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JUNE/JULY 2026
Vol. 9, No. 3

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Support is part of the package

■ By Karen Knapstein

Downtime has a way of cutting through everything.

When a machine goes down, none of its specs matter in that moment. Not the speed, not the profile capability, not how new the equipment is. What matters is who you can reach, how fast they respond, and whether they can help you get back up and running without losing a day—or more.

That's what really came through in the conversations I had for the technical support article. Support isn't something

that kicks in after the sale anymore. It's part of the product. The manufacturers featured in the article may approach it a little differently, but they understand the same thing: when your equipment stops, their job starts.

And it's not just about emergency calls. The shops that stay productive are the ones that have access to real people who know the machines, parts that are available when they're needed, and the ability to troubleshoot quickly—sometimes without stepping foot on-site. Training and preventative maintenance

play an important role here too. The more confident and skilled your operators are, the fewer problems turn into downtime.

For rollformers, that changes how equipment should be evaluated. It's not just about what the machine can do on day one—it's about what kind of support you'll have on day 859.

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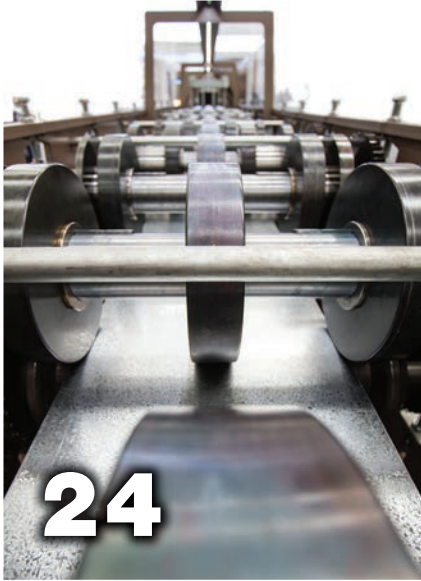
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A structural component roll former from Bradbury.
Photo courtesy of The Bradbury Group

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Steel Market Update

Courtesy of Majestic Steel USA

Each week, Majestic Steel USA [majesticsteel.com], a steel service center that distributes prime, flat-rolled galvanized steel sheets and coils to industries across the United States, compiles the Core Report. The Report is “an in-depth look at key indicators and trends driving the steel market. Market volatility demands your attention about what’s driving prices, when and why.”

Majestic Steel has granted *Rollforming Magazine* permission to publish information excerpted from the Report for its readers.

SCRAP PRICING

The Prime Scrap report dated May 15, states prime scrap stayed flat for the third consecutive month.

May prime scrap pricing held steady at \$445/gt. It held steady despite broader market softness, with strong domestic steel pricing and improving mill demand helping to offset weaker conditions.

Rising imported pig iron prices are also expected to support the scrap market going forward. Shredded scrap pricing settled flat as well, holding at \$425/gt.

SPOT IRON ORE

The Platts, Spot Iron Ore report for the week ending May 15 reports that pricing Spot iron ore increased again for the week, now up eight out of the last nine weeks.

Spot iron ore pricing ended the week at \$111.20/mt, up from \$110.83/mt a week ago. This is now the highest price for iron ore since the Fall of 2024.

Steady restocking and seasonal steel demand continue to provide support, along with cost pressures stemming from volatile freight rates related to the conflict in the Middle East.

DOMESTIC STEEL PRODUCTION

According to the American Iron & Steel Institute, Weekly Domestic Steel Production report dated May 12, domestic raw steel production Domestic steel production increased sharply

again the previous week, now up seven out of the last eight weeks.

U.S. mills produced an estimated 1,880k tons at an 81.4% utilization rate, up from 1,856k tons and an 80.4% utilization rate previously.

This remained the highest weekly output since November 2021.

Production rose in four of the five regions, with the largest increase (in tons) coming from the Great Lakes region. Production in the Great Lakes region increased from 511k tons to 522k tons.

Year-to-date production is now up 7.8% compared to the same time frame last year.

ZINC PRICE & INVENTORY

According to the London Metal Exchange, Weekly Zinc Price and Inventory Report and the Shanghai Futures Exchange, Weekly Zinc Inventory Report, both dated May 15, zinc pricing increased sharply during this week, now up six out of the last seven weeks.

Zinc pricing ended the week at \$3,526.50/mt (\$1.600/lb), up from \$3,415/mt (\$1.549/lb) previously.

Chinese economic data came in above expectations during the week, helping to drive pricing higher, while elevated energy costs continue to disrupt supply.

The recent rise in zinc pricing has led domestic producers to increase coating extras beginning with July production.

Global zinc inventory increased for the second consecutive week.

LME warehouse inventory rebounded from 94,425 metric tons to 110,875 metric tons.

Shanghai warehouse inventory increased as well, climbing from 146,766 metric tons to 151,084 metric tons. **RF**

The Majestic Steel USA Core Report library can be accessed at <https://www.majesticsteel.com/majestic-insights/core-report/>.

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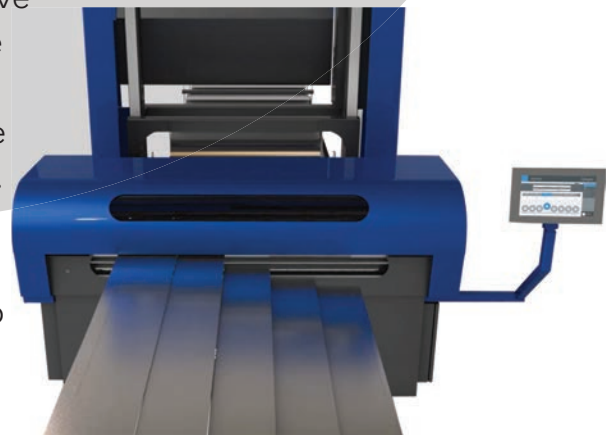
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Dual Height Profile Stands. PHOTO COURTESY OF ASC MACHINE TOOLS

Multi-Profile Machines

Are They Right For Your Shop?

■ By Linda Schmid

Rollformers today have more options than ever when it comes to running multiple profiles on a single machine. Multi-profile panel lines and multi-trim systems promise flexibility, but they do so in different ways. Understanding how these machines actually function and where they fit operationally is the key to making a smart investment.

At the most basic level, multi-profile capability is about reducing the need for multiple standalone machines. The tradeoff is almost always between flexibility and throughput.

HOW MULTI-PROFILE PANEL LINES WORK

There are two primary approaches to running multiple panel profiles on a single line. One is a dual height or double level configuration. The other uses interchangeable tooling mounted on subplates or rafts.

In a dual height system, two profiles are built into the same machine footprint, one on the lower level and one above it. This allows a roll former to switch between two profiles without removing tooling, but only one profile can run at a time.

The second approach uses rafts or subplates that hold complete sets of roll tooling. Entire tooling assemblies can be lifted out and replaced as a unit. This allows more than two profiles to be run on the same base machine, depending on how many tooling sets are owned and stored.

Changeover time varies depending on the system. With rafted or subplated tooling, a full changeover may take around 30 minutes and typically requires a forklift or overhead crane to remove and install tooling. In contrast, some quick-change systems allow swaps

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in minutes once operators are trained, though larger tooling sets limit how fast this can realistically be done.

Despite the physical differences, the forming process itself remains the same. Material feeds through a series of stations where it is gradually shaped until the final profile is achieved. Quality is not inherently affected by whether the machine is single-profile or multi-profile, assuming proper setup.

