

FEB/MAR 2021
Vol. 4, No. 1

Rollforming

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Magazine

**2021
CONSTRUCTION
ROLLFORMING SHOW
REGISTRATION
NOW OPEN!**
SEE PAGE 7
FOR DETAILS

THE HISTORY OF ROLL FORMERS

DESIGNER OF FIRST PORTABLE
REFLECTS ON HIS JOURNEY

COVID'S EFFECT ON STEEL

A NEW REALITY OF LOW
SUPPLIES, HIGH PRICES

LOOKING TO BUY A NEW MACHINE?

10 QUESTIONS
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Building Homes For Heroes Speaker To Give CRS Keynote

■ By Sharon Thatcher and Karen Knapstein

Jim Rogers, Director of Development for the national non-profit Building Homes for Heroes, will be the keynote speaker for the 2021 Construction Rollforming Show. The show, postponed in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, has been rescheduled for June 3-4 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Building Homes for Heroes organizes the modification and building of mortgage-free homes gifted to injured veterans and their families.

After a successful career of more than 20 years in the Air Force serving in locations around the globe, followed by nearly a decade of supporting wounded veterans and their families in his current role, Rogers shares this message while speaking to Fortune 500 companies, businesses, organizations and participating in television and radio interviews across the country. He is tasked with helping the organization grow by uniting businesses, organizations and individuals around the common goal of supporting wounded veterans and their families nationwide.

Rogers holds a M.A. in Leadership and enjoys spending time with his family on their 50 acres of natural forested property and restoring his family's nearly 200-year-old historic farmhouse in the Mohawk Valley in Upstate New York.

Building Homes For Heroes

Building Homes for Heroes was founded by Andy Pujol in 2006, inspired after volunteering in the search and rescue for survivors of the 9-11 terrorist attacks.

According to Building Homes for Heroes Vice President Kimberly Vesey, one day, Pujol heard young veterans talking on the radio about the struggles they were dealing with and decided he would build a home and gift it to a veteran.

Vesey said it took Pujol time to incorporate and find his way, but after that one home was adapted and gifted, he thought, "Why stop now?" So the

goals grew, and the organization grew.

Based in New York, Building Homes For Heroes is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that now serves the entire country. "We've gifted homes in 33 states in home gifts and modifications," Vesey said. "We're attempting to get to every state; that's the goal."

While home gifting is the largest program, Building Homes for Heroes offers many other types of assistance. These additional programs include financial planning, sponsorships for athletic programs, emergency support, and more.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the non-profit acted quickly and initiated a new program; it sent \$500 checks to veterans for emergency funding.

"Psychological wounds cause veterans to fear for their lives," explained Vesey. Due to COVID-19, those who suffer from PTSD are "afraid now for their spouse, children, and parents. They're

afraid now for the people that they love."

Partnerships with national distributors are critical for the organization because those companies can ship directly to the building site, Vesey explained. Sponsors who provide materials get deductions for donating products and they are included in the promotional coverage.

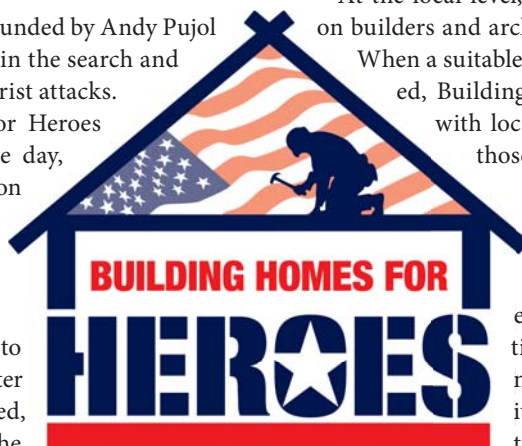
At the local level, the organization is dependent on builders and architects to donate labor or time.

When a suitable home location has been selected, Building Homes for Heroes partners with local builders and then pulls in those national product sponsors.

Building Homes for Heroes has set the bar high; on average, they seek to gift one home every 11 days. With continued support, the organization hopes to reach its 300th home gift by the end of 2021. RF



Jim Rogers



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On The Cover

In addition to higher prices and lower steel supply, COVID-19 has hastened the use of Electric Arc Furnaces (ERF) in newer mills. Related articles starting on p. 16.

Next Issue: • CRS Preview Issue
• Old vs New Machine Purchases

Registration Open For CRS

Rescheduled show set for June 3-4 in Cincinnati

■ By Sharon Thatcher

Let's try this again! The December Construction Rollforming Show (CRS) was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions, but we are feeling optimistic about the June show. In fact, registration for attendees is now open, and hotel registrations at reduced rates are available. Go to our website for more details: www.constructionmagnet.com/construction-rollforming-registration. It includes information on exhibitors, programming, show registration, and guest hotel lodging.

We are still finalizing the educational programming but a comprehensive schedule is being planned. Topics range from roll former basics; to the pros and cons of buying vs. leasing; coil and coating warranties; metal types and uses; software; packaging, shipping and delivering products, and much more.

We are pleased to announce that a spokesman for the Building Homes for Heroes organization will kick off the annual trade show with the keynote address. Jim Rogers, Director of Development, will be speaking right

from the trade show floor at 1 p.m. on opening day. The trade show floor will open to visitors at noon. You can read more about Jim on page 8.

Gary Reichert, Publisher of Shield Wall Media, the show's sponsor is optimistic about the resumption of the trade show industry in general. "We keep in regular contact with the exhibition venues for our trade shows," he said. "Lobbyists are pushing state governments to loosen restrictions and several states have already begun the process. We are not there yet, but the light at the end of the tunnel is looking less like an oncoming train than a few weeks ago."

Virtual shows have helped fill the void. "Innovation is always good and sometimes successful," Reichert added. "I do not believe virtual shows will ever replace traditional shows, but they will create one more avenue to deliver information."

We will provide more details about the Construction Rollforming Show in the April issue of *Rollforming Magazine*. Also check our website for updates.

THE VALUE OF TRADE SHOWS

From a personal perspective, I'm looking forward to the resumption of in-person trade shows. You can't beat face-to-face interactions. That was a point driven home to me while working on an article for this issue featuring Long Creek Steel in South Dakota. Watching a demonstration at our first Construction Rollforming Show in December 2019, representatives from Long Creek were led to the eventual purchase of a new automated line from SWI. Pat Strouth at LCS shared the company's journey of decisions to grow their business. Their story can be found in this issue.

Also in this issue is an article on the crazy steel market: an important topic to follow in the months ahead. I enjoyed speaking with insiders who could explain what was happening and why. It also led to an article on the emergence of mini mills and how they are changing the production of steel.

CORRECTION

A photo in the Winter of issue of *Rollforming Magazine* for the article "From Milk to Metal" incorrectly identified the representative from Hershey's Metal Meister. It was Hershey's technology expert Nelson Zook who was pictured, not Nelson Hershberger. My fault and my apology for the error.



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Presented by the Publishers of Rollforming Magazine

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT GARY REICHERT:
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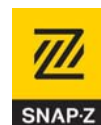
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Shield Wall Media Launches New Award

The Building Progress Award to recognize individuals' impact on construction trade

The Shield Wall Media Building Progress Award is being launched to recognize individuals who have made significant impacts on the growth and/or development of the construction trade.

The new award will replace, and build upon, two previous awards from our sister publications: The Rural Builder Hall of Fame and the Metal Roofing Magazine Hall of Fame awards. The Rural Builder Hall of Fame ran from 1982-2020. The Metal Roofing Magazine Hall of Fame ran from 2007-2019.

Both of these long-standing Hall of Fame programs have now come to a close and have been replaced by the Building Progress Award program.

DETAILS ABOUT THE SHIELD WALL MEDIA BUILDING PROGRESS AWARD PROGRAM

In this program, one award will be presented each year beginning in 2022. Anyone can nominate one or more individuals who have had a significant impact on some facet of the low-rise construction trades serving the town and country market.

As the name implies, the Building Progress Award will be bestowed upon someone who has spent their career bettering and advancing the low-rise construction industry. Those advancements may include innovating products or processes, developing solutions to significant problems in the trade, influencing young people entering the workforce or people from other professions to join the construction trades, supporting trade

education efforts, or any number of other ways to positively influence the construction industry.

NOMINATION & VOTING PROCESS

The nomination process is non-exclusive; anyone who has a vested interest in the construction trade may nominate a candidate who has made an impact on the low-rise construction industry. Builders, manufacturers, public relations and media professionals, and anyone else who comes in frequent and close contact with construction trade leaders and influencers are in an excellent position to make nominations.



Candidates must have made exceptional, enduring contributions to the success of the industry and must have been active in the industry for a minimum of 10 years. Individuals who have received entry into the Metal Roofing Hall of

Fame or Rural Builder Hall of Fame are eligible for the Building Progress Award.

Once a nominee's qualifications have been reviewed and vetted, the candidate's professional profile will be published online and in all Shield Wall Media titles (time permitting).

The Nomination Period for the Building Progress Award cycle closes December 31 each year. Voting for the first award cycle will commence January 1, 2022. Ballots will be published in each of our magazines, distributed via email, and voting will be available online.

Voting for the inaugural award will continue through the final day of the 2022 Construction Rollforming Show, which will be held in August. (Exact dates will be announced as 2022 show plans develop.) Voting is open to everyone over the age of 18, but is limited to one vote per person.

The candidate with the most votes will be announced and live-streamed from the Garage, Shed & Carport Builder Show in November 2022. This person will have the distinction of being honored with the inaugural Shield Wall Media Building Progress Award. Additionally, Shield Wall Media will donate \$1,000 to the charity of the recipient's choice. The charity is subject to approval and must be a 501(c)(3) organization.

All non-winning candidates will be rolled over and included on the next year's ballot, making repeat nominations unnecessary.

Feel free to contact Sharon@shieldwall-media.com at any time for a nomination form. RF

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DYNA-GUARD® Snow Retention System installed on a metal roof.

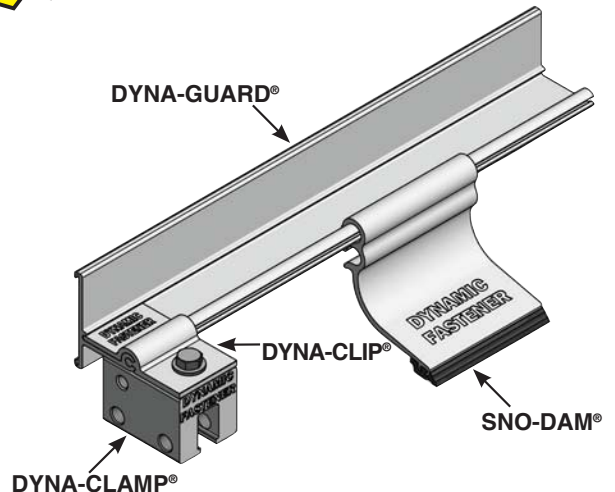
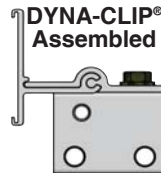
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No Change In Steel Tariffs Expected

President Joe Biden is likely to keep Section 232 steel tariffs in place, a step that is welcome by U.S. steel industry organizations and union groups.

Imposed by the Commerce Department under President Trump in March 2018, it includes tariffs of 25% on steel and 10% on aluminum.

Biden is said to want to take time to consider the matter, while keeping his focus on the myriad of other issues facing the nation. Helping to confirm that are statements coming out of the White House indicating that there is a concern over China's more "assertive" and "authoritarian" actions in recent years. The Biden administration is calling for "patience" in dealing with those threats.

Prior to President Biden's inauguration, the American Iron and Steel Institute, the Steel Manufacturers Association, the United Steelworkers union, the Committee on Pipe and Tube Imports, and the American Institute of Steel Construction issued a joint letter to Biden urging him to keep the national security tariffs in place to ensure the viability of domestic steel production.

"Unfortunately, the steel industry's recovery was set back by the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a significant drop in demand last spring, forcing painful job cuts as steel mills, fabricators and pipe and tube mills either cut back production or shut down entirely. As customers have restarted production, the steel industry has begun to recover, but we remain very vulnerable to new surges in imports," the letter stated.

Steel overcapacity throughout the world grew to 700 million metric tons in 2020, or eight times the total steel output of the United States last year. China, Vietnam and Turkey are among those countries that are increasing their steel production even as world demand drops. As well, Korea, Russia, Ukraine and Indonesia have been exporting larger shares of their steel production.

In making their case to Biden, the steel groups said removing or weakening of the tariffs "will only invite a new surge in imports with devastating effects to domestic steel producers and their workers. We must not repeat the experience of the 1990s, when the demand shock of the Asian Financial Crisis resulted in surges in steel imports from many regions of the world and led to widespread steel industry bankruptcies and job losses."



