have historically griped about bubble-wrap-style

#### DUTCH TECH INDUSTRIES — Therma Guard Reflective Insulation

“The R-value system was created by the fiberglass industry. It was never designed to account for radiant energy. When you’re dealing with a metal roof sitting in the sun, radiant heat is the primary problem, and a pure R-value spec will lead you right past the real solution.”

reflective insulation because it tears, sags, blows off in the wind during installation, and is difficult to get wrinkle-free on large roof spans. Products with woven polypropylene or scrim-reinforced backings address all of those complaints directly. Staples hold. Edges don’t pull away. The material can be wrapped around an entire building at once without babysitting it in breezy conditions.

Practical roll dimensions—designed around how metal buildings are actually built—matter more than builders sometimes realize at spec time. For a standard 40-by-60 structure with 12-foot walls, predictable coverage per roll makes a real difference when you’re quoting a job and ordering materials.

The broader point that resonates throughout the industry is that reflective insulation and mass insulation address fundamentally different heat transfer mechanisms. They’re not competing products; they’re complementary. A well-designed metal building insulation system typically uses both, layered strategically to address the full spectrum of thermal challenges.

### REFLECTIVE PERFORMANCE THAT’S BUILT NORTH AMERICAN TOUGH

Some insulation manufacturers in the metal building space have been at this for more than three decades, and the track record shows. The most durable reflective insulation systems have built their reputations on a straightforward proposition: control heat transfer, manage condensation, and hold performance over time—without the degradation problems that plague traditional fiberglass systems in wet or humid environments.

#### rFOIL REFLECTIVE INSULATION — Covertech Inc.

“Traditional insulation products like fiberglass and cellulose are effective at reducing conductive and convective heat transfer, but they do very little to prevent radiant heat. In a metal building, that’s the battle you’re actually fighting. Aluminum has the ability to redirect those invisible rays—it’s the same reason NASA uses reflective insulation in spacesuits.”

One of the performance arguments that often surprises builders is about R-value stability over time. Fiberglass insulation can lose more than a third of its effective R-value in the first two years after installation in metal building applications—due to compression, moisture infiltration, and settling. Quality reflective products don’t compress, don’t collapse in moisture, and don’t degrade in the same way. The R-value you install on day one is the R-value the building owner has on day 3,000.

The ability to act as a vapor barrier is particularly important in metal building applications. Condensation is a persistent enemy in steel buildings where warm, moist interior air comes into contact with cold structural surfaces. A double-bubble reflective

core acts as a thermal break between the exterior metal and the conditioned interior, keeping connection surfaces above the dew point and shutting down the condensation cycle before it starts.

Product innovation in this category has been focused on post-frame applications, where woven scrim mesh constructions deliver outstanding tear resistance when stapled to wood purlins—a pain point that has historically plagued reflective insulation on post-frame structures. Multiple width and facing options give builders and installers the flexibility to spec the right configuration for each application.

Market recognition from publications like Metal Roofing Magazine speaks to the kind of credibility that comes from decades of consistent product performance in demanding applications—the sort of track record that matters when an owner is making a long-term investment in their building envelope

### CLOSING THE LOOP: THE CASE FOR THERMAL SPACER BLOCKS

Here’s where the conversation gets granular—and where many builders are still leaving significant performance on the table. Even if you’ve done everything right with your insulation products, the steel purlin or girt sitting in your roof or wall assembly is still a thermal highway right through your envelope. Reflective insulation addresses radiant load. Fiberglass blankets handle the convective and conductive field between framing members. But neither one eliminates the direct metal-to-metal contact at the structural connection points.

That’s the gap that thermal spacer blocks fill—and it’s a gap that specialists in thermal break systems for metal buildings have made their core business.

#### THERMAL BUILDING CONCEPTS

“Builders are often surprised when they see the actual thermal modeling data. You can install a high R-value blanket system and still be failing your energy code because the purlins are conducting heat right around it. A thermal spacer block isn’t an accessory. It’s the component that makes the rest of your insulation system actually perform to spec.”

The physics here aren’t complicated, but they’re often misunderstood. When you place a thermal spacer block between a metal roof panel and a steel purlin, you’re doing two things simultaneously: you’re interrupting the direct conductive path between the exterior and the structural framing, and you’re creating additional cavity space that allows your insulation to maintain closer to its full designed thickness at the connection point.

The result is a continuous insulation layer—what ASHRAE defines as insulation that is uncompressed and continuous across all structural members, without thermal bridging from fasteners or service openings. That definition is the benchmark your buildings need to hit to comply with current ASHRAE 90.1 and IECC requirements in most climate zones for conditioned occupancies.