PLATE-BASED AND ADJUSTABLE TOOLING SYSTEMS

A variation of the second type of multi-profile machine involves machines where tooling plates are pushed into position against a fixed shoulder and aligned for each run. In these systems, the rollers and stations remain largely intact, and the operator adjusts or swaps specific tooling elements as needed.

In these plate-based systems, maintaining alignment between runs becomes a key advantage, allowing experienced operators to reduce setup time while still holding tolerances. Because many of these systems retain baseline alignment, the consistency of the finished product depends less on full teardown and more on careful verification of settings before production begins.

Adjustments may include roller settings, shear components, or profile-specific tooling such as lip boxes or forming blocks. On some systems, operators must also change shear plates depending on the profile being produced.

These machines often retain alignment between changeovers, which reduces setup time once operators are familiar with the process. However, accuracy depends heavily on following procedures and verifying settings before running production.

MULTI-PROFILE FRAMING MACHINES

In the framing segment, multi-profile machines function somewhat differently but follow the same principle of flexibility.

RESOURCES

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Dual Height Shears. PHOTO COURTESY OF ASC MACHINE TOOLS

A typical system feeds coil through a sequence of stations that punch, notch, and form the material. A stripper block may create service holes and notches early in the process, followed by forming stations that progressively bend the material. Additional components such as lip boxes and swaging units complete the final shape and connection details.

Multi-profile capability in these machines allows operators to run different web sizes or structural profiles by changing tooling blocks and making adjustments to rollers and forming components. This may include changing stripper blocks, adjusting roll positions, and resetting forming stations.

Changeovers introduce the risk of setup errors, especially if the wrong coil size or tooling configuration is used. Operators typically run test pieces

through the machine to verify setup before full production begins. This verification step is critical, as even small setup inconsistencies can compound through the forming stations and affect downstream fit and performance.

Compared to dedicated high-performance machines, multi-profile framing systems trade some speed and throughput for versatility, though some configurations may provide the ability to run twice as much of a particular panel in the same timeframe.

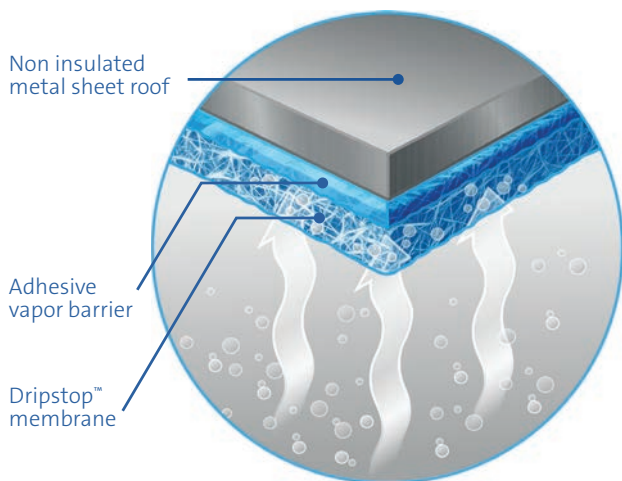
TRIM ROLLERS AND MULTI-TRIM SYSTEMS

Trim production introduces another layer of multi-profile capability. A trim line can be configured to run several trim profiles, such as fascia or gutter components, often positioned side by

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side within the same machine.

However, even in multi-trim systems, only one profile is typically produced at a time. The advantage is that multiple tooling sets are available within the same footprint, reducing the need for separate machines. Additional equipment such as hemming machines can extend this flexibility further, allowing shops to expand trim offerings without investing in entirely new lines.

Additional equipment such as hemming machines can further increase flexibility by allowing operators to produce a wider range of trim configurations. These systems can often accept additional tooling over time, extending their capabilities as production needs evolve.

CHANGEOVER REALITIES

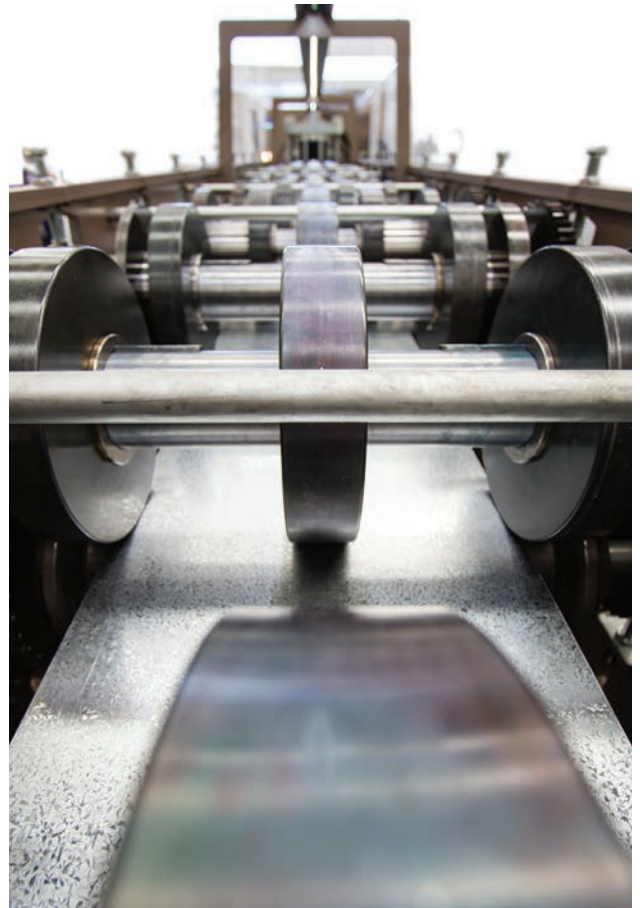
Changeover is the defining factor in multi-profile operations.

Depending on the system, changeover may take anywhere from a few minutes to 45 minutes or more. The time required depends on the size of the tooling, the complexity of the profile, and the experience of the operator.

Portable roll-forming machines have an advantage over many machines when it comes to changeovers. These machines are much smaller, so changeovers are quicker and easier and there is less to clean and lubricate.

With all machines there is a learning curve. Operators who are new to the equipment will take longer to complete changeovers and are more likely to make mistakes. Training and repetition significantly reduce both time and error rates.

Material waste is another consideration. Changing profiles often requires running out remaining coil or scrapping partial material, which can add up. For this reason, many operators



This design overcomes many traditional issues with adjustable tooling. True load-bearing frames offer cleaner structural intersections in a product range of 20 to 16 gauge (0.95 to 1.55mm). 1.55mm). PHOTO COURTESY OF HOWICK LTD.



Howick FRAMA™ 7600 Multi-Profile System for Frames, Trusses & Panels accepts additional tooling sets for more profile options.
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A multiple-profile roll former. When multiple tooling sets are available in the same footprint, it reduces the need for separate machines and saves space on the shop floor. PHOTO COURTESY OF METAL ROLLFORMING SYSTEMS

plan production runs carefully, grouping jobs by profile and coil type to minimize changeovers and maximize efficiency.

THROUGHPUT VERSUS FLEXIBILITY

The central tradeoff with multi-profile machines is speed versus versatility.

A dedicated single-profile machine or a high-performance line will generally produce higher throughput because it does not require changeovers. Multiple single-profile machines can also run simultaneously, increasing total output.

In contrast, a multi-profile machine runs one profile at a time. Even with fast changeovers, production pauses during transitions. This makes multi-profile systems less efficient for high volume, single-profile operations. Furthermore, if the machine breaks down, it's possible



The compact design layout produces frames, trusses, panels in 3" to 8" (75 to 200mm) sections. PHOTO COURTESY OF HOWICK LTD.