S-5! COLORGUARD VOTED TOP PRODUCT OF 2020

The S-5! ColorGuard snow retention system was named the #1 Top Product for 2020 by *Metal Roofing Magazine*, a sister publication to *Rollforming Magazine*.

Of the more than 150 metal roofing products featured throughout 2020 in *Metal Roofing Magazine*, 66 made the final ballot. Readers were then given a chance to vote to determine the final winners.

In addition to S-5! ColorGuard, the winners include:

- Ultra-Vent roof vent from A.B. Martin Roofing Supply;
- rFOIL 2200 reflective insulation from Covertech;
- 175S Snap Lock metal roofing panel from Drexel Metals;
- 4350 Metal Roof & Siding Construction Sealant from Geocel;
- RoloShield 25 (now Roloshield Plus) and RoloShield 50 (now Roloshield Pro) underlayments from Levi's Building Components;
- Double-deck roll formers from Metal Rollforming Systems;
- HT Wind & Water Seal underlayment from MFM Building Products;
- 2.0" Mechanical Seam metal roofing panel from Sheffield Metals;
- ZXL MB WoodBinder from ST Fastening Systems;
- R-Mer Force flashless edge metal system from The Garland Company;
- Galvalume steel coil from United Steel Supply.

A feature appears in Metal Roofing Magazine's February/March issue offering more information on each of the products.



THE DM-ARM HAS YOUR BACK!

Drexel Metals Association of Regional Manufacturers (DM-ARM) is a comprehensive portable roll former program designed to help you meet building codes and build your brand locally. The Drexel Metals DM-ARM program allows installers and regional manufacturers to grow their businesses by offering better local control, greater profits, freight savings, less scrap, and the ability to provide metal roofing on-demand.

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ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS MADE TO OSHA CIVIL PENALTIES

The U.S. Department of Labor has announced adjustments to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) civil penalty amounts based on cost-of-living adjustments for 2021.

OSHA's maximum penalties for serious and other-than-serious violations will increase from \$13,494 per violation to \$13,653 per violation. The maximum penalty for willful or repeated violations will increase from \$134,937 per violation to \$136,532 per violation.

The increased penalty levels apply to any penalties assessed after January 15, 2021.

RIMA INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS WITH ASTM INTERNATIONAL

The Reflective Insulation Manufacturers Association International (RIMA-I) has joined with ASTM International and their certification team, and SEI (Safety Equipment Institute) to manage the RIMA-I voluntary product Verification Program. The program verifies reflective products meet ASTM standards and codes.

Once a product has been approved, the verified product will bear the ASTM/RIMA-I Verification mark along with a unique code identifying each product's country, company and product category.

RIMA-I launched the program in 2009 with the goal of emphasizing the importance of proper product testing and to help those purchasing product to know that it meets or exceeds ASTM standards.

The structure of the program will remain the same under SEI's management. There are five product categories: reflective insulation, radiant barrier, interior radiation control coatings (IRCCs), and radiant barrier sheathing. A third-party independent testing and inspection laboratory will determine whether a product's physical properties comply with the appropriate standards. At this time, verification is only available for products sold/purchased by RIMA members in the United States, but is slated to include other countries in the future.

TRACHTE BUILDING SYSTEMS ACQUIRES ALABAMA COMPANIES

Trachte Building Systems, Inc., Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, announced the acquisition of three related businesses located in Vernon, Alabama: Roof Mart, LLC; Made Right, LLC; and Metal Land, LLC.

In making the announcement in December, Trachte Building Systems said the new operating platform will improve its position as the leading resource for self-storage building systems, steel curtain doors, refurbishment services and public safety training systems. "It will also provide the required resources to

accelerate the growth of Roof Mart and Made Right Buildings," according to a company press release.

Joe McNees, current COO of the Roof Mart companies, joins the Trachte organization as general manager for the new Roof Mart division of Trachte Building Systems. The division will remain in Vernon.

"We will invest in our Vernon operation to enhance the value of all of our combined products and services for our customers," Jeff Burbach, CEO Trachte Building Systems said.

Founded in 1901, Trachte Building Systems, Inc. is an employee-owned company.

The Roof Mart companies were started by Robert McNees in 2004. Roof Mart and Made Right manufacture and market metal roof panels, wall panels, trims, trusses, sheds, and post and beam building packages. They also erect post-frame buildings.



MRA LAUNCHES 2021 BEST RESIDENTIAL ROOFING PROJECT COMPETITION

The Metal Roofing Alliance (MRA) has kicked off its 2021 Best Residential Metal Roofing Project quarterly competition. This year the opportunity to enter is open to both the trades and homeowners.

Designed to honor the most stylish, creative and effective use of metal roofing, the MRA will select one winner each quarter based on project appearance, performance and originality/use of materials. Interested participants may upload online their project photo along with a 200 word or less description for why their metal roofing project is worthy of top honors. Winners will be highlighted on MRA's website and digital channels and will receive a \$200 prize. MRA's quarterly honorees for 2021 will be selected in March, June, September and December. Only residential metal roofing projects in the U.S. and Canada will be considered.

For more information about how to enter MRA's "Best Residential Metal Roofing Project" competition, visit www.metalroofing.com

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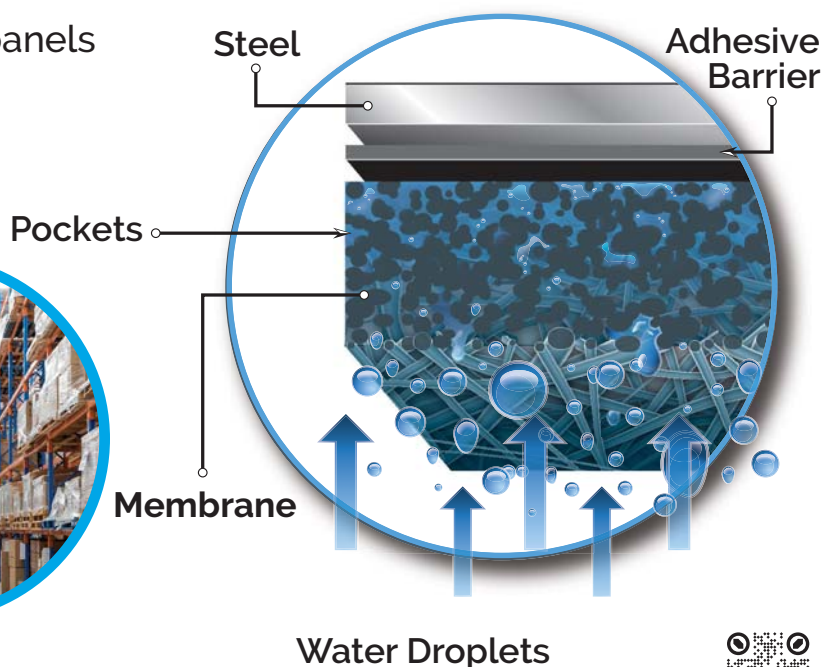
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Recent Changes To PPP Program Promise To Make It More User-Friendly

■ By Jenn Milner & Sharon Thatcher

If you were discouraged at navigating through the Personal Paycheck Protection (PPP) program last year, there have been some changes to make the system more user-friendly. Until early 2021, the application for PPP loan forgiveness was a couple of pages with many pages of instructions. Now, for borrowers seeking forgiveness for \$150,000 or less, there is a streamlined, one-page application.

Also new starting this year: The covered period for PPP loans can be anywhere from 8 to 24 weeks, instead of one or the other, allowing borrowers plenty of time to apply for forgiveness.

Under the second draw of the PPP loan program, however, note that the number of employees for an eligible company has been reduced from 500 to 300.

Importantly, the Small Business Administration (SBA), the IRS, and the Department of Labor (DOL) have worked out a lot of loan forgiveness tax questions in the last year. Forgiveness for PPP loans is not taxable income, so once forgiven, the loan essentially becomes a non-taxable grant.

WHAT THE PERSONAL PAYCHECK PROTECTION LOAN COVERS

At least 60% of the funds need to be spent on recouping payroll expenses: wages, leaves of absence, commission, vacation time, and some health care costs. The remaining 40% can be spent on non-payroll expenses, including rent or lease payments, mortgage interest, utilities, and worker protection expenditures like personal protective equipment (PPE) or building modifications made to achieve COVID compliance.

The first draw of PPP loans is still available to any small business with fewer than 500 employees, or any 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, 501(c)(19) veterans' organization, or tribal business concern (sec. 31(b)(2)(C) of the Small Business Act) even if they exceed 500 employees. To determine your possible loan amount, calculate the average monthly payroll and multiply by 2½ with a maximum of \$10 million. Businesses can choose to use 2019 or 2020 payroll numbers to make calculations.

The second draw of PPP loans is available to businesses in the



U.S. Small Business Administration

same categories who have already received and spent the first draw loan. These businesses must, however, have fewer than 300 employees and must be able to demonstrate a 25% reduction in gross receipts from one quarter of 2019 to 2020.

The loan forgiveness paperwork needs to be submitted through the same lender as the loan. That doesn't mean that forgiveness paperwork needs to be complete before applying for a second draw loan, or that the second draw loan needs to be with the same lender as the first.

SBA RESOURCES AND A WORD OF CAUTION

While many small businesses depend on a lender to navigate the loan process, the SBA has a large number of resources available. For more information and to stay up-to-date on PPP assistance,

visit sba.gov, subscribe to the SBA email at sba.gov/updates, and follow the SBA on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

A word of caution, however. The identities of all borrowers who received Paycheck Protection Program loans under the Cares Act and Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) are available to the public. While there are valid reasons for why, the availability of this information has also led to third-party scams. Beware of any third party attempting to collect your personally identifiable information (PII) via phone and email, even if they use the SBA logo or

already know some information about your business. The SBA assures, "federal agencies that provide disaster recovery assistance will never ask for a fee or payment to apply for financial assistance, and government employees do not charge for any recovery assistance provided."

When in doubt, speak with your personal banker or contact the SBA directly before disclosing any information. [RF](#)



Calendar of Events))



BEFORE TRAVELING, CHECK FOR EVENT UPDATES.

MARCH 2021

ADDED VIRTUAL EVENT: 2-4. International Roofing Expo.
www.theroofingexpo.com.

CANCELLED. 3-5. Frame Building Expo. Nashville, Tennessee.
www.nfbfa.org.

16-18. National Insulation Association Virtual Spring Summit.
www.insulation.org.

APRIL 2021

12-16. The Virtual Steel Conference. www.nascc.aisc.org

19-21. National Coil Coating Association Annual Meeting.
Austin, Texas. www.coilcoating.org.

JUNE 2021

NEW DATES: 3-4. 2nd Annual Construction Rollforming Show.
Duke Energy Convention Center. Cincinnati, Ohio. www.constructionmagnet.com/construction-rollforming-registration.

NEW DATES: 8-10. World of Concrete. Las Vegas, Nevada.
www.worldofconcrete.com.

27-29. Western Roofing Expo. Las Vegas, Nevada.
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COVID's Effect On Steel

The pandemic brought big changes and concerns for more than just our health!
High prices, limited supply of steel/aluminum coil expected through mid-2021

■ By Sharon Thatcher

Small- to medium-size roll-forming companies over the past few years had the luxury and convenience of knowing, without commitments or forecasting, their acrylic and prepainted coil needs. They could reach out to any number of coil distributors who were stocking all or most of their items.

That was until COVID-19 arrived in spring of last year, impacting multiple manufacturing segments using metal. With closures of auto assembly, appliance, aerospace plants and other industries due to COVID outbreaks and concerns, mills were being idled or closed short term over the unknown, and the fear of how long some of these manufacturers would be running at reduced productivity. About 20% of the U.S. metal industry output was taken off-stream as a result.

When businesses returned to normal productivity, consumption inventories of metal were shrinking because the mills held off bringing back most of the mills that were idled. Through 2019 and early 2020, capacity utilization had been running around 65%; most mills needed to be running at 70% or above to really make money.

Steve Swaney, Sales & Business Development at metal service center, Flack Global Metals, said the current situation is “re-writing the metal history books,” especially for the building products industry. It was enjoying a strong year particularly in the residential sector. Through the early months of COVID it was one of the least impacted due to the majority of the construction work done outside with natural social distancing



among workers.

“We started 2020 with a buyer-driven market,” Swaney explained. “There was plenty of steel — metal pricing was near historic lows in some cases — then the market started on a meteoric rise starting in September, and within four months we saw the most rapid and dramatic price change and level surpassing the previous record year of 2008. We ended the year with hot-rolled steel more than doubling in price and galvanized and Galvalume not far from it.”