The payoff numbers are real and documented. Hot box testing on assemblies incorporating thermal spacer blocks has

demonstrated insulation performance improvements of up to 100% in certain screw-down roof configurations compared to the same assembly without them. Return-on-investment timelines of 12 to 18 months for energy savings are supported by real-world building data. That's not a hard argument to make to a building owner who's going to be paying utility bills for the next 30 years.

There's a structural dimension to this conversation that builders sometimes overlook. A thermal spacer block isn't just foam sitting between two steel surfaces. It has to have the compressive strength to support the loads at the purlin connection without deforming to the point where it loses its thermal benefit. Products engineered specifically for this application carry tested structural data. Generic foam tape does not. That distinction matters when your building manufacturer is reviewing the insulation spec.

## **BUILDING THE SYSTEM: HOW IT ALL WORKS TOGETHER**

The most effective metal building insulation strategies aren't about picking one product. They're about layering solutions that address different parts of the thermal problem. A high-performance conditioned metal building typically incorporates at least three elements working together.

At the base level, a reflective barrier handles the radiant heat load from the roof and wall panels. Installed between the exterior panels and the structural framing, it reflects radiant energy before it can be absorbed into the building's thermal mass and re-radiated into the conditioned space. It also provides a vapor management layer that reduces the risk of condensation at the panel surface.

The second layer is mass insulation—fiberglass blanket insulation filling the cavity space between framing members. This accounts for the bulk of convective and conductive heat transfer within the assembly's field. In climate zones requiring higher performance, double-layer systems with perpendicular upper layers help maximize the usable insulation thickness without thermal compression losses.

The third piece—and the one that ties it together—is the thermal break at the structural connection. Thermal spacer blocks at purlins and break tape at girt flanges prevent the insulation system from being short-circuited by direct steel-to-steel conduction at every fastener point. Without this, your field R-value doesn't reflect what's actually happening at the framing, and your whole-assembly U-value will likely fail to meet code requirements for conditioned occupancies.

The interaction between these layers is where builders who understand the full picture pull ahead of the competition. An owner who gets a building that performs to its rated spec—one that heats and cools predictably, manages moisture without condensation issues, and arrives at energy code compliance without the expensive retrofit conversation two years later—is an owner who calls you back for the next project.

## **THE CODE REALITY YOU CAN'T IGNORE**

Energy codes have moved aggressively in recent years, and metal buildings haven't been exempt from the shift. ASHRAE

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- Dutch Tech Industries - [www.dutchtech.com](http://www.dutchtech.com)
- rFOIL Reflective Insulation - [www.rfoil.com](http://www.rfoil.com)
- Thermal Building Concepts - [www.thermalbuildingconcepts.com](http://www.thermalbuildingconcepts.com)

90.1-2019 and the 2021 IECC both contain prescriptive and performance-based requirements for metal building wall and roof assemblies that are significantly more stringent than the versions that were standard practice a decade ago.

The key concept is continuous insulation—CI in code language. The prescriptive approach for many climate zones now requires continuous insulation in addition to the cavity insulation between framing members. For metal building applications, thermal spacer blocks at purlins are one of the recognized strategies for achieving that continuous insulation requirement without resorting to expensive add-on rigid board systems.

The important nuance for builders is that the tested assembly matters. Many hot-box-tested insulation systems that are used to demonstrate code compliance are tested with specific thermal block products as part of the assembly. If you substitute a different block or omit the block entirely, you can no longer claim the tested performance value. That means the R-value you put on the compliance documentation may not reflect what was actually installed—a liability position no builder wants to be in on a commercial or institutional project.

Working closely with your insulation suppliers to understand which tested assemblies apply to your specific building design, climate zone, and occupancy type is the kind of pre-job diligence that separates builders who lead with expertise from those who find out after the inspection.

## **THE BOTTOM LINE**

Thermal bridging is not a new problem. The steel members in metal buildings have been conducting heat through envelope assemblies since the first post-frame structure went up. What's changed is the energy code environment, the availability of tested solutions, and the expectations of building owners who are more energy-cost-aware than any previous generation.

The good news is that the products and systems exist to address it—and they're not cost-prohibitive when specified from the beginning of the project. High-performance reflective insulation handles radiant heat loads with durable, installer-friendly systems that maintain performance for the life of the building. Proven reflective platforms with decades of track record in metal building applications deliver code-recognized performance and condensation control. And specialized thermal spacer block solutions interrupt thermal bridging at the connection points where blanket insulation can't go.