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that none of the profiles can be produced during the breakdown period.

However, for shops that run a variety of profiles in smaller quantities, the flexibility of a multi-profile system can outweigh the loss in speed. It can also provide redundancy, allowing production to continue if another machine is down.

HOW TO DECIDE WHAT FITS

Choosing between a multi-profile machine and multiple single-profile machines comes down to a few core questions.

First, what profiles are you running, and how often? Shops producing large volumes of one or two profiles may benefit more from dedicated machines. Shops handling a wide mix of profiles in smaller runs may gain efficiency from a multi-profile setup.

Second, what is your annual volume in linear footage? Higher volumes tend to favor dedicated equipment, while lower or variable volumes support multi-profile flexibility.

Third, where is the business headed in the next three to four years? If growth or diversification is expected, a machine that can accept additional tooling later may be a better long-term investment.

Fourth, what are the space and labor constraints? A single multi-profile machine uses one footprint, one uncoiler or decoiler, and one set of operators. Multiple machines require more floor space and more labor but can run simultaneously.

Finally, what is the budget? Multi-profile systems typically require a higher upfront investment, especially when additional tooling is included. However, they may reduce the need for future equipment purchases if growth occurs.

COMMON STUMBLING BLOCKS

One of the most common challenges is underestimating the impact of changeovers. Shops that switch profiles frequently without planning can lose

Adjustable for 1" or 1½" profiles.
PHOTO COURTESY OF ROLLFORMER LLC



New Tech Machinery's newly released SSQ3 portable roll former.
PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW TECH MACHINERY

significant production time. The solution is to schedule runs strategically and group similar jobs together.

Another issue is inadequate training. Operators who are not fully familiar with changeover procedures are more likely to make setup errors, leading to scrap or downtime. Taking advantage of training and practicing changeovers before production is critical.

Storage is often an overlooked factor. Rafted or subplated tooling sets require space and proper handling equipment. Without organized storage, changeovers become slower and more difficult.

Maintenance can also become a problem if neglected. As with any roll-forming machine, multi-profile machines still require routine care such as greasing, hydraulic fluid changes, and blade maintenance. Skipping these steps can lead to breakdowns and lost production time.

Finally, some shops invest in capability they never use. Buying a machine with expansion potential only makes sense if future expansion is realistic. Otherwise, a

simpler and more affordable solution may be the better choice.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Multi-profile rollformers and trim systems offer clear advantages in flexibility, footprint, and future expansion. They allow a single machine to handle a range of profiles and adapt as business needs change.

At the same time, they require disciplined production planning, trained operators, and a clear understanding of throughput limitations.

For some operations, especially those using rafts or subplates and looking to provide a consistently high volume of a specific profile, multiple dedicated machines will be the most efficient path. For others, particularly those balancing variety and growth, a multi-profile system can provide the versatility needed to stay competitive.

The right choice is not about which machine can do more, but which one aligns best with how the shop actually runs today and where it plans to go next.

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Legacy Metals

From In-House Solution to Standalone Roll-Forming Success

■ By Karen Knapstein

Legacy Metals' story is rooted in a long tradition of craftsmanship, entrepreneurship, and steady growth—one that began decades before the company itself took shape. What is now a dedicated roll-forming operation grew naturally from a family business with deep ties to construction and fabrication. Today, Legacy Metals reflects how thoughtful investment, a focus on quality, and strong customer relationships can turn an internal support function into a successful standalone business.

The foundation was established in 1984, when Sylvan Stoltzfus founded Pine Creek Structures, a company focused on building storage sheds. Over time, the business expanded to include three manufacturing plants, building a reputation for dependable products and steady service. In 1995, Sylvan's son, Amos Stoltzfus, took over operations, continuing that momentum while identifying new opportunities for growth. A decade later, Pine Creek Construction was launched to focus on larger-scale projects such as pole buildings and horse barns, further broadening the company's reach.

For many years, both Pine Creek Structures and Pine Creek Construction sourced metal panels and trim from outside suppliers. That changed in 2015 with the purchase of the



Legacy Metals, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF LEGACY METALS, WWW.LEGACYMETALSPA.COM

company's first roll former from Acu-Form/Paint Valley Parts—an investment initially intended to support internal needs.

“We started buying roll formers to fabricate metal and trim only for Pine Creek Construction and Pine Creek Structures,” said Bobby Ebersole, sales and production manager at Legacy Metals. “At that time, it was really about supplying our own jobs.”

It didn't take long to recognize the broader potential. By 2018, the company had expanded its capabilities with a full line of trims and the addition of a Jorns folder. Production quality was strong, and output was consistent—enough to prompt a new line of thinking.



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“It was going so well, and we were looking for ways to help offset the overhead costs from buying the machines,” Ebersole said. “That’s when we started exploring outside sales.”

That shift marked the beginning of a new phase. Demand continued to grow, both internally and from external customers, and the metal operation steadily gained traction. On April 1, 2024, the business was formally established as Legacy Metals—still part of the broader Pine Creek family of companies, but with its own identity and focus.

Amos Stoltzfus remains the owner, with Pine Creek Structures, Pine Creek Construction, and Legacy Metals operating as sister companies. Ebersole, who joined the business in 2020 working in the metal shop, now oversees both sales and production. The metal shop itself is a tight-knit team of three full-time employees, each playing a key role in day-to-day operations.

Legacy Metals primarily serves customers in upper Dauphin County and lower Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, though its delivery area extends as needed. The company offers free delivery within its local valley and works to remain flexible for customers with projects farther afield.

“We offer free delivery in our community, but we’ll deliver wherever our customers need us to,” Ebersole said.

That flexibility is part of a broader emphasis on customer service—an area the team views as essential to its success. Quick turnaround times



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and responsiveness are central to that commitment.

“If someone comes in and needs a few pieces of metal and trim, we can usually take care of that right away,” Ebersole said. “We aim for a 24-hour turnaround or less. Orders placed before 2 p.m. are

typically ready the next day. That level of service is something we take seriously.”

As the business has grown, so has its equipment lineup, reflecting a careful and deliberate approach to expanding capabilities. Early investments included an agricultural panel roll former, rat

guard machine, J-channel machine, and ridge cap machine—all from Acu-Form. Those machines remain core to the operation today, supported by additional Acu-Form equipment for producing rake and corner trim, gutter apron, residential rake, fascia and J-channel trim, and overhead door trim. A hydraulic-electric combination roll former and uncoiler helps maintain consistent production, while electric-powered auxiliary machines support efficiency across the shop.

One of the most impactful upgrades came in late 2024, when the company replaced its used Jorns folder with a 21-foot Variobend folder from Hershey’s Metal Meister. For Ebersole, the upgrade reinforced a lesson learned over time.

“I would’ve invested in a quality folder much earlier,” he said. “The accuracy you get with a good folder makes a big difference. If your trim isn’t right, customers notice—and they’ll go somewhere else.”

In addition to in-shop production, Legacy Metals has expanded into mobile roll forming for specialized applications. A New Tech Machinery SSQ standing seam machine allows the team to form

Case Study: ZAM Proves Its Durability in a Corrosive Environment

In the roll-forming industry, material selection often comes down to balancing cost, availability, and performance. But for some applications, performance becomes the deciding factor—especially when corrosion resistance is critical. A recent real-world example shared by Bobby Ebersole of Legacy Metals highlights just how durable ZAM-coated metal can be under demanding conditions.