Due to the large amount of stock and inventory the major coil distributors had on hand, the erosion of inventory levels, and the series of price increases the mills were putting through disguised the impact in the roll-forming and fab-

rication sector. “It was not until October when people really started seeing and feeling the impact of rising cost and less available inventory,” Swaney explained. Still, due to the history of metal markets, there were those doubters who felt things would soon return to normal and continue on its trek.

“Once we got into mid- to late-November everyone was well aware the mills were in control and we had a runaway train on our hands,” Swaney continued. “COVID had allowed the mills to set up the ‘Perfect Storm’ for metal supply knowing service centers reduced their buying and inventory levels in fear over how COVID would impact [the market].

Within the storm clouds: 20% of the U.S. capacity had been taken off-line,

NMLK had a union-strike, Section 232 tariffs and a weak dollar brought import levels to almost historic lows. “Yet,” Swaney said, “demand for metal remained strong and was actually increasing as we entered 2021.”

Bob Kula, Sales Manager—Building Products, for steel supplier Mill Steel, likens the recent steel market to a rocket ship ride. “We put our customers on allocation the middle of October because we could not get enough steel for our monthly demand, and a lot of our competitors were in a worse situation,” he said.

By the end of the year, excess inventory was nowhere to be found. “Typically, [steel coil] for buildings, there’s inventory on the ground all over the country, but that’s not the case anymore; it’s all dried up, therefore everything that comes in goes out at a very fast pace,” Kula said.

He has worked in various segments of the steel market for 30 years and hasn’t seen anything quite like it. “It is comparable to markets of 2004 and 2008, but the difference back then, in those markets, is that you could still get steel; it was just that the price was rising weekly. Now you can’t get steel, but you’re still paying the price.”

Graber Post Buildings, based in Indiana, has a diversified building supply business focused on post frame. It is a smaller, more regionalized steel supplier, with only about 7-8% of its business focused on direct coil sales to typically smaller rollformers. Graber also does its own roll forming for roof and wall panels that are sold retail, and used by their 30 subcontracted building teams.

Their coil sales business was caught in the price-and-supply dilemma starting

Caution: Not Just Any Coil Will Do

Rollformers desperate for coil may be tempted to buy HSLA steel as an excess prime or secondary product. Beware this steel type is not roll former friendly. Steve Swaney, Flack Global Metals, cautions that the auto industry has switched to this higher strength steel for many body parts. He noted: “Buyers are going to need to be educated and aware of what they are being offered so they don’t get a product they can’t work with. Know and trust your sources.”

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when they ordered coil in September for October delivery. “We were told [by our supplier] that they just over-booked and they had to start limiting orders so they could catch back up,” steel purchasing agent Cole Welford said. “I’m afraid it’s still going up. It went up pretty heavy for February deliveries and I think they’ll probably go up for March deliveries.” He said their coil division paid 33% more for steel from the lowest price in 2020 to the highest.

Welford also said that some supplies have been easier to get than others, with no particular rhyme or reason. “We’ve got some stock taking 90 days that would normally take three or four weeks, six weeks if running late in a normal year,” he said. They have limited the amount of steel they offer coil customers to make sure they have enough for their own sub crews, and to satisfy the demands of their more regular roll-forming customers.

Important to note is that steel mills often have a multi-market focus, meaning they produce steel for HVAC, appliances, aerospace, transportation and other industries in addition to building products. As the mills gear back up, they need to service all those various interests.

Large distributors for that steel—service centers like Mill Steel and Flack Global—also serve multiple industries. Both companies saw the emergence of shortages for hot-rolled building products in particular.

WHEN WILL RELIEF COME?

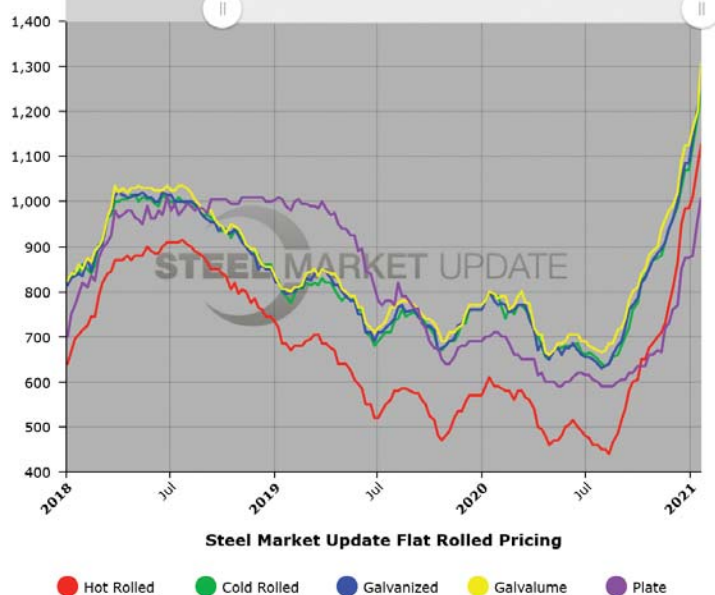
The prognosticators vary predictions from early second quarter to late third quarter before relief is seen for the price of steel to level off and supplies to ease up. COVID is still very much in control.

Good news so far is that the end user—the consumer—doesn’t seem to be bothered yet by the price increase and, in some areas of the country, are not yet impacted by significant delays. Typical winter slowdowns in northern areas have helped de-escalate concerns, along with the continuation of low interest rates, and a backlog of contracts lined up well into 2021. “Interest rates are so low that the difference in the interest rate is making up for steel pricing,” Cole Welford said.

Steve Swaney believes light gauge building products will be first to recover from the low supply. “The construction sector, we think, will be one of the first markets that kind of balances itself out. The automotive and the appliance sectors, I think those guys are going to be struggling through mid-year to get caught up,” he noted.

WHAT IS A ROLLFORMER TO DO?

Bob Kula jokingly advises: “be very kind to your steel suppliers” but it is a message that bears consideration. Bottom line, loyalty pays off. When a business has a limited supply of product to sell, they tend to dole it out to the people who have been there with them for the long haul.



Steel Pricing Going Into 2021

Up to early May 2020 steel pricing for hot-rolled steel had been struggling to reach the historic average of \$630 a ton since the China-U.S. trade war began to heat up in mid-2019. It had even dropped to \$485 a ton at its lowest point in April 2020 before shooting up to around \$1,000 a ton by the end of December 2020.

“It’s been A Tale of Two Universes,” said Steve Swaney, Flack Global Metals. “I mean, we’ve gone from one extreme to the opposite, from the beginning of the year to where we are today.”

And it’s still rising, but many believe it is near its peak. Once it stabilizes many experts expect it to hold for a month or two and have a gradual pull-back.

Pictured is a graph that reflects steel pricing since January 2018 showing the meteoric rise beginning in the last half of 2020 and continuing through the beginning of this year. This information, current through January 26, 2021, was compiled by Steel Market Update and used with their permission.

“Some of the guys trying to buy from us now, if they had been buying from us throughout the year, we would have had that [calculated] in our stocking program,” Cole Wolford said. “Loyal customers who buy from us all year, we want to make sure they get what they need.”

While Graber Post would like to accommodate all buyers, they now have to make tough choices, “because it’s just too hard on our own stock,” Wolford explained.

Steve Swaney sees a similar situation at Flack Global where they satisfy the demands of steel users in more than 30 states and across multiple platforms. He said recently, “we have been approached by customers that we’ve pursued for a year or two and our sales pitches have fallen on deaf ears. Now all of a sudden, in the last few months, we’ve become

their best friends. Because we’re having to divvy up our inventory so selectively and support the people that have been there to support us; unfortunately, we’ve had to say ‘thanks but no thanks.’”

Turning business away is not what a supplier wants to do. “As a salesperson you want to sell steel and sell as much as you can,” Bob Kula said. “Now we’re having to say no. We’ve been saying no for four or five months, and it’s getting old.”

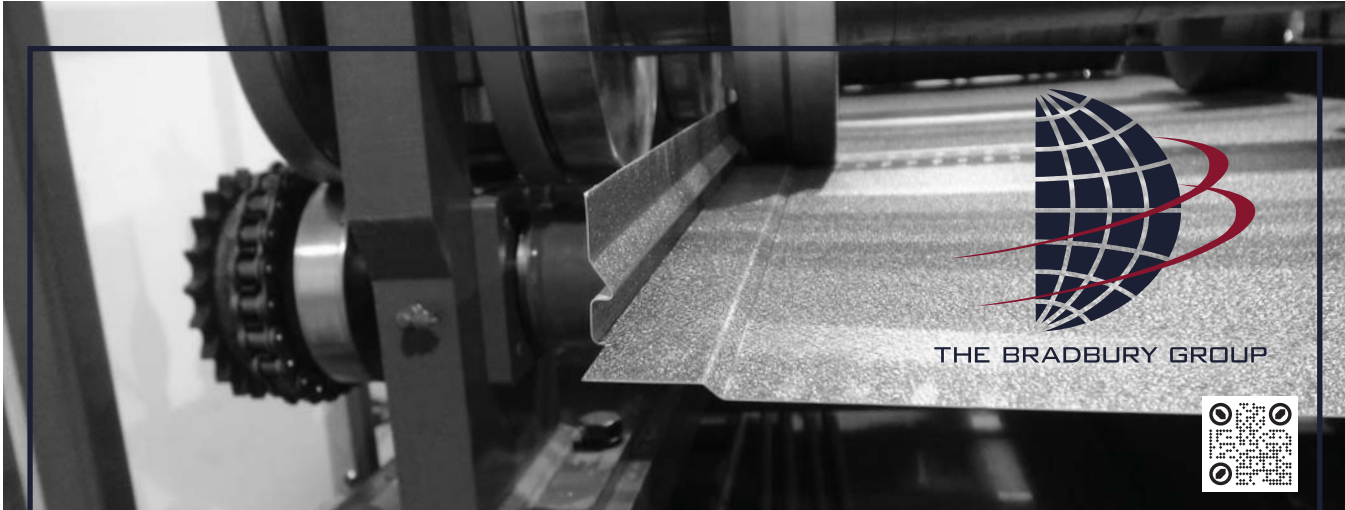
Aside from loyalty, limiting the diversity of what you offer is advisable until supply loosens up. “Most rollformers are used to offering up to 14 or 16 different colors,” Kula said. “My advice to a lot of them is reduce the number of colors you’re offering.” He suggests that rollformers carry about half their regular supply of colors, concentrating on their

most popular and “if a customer has a color outside of those, then it’s considered a special order and they’re going to have to wait.”

Even then, common colors are hard for suppliers to keep in stock due to high demand. Colors like Polar White, Light Stone and Ash Gray have been delayed because coil coaters have also been caught in the middle of the coil shortage problem; they can’t coat what they don’t have.

Stocking less makes sense for small rollformers because the price will eventually come down, as it always does.

“The hedging is over,” Kula said. “I say just buy what you need. I wouldn’t buy long—by that I mean I wouldn’t buy extra inventory—because prices are so high right now and eventually prices will slide back.”



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WHAT THE FUTURE LOOKS LIKE

Steve Swaney said rollformers are scrambling and many will need to change their business planning to avoid getting caught in situation similar to this in the future. Hedging, making some commitments, and working with coil suppliers with custom-managed inventory programs are the best ways for them to ensure availability, remove price volatility, and reduce risk. "I think all businesses will come out of this pandemic with some different strategies and plans," he said. "I think for the first half of 2021 rollformers are going to have to plan on carrying more inventory and looking farther out than they have in the past. We are months away from having just-

in-time inventory ready to go for them. Working with your suppliers in ordering, and forecasting a few months out is going to enable them to insure they can service and support their customers."

He continued to emphasize that "there really is nothing throughout history to look back on where we are today. There's too many different unique variables impacting the metal situation, and the economy in general, than any period prior that compares with what we're encountering right now."

If President Biden enacts his "Buy American Policy" for government purchasing items, Swaney believes it will help the domestic steel industry but also stimulate the need for markets like con-

struction to supplement its needs with import. A strengthening dollar and higher Chinese steel output will help balance the world metal market supply-and-demand situation.

Buying steel offshore may become more appealing again despite higher tariffs on steel and long delivery delays. Prices for offshore steel are traditionally lower, but COVID also diminished worldwide steel supplies and China, whose economy was among the first to ramp up, has been on a buying spree to scarf up that supply.