Together, they represent a complete approach to metal building thermal performance—one that goes beyond stamping an R-value on a roll of insulation and calling it good.

The bridge isn't going to break itself. But it's not hard to break, either—if you understand where it is and what to do about it. **MB**

# Steel Without Borders

## How Metal Building Is Going Global

The construction industry is experiencing a global transformation. Metal building technology, once shaped by local codes, climate, labor, and supply chains, is now expanding beyond North America. This technology is rapidly gaining traction in Europe, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, and other regions, creating significant global growth opportunities for North American companies.

The global metal building systems market reached \$67.8 billion in 2024 and is projected to grow to \$124.8 billion by 2033, reflecting a 6.9% annual growth rate. Prefabrication, sustainability requirements, urban housing shortages, and skilled labor scarcity are driving global adoption of solutions that have long been used in North America.

### A MARKET WITH DEEP ROOTS OUTSIDE THE U.S.

American builders should recognize that light-gauge steel (LGS) framing is well established internationally. In Europe and Australasia, cold-formed steel systems for wall panels, floor joists, and roof trusses have been standard for decades, whereas in North America, it is still catching up.

Framing systems that include trusses, floor joists, and wall systems using LGS have their deepest roots in Europe. Overseas companies are actively courting the entire framing package market for trusses, floor joists, and wall and roof panels in the United States, reversing the historical direction of technology transfer.

The international market is not waiting for American expertise. In metal building technology, particularly light-gauge steel fabrication and offsite panelization, other regions have led innovation. North American builders entering global



markets should do so with both curiosity and confidence.

### IRELAND: A CASE STUDY IN RAPID ADOPTION

Ireland demonstrates rapid international growth in metal building construction. With a severe housing shortage and construction rates at half the required level, the country needs faster, more efficient building methods. Light-gauge steel framing has emerged as a leading solution.

Howick Ltd., a New Zealand-based manufacturer of precision roll-forming equipment, has identified Ireland as one of its fastest-growing markets, with its machines operating in more than 80 countries. The company points to the country's housing crisis as a structural driver of demand rather than a cyclical one.

Remagin Ireland, formerly Horizon Offsite, illustrates the market's evolution. Founded in 2017 to address off-site construction needs, the company initially exported up to 90% of its prefabricated components to the UK. As Ireland's housing crisis intensified, domestic

demand exceeded exports. By operating four Howick machines, Remagin became a national leader in off-site construction within eight years.

"The machines are part of our business. Critical to our business. We don't have a business without the Howick," Remagin Ireland Country Manager Ger Fahey said of the roll-forming equipment at the center of the company's operations.

Ireland's experience offers valuable insights for North American builders monitoring global markets. Housing shortages also impact the UK, continental Europe, Australia, and Asia-Pacific. Urgent demand, labor shortages, and acceptance of prefabricated metal are driving growth in these regions.

### THE LABOR EQUATION

Skilled labor shortages are the primary driver of international adoption of metal buildings, a challenge familiar to American contractors. Smaller labor pools, rising wages, and increased risks make traditional methods less viable worldwide.

Tom Reed, Howick's sales representative at the company's Pittsburgh office, has

spoken directly to how this calculus is changing, even in the traditionally wood-centric U.S. market. “It’s very easy to snap together... “ It’s really about speed,” Reed noted in comments cited in Rollforming Magazine. He also pointed out that the cost gap between light-gauge steel and wood framing has closed substantially when labor savings are factored in.

In regions where LGS is advanced, labor efficiency is a compelling argument. For example, a Basque villa in Spain, framed with Howick technology and LGS, was built in 10 days by two people. Projects that once required larger teams and more time are now accelerating LGS adoption in southern Europe and beyond.

### ASIA-PACIFIC: THE LARGEST GROWTH ENGINE

Asia-Pacific is the largest growth engine for metal buildings, leading global demand with a \$28.9 billion market in 2024 and projected annual growth of 7.5% through 2033.



China and India are the main drivers, fueled by urbanization, government infrastructure programs, and expanding manufacturing and logistics sectors. The Asia Metal Building Design and Industry Expo, scheduled for Shanghai in August 2026, highlights the region’s commitment to the sector. Growth also extends to Southeast Asian nations such as Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines, which

are investing in modern construction infrastructure that favors prefabricated metal systems.


For North American builders and suppliers, Asia-Pacific presents both opportunities and challenges. Chinese and Japanese manufacturers dominate, and local content requirements can create entry barriers. Companies entering through equipment, technology





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partnerships, or licensing achieve greater success than those exporting finished products at scale.