The project began when an unconventional customer approached Legacy Metals with a very specific need. The company, which produces deer scents for hunters, operates a facility that collects and processes deer urine for use as an attractant. Because of the nature of their operation, they required a material that could withstand constant exposure to highly corrosive organic fluids.

“We have a customer that makes deer scents,” Ebersole explained. “They were looking for something that would be highly corrosion resistant—really the most corrosion-resistant metal on the market.”

After consulting with Paul Zimmerman of Hixwood, Legacy Metals recommended ZAM-coated steel,

a zinc-aluminum-magnesium alloy known for its enhanced corrosion resistance compared to traditional galvanized coatings. The customer installed the material as a funneling system designed to direct collected deer urine into a central basin.

At the time, the application served as something of a test case for both the customer and Legacy Metals. The expectation was durability, but the real question was how the material would perform under continuous, aggressive exposure over time.

Roughly a year later, the results spoke for themselves.

“In late February, they contacted us again because they’re adding on to their facility,” Ebersole said. “They’ve been using the ZAM for about a year now, and there’s no sign of corrosion. They told us it looks the same as the day it was installed.”

For the customer, the performance was compelling enough to standardize the material for their expansion. Legacy Metals quickly supplied additional ZAM-coated product, delivering it to the site the following day to keep the project moving.

“They wanted more for their add-on, and we had it in stock,” Ebersole said. “We delivered it the next day.”

While unusual in application, the project underscores a broader point about material performance in real-world environments. In this case, ZAM was not only selected for its theoretical corrosion resistance—it was proven in a setting where failure would have been immediately visible.

“It’s a case of testing at its best,” Ebersole noted.

For Legacy Metals, the experience reinforced the importance of pairing quality materials with practical application knowledge. It also demonstrated how emerging coated steel technologies like ZAM can offer meaningful advantages in environments where traditional coatings may degrade more quickly.

As demand for longer-lasting, low-maintenance materials continues to grow across agricultural, commercial, and specialty applications, cases like this provide tangible evidence of performance—not just in controlled specifications, but in day-to-day use where it matters most. **RF**

panels on-site, reducing handling and accommodating longer panel lengths. The company also operates an Eastside Machinery board-and-batten machine, complete with an embosser, to meet demand for vertical siding profiles. A soffit machine from Roll Former LLC rounds out the offering, producing double 6-inch solid or fully vented panels.

While equipment plays a critical role, Ebersole emphasizes that material quality is just as important. Legacy Metals sources its steel coils from Hixwood, a supplier the company has worked with since its early days.

“We feel it’s a superior coil, and that matters to us,” he said. “It has Beckers coatings, and we believe it results in a better finished product. Quality starts with what you put into it.”

Beyond panels and trim, Legacy Metals stocks a range of complementary



Variobend Folder from Hershey’s Metal Meister.



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Legacy Metals' Board & Batten trailer for on-site roll forming.



Stock painted coils from Hixwood, and an spender from Stoll Metal Works.



Legacy stocks screws from Levi's Building Components and ST Fastening Systems' SealTite ZXL.

products, including Thermo-Guard reflective insulation from Dutch Tech, fasteners from Levi's Building Components, ventilation products like UltraVent, and snow retention systems from SS Snow Stoppers and Levi's. Many residential roofing contractors also prefer SealTite ZXL screws from ST Fastening Systems, which the company keeps on hand.

In terms of market focus, residential reroofing has become the largest segment of the business. Roofing contractors make up a significant portion of the customer base, particularly those handling tear-offs and re-roof projects.

"There's definitely a growing interest in residential roofing," Ebersole said. "That's where most of our work is right now."

Agricultural buildings remain an important part of the mix as well, including horse barns and poultry houses. At the same time, the company serves a steady stream of do-it-yourself customers working on smaller projects.

"We see a lot of homeowners picking up materials to reroof sheds or smaller buildings," Ebersole said. "They're often installing right over existing shingles, and we're able to help them get what they need quickly."

Color trends in the region lean heavily toward darker tones, particularly textured finishes.

"Black and textured black are by far the most popular," Ebersole said. "We also see a lot of bronze, charcoal, and brown. Dark, textured colors are definitely the trend here."

Agricultural panels and trim remain the company's most widely used products, but demand for specialty profiles continues to evolve. Board-and-batten siding, for example, saw a surge in popularity in recent years.

"It really peaked around 2021 or 2022," Ebersole said. "It's leveled off some since then, but it's still a popular option and something we do regularly."

While the company operates in a region with relatively few direct competitors,

Ebersole views the competitive landscape as a positive influence.

“There are a couple of other shops within about 50 miles, and we think there’s room for everyone,” he said. “At the same time, it keeps you sharp.”

That mindset extends to the company’s internal culture. With a small team, flexibility and communication are key. The work environment is relaxed, but expectations remain clear.

“We try to keep things flexible,” Ebersole said. “Everyone here is local and has things going on outside of work, so we work around that when we can. At the same time, we all understand what needs to get done.”

The company has navigated its share of staffing changes, including the departure of a key employee in 2024. Support from the Pine Creek Construction team helped bridge the gap until new hires were brought on in 2025 and early 2026.

External factors have also influenced operations, particularly during the winter of 2025-2026. Unlike previous mild winters, colder temperatures and persistent snow slowed construction activity across the region.

“It was slower than what we’ve been used to,” Ebersole said. “There was snow on roofs for much of the winter, and contractors couldn’t work. That had a ripple effect for everyone.”

Projects were delayed, foundations couldn’t be poured, and demand for materials temporarily declined. Still, Ebersole sees it as part of the natural cycle of the industry.

“It created a bit of a domino effect,” he said. “But things are starting to pick back up as the weather improves.”

Through it all, strong supplier relationships have remained a constant. Legacy Metals’ partnership with Hixwood, in particular, has proven valuable in maintaining supply chain reliability.

“They’ve been very good to work with,” Ebersole said. “Being able to get a full load of coil in less than 24 hours is impressive. There’s a lot that goes into making that happen.”

Looking ahead, Legacy Metals is focused on continuing to build on its strengths—investing in the right equipment, maintaining high standards for quality, and staying responsive to customer needs. While the company has grown significantly in a relatively short time, its approach remains grounded and practical.

At the end of the day, the goal is simple.

“Customer service comes down to having what people need—or being able to get it to them quickly,” Ebersole said. “That’s what we focus on every day.”

It’s a straightforward philosophy, but one that continues to guide Legacy Metals as it moves forward—balancing growth with consistency, and innovation with the values that started it all. **RF**



Board and batten siding has experienced a surge in interest in recent years.

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Structural roll forming requires not only shaping metal but controlling how that material behaves throughout the process and in its final application.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRADBURY GROUP

Structural Roll Forming

Where Precision Becomes Critical

■ By Matt Werner, Senior Manager Inside Sales & Global Marketing, The Bradbury Group

In today's construction and manufacturing environment, the margin for error in structural components is rapidly shrinking. As buildings grow more complex, materials become stronger, larger sections, and production speeds increase; manufacturers are under greater pressure than ever to deliver absolute precision — every time. In this landscape, even minor inconsistencies in forming can translate into costly failures in the field.

Roll forming has long been a cornerstone of efficient metal shaping,

but not all applications are created equally. When it comes to structural components — studs, joists, purlins, girts, struts, and track — the stakes are significantly higher than for light-gauge or architectural profiles.