If there is any comfort to be found, find it in the fact that you're not alone. As Bob Kula tells his salespeople and customers, "We're all in the same beat-up boat, and we're all losing sleep at night." RF

Market Prices and Lead Times

Bob Kula, Mill Steel, offers a look at what the company was forecasting in its steel supply outlook for the middle of January based on market prices provided by Steel Market Update on January 13.

Hot Rolled Coil: SMU price range: \$1,030-\$1,130 per net ton (\$51.50-\$56.50/cwt) with an average of \$1,080 per ton (\$54.00/cwt) FOB mill, east of the Rockies. The lower end of our range increased \$40 per ton compared to a week earlier, while the upper end increased \$100. Our overall average was up \$70 from the previous week. Our price momentum on hot rolled steel was Higher, meaning prices were expected to rise in the following 30 days.

Hot Rolled Lead Times: 6-10 weeks

Cold Rolled Coil: SMU price range: \$1,140-\$1,240 per net ton (\$57.00-\$62.00/cwt) with an average of \$1,190 per ton (\$59.50/cwt) FOB mill, east of the Rockies. The lower end of our range increased \$60 per ton compared to a week earlier, while the upper end increased \$80. Our overall average was up \$70 per ton from one week earlier. Our price momentum on cold rolled steel was Higher, meaning prices were expected to rise in the following 30 days.

Cold Rolled Lead Times: 7-12 weeks

Galvanized Coil: SMU price range: \$1,180-\$1,240 per

net ton (\$59.00-\$62.00/cwt) with an average of \$1,210 per ton (\$60.50/cwt) FOB mill, east of the Rockies. The lower end of our range increased \$80 per ton compared to one week earlier, while the upper end increased \$60. Our overall average was up \$70 from a week earlier. Our price momentum on galvanized steel is Higher, meaning prices were expected to rise in the following 30 days.

Galvanized .060" G90 Benchmark: SMU price range is \$1,249-\$1,309 per ton with an average of \$1,279 per ton FOB mill, east of the Rockies.

Galvanized Lead Times: 8-13 weeks

Galvalume Coil: SMU price range: \$1,180-\$1,220 per net ton (\$59.00-\$61.00/cwt) with an average of \$1,200 per ton (\$60.00/cwt) FOB mill, east of the Rockies. The lower end of our range increased \$60 per ton compared to a week earlier, while the upper end increased \$20. Our overall average is up \$40 per ton from one week ago. Our price momentum on Galvalume steel was Higher, meaning prices were expected to rise in the following 30 days.

Galvalume .0142" AZ50, Grade 80 Benchmark: SMU price range was \$1,471-\$1,511 per ton with an average of \$1,491 per ton FOB mill, east of the Rockies.

Galvalume Lead Times: 8-12 weeks

Mini Mills Emerge To Lead Modern Steel Market

If you are old enough, you remember the U.S. industrial decline. A region in the Northeast and Midwest left in ashes was nicknamed the Rust Belt because of the shuttering of huge hulking industrial complexes. The decline became rapidly apparent in the 1970s and '80s, and among the victims were some of the world's largest steel mill facilities.

Today, the U.S. steel industry is making a comeback, but it is not coming back as it once was; rather, it is coming back using old steel and new technology.

MINI MILLS VS. INTEGRATED MILLS

There are two forms of steel-making operations today: integrated mills and mini mills.

Integrated mills are the old legacy mills that use raw materials like coke and iron ore melted down in huge blast furnaces. They are worker-intensive to operate, consume large amounts of water and natural gas, and require extensive periodic maintenance.

Mini mills, on the other hand, feed on scrap metal fired by electric arc furnaces (EAF). Because these mills are newer, they are built with a lot of automation and computerized controls, requiring about 20% of the number of mill personnel as integrated mills. They are also more earth-friendly. According to MarketInsider.com, EAFs are about 75% more emissions-efficient than traditional blast furnace steel mills.

THE COVID FACTOR

Mini mills have been around for about 40 years for flat-rolled steel, but COVID in some ways helped to accentuate their importance and demonstrated that they are now in control of the steel market and



not the integrated mills. "The integrated were the ones that really partially shut-down [during the early days of the pandemic]," noted Steve Swaney, Flack Global Metals. "It was the mini mills that didn't, and now they're kind of in the driver's seat; they're really controlling the market."

It isn't a new story, however. As Swaney said, "China controls a great extent of the world's steel capacity and many of their mills are mini mills. Anything new being built [in the world] today is a mini-mill type facility."

Although many old legacy steel mills have gone out of business, many surviving players remain strong. Steel Dynamics has converted its operations to use more scrap and invested \$1.9 billion in transforming a former sorghum field in Texas to a new mini mill facility. The new mill is scheduled to open this year.

Additionally, U.S. Steel just finalized its \$774 million purchase of Big River Steel, a 3-year-old mini mill in Arkansas,

while also converting one of its energy and pipe mills to an EAF facility.

Bob Kula, Mill Steel, said that while mini mills have cost advantages over integrated mills because of their new-wave technology, integrated mills will continue to play a role. It will be difficult to get rid of all of the integrated mills as no one is certain if there will be enough scrap in the future to feed only EAFs.

The need for scrap for the electric arc furnace mini mills may in fact help keep the integrated mills in business, especially in some of the Third World countries where labor costs are very low.

According to Wayne Duggan with Benzinga Insights, only 28% of global steel production currently comes from EAFs, but the International Energy Agency wants to boost that percentage to 40% by 2030. Meanwhile, the U.S. steel industry is on track to produce more than 80% of its total steel output from EAFs by 2023. [RF](#)

10 Questions Smart Buyers Ask Before Purchasing A Roll Former

■ By Chris Cox, JD

Smart buyers ask smart questions. Roll-forming equipment is not “one size fits all”; it is highly specialized equipment that varies widely in quality, performance, and features. By asking the following 10 questions, a buyer can gain the knowledge necessary to make an informed decision on which roll former is the best fit for its needs.

1. Where is the equipment manufactured? Made in the USA is more important than ever. A global pandemic and trade wars have disrupted supply chains, and getting spare parts and service for foreign-made equipment can be extremely difficult if not impossible. U.S.-based manufacturers should have an inventory of spare parts at their facility that can be shipped quickly and service technicians who can travel to customers’ factories when needed.

2. What is the roll-forming line’s throughput speed? *Throughput Speed* is the speed that a roll-forming line can produce finished panels. For example, an ASC Alpha Series® roll-forming line has a net throughput speed of 120 feet per minute (based on 20-foot panels), so a manufacturer can produce six 20-foot panels per minute. *Roll-former Speed*, in contrast, simply means how fast the shafts and dies can turn and does not take into consideration the time it takes to shear the panel, shear time, and part separation between the panels. Thus Throughput Speed is the measure of a roll-forming line’s performance that smart buyers should consider.

3. What Throughput Speed is Right for My Operations? Faster throughput

speed equals higher roll-forming equipment prices. How much is a buyer willing to spend to achieve a throughput speed of 200 feet per minute or faster? Does the buyer have a high enough demand for its panels to justify spending more for faster throughput speeds? Will the buyer need an automated stacking system to handle the faster throughput speed? Smart buyers work with their roll-forming equipment sales professional to determine what throughput speed makes the most sense for their operations.

4. What is the equipment footprint? Manufacturing floor space is extremely valuable, and equipment buyers should consider the footprint of the equipment when making a purchasing decision. For example, an ASC Alpha Series® roll-forming line’s footprint is less than 40 feet, while other panel lines can be 55 feet or longer. Smart buyers take the equipment footprint into consideration when purchasing a roll-forming line and request a drawing showing the dimensions of the equipment from the manufacturer.

5. Precut or postcut: Which option is best for me? There are advantages and disadvantages for both precut and postcut roll-forming lines, and the right choice depends on what panel profile the buyer wants to produce, whether the buyer intends to produce a significant number of panels shorter than 40 inches, whether the buyer can accept the panel end flare associated with some precut roll formers, and other specific requirements for that buyer. The buyer should discuss the pros and cons of precut and postcut roll-forming lines with the

sales professional to make the best decision for its specific operation. **Buyers Beware:** Some manufacturers only offer one model (i.e. precut only) and may only emphasize the advantages of the model they manufacture, whereas other manufacturers offer precut and postcut options to meet the customer’s requirements and preferences.

6. What type of shear is on the roll former? The type of shear on the roll former makes a significant difference in performance. The ASC Alpha Series® precut roll-forming line, for example, has an upcut electro-mechanical shear that provides a fast, quiet cut. Postcut roll formers typically use hydraulic shears with profiled shear blades because of the tonnage required to shear a profiled panel. Some manufacturers also offer pneumatic shears that are cheaper than electro-mechanical and hydraulic shears but are typically louder and may require a dedicated air compressor. Some high-speed roll-forming lines use mechanical shears. It is also important to know whether the shear cuts upward or downward. Upcut shears are generally preferable on panel roll formers because, if there are burrs because of dull blades or blade gap issues, the burr will go up and not scratch panels underneath it. Smart buyers know what type of shear is on the roll former and the benefits of that type of shear.

7. What Features are Included in the Equipment Controls? Automation can make operating roll-forming lines easy and efficient. Competent operators can be hard to find, and roll-forming line controls must make the equipment easy

to operate for any skill level. In addition, modern controls can improve the efficiency of roll-forming operations by including features such as (1) FTP Upload/Download for orders, cut lists, and settings; (2) Production and Coil Consumption Reports; and (3) Remote Access Connection for instant technical support. Smart buyers ask for a detailed description of the roll-forming line's controls and features.

8. Where can I see the equipment in operation? Seeing the roll-forming line in operation is a great way to determine whether it is the right roll-forming line for a buyer's specific needs. If possible, buyers should consider visiting a manufacturing facility to see the equipment in operation. Buyers can talk to the operator and the equipment owner to find out what they like and dislike about the equipment, check out the durability of a roll-forming line that has been operated over a period of time, and examine the quality of the panels being produced. The smart buyer may have to travel to see the equipment, but it is usually well worth the time and expense.

9. How is the equipment guarded? Safety is a key factor in a successful manufacturing operation, and machine guarding is crucial to keeping employees safe. Do the guards on the roll-forming equipment allow easy, safe access to the equipment when necessary? Or are the guards difficult to remove and reinstall? Guards that are difficult to remove and/or to reinstall increase equipment downtime, and frustrated operators may leave the guards off of the equipment rather than taking the time to reinstall them.

10. What are the warranty terms? If there is a problem with the equipment after it is delivered, a warranty can save the buyer tens of thousands of dollars or more for parts and service. Will warranties from foreign manufacturers be honored and, if not, are they enforceable in U.S. courts? Smart buyers know the terms of the warranties for the equipment they are considering for purchase.

The old saying that "knowledge is

power" is especially true in the roll-forming equipment purchasing process. A buyer first needs to know his own needs, priorities, and budgets. Then, by using the 10 questions above and working with sales professionals, the buyer can gain the knowledge to make an

informed decision and purchase the best roll-forming equipment to meet or exceed expectations. **RF**

Chris Cox, JD, is Southeast Sales Manager for ASC Machine Tools, Inc. He can be contacted at ccox@ascmt.com



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EDITOR'S NOTE:

In reviewing what articles were the most popular on our website, ConstructionMagNet.com, we rounded up the top ten, updated information, and are republishing those articles throughout this year in our various construction magazines. One of the top 10 includes the article that follows, first appearing in the June/July 2014 issue of sister publication, *Metal Roofing Magazine*.

■ By Sharon Glorioso

More and more roofing contractors these days are answering “yes” to that question. Manufacturing independence, waste management, shipping considerations and other factors paint a compelling case for contractors looking to buy a roll former and produce their own panels. But it’s not that simple — additional manufacturing costs, employee training, warehousing and a different set of transportation considerations must be weighed before pulling the trigger on this significant purchase.

Mike Milliman of Gutter Supply Inc. decided it was worth it. Gutter Supply has been selling New Tech Machinery’s gutter machines for years and has had such a positive experience with their equipment. The company recently became a distributor for New Tech’s roof panel machines. “There are so many benefits for companies to purchase their own machinery,” Milliman says. “Just not having to depend on anyone else is a big advantage. It saves time as well as money.”

Ken McLauchlan, regional manager with Drexel Metals, agrees, and says it’s about controlling what kinds of projects you want to take on. “You can control your own destiny and have the flexibility of what jobs you can do — and be confident that you are putting out a better product,” he says.