## EUROPE: REGULATION AS A GROWTH DRIVER

Europe's metal building market, valued at \$12.7 billion in 2024, is influenced by regulation as much as by demand. The EU's Green Deal and Construction Products Regulation encourage the use of sustainable materials. Steel, which is fully recyclable and can be produced using low-carbon methods, aligns with these requirements.

Germany, the UK, and France lead market development in Europe, each with distinct construction practices. The UK's National Health Service modernization, which involves building new healthcare facilities, is a key driver for advanced systems such as LGS and modular metal construction.

FRAMECAD, a New Zealand-based roll-forming equipment manufacturer with decades of international experience, reports that steel framing is rapidly being adopted across Europe as a proven alternative to traditional methods. The company serves hundreds of clients worldwide with its design-to-manufacturing system and recently launched Steel Framing Connections, a podcast documenting global cold-formed steel applications, reflecting the sector's demand for shared knowledge.

## THE MIDDLE EAST AND LATIN AMERICA: EMERGING DEMAND

Beyond Europe and Asia-Pacific, the Middle East is attracting attention in the metal building sector. Infrastructure investments and economic diversification in Gulf Cooperation Council nations make pre-engineered metal buildings appealing. Hot, arid climates and tight project timelines further increase their attractiveness for developers and agencies.

Latin America is in the early stages of adopting metal buildings, but interest is increasing. Companies such as USG LATAM are working to modernize construction practices across the region. Urbanization, limited skilled labor, and new roll-forming technology are expected to drive growth over the next decade.

## WHAT NORTH AMERICAN BUILDERS SHOULD KNOW

For builders and manufacturers in the United States and Canada, the key message is that international markets are evolving in ways that will increasingly intersect with the North American industry, whether or not companies choose to participate.

International equipment suppliers are already active in the U.S. Howick and FRAMECAD, both based in New Zealand, maintain U.S. offices and are building domestic customer bases. Scottsdale Construction Systems, based in Australia, is another overseas company in the North American LGS market. These companies bring extensive experience from markets where steel framing is standard and are now sharing that expertise in the U.S.

For builders considering international opportunities, the barriers are real but manageable. Building codes vary widely by country and region. Material sourcing relationships must often be established from the ground up. Currency risk and longer project

## SOURCES & RESOURCES

- Howick Ltd. [howickltd.com](http://howickltd.com)
- FRAMECAD [framecad.com](http://framecad.com) Steel Framing Connections podcast available through [BuildSteel.org](http://BuildSteel.org)
- Remagin Ireland formerly Horizon Offsite; part of the Etex Group [remagin.world/en/](http://remagin.world/en/)
- Scottsdale Construction Systems [scs.com.au](http://scs.com.au)

## INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS

- Steel Framing Industry Association (SFIA) – [sfia.memberclicks.net](http://sfia.memberclicks.net)
- BuildSteel.org – [buildsteel.org](http://buildsteel.org)
- Metal Building Manufacturers Association (MBMA) – [mbma.com](http://mbma.com)

## MARKETING RESEARCH

- Growth Market Reports: Global Metal Building System Market (2024–2033, CAGR 6.9%, \$67.8B to \$124.8B)
- Data Bridge Market Research: Global Light Gauge Steel Framing Market (\$37.45B in 2022, projected \$56.18B by 2030)
- Valuates Reports: Global Light Steel Framing (LSF) Market (\$23.57B in 2024, projected \$43.66B by 2031)
- PS Market Research: Global Structural Metal Products Market (\$510.3B in 2024, projected \$764B by 2030)

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE SHOWS

- Asia Metal Building Design and Industry Expo (MBE 2026) – Shanghai, August 2026
- Batimat – Paris, France September 2026
- Offsite Expo – United Kingdom September 2026
- METALCON – USA October 2026

timelines require financial discipline. However, companies that have overcome these challenges, including many clients in the global LGS and metal building sector, describe international markets as transformative for their businesses.

Ireland's Remagin provides a model: the company developed deep expertise in a single technology, invested in reliable equipment, and built a reputation for full-service delivery, setting it apart from competitors offering only components. This approach led directly to rapid national market leadership.

The global housing and infrastructure challenge will persist. The United Nations projects that 2.5 billion more people will move to cities by 2050, most of them in Africa and Asia. Traditional construction methods cannot meet this demand. Metal building systems, which are precision-engineered, factory-produced, and rapidly assembled, offer a viable solution. The question for North American companies is whether they will help shape this narrative. **MB**