These are not simply shaped; they are load-bearing elements that must perform reliably in real-world building environments. Producing them consistently requires far more than a standard roll forming setup. It demands a tightly integrated system of engineering expertise, advanced tooling, robust

equipment, and intelligent automation.

ENGINEERING PERFORMANCE INTO EVERY PROFILE

Structural components are governed by strict building codes, load tables, and often customer-specific design criteria. Every profile must meet requirements for strength, stiffness, and dimensional precision. That includes maintaining yield and tensile strength, achieving exact section properties, and ensuring reliable deflection and buckling performance. Even hole placement must be precise to

support downstream assembly.

Unlike some non-structural products, there is little tolerance for variation. The roll forming process must preserve material integrity while delivering repeatable geometry. Poor alignment, inconsistent forming, or excessive cold work can compromise performance long before installation.

**FROM COIL TO CUTOFF:
CONTROLLING THE PROCESS**

That level of consistency begins at the front end of the line. Structural members are typically produced from thicker-gauge, higher-strength steel — materials that place greater demands on coil handling and strip preparation. Robust uncoilers, precision straighteners, and stable entry guides are essential to ensure consistent strip guidance. Any variation at this stage—whether from coil camber,



Producing load-bearing elements demands a tightly integrated system of engineering expertise, advanced tooling, robust equipment, and intelligent automation. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRADBURY GROUP



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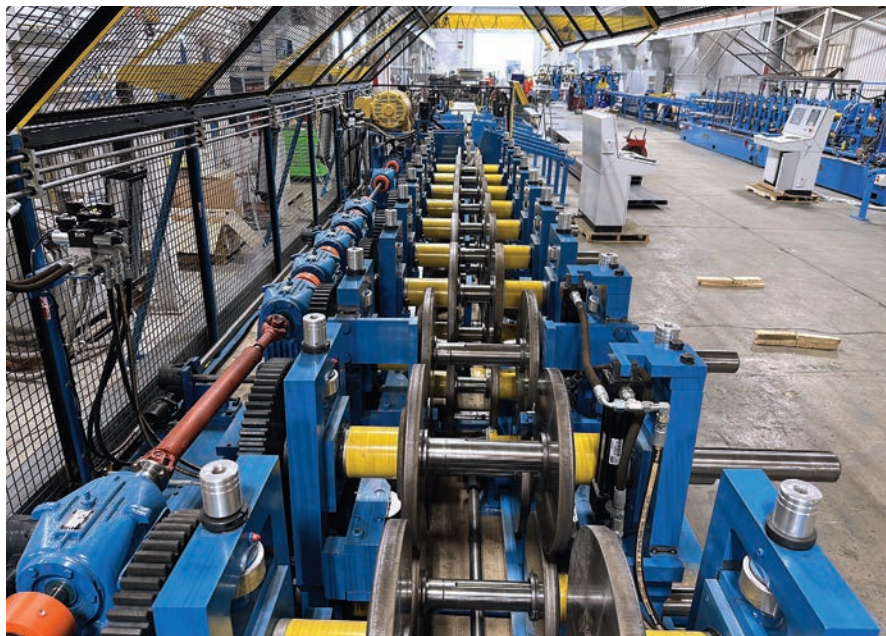
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edge condition, or feed instability — will be amplified throughout the process.

The roll forming mill itself must be engineered for durability and precision under load. Structural profiles require higher forming forces, more forming stations, and tighter tolerance control over long production runs. Mill stands must resist deflection, while shafting, bearings, and gearboxes must be sized for continuous-duty structural production — not light-gauge applications. At the same time, flexibility remains important, especially for producers running multiple profiles or material thicknesses.

Tooling plays a defining role in this process. Effective pass design must gradually form the material to avoid cracking or excessive work hardening while also compensating for spring back, particularly in high-strength steels. Strategies often include pre-forming stages, controlled over-bending, and specialized stations to maintain consistent web, flange, and lip dimensions. Precision manufacturing and proper heat treatment ensure tooling durability and repeatability over time.

Most structural components also require holes, slots, and sometimes end features for fastening and assembly. Integrating these processes inline



The roll forming mill must be engineered for durability and precision. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRADBURY GROUP

demands precise synchronization with line speed. Servo-driven punching systems provide repeatable hole placement across varying profiles and gauges, while robust cutoff systems are required to cleanly process thicker materials. Accuracy is critical — misaligned features can render a structural member unusable.

AUTOMATION, HANDLING, AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Automation plays a significant role in maintaining precision and efficiency. Modern control systems enable recipe-based changeovers, allowing operators to switch between profiles and materials with minimal downtime. Closed-loop monitoring ensures coordination between punching, forming, and cutoff operations, improving consistency while reducing reliance on operator experience.

Just as critical as forming the profile itself is how finished components are handled once they exit the line. Structural members are often long, heavy, and produced at high speeds, making manual handling very difficult and sometimes unsafe. Automated runout tables, servo-controlled stackers, and bundle-forming systems ensure parts are aligned, counted, and stacked without introducing twist, bow, or surface damage. Integrated packaging solutions—such as banding, wrapping, or palletizing—prepare components for downstream handling and shipment while reducing labor requirements. Effective handling systems preserve product quality while improving



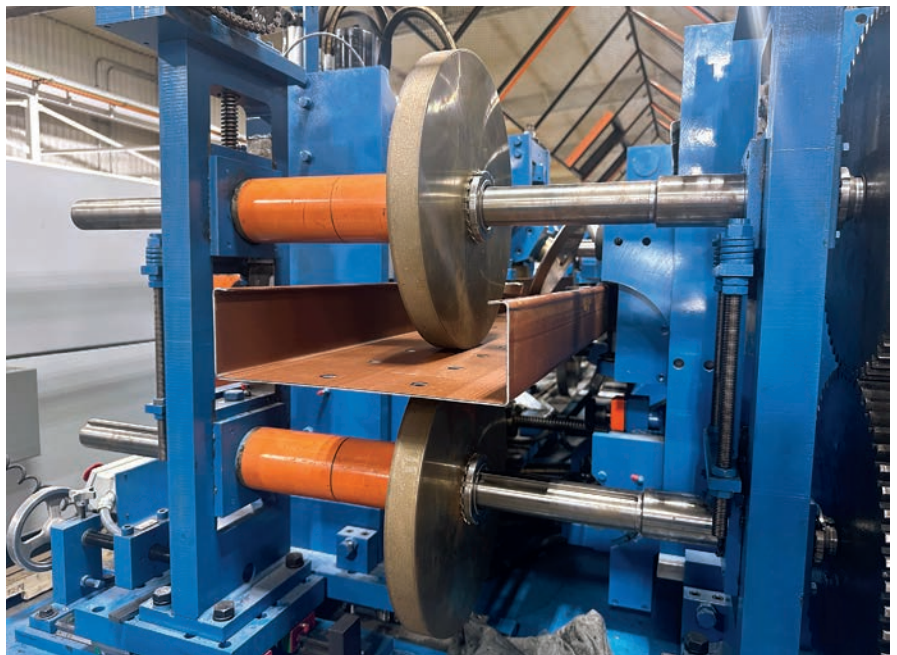
Structural components are load-bearing elements that must perform reliably in real-world building environments. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRADBURY GROUP

safety and throughput.