For 42 years, Roll Former Corp., of Chalfont, Pennsylvania, has designed and developed custom machinery for companies looking for a roll-forming application. “We design our custom equipment from scratch and we offer about 25 standard products,” said John Dumke, director of sales and marketing for Roll Former Corp. Dumke says that roll forming has many cost advantages over brake forming and preformed pan-



els, including:

- No expensive shipping and crating of long panels. Coils are delivered right to the shop or jobsite
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Additionally, Bruce Pearson, with Zimmerman Metals, has been in the business for more than 40 years, and he says that you can reduce your cost of doing business by using a portable roll former in many ways. “On-site fabrication eliminates shipping damage, you don’t have to worry about packaging materials, sizing errors and the panels can be custom manufactured. Also, as you make your panels on site, you don’t have to worry that the manufactured panels will get damaged laying around on the jobsite,” he says.

IN-HOUSE VS. PORTABLE ROLL FORMING EQUIPMENT

Ready to roll your own? Your next decision will be to choose between the two distinct types of roll formers — portable and in-house [stationary] machines. In-house machines are usually larger units designed and built for high-production rates. Portable roll formers

are smaller for simpler transportation and tend to be more flexible in their ability to produce a variety of panel profiles.

For in-house manufacturers, you don’t have to keep your machine busy to justify its expense, as they are built for increased orders and high-production rates.

However, portable roll formers tend to save on transportation costs — they save on packaging and freight costs while giving the roofer the ability to reduce the time of a project, instead of ordering factory-formed panels. As an added bonus, onsite panel fabrication eliminates the possibility of shipping damage to panels, miscalculated sizing, etc. Also, onsite roll formers can produce panel lengths varying in size required by the specific roof, as they are not regulated by shipping rules.

WHAT IT COSTS

So you’ve decided to open up the checkbook and buy a roll former. Will it be worth the investment? Cost varies,

and your priorities will drive just how large a check you will need to write.

“There’s the entry level and the commercial level. But having the flexibility and the ability to cut the middle man out may be beneficial to your business,” says Drexel’s McLauchlan. “The entry level roll former may start in the low \$20,000 range, where the very specific commercial machines might be as high as \$150,000. But being able to diversify your jobs will be worth the cost.”

There are a number of companies in the industry that will work with contractors on equipment financing. Another option would be to lease equipment. Leasing payments are much less expensive of the total purchase price of a roll former and it can be a pre-tax expense. Leasing also allows for upgrades and equipment add-ons.

According to Pearson at Zimmerman Metals, they train on maintenance and adjustment of their machines. “We pro-

vide training on all of our equipment. You can either do it on-site in our factory, or we will send one of our technicians out to you to do the training and it usually only takes one day. We don't charge for this on any new machines that are purchased," Pearson said.

Dumke, at Roll Former Corp., says they offer training as well. "We do this in two ways; we offer free training at our facility, or if we send a technician to the customer's location, we do charge for that cost. Either way, we will make sure that you know how to operate our custom machine."

As with any significant purchase, a contractor looking to purchase a roll former should shop around, and consider not only the price but quality reputation, warranties and service.

Additionally, Pearson says to do ref-

erence checks. "It's also important to know how long they have been building their machines; check to see if they offer training, see where they make their equipment. I personally prefer American made, but make sure it is a quality company with a quality product. We offer a two-year warranty on our machines, but we never have any problems. I built my first machine 24 years ago, and the owner today of this machine has only replaced one part in 24 years," he said.

ALWAYS EVOLVING

Today, portable roll formers tend to be more advanced and use modern technology that can produce quality panels that are competitive with in-factory roll forming machines. Portable roll formers can cut metals more quickly, without any waste. Many roll formers sold today fea-

ture computer controllers software that offers users more options and benefits than in the past. Many offer proximity sensors, multiple-length memory storage, batch and length control, and some even recognize coil color for state-of-the-art user-friendly settings.

Another key distinction among different types of roll formers is multi-panel vs. fixed panel machines. Rich Small of Englert Inc., in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, reports seeing more and more of the former.

"We are seeing more of the multi-panel options being sold, as contractors want to be able to diversify their jobs, and get more of the market share in their business," Small says. "There are also more customized projects being sought by both residential and commercial roofing contractors." **RF**

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Understanding Paint Warranties

What's covered, what's not, and how rollformers can avoid paint failure problems

By Sharon Thatcher

The metal construction industry would not be where it is today without the tremendous advances made in paint technology. The earliest construction metals were tin and copper, left uncoated to weather the elements.

Paints for an increasing variety of metals were eventually developed but had to be hand applied, typically by the roofer, then reapplied every few years. Not until the 20th century did paint companies develop sophisticated formulas that allowed for more effective means of application, working in conjunction with an early generation of coil coaters.



Peeling and flaking of paint is a sign of poor film integrity.

The increases in effectiveness, and the rise of popularity of prepainted products pushed more responsibility for paint companies to create great performing paints backed with paint warranties.

How well paint holds up in warranty depends on the quality of its components, how well it is handled before and during the application process, and what type of metal on which it's being applied. Aluminum, for instance, has a natural resistance to corrosion. By comparison steel, though highly resistant, is more



A quality coating system will maintain its film integrity over the life of the structure. This roof is an example of one that is failing.

susceptible to corrosion but can be controlled.

Rollforming Magazine turned to AkzoNobel for answers on what is and is not typically covered by warranty.

WHAT IS TYPICALLY WARRANTIED:

Film Integrity references to the paint adhesion to the substrate. Loss of film integrity shows up as peeling or flaking.

Color Retention is how long paint stays true to its original color. Fade (visible loss of color) results from chemical breakdown of a coating's base resins and pigments when exposed to natural weathering elements.

The allowable change in color/fade is reported in Delta E Hunter units. A lower Delta E number is better than a higher number. Most Delta E tolerances are Delta E of 5 for vertical (sidewall) installations and DE 7 for non-vertical (roofing) for the duration of time expressed in years on a warranty. It's a recommended practice of keeping your prepaint product free of dirt and other debris by periodically washing the structure.

Chalk Resistance — Chalking shows up as a white residue.

It is a result of decomposition of the paint film caused by ultraviolet rays, moisture, heat, or a combination of all three. The decomposition can be measured by rubbing the coated surface with a soft fabric and calculating the amount of powder picked up. Ratings, established by ASTM D659, are from 0-10 depicted by increments of 2, where 10 indicates the least chalking.

As important as what is covered by a warranty is what is *not* covered.

COMMON NON-WARRANTABLE SITUATIONS:

- Substrate corrosion, including failure or damage from under-film or edge corrosion.
- Coatings not applied in accordance with good install practices.
- Breaches in the coating film caused by installation scratches, abrasions or hard impact.
- Damage caused by moisture entrapment (between bundles or during transit).
- Mixing of different paint systems.
- Unapproved chemicals or cleaners.
- Where materials or items are permanently attached or adhere to the coating.

WHEN A COATING SYSTEM FAILS

Coating inspections should be handled by the panel manufacturer, coil supplier, coil coater and paint company. They are the best ones to have the resources and expertise to determine cause. Scott Hanna, Regional Sales Manager for AkzoNobel's Coil North America noted that common culprits leading to paint failures include poor panel storage on a job site, post painting with inferior air-dry touch-up systems, installation scratches, defective metal, out-of-spec application processes, and inferior coating systems.

TIPS FOR ROLLFORMERS

Rollformers can minimize their own risk for getting sucked into a paint failure issue by understanding the metal they handle.

"Making certain the correct coating system is selected for its intended end use is very important," noted Hanna. "Inferior performing coating systems can lead to premature failure depending upon the warranty expectations. Learn and understand what paint system is being used and who the coating manufacturer is when acquiring painted coils.

"A properly assembled prepainted package: substrate, cleaning,



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pretreat, paint selection, along with paint application creates a very durable and long-lasting product," he added.

Beware that all paints and coatings are not created equally. "A rollformer should contact his/her paint supplier and ask for specifics about paint performance," advised Hanna. "Rollformers should educate themselves on who is involved in the entire prepaint supply ... to prevent any possible issues."

Good companies will go the extra mile to help rollformers understand their product purchases.

AkzoNobel offers proof of performance through real world testing protocols. "We always have the next generation of technology under testing in real world exposure," Hanna said.

They also have a free app, (found in the Apple App Store under Canopy by AkzoNobel), to help educate rollformers



Animal confinement facilities are highly corrosive environments. Care is needed in the proper selection of paint systems, and installation procedures to limit damage.

about paint performance. "For instance, our app contains a weather simulator where a rollformer can get a visual representation of what a Delta E could look like in order to best educate their

customers on color retention," Hanna explained.

You can learn more about the Canopy app at coilcoatings.AkzoNobel.com/us/our-digital-tool. RF



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Long Creek Steel

South Dakota business grows from country creek to busy highway

■ By Sharon Thatcher

Long Creek Steel is a family business that took roots near the shores of a small creek running through a South Dakota farm near the town of Lennox. A father and his two boys had a “pipedream” for starting a business that today employs more than 35 workers. The initial machines have been joined by over a dozen more in a shop teeming with activity. When they moved to their new facility, the quiet scenery of the farm and Long Creek a few miles away was replaced by a busy highway that leads to Sioux Falls in one direction and Sioux City in another.

The founder of Long Creek Steel, Paul Hofer Sr. and his two sons Paul Jr. and George, were all general tradesman by profession. According to the company’s present-day general manager Pat Strouth, the Hofers “are all very talented at many different avenues, but Paul Sr. always wanted to fabricate steel wall and roof components for the ag business.”

Their journey into fabrication started with a metal roofing business. At first,

the steel they used was purchased from suppliers, “and Paul Sr. thought, ‘why don’t we start rolling our own?’” The cost of the needed machinery couldn’t be justified for just their own work, however, so he began also to sell his panels to other roofers and post-frame builders in the area.

The business grew and continued to do well with the help of his two sons and other family members. Seeing that there was greater potential they looked to hire someone with industry experience and the ability to help take the company to the next level. In 2011 they hired Pat Strouth.

The plan to build a new facility was laid in place as they knew the old facility where they started would not be able to support the business that was going to come. “The ground was broke for the new state-of-the-art facility along 1-29 between Sioux Falls and Beresford,” said Strouth.

The company was transformed from mostly direct sales to distribution in the following months. Instead of selling to tradesmen, they redirected their focus

on selling to lumberyards and wholesale companies. “Long Creek Steel has a geographical footprint of about a 300-mile radius around us and every lumberyard in that radius has the ability to buy from us,” he explained.

What they sell has few limits. “Whether it be commercial, architectural, industrial, residential, agricultural, we will try to supply what our customers need,” he said.

THE STEEL MARKET

Like many roll-forming shops around the country, 2020 figured out to be a good year for orders, and 2021 has started out strong. However, Strouth wonders if higher steel prices aren’t reversing historical trends in his area with bigger orders being placed now in preparation for what’s ahead.

“We’re getting bombarded with price increases and I think there’s a lot of advance ordering going on; they’re trying to beat price increases,” he said, adding: “The dynamics of 2021 are going to be very intriguing.” Historically, he noted, “January, February and March are normally our slow months; from

there, everything starts ramping up, and then September, October and November are normally our big months.” Because buying has continued to be very strong in what is normally the slow months, he speculates that the business year will be flipped end for end. “What’s happening is, projects are coming forward that probably wouldn’t have been done until later in the year,” he said.

For its own part Long Creek Steel tried to prepare for the crazy ride of higher steel prices. “To be honest, we thought we saw this coming, so we were preordering heavier than we would normally for that time of year,” Strouth said. “Who knows, 30 days from now it could all be different, but as of right now, it’s business as normal, the orders are coming in and we’re all trying to cope with the [steel price] increases.”

He’s expecting to see some fluctuation

in pricing throughout the year, then an eventual settling down, but thinks “2022 is probably when it really stabilizes and gets back to whatever normal is.”

TRENDS

In his own experience being around the industry, Strouth says the one thing he’s noticed is the impact women are having on metal industry trends. “Women in the world are getting more involved in the operations of things; a farm operation today is a husband-and-wife team. A lot of the old color [on buildings] was white. Now with a female’s input, there’s beautiful buildings being used for confinement. There’s now a vivid eye out there making decisions.”

That’s especially true with color: “You’re seeing all kinds of things done today that 20 years ago weren’t being done.” And those decisions tend to change more often.

“Black might be the big color today, and a year from now it might be back to the clays and taupes,” he said.

What type of building is selling in South Dakota? A little bit of everything but housing in particular has been strong in part due to low interest rates. Of special appeal are hobby shops with housing (“shouses”). “Shouses are huge,” he said. “They’ve just been really strong for over a year. It gives people the opportunity to have a beautiful shop and a house all in one.”

Long Creek Steel is fortunate to have a solid workforce helping to produce the orders that will one day end up on those shouses. In addition to the Hofer family, there are other family and friends on the payroll. “It’s a very family-oriented business. I can say I’m very, very happy and thankful. I have great people surrounding me, we have great customers surrounding us; we’re very fortunate.” RF



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Making The Leap To An Automated Trim Line

What Long Creek considers when buying new equipment

With 17 fabricating machines helping to feed their business, Long Creek Steel has been through the machine acquisition process many times. Their most recent purchase was an automated trim line from SWI Machinery.

Strouth said the company has always bought new equipment,

even from the very start. No decision, however, has been hasty. Strouth said when the Hofer family started the fabrication side of the business, “they started with the minimum number of machines needed: they had the roll former, a brake and they had a manual slit line. It was all good equipment, but it was essential equipment needed to get them started. As the company grew, we’ve added more and more machinery all the time. We’re always thinking and looking for ways to increase production. We’re always looking for equipment that is of high quality, but at a fair price.”

They did not have any SWI equipment when they ventured to the Construction Rollforming Show in late 2019 and saw the Marxman Pro in action. “We saw it at the trade show, that’s how it all originated,” Strouth said. “It really caught our eye; we saw a need for the investment and knew that this would give us the opportunity to help increase our production.”

There continued to be a lot of discussion with SWI before a commitment. “We talked about it back and forth several months before we committed,” he said. “They put a good program together and, in my opinion, they have a lot of capabilities that speeds up our process.”

An important and sometimes forgotten part of the purchasing process really comes down to personality of the company’s representative. Strouth noted: “For us, as a company, it’s important to have a representative that has great knowledge of their equipment and a good personality. As we move forward with



PHOTO PROVIDED BY SWI MACHINERY

the transaction we find things out about a machine or a company that fits our need; their personality plays into [the decision] ... Not only does [SWI] have great salespeople and support behind them, they have a great product.”

Long Creek Steel purchased three new machines from SWI for a complete line: a 4-station modular uncoiler, a Marxman Pro, and a recoiler.

As noted previously, the new line did not replace anything Long Creek already had but rather was added to their operation. “What we’re always looking for is opportunity for advancement in lineal footage per man hour. The technology [SWI] brought forward gave us that opportunity where, with our budget, cash flow and payback, it made sense. That’s the determining factor: how soon it pays itself back with the technology; not that I’m looking to get rid of people, but as we grow, I need additional [productivity]. If I can’t do it with the number of people, I have to do it with the machine.”

Jason Smoak, of SWI’s U.S. operations, said the Marxman Pro offers particular advantages because of its automated features. “The Pro has both a guillotine shear as well as a part cut slitter,” he said. “The shear allows just a single stroke to cut the entire width of the coil and the part cut slitter gives the machine the

option to cut any piece anywhere on the sheet.”

Important in this tight steel market is also its nesting capability — controlling what fits mathematically on a sheet of coil with the least amount of scrap. “With prices going up, you have to be the most efficient you can be, you need your scrap to be as low as possible,” Smoak said.

With manual slitters still common in the industry, Smoak said a potential buyer needs to look at their own business model before upgrading to an automatic slitter but there are obvious advantages. He said customers “definitely need to look at their volume and how much scrap they have and also how many set-ups they’re doing per day and how long it takes for each one of those setups, because that operator could be a lot more efficient, maybe free that guy up to do another job.”

Because of the experience in using multiple machines, Long Creek Steel needed minimal instruction to get up to speed with their new line. SWI did the install and sent a technician to help with training and software integration. Smoak said their machines are “pretty foolproof,” but if there is a problem, help is only a phone call away. “We have Team Viewer on all our controls so we can log into the control and see what the issue is; 90% of the time we can fix it over the phone.” RF

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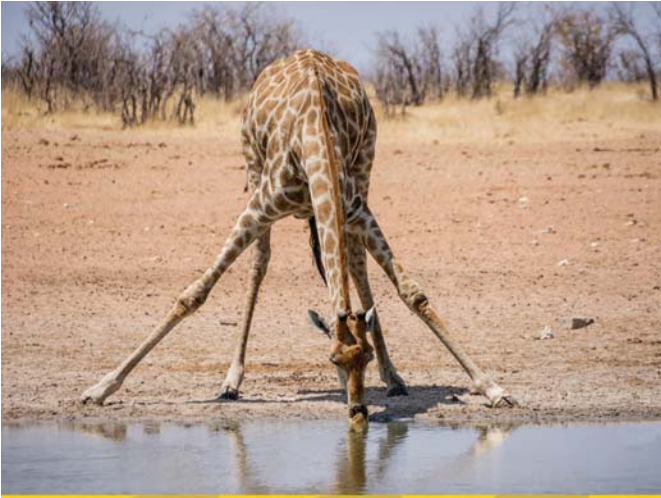
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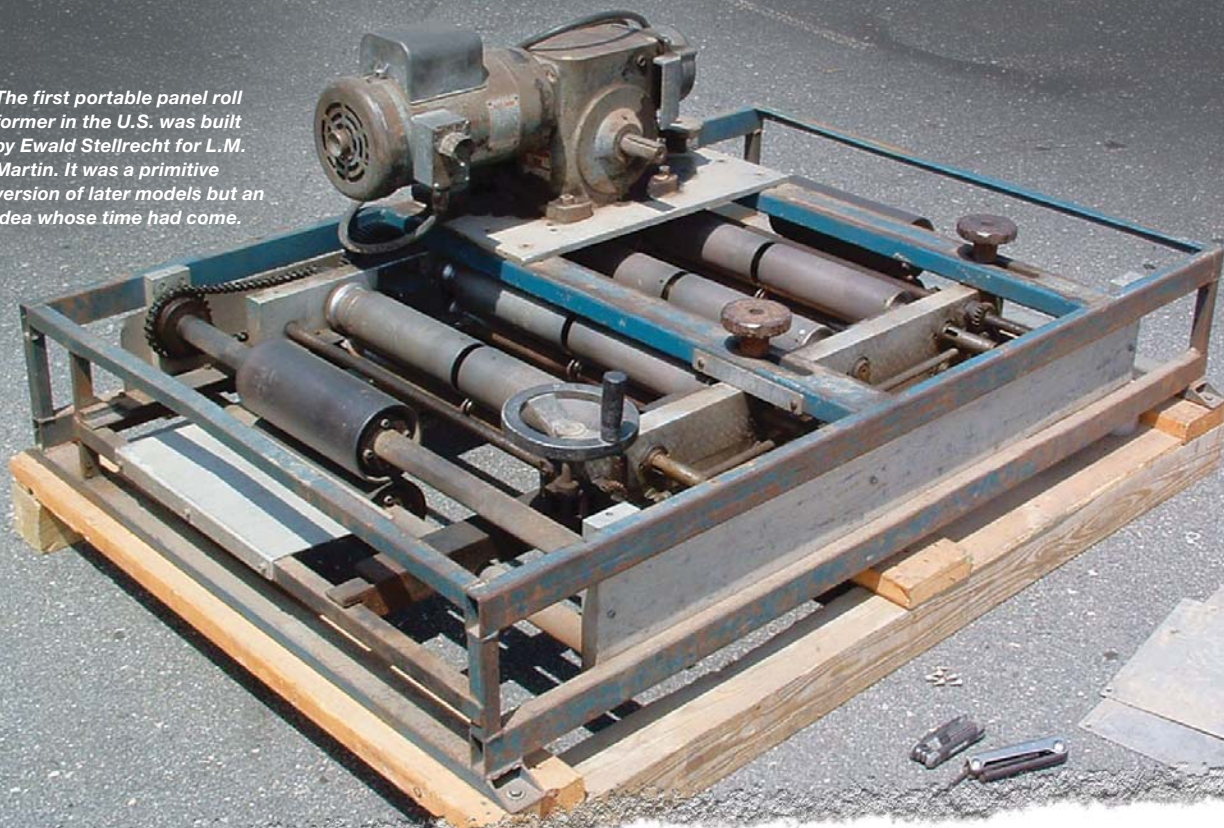
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The first portable panel roll former in the U.S. was built by Ewald Stellrecht for L.M. Martin. It was a primitive version of later models but an idea whose time had come.



Machinist Who Built First Standing Seam Portable In U.S. Reflects On His Journey

■ By Sharon Thatcher

Ewald Stellrecht, owner of ESE Machines, is recognized as the man who created the first portable roll former in the U.S. dedicated to the double-lock standing seam roofing industry. Now in his 70s, he remains active in the industry and is still amused by the fact that his lack of knowledge about metal roofing was a catalyst for his creation of a machine that would help to revolutionize it.

Trained as a machine builder in Germany, Stellrecht immigrated to the U.S. in 1965 and eventually opened his own “jobbing” shop in Exton, Pennsylvania, in the western suburbs of Philadelphia. There, he and one or two employees would design and make machines by order. “We built equipment for companies that said, ‘can you build this?’ and I did,” he recalled in a recent interview for *Rollforming Magazine*.

One of the machines he built was used for making foam-

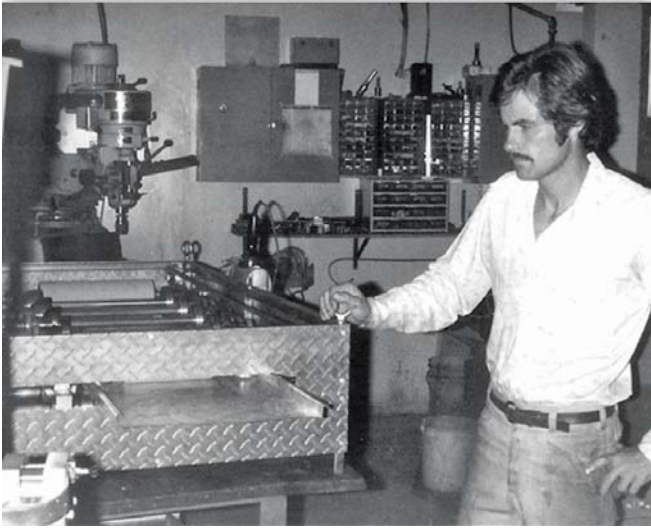
coated fabric for go-go boots. In 1976, while working on site, he got into a conversation with roofing contractor L.M. Martin from nearby Ephrata. “He saw the machines that I built for that plant and he approached me to build a machine for him to form panels. That’s how I got started,” Stellrecht said.

Stellrecht didn’t know anything about metal roofing, but building such a machine was simple enough.

“I didn’t research what roll forming was all about,” he said. “I just thought, I can figure this out myself. What I came up with was a different idea of pulling the metal through, without looking at existing machines; I wasn’t focusing on how it was done normally.”

L.M. Martin was more than pleased with his new portable. “He came back and he said this is really changing the industry, and he explained all the labor savings,” Stellrecht said.

In the late 1970s, roll-formed metal panel was being provided by a few companies with large stationary machines and deliv-



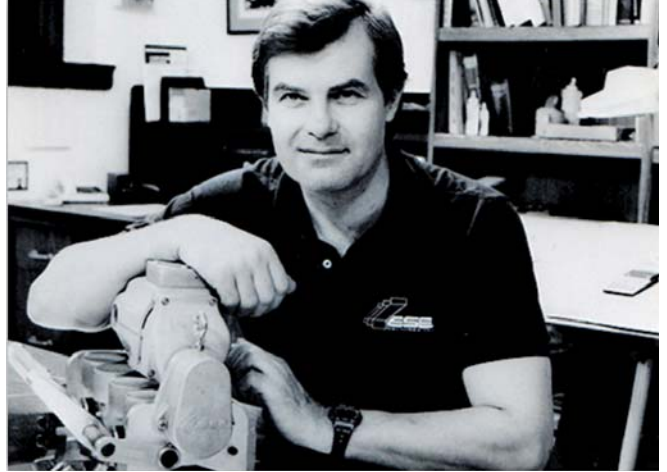
Ewald Stellrecht was approached by a contractor in 1976 to develop a portable roll former. He is shown here in 1978 with the product of that innovation.

ered in packaged bundles of uniform size. For standard double-lock standing seam, metal roofers would typically brake-form 8- or 10-foot sections on site, then interlock with hand tools. It was a time-consuming, labor-intensive process.

“Roll forming eliminated the labor it took to join pieces together. That was the big savings,” Stellrecht said.

Martin told Stellrecht that his machine was worth its weight in gold. He encouraged him to go into partnership with him to build more. Stellrecht shrugged it off. “I didn’t think too much more about it,” he said. “I just tried to fill the request of this one customer. After I built that machine, I thought I was done.”

Stellrecht couldn’t believe there was nothing in the U.S. already like it. “We already went to the moon seven years earlier,



Stellrecht moved on to develop ESE Machines to focus on metal installation tools and accessory machines.

why wouldn’t you have this simple machine here in the U.S.,” was his logic.