In structural applications, quality must be continuously verified. Producers rely on dimensional inspections, statistical process control, and material traceability to ensure compliance with internal standards and external requirements. A well-designed roll forming system supports this effort by delivering consistent parts while allowing for efficient inspection and adjustment when necessary.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Success in structural roll forming extends beyond the equipment itself. It depends on engineering expertise, application knowledge, and long-term support. Producers benefit most from partners who understand structural performance requirements and can assist with profile optimization, troubleshooting, and system evolution as demands change.



When roll forming structural components, the process must preserve material integrity while delivering repeatable geometry. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRADBURY GROUP

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Bradbury strives to set the standard for automated production and systems integration in the metal processing industry. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRADBURY GROUP

Structural roll forming sits at the intersection of engineering precision, manufacturing strength, and automation intelligence. It requires not only shaping metal but controlling how that material behaves throughout the process and in its final application. When all these elements come together, the result is a system capable of producing high-performance structural components — ready to support the buildings and infrastructure they are designed to serve.

Companies like The Bradbury Group exemplify what it means to support structural roll forming at an elevated level. With decades of experience in designing and building heavy-duty roll forming systems, Bradbury brings together engineering expertise, robust equipment design, and application-specific knowledge to help producers meet demanding

structural requirements.

Their capabilities extend across the full production line — from coil handling and mill design to advanced tooling, precision punching integration, and automated downstream systems. This comprehensive approach allows manufacturers to implement complete, coordinated solutions rather than piecing together individual components, resulting in improved efficiency, consistency, and long-term reliability.

Equally important is the depth of application knowledge behind the equipment. Experience with structural profiles such as studs and track, purlins, joists, and strut systems enables more effective pass design, better material utilization, and faster problem-solving when challenges arise. Combined with ongoing support, training, and service, partners with this

level of capability play a critical role in helping manufacturers optimize performance and adapt as project demands and market conditions evolve.

ABOUT THE BRADBURY COMPANY

The companies of the Bradbury Group [<https://bradburygroup.com>] are known for the cutting-edge technology and reliability built into every product — and for the exceptional service that helps satisfy customers worldwide. Bradbury strives to set the standard for automated production and systems integration in the metal processing industry. Bradbury believes its leveling, cutoff, punch, folding, roll forming machines and automated systems set the highest standard for productivity, reliability and safety in coil processing. **RF**



Metal board and batten siding in Rough Cedar Gray, a Tru-Steel HD digital print. PHOTO COURTESY OF UNITED STEEL SUPPLY

Board and Batten's Evolution

And Why It Still Presents Opportunities for Rollformers

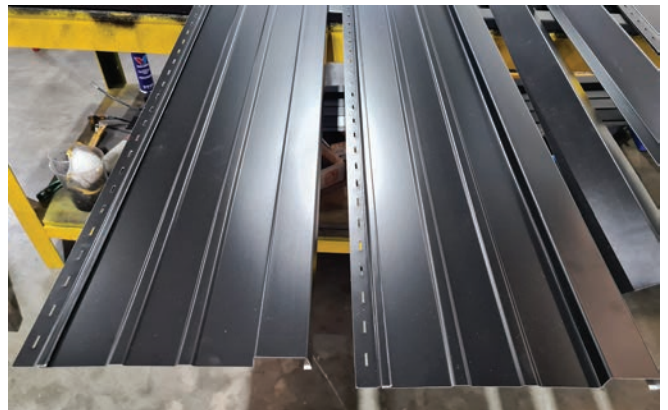
■ By Rollforming Magazine Staff

Board and batten, a historical design originally used in wood, has moved well beyond a niche aesthetic into a meaningful growth category for metal construction. What began as a regional trend has expanded into broader residential and light commercial markets, driven by demand for distinctive exterior cladding that blends traditional appearance with modern performance.

For rollformers, this shift represents more than a style trend—it is a production opportunity. Board and batten profiles allow shops to move beyond commodity panels and into higher-margin, design-driven products. Because many systems can be produced using existing coil inventories, the barrier to entry remains relatively low compared to entirely new product categories. At a time when many contractors and suppliers are looking to differentiate themselves in competitive markets, board and batten offers a relatively accessible way to add value.

The profile itself replicates the look of traditional wood construction through wide panels paired with a batten that conceals fasteners and protects seams. In metal applications, this design not only delivers a sought-after aesthetic, but also improves durability and reduces maintenance compared to wood alternatives. Resistance to moisture, insects, and dimensional instability makes metal board and batten especially attractive in regions where wood siding has historically required frequent upkeep or replacement.

In the post-frame segment, the profile is finding particular traction. Builders who once relied almost exclusively on



Bradbury recently introduced a board and batten line. COURTESY OF THE BRADBURY GROUP.

ribbed through-fastened panels are increasingly incorporating board and batten into residential-style post-frame homes, barndominiums, and hybrid structures. This shift reflects a broader trend you're familiar with: post-frame construction is no longer limited to agricultural or utility buildings. As expectations rise, so does demand for exterior finishes that align with residential design preferences while maintaining the structural efficiency of post-frame systems.

Board and batten fits naturally into that evolution. Its vertical orientation complements the structural lines of post-frame buildings, while its concealed fastener appearance elevates the

overall aesthetic. For builders, this creates an opportunity to deliver a higher-end look without abandoning the efficiencies that define post-frame construction. For rollformers, it expands the customer base beyond traditional agricultural and commercial applications into residential and architectural markets.

Recent developments across the industry show that board and batten is no longer limited to exterior walls. Interior applications—such as feature walls, ceilings, and accent areas—are expanding demand even further. Designers are increasingly using metal panels to create visual continuity between exterior and interior spaces, particularly in barndominiums and modern rural homes. Perforated panels and acoustical adaptations are also emerging, opening the door to functional as well as aesthetic applications.

This diversification matters for rollformers because it increases utilization opportunities. Instead of producing panels solely for exterior cladding, shops can supply material for multiple phases of a project, improving production efficiency and strengthening relationships with builders and contractors.

Equipment advancements have also played a role in making board and batten more accessible. Modern roll forming systems are capable of producing consistent, repeatable profiles across a range of substrates, including steel and aluminum. Many systems are adaptable to both portable and in-plant setups, allowing contractors to manufacture panels on-site or in controlled shop environments. This flexibility reduces transportation costs, shortens lead times, and allows for greater responsiveness to project needs.

At the same time, the growth of designer profiles is pushing suppliers to think more strategically about their product mix. Board and batten often serves as an entry point into a broader portfolio of architectural profiles, including lap siding variations, flush

panels, and other visually distinct designs. Offering both vertical and horizontal solutions provides greater flexibility when working with builders, architects, and homeowners who are looking to combine multiple profiles on a single structure.

This trend toward mixed-profile design is particularly evident in residential and post-frame projects, where combining textures and orientations helps break up large wall expanses and create visual interest. Board and batten panels are frequently paired with horizontal profiles or traditional ribbed panels to achieve a balanced aesthetic. For rollformers, this creates an opportunity not just to sell a single product, but to become a supplier of coordinated systems.

Another major factor accelerating adoption is the advancement of painted, embossed, and digitally printed coil.



Wood-grain texture that's embossed into Board & Batten panels.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HIXWOOD

“Our Tru-Steel HD woodgrain digital prints images have really increased the end users’ interest and willingness to use steel siding on their projects,” explained Will Waldrip, President, United Steel Supply. “Some of our woodgrain prints have plank patterns baked in, which has been really popular on board and batten.”