But he eventually started to research the history of roll forming. He found that portables were already being used in Europe, and there had been portable gutter machines in the U.S. since Art Knudson made the first one in his garage in Cedar Falls, Iowa, in 1957, and marketed as Watertite gutter machines starting in 1961. Absent, however, were portables for the standing seam market.

Finally believing there might be a market for such a machine, he built a second one in his spare time, then placed an ad in a trade publication to see if anyone was interested.

“As soon as the magazine was out, I got phone calls,” he said. “I got people sending me deposits.”

The problem? He only had one machine to sell.



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The History of Roll Forming))

Afraid that a larger company might design a similar machine and jump into the market ahead of him, he quickly gathered some business partners and they formed Roll Former Corporation in 1978. They began production to fill orders out of his small shop in Exton. Stellrecht started traveling around New England towing one of the new machines and selling to roofers on the spot.

About a year later, Ball Metal, part of the Ball Mason Jar enterprise, showed up at the shop. Their popular jars had zinc lids, and the company was involved in several areas of metal manufacturing in the zinc market. They wanted to be the sole

distributor for Stellrecht's creation for the zinc roofing market. "So we decided, this was a good connection for us to let them sell the machine," he said.

For a time it was successful, but metal roofing was not Ball's strength, and the company ended its agreement with Roll Former Corporation. About the same time Stellrecht also left to escape the restrictions of a partnership business, and returned to independent jobbing.

"I started my own business (ESE Machines) to be my own boss, and not have to discuss changes and policies every week," he said. The move would allow him to do what he did best:

Stationary machines preceded portables

Roll-forming machines have been used in the metal panel-forming industry for decades in the U.S. long before the debut of portable roll formers.

Ryan Reed, former editor of *Metal Roofing Magazine* (now a sister publication to *Rollforming Magazine*) delved into the his-



Trachte Brothers Co. was one of the earliest companies in the U.S. to use stationary roll formers. Originally located in Watertown, Wisconsin, its first roll former was used to make corrugated water tanks for livestock. A second part of the business included metal barrel-vaulted buildings made with 2' wide roll-formed corrugated panels. Early Trachte buildings, like this one in Brodhead, can still be found in the Madison, Wisconsin area. PHOTO COURTESY OF TRACHTE BUILDING SYSTEMS

tory of roll formers in an article published in *MR* in 2005.

Although Europe led the way initially, Reed noted, the U.S. would develop its own path in the 1800s.

"...As soon as metal sheets became common in architecture, metalworkers developed machines to fold, bend, and seam them," Reed said. "The roller concept was in use in roofing by the mid-19th century, if not before.

"Powered machines to form more intricate shapes in metal were developed at the turn of the [20th] century. In 1910, Carl M. Yoder, a draftsman for a Cleveland-area sheet metal company, designed a continuous cold roll-forming machine for making mud strips for cars. Two years later, the Trachte Brothers Co.* built a roll-forming machine in Watertown, Wisconsin, to make corrugated water tanks for livestock."

Large machines in the U.S. were increasingly used in the mid-

20th century.

"By the 1960s," Reed noted, "companies like Butler and Wheeling Corrugating were manning huge roll formers that produced structural standing seam and wide, ribbed through-fastened panel for residential and metal and post-frame buildings. These were long, heavy machines with dozens of roller sets, which allowed accurate forming at high line speeds."

The regional trend in stationary machines has been more recent, developing first in the South and slowly making its way up the east coast and spreading out throughout the country. Today, its growth has become more rapid, accelerated by the rising popularity of metal roofing and siding in construction.

* *Trachte Brothers Co* was later broken into two companies, both still operating today. *Trachte Building Systems*, headquartered in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, specializes in mini-storage facilities. *Trachte USA*, Oregon, Wisconsin, specializes in steel buildings for housing technical equipment.



This 1931 photo inside the Wheeling Corrugating factory in Wheeling, West Virginia, shows an early shop-based machine that was used to corrugate metal panels for the use in making trash cans. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OHIO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY ARCHIVES, WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA.

design and build. In 1982, when a two-year noncompetitive agreement with his former partners ended, he started manufacturing new tools for the metal roofing trade.

At the top of his list was a new portable machine that could handle painted panel. His previous machines were designed for galvanized metal, yet he recognized that painted panel was increasingly becoming popular as coating companies developed more sophisticated paints and coatings. Stellrecht said, “You couldn’t normally bend painted metal without damaging the paint. With the new paint you could form the metal with the paint on. That changed the whole industry.

“The machines had to be changed to accommodate painted material because zinc and copper and galvanized material couldn’t really be damaged,” he continued. “Zinc is zinc if you scratch it or not. Same with copper, but when you use painted material, the rolls had to be changed slightly, the clearance, the bending radius, all had to be adapted to it.”



This undated advertising shows an edger and reel from W.C. Bell that replaced some of the hand labor in metal roof installation.

The new machine debuted in the early 1980s and was made until a couple years ago when the lack of available skilled labor ended production. Also a factor in the decision was the existence of other portables on the market, and ESE Machine’s growing reputation and focus as an accessory toolmaker to the metal roofing trade.

ESE Machines (ESE is an acronym for Ewald Stellrecht of Exton) “developed a lot of tools that were needed in the industry,” Stellrecht said. “Before that, my hand tools didn’t exist. There was no proper tool to seam by hand, no machine to unroll the coil, so I focused on making the accessories, tools to make the cleat, the recoiler to put the coil on the cradle and into the machine.”

In the highest form of flattery other companies have copied his tools and equipment. The competition may not be welcome, but he is content to be a small fish in the big lake he helped

to create, abiding by his principle “to keep the prices real so nobody has to spend a fortune to get the right hand tools, the right decoilers, that accommodates the machine.”

His wife Eileen, daughter Julie, along with employee Beth are part of the small but mighty workforce at ESE. His son Mark is a successful regional rollformer providing metal panels to local roofers.

Today Ewald has time to work on other projects, which includes the selling of his patented wood splitting axe. Read more about the axe in New Products on page 49. **RF**

Should You Buy A Portable Roll Former? Inventor says, not necessarily

Ewald Stellrecht is a basic, factual man, not given to false promises. He doesn’t believe every metal roofer needs to own a portable roll former, but should get to know someone who does.

“For the small guy it doesn’t make financial sense to spend roughly \$30,000 on a machine. When you calculate the time you spend on a roof, like a residential roof, it will take 100 hours to install a roof, and you only need 30 minutes to make all the panels,” he said. “The rest of the time it just sits around.”

There are still many opportunities, however, to cater to these smaller roofers. His son Mark provides roll-forming services and makes a living doing this in the southeastern Pennsylvania area.

“My son has worked for me since his teenage years,” Ewald said. “He loved the trades, and I gave him a present for his 18th birthday; I gave him a roll-forming machine and said go ahead and make panels for all these small roofers. So he has more than a 100 regular customers. When they have a metal roofing job, they either come to our place where they keep their coil and he runs the panels for them to take it to the job site, or if the panels get too long he goes to the job site to run their panels. That’s a business somebody can make a living at, just making panels.”

BELLS & WHISTLES?

If you do buy a machine, Stellrecht said beware of getting caught up in expensive add-ons. “Companies that make panel formers now, they get carried away, they think it has to have more bells and whistles, which is totally unnecessary, but some customers really like that. I believed in a very simple understandable product, where if something breaks you can fix it. If my computer breaks, I can’t fix it.” **RF**




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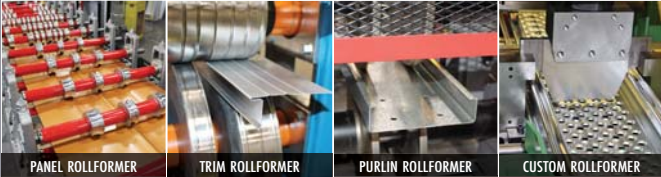


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If You Own a
Bradbury, Their
Equipment
Rebuild Program
Is An Option to
Consider

Inside Look at a SHEAR Rebuild

■ By Shonda Fast

Information provided by The Bradbury Group.

We know that not all machines are maintained or serviced to the full extent of the manufacturer's direction. They are just that—a used machine—beat up, pushed to full capacity, and well worn. After a good cleaning, they can look bright and shiny, but the inner-workings and heart of the machine may be at the breaking point and less efficient than they once were.

WHAT DOES A REBUILD ENTAIL?

A rebuild from The Bradbury Group consists of a meticulous inspection of all mechanical parts, electrical components, controls and safety features. All parts are disassembled and a determination is made as to which can be repaired, replaced, or upgraded. The machine is then reassembled, painted, and tested, returning it to “like new” condition.

WHAT DOES A REBUILD LOOK LIKE?

A Bradbury Customer requested a rebuild of their 1996 model B.O.S.S.™ Shear and Stock Reel. We were able to capture this transformation with some before and after pictures.

The B.O.S.S.™ Shear rebuild included providing and installing:

- A new drive belt
- a new roller straightener motor and gearbox
- all new bearings and linear rails
- all new spur gears
- new upper and lower feed rolls and roller straightener rolls
- regrinding and installation of upper and lower shear blades
- new pneumatic valves and gauges
- new filter, lubricator and regulator assemblies
- new overrunning clutch and brake
- paint
- rebuilt shear guards.

Electrical components were also refurbished and upgraded in this project:

- New main operator station
- Beck Automation SII™ controller with ethernet capability
- a new encoder
- a new BOSS™ shear servo motor and drive
- a new CompactLogix PLC and I/O card

- a new safety circuit
- new safety guard switches
- all new circuit protection, power supply
- Beck Automation Connex™ production software system.

A typical rebuild of a Stock Reel includes:

- New spindle, leaves, spiders and cylinder
- new hydraulic motors
- new loop arm
- new valves
- new operator station and controls
- all uncoiler items are new except for the hydraulic power unit, spindle housing and weldment.

BENEFITS OF REBUILDING

- It is not necessary to invest time and money retraining operators on how to use a new machine.
- Typically less investment than buying new.
- Avoid risks associated with buying a used machine from an unfamiliar company or unknown history.
- Expect performance similar to that provided by a new machine.
- The machine will have cosmetic upgrades and return shiny, like new.

WHEN IS REBUILDING APPROPRIATE?

Choosing to rebuild isn't always an easy decision. Business owners and equipment managers should consider a few factors before deciding to refurbish, like the type of machine, the age, the condition, how much investment is required and how much downtime is involved. “One-off” rebuilds can be costly and more time consuming because of the unknowns. Rebuild programs are less risky and can put you back in production in a much shorter time frame.

At some point, it will become necessary, or at least preferable, to replace any machine. This applies especially if the machine has been greatly damaged, or has already undergone multiple rebuilds in the past.

A comprehensive inspection by industry specialists and technicians can help determine whether your machine meets the appropriate criteria for a rebuild. [RF](#)

BEFORE



AFTER



Help Small Businesses

Help support the construction industry by contacting your government representative and letting them know what you think. If you're at a loss for words, the Construction Rollforming Association has provided four templated letters for you to send to your government officials. You can either use them to get started on your own unique message, or simply copy the letter and sign your name.

If you prefer to contact your representatives online, visit the URLs (or scan the QR codes) provided below:



(Find OFFICIAL by state)
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Letter 1: Positive Reinforcement, Express Support

Brief description:

Use this letter if your official is trying to open the economy. Positive reinforcement for support is as important as expressing displeasure.

Letter:

Thank you [enter official's title and name],

I would like to express my personal gratitude and support for your dedication to opening our economy by reducing the mandates restricting commerce.

Small business comprises an integral and critical portion of our economy. While not all small businesses were shut down, the closures and restrictions have resulted in significant hardship and closures for many business owners and employees. This has a ripple effect throughout the economy affecting everything from cash flow to consumer confidence and buying patterns.

Your effort to keep businesses open is noticed and appreciated by small business owners and the people who depend on those businesses for their life and livelihood. Your actions will have a net positive effect throughout our economy.

You are making the reasoned and correct decision to support small business in our community.

Sincerely,

[sign your name]

Letter 2: Neutral Position, Request Support

Brief description:

Use this letter to express your concern if you are unsure of your official's stance on opening the economy. It is important to make sure your official knows what you think.

Letter:

Dear [enter official's title and name],

I am writing to express concern about the COVID-19 restrictions and their impact on small business.

Small businesses employ almost 50% of the United States workforce and contribute 44% to the United States economic activity. It is impossible for the US economy to flourish, grow, or even survive without the success of small business.

COVID-19 restrictions place unnecessary hardship on businesses and specifically seem to target small retail, food & beverage, and hospitality businesses. Damaging these businesses will have a ripple effect through other small businesses and the world economy as a whole.