Recent innovations have significantly improved the realism and durability of woodgrain, stone, and other natural finishes. These developments align particularly well with board and batten, where texture and visual depth play a central role in the finished appearance. That demand is showing up in specific



Acu-Form Board & Batten Roll Former.

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finish preferences.

Hixwood has also noticed the continually rising interest in board and batten, for both its form and the finishes available. “Black Textured and Rough Edge Barnwood are driving a lot of sales in board and batten,” said Paul Zimmerman.

Earlier generations of faux-finish metal often struggled with issues such as fading, chalking, or unrealistic pattern repetition. Over the past several years, however, improvements in coating technology have addressed many of these concerns. High-performance paint systems combined with advanced embossing and digital printing techniques now allow for more consistent, non-repeating patterns and longer-lasting color retention.

“Finish quality is extremely important for any steel siding profile since customers are paying for long-lasting surface durability,” Waldrip added. “Board and batten profiles tend to have a lot of flat surface area which can make coating flaws more noticeable, so we’d argue that a high-quality finish is even more important there. It’s a big part of why we only stock coils from reputable domestic manufacturers with solid warranties.”

For builders and owners, this means metal board and batten can deliver the warmth and character of wood without the associated maintenance. For rollformers, it creates an opportunity to offer premium products that command higher margins while meeting customer

expectations for both aesthetics and performance.

The ability to mix and match colors, textures, and finishes further enhances design flexibility. Projects can incorporate multiple tones or materials to create contrast and highlight architectural features. This aligns with broader trends in residential construction, where personalization and visual differentiation are increasingly important.

From a business perspective, the convergence of profile innovation and advanced coil technology creates a compelling value proposition. Rollformers can leverage existing equipment and supply chains while expanding into new market segments. At the same time, they can respond to growing demand for low-maintenance,

visually distinctive building materials that appeal to both builders and end users.

There are also practical considerations that support the continued growth of board and batten. Installation familiarity is improving as more contractors gain experience with the profile. In addition, compatibility with common trim systems and accessories simplifies integration into existing construction practices. As more projects incorporate board and batten, the learning curve continues to decrease, further accelerating adoption.

Looking ahead, the long-term outlook for board and batten remains strong across multiple segments. “Board and batten will continue to see strong growth in post-frame, residential, and equestrian applications,” Zimmerman said. “With the wide variety of prints and

textures available, the options feel nearly endless—and long-term durability will continue to drive adoption.”

The continued evolution of profiles and finishes suggests that board and batten is not a passing trend, but part of a broader shift toward design-driven metal cladding.

In both roll forming and post-frame construction, the emphasis is moving toward solutions that combine performance, efficiency, and visual appeal.

For those in the roll-forming industry, board and batten represents a practical and scalable way to participate in that shift. It bridges the gap between traditional construction aesthetics and modern manufacturing capabilities, offering a path toward greater product differentiation and long-term growth. **RF**

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Best Buy Metals

Growing with Purpose, Grounded in Service

■ By Karen Knapstein

In an industry where speed, consistency, and reliability can make or break a contractor's day, Best Buy Metals has carved out a reputation built on more than just product. It's a company that has grown steadily over the past two decades by focusing on relationships, responsiveness, and a willingness to adapt—without losing sight of its core values.

Since being named to the Inc. 5000 list in 2021, Best Buy Metals has continued to expand its footprint, refine its operations, and invest in both people and equipment.



Isaac Libbey, CEO & founder of Best Buy Metals.

But I asked founder and CEO Isaac Libbey what stands out most over the past five years, and his answer isn't just about new locations or product lines—it's about leadership.

"We added a couple new locations and we're continuing to grow," Libbey says. "What stands out is, thankfully, we were able to add a good number of leaders within our team to help, which is moving us in a good direction without overloading us as we add new locations. So we feel really good about the leadership that we have within the company to help take it to a new level."

That deliberate approach to growth—building the team alongside the footprint—has allowed the company to expand into key markets like Dalton, Georgia, and Knoxville, Tennessee, while maintaining the level of service customers have come to expect.

"We've added more stores, expanding



This new warehouse and production facility at the Cleveland, Tennessee, location serves as a key hub and enhances already streamlined operations and efficient service. PHOTOS COURTESY OF BEST BUY METALS.



The latest expansion in Greer/Greenville, South Carolina, brings a major upgrade to the Best Buy Metals Eastern Region with enhanced production, showroom, and customer service capabilities. INSET: The Dalton, Georgia, store represents an important milestone in the company's expansion and commitment to contractor support.

into Dalton, Georgia," Libbey explains. "We were already selling in the Atlanta area, but Dalton helped us expand into the surrounding areas and take care of our contractors. Some of the contractors we already sold to, but it helped us to be

able to serve them better."

The Knoxville expansion followed a similar logic but added a manufacturing component that proved especially impactful.

"We sold in Knoxville for years, but

we were able to open a manufacturing facility in Knoxville,” he says. “That definitely helped contractors be able to get better service. If they need something right then, we can manufacture the packages right then or the next day—just whatever their needs might be.”

EXPANDING THE PRODUCT MIX

While geographic growth has been important, Best Buy Metals’ evolution is just as evident in its expanding product lineup. Traditionally known for roofing panels, the company has leaned heavily into siding and complementary building components in recent years.

“One of the biggest things that’s really taken off since the last magazine when it comes to new products is siding,” Libbey says. “Residential board and batten panel has really been a big hit.”



Community leaders and team members gathered for a ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the grand opening of the Greer, South Carolina, location in April.

That board and batten offering is a good example of how Best Buy Metals is differentiating itself in a crowded market.

The company’s ability to emboss metal panels to mimic wood grain not only enhances aesthetics but also improves

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This home showcases EDCO board and batten siding in Willow, accented with Craftsman Plank in Tiger Wood underneath, creating a clean, elevated look with rich contrast.

performance.

“One thing about board and batten that makes us different than others is our equipment will emboss the metal to give a wood grain feel,” Libbey explains. “Embossing isn’t just for looks; it gives a lot of strength and keeps the panels a lot more rigid. Other metal, if the surface isn’t perfectly smooth, can ripple. Embossing helps with looks as well as the actual performance.”

The company has also introduced new roofing profiles, including its Apex Panel—a reimagined take on the traditional exposed-fastener system.

“Our Tuff Rib panel is 3-foot wide with ribs 9 inches apart. We’ve sold this screw-down panel for years,” Libbey says. “We added a couple machines to make a new roof panel with a new look. It still has 3-foot coverage, still exposed fastener, but the ribs are 12 inches apart and square, so it makes it look like a hidden fastened panel but doesn’t cost any more than the same 3-foot panel we’ve been selling for years.”

The result is a product that offers a standing seam aesthetic without the added cost or complexity.

“It looks like standing seam and is easy to install. It gives a different look,” he

adds. “People like having another option.”

Beyond panels, Best Buy Metals has also expanded into structural components like metal trusses for post-frame buildings. By increasing the size and strength of its truss offerings, the company has tapped into growing demand in that segment.

“We upped the size,” Libbey says. “They were 1½ inches; all ours are now 2 inches. It’s a thicker, stronger truss that we stock and have readily available. That’s helped us sell a lot more of those over the last few years.”

A SERVICE-DRIVEN STRATEGY

Despite the product and geographic expansion, Libbey is quick to point out that the company’s momentum is rooted in something less tangible: customer care.

“The one thing that we’ve tried is always stay steady—add to the team and focus on customer relations,” he says. “Don’t let customers fall through the cracks.”