I understand that we may need to make some concessions to benefit public health, but limiting commerce and driving small and family businesses to bankruptcy is not an acceptable concession.

Help save small businesses by allowing them to operate and survive. Damaging small, privately held companies has no benefit to public health and only creates additional economic, societal, and psychological problems.

Please remove the restrictions on small business and allow our economy to recover.

Sincerely,

[sign your name]

Letter 3: Express Mild Displeasure, Disagreement

Brief description:

Use this letter to tell your official you disagree with their stance on opening the economy. This is an attempt to use reason to sway the official's opinion.

Letter:

Dear [enter official's title and name],

I am writing to express disappointment with your support for the COVID-19 restrictions limiting the ability of small businesses to operate.

Small businesses employ almost 50% of the United States workforce and contribute 44% to the United States economic activity. It is impossible for the US economy to flourish, grow, or even survive without the success of small business.

COVID-19 restrictions place unnecessary hardship on businesses and specifically seem to target small retail, food & beverage, and hospitality businesses. Damaging these businesses will have a ripple effect through other small businesses and the world economy as a whole.

Destroying small and family-owned businesses, limiting commerce, and driving them into bankruptcy is not an acceptable solution. In most cases the states and localities with the harshest restrictions experienced the most extreme effects from the virus.

Small businesses find solutions—it is why they can be successful where larger businesses fail. By taking actions you mistakenly believe are a solution, you are making the health crisis worse. Damaging small companies generates no benefit to public health. It only creates additional problems economically, societally, and psychologically.

Please stop gutting the businesses that make up the foundation for our economy. Remove the restrictions on small business and allow our economy to recover.

Your assistance in this will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

[sign your name]

Letter 4: Express Strong Disagreement

Brief description:

Use this letter to tell your official you disagree with their stance on opening the economy to the extent that direct opposition is the only alternative. This is an attempt to use political activism when reason alone is insufficient.

Letter:

Dear [enter official's title and name],

I am writing to express my utter and complete dissatisfaction with your lack of support for the small businesses in our community.

As an official allegedly representing me, please change your position and immediately take all possible steps to remove the restrictions destroying small and family-owned businesses in our communities.

Small businesses employ almost 50% of the United States workforce and contribute 44% to the United States economic activity. It is impossible for the US economy to flourish, grow, or even survive without the success of small business.

It is not the role of government to select winners and losers in the private sector. COVID-19 restrictions place unnecessary hardship on small business and specifically seem to target retail, food & beverage, and hospitality businesses, while favoring big-box retailers and chains.

I am not asking you to limit large business, only to stop trying to destroy small ones.

We may need to make concessions to open businesses at full capacity. Reasonable precautions and personal hygiene are understandable. Limiting occupancy and instituting additional restrictions that require capital investments from already struggling businesses are not.

The one resource truly lacking in a small business is time. This crisis has reached a point where small businesses are being forced to become politically active. I would prefer spending my time growing my business and working to ensure the success of my business, family, and employees. Unfortunately, I am now forced to use time to motivate the officials claiming to represent me to do what is correct and obvious.

Unless your intent is to antagonize and motivate small business owners to organize as opposition, the current restrictions are inappropriate. If you are attempting to alienate the force that employs 49% of the US workforce, you have succeeded.

I am not by nature politically active. Feel free to view my taking time to write as the metaphorical canary in the coal mine. I can assure you I am not the only businessperson who feels this way.

Please allow us to return to our lives and normalcy. I have no desire to organize political opposition, but the current restrictions are untenable and must be lifted. Without change we have no other option.

Sincerely,

[sign your name]

What One Business Owner Learned From A Pandemic Year

Turning problems into opportunities

■ By Rob Haddock, CEO and Founder of S-5!

As we cross the threshold into a new year and reflect on the year that has just passed, we learned some valuable lessons. Although for some in our industry it may have appeared as though the greatest economic boom period in history was coming to an abrupt standstill, at S-5! we put our heads together, mobilized, got creative and activated a plan to not only keep our business afloat, but to thrive and be well-positioned for the future.



Rob Haddock

Instead of looking for problems with the pandemic upon us, we found opportunity—to react for the near term, manage differently and maybe even more effectively. We used the downtime to shift thinking, re-direct resources and prepare for the pent-up, near-term demand on the other side.

We got creative with our sales process and came up with new ways to stay in front of customers, educate and train them. We used the time to survey our customers and gather some insightful feedback. We expanded our marketing efforts and improved our manufacturing processes.

Most importantly, we will be ready for the other side of this pandemic—we have not just gone through it; we have *grown* through it! We have learned what to do



and what not to do, and we have gained knowledge and understanding of how to plan better for the year ahead.

S-5!'s five lessons learned from a pandemic year:

1) Change Happens—This one is an old lesson we relearned in a big way this past year. External change beyond our control can come at any time—and with little warning. It can be within our personal arena, business arena or both. Change can be local or regional, national or global. Change can be minor or radical, gradual or sudden. And, it can be any combination of those. I have seen much

change throughout my life. I can remember gasoline shortages and hour-long lines at the pump along with sudden cost escalations; building booms with labor and material shortages; construction moratoriums and no work to be found anywhere. From personal tragedies to now this global health pandemic, change is always with us. So, change is actually “normal” and it is, in fact, inevitable. It’s only the degree of scope and severity that’s variable.

2) Shaking & Upheaval—No arguing, this COVID pandemic happened suddenly, severely and broadly—pretty

radical, and it shook us all to the very core! It has taken a huge and tragic toll on so many. It has caused upheaval in our personal lives and businesses. We're all creatures of habit, and sudden change is extremely disruptive to us—even traumatic. Often, when we are suddenly disrupted or traumatized, we react with panic, but I have learned panic is never our friend; it's the enemy of clear thinking. I have also learned that with practice, we are capable of taking charge of our emotional responses. So, we shouldn't panic; we can't panic—it doesn't help anything!

3) Shift in Our Thinking—When the initial shock diminished, and we began to regain composure and clarity of thought, we realized we can't do things the way we used to, so we began to shift our thinking and perspectives. We were actually forced to reanalyze

things from top to bottom and come up with new ways of doing things. Done "The Right Way®," this kind of shift can assure our self-preservation and actually lead to some new dimensions in our operations.

4) Realignment with New Circumstances—When we accepted the things we could not change, our creative juices went to work aligning with the things we could change. Through the process of re-evaluation and realignment, good things began to happen. We were actually forced to collaborate closely as a team with a common cause and goal. The result was—we came up with proactive ideas and alternatives. We learned that this realignment can actually be very thought-provoking and exciting. It is, after all, innovation, and we are an innovation company. But, innovation is anyone's intelligent response to handling problems.

5) Positive Results & Increased Profitability—Through the realignment process, we learned that often the things we were forced to change turned out to be more effective than the way we had previously operated. They have increased productivity—saving stress, time and expense and resulted in increased profitability.

With those lessons learned and 2020 behind us, we now look forward to the year ahead with a perspective and attitude of gratitude. You know, gratitude is a lot like bacon; it can make almost anything taste better—even Brussel sprouts! RF

Rob Haddock, the inventor of metal roof attachment solutions, is a former contractor, award-winning roof-forensics expert, author, lecturer and building envelope scientist and has worked in various aspects of metal roofing for nearly five decades.

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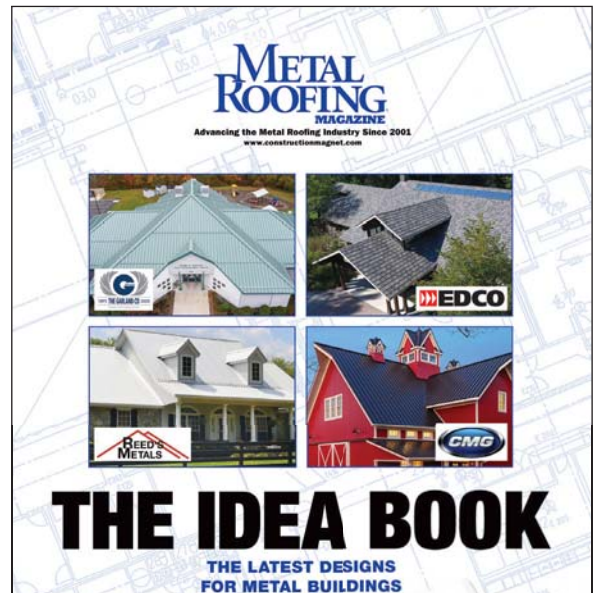
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New Products))

A BETTER WOOD SPLITTING AXE FROM ESE

Cross an axe with a wedge and you get the Super Splitter wood splitting axe from ESE Machines Inc. This patented hand tool comes from the machinist who brought to the U.S. the first portable roll former and many revolutionary ancillary roll-forming tools.

Twenty years ago Ewald Stellrecht (related article on p. 36) was helping to manufacture a wood-splitting axe when he was struck by the idea that he could make it better. He tinkered with the design and came up with the ESE Super Splitter Wood Splitting Axe, which earned an international patent. He shelved the idea for several years, his day-to-day job as owner of ESE Machines still all consuming.

If Covid-19 did anything, it helped to free-up Stellrecht's schedule so he could revisit his axe idea. The result is the unveiling and marketing for the Super Splitter.

Stellrecht uses Newton's Law as the basis for how his axe works: "A body at rest tends to stay at rest as long as no outside force acts on it. A body in motion will continue at a constant speed in a straight line as long as no outside force acts on it."

At rest, the axe and wedge separate, but in motion, they move together as one. Upon hitting the log, the wedge pivots, and allows the axe edge to split the wood apart using the outside force.



The Super Splitter axe head is cast in ductile iron and moves on a sturdy ½" stainless steel pivot pin. A 36" fiberglass core handle helps absorb shock for comfort and efficiency. It is available through ESE Machines Inc.

For ordering information call 800-854-7361

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OSHA estimates that more than 70 percent of hand and arm injuries could be prevented with the proper protective equipment. While extra vigilance must be taken with any type of glove or clothing when working around equipment, when handling sharp-edged materials, the Brass Knuckle® SmartCut™ BKCR303 offers dexterity, grip and ANSI cut level A2 protection.

This triple threat is accomplished with a glass fiber and ultra-high-molecular-weight polyethylene shell — a composite yarn that has a strength-to-weight ratio 8 to 15 times greater than steel — and polyurethane coating. The thinner, 13 gauge material delivers deftness without trading away its inherent cut-resistance.

The non-sticky polyurethane coating on the palm and fingers features excellent grip, even against oils, fats, and greases, and can deliver enhanced puncture protection and abrasion resistance, all without adding bulk or reducing touch sensitivity.

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(Continued on page 51)

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HONDA ROLLS OUT CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTION SYSTEM ON ALL ITS GENERATORS

Honda Power Equipment is equipping all models in its portable generator line-up with CO-MINDER™, a new advanced carbon monoxide (CO) detection system designed to help protect users from injury or death from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning. Honda Power Equipment is first in the industry to commit to installing CO detection systems on its full line of generator models.



Honda Power Equipment started their roll out of the technology on existing generator models in 2020. By the end of this year, all Honda portable generator models will be included.

The Honda CO-Minder incorporates a fast-reacting sensor that continuously monitors for carbon monoxide in the air near the generator. If the sensor detects a CO level at or exceeding 800 parts per million (ppm) at a given time, or an average of 400 ppm for 10 minutes (per Portable Generators Manufacturers' Association G300-2018 standards), it triggers the generator to shut down automatically. A safety light on the main panel notifies the user that a buildup of carbon monoxide caused the generator to shut down.

www.hondanews.com

HY-BRID LIFTS ADDS SKYREACH EQUIPMENT TO MID-ATLANTIC NETWORK

Hy-Brid Lifts, a leader in low-level access equipment, welcomes Skyreach Equipment to its Mid-Atlantic network. As one of the area's premier aerial specialists, Skyreach will represent Hy-Brid Lifts' full line of lifts in a rental and sales capacity.

"Hy-Brid Lifts was one of the first manufacturers of lightweight, compact scissor lifts," said Kevin Gray, vice president of

Skyreach Equipment. "A lot of our customers work in unique applications that require low point loads, and that's when we knew Hy-Brid Lifts would be the perfect addition. In fact, some of our contractors were asking for them by name."

Skyreach currently offers lifts from Hy-Brid Lifts' Pro Series, which was recently introduced to the market. Innovative features, such as a compact and lightweight footprint and a high lift capacity, make the Pro Series ideal for industries including general construction, electrical and other trades. Skyreach is also looking to add the new Zero-Turn Series and Push-Around Series lifts to their lineup.

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