That philosophy has led to investments in both outside sales and dedicated customer relations roles, with team members tasked specifically with checking in on contractors and ensuring their needs are met.

“Their main goal is to check on some

of our contractors, make sure they’re taken care of,” Libbey explains. “When we come up short, make it right. We’ve tried our best to do that.”

It’s a mindset shaped, in part, by observing gaps in the market.

“Our biggest reason we’ve gone to other places is you don’t feel like you’re necessarily needed as a customer—you feel like nobody cares,” he says. “We don’t want to operate like that. Our main goal, from front to back, is that every individual is important. They need to know they’re important.”

That emphasis on service has helped the company build a loyal and growing contractor base.

“We’re seeing a lot more solid contractor base that keeps returning every year,” Libbey says. “They keep coming back.”

NAVIGATING INDUSTRY SHIFTS

Like every manufacturer and supplier in the metal construction space, Best Buy Metals has had to navigate significant industry changes over the past five years—from supply chain disruptions to evolving design preferences.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the company experienced its share of

The Way We Roll))

challenges but managed to maintain stability.

“During COVID we saw some challenges for sure with supply chain, but we stayed steady and had a strong year—and even the next year,” Libbey says.

Today, supply constraints have largely eased, but pricing volatility remains a factor, particularly with ongoing tariff uncertainties.

“We buy American steel—U.S. steel here in America. We take pride in that domestic steel,” he says. “But it fluctuates because tariffs... Not tariffs on our steel but on the foreign steel which causes the domestic steel to change and adapt to what’s going on around. It has made unknowns a little bit more unknown. It hasn’t caused a shortage, just a little more navigating.”

To mitigate those uncertainties, the company prioritizes inventory.

“We keep plenty in stock so customers won’t have to wait on any downtime waiting on colors,” Libbey notes.

At the same time, shifting aesthetic trends are influencing product development. One notable change is the growing popularity of ultra-low gloss finishes.

“It used to be that all the rolls of metal coils were shiny,” Libbey says. “Now we have these ultra-low gloss, dull flat colors people are starting to like. We try to make sure we have several colors available.”

INVESTING IN EQUIPMENT AND EFFICIENCY

Behind the scenes, Best Buy Metals has made significant investments in manufacturing capabilities, particularly in coil processing and equipment upgrades.

One key improvement has been the expanded use of slitters, allowing the company to maximize flexibility from a single master coil.

“We can take the master coil and have it on the floor and use it for many different products by slitting what we need,” Libbey explains. “We’ve purchased several more slitters from SWI, and that’s helped us be more efficient.”

That flexibility is especially valuable as the product mix grows to include board and batten, soffit, standing seam, and multiple panel widths.

On the forming side, the company continues to invest in high-quality equipment designed for longevity and consistency.

“You could buy a roll former for half the price, but they’re not going to make the same consistency and won’t last as long,” Libbey says. “We run Metal Rollforming Systems Titans. We’ve had great success with ours.”

The company has also embraced newer technologies, including a 28-foot all-electric brake from ASCO USA that eliminates the need for hydraulics.

“The big feature about it is it’s 100% electric—no hydraulics,” Libbey says. “Hydraulics wear and tear over time. All electric is a newer concept. It’s tested well and runs efficiently.”

Additionally, Best Buy Metals is investing in new panel



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capabilities, including a large, corrugated panel machine, also from MRS, that reflects a resurgence in that profile.

"It used to be an old panel. Now it's coming in as a modern look," Libbey notes.

TRAINING, SAFETY, AND TEAM DEVELOPMENT

As the company has grown, so has its workforce—now totaling around 235 employees. With that growth comes a heightened focus on training and safety.

"We do a lot of training for product knowledge and safety," Libbey says. "If our team, especially in sales, doesn't know the product, they won't be able to take care of the customer or have confidence."

To address that, Best Buy Metals has implemented structured training programs that guide employees from basic products to more complex offerings.

"We start out with the most common panels and move into more detailed specialty products," he explains. "We

make sure they have the right tools to learn everything."

Safety remains equally critical, particularly in a metal manufacturing environment.

"Always wear gloves, sleeves, and boots," Libbey says. "Forklift training is a must. There's a lot that goes into safety, and it's a huge factor. We're very thankful to try to keep a good record."

COMPETING IN A CROWDED MARKET

With growth in the metal roofing and cladding sector has come increased competition. What was once a relatively sparse landscape is now much more crowded.

"When we first opened 24 years ago, we saw very few that roll form metal around us," Libbey says. "Now within a few hours, you'll have more who have chosen to do something very similar. It keeps you on your toes."

For Best Buy Metals, the response has been to double down on its core

principles.

"We continue to do what we do best—customer service—and keep the base that we've established," he says. "We work hard to keep a good name. We do what we say we will do and follow through. If we come up short, we make it right."

At the heart of that approach is a simple but deeply held belief: "Doing the right thing because it's the right thing," Libbey says. "Morals and doing the right thing—that's what matters most."

LOOKING AHEAD

As Best Buy Metals looks to the future, growth remains firmly on the agenda—but not at the expense of culture or service.

"We're not done growing," Libbey says. "We're continuing to research new markets and new facilities."

At the same time, the company is mindful of maintaining its identity as it expands.

"We want to grow at a healthy pace so we can keep customer service the way it should be," he explains. "Keep that family-based atmosphere. We're a family business, so we want to keep that going and not lose that if we get too big."

Several facility upgrades and expansions are already in motion, positioning the company for its next phase.

Ultimately, Libbey says, the mission remains unchanged.

"The biggest thing is we're in this for the long term—to continue to serve our customers," he says. "We're in this as a team. It's important for people to know that. We want to grow at a good, healthy pace."

In a fast-moving industry where products, profiles, and technologies continue to evolve, that steady, people-first approach may be Best Buy Metals' most enduring advantage. **RF**

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Business Outlook

Construction Faces Opportunity and Headwinds in a Two-Speed Economy *Keynote insights highlight rising costs, uneven demand and sectors driving construction forward*

■ By Fiona Maguire-O’Shea, METALCON Writer

Before leaders of the metal building industry in Colorado Springs, Colorado, keynote speaker Anirban Basu, a widely respected industry economist, underscored both the opportunities and headwinds facing construction: the U.S. economy is still growing, but growth is increasingly uneven, and industry professionals need to be clear-eyed about where opportunity exists and where risk is building.



Anirban Basu,
Chief Economist
for the ABC, CFMA,
and MBI.
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Speaking at the joint Metal Building Contractors and Erectors Association/Metal Building Manufacturers Association (MBCEA/MBMA) event, Basu offered an early roadmap to the financing, labor, inflation and market questions facing the metal construction industry — conversations that will carry into METALCON 2026, where thousands of metal construction professionals will gather amid ongoing discussion about the market forces shaping the year ahead.

Basu, chief economist for the Associated Builders and Contractors, the Construction Financial Management Association and the Modular Building Institute, and a former chair of the Maryland Economic Development Commission, brought a practical, construction-focused perspective to the stage. His core point was blunt: the economy is growing, but the benefits are uneven. “So, it’s a lopsided economic expansion with some families really

benefiting, and other families really fading in terms of standard of living,” Basu said.

PRICES, RATES AND PROJECT PRESSURE

One of Basu’s clearest messages centered on inflation and the frustration it is creating. He said there is “a fair amount of angst out there regarding the economy,” as well as “a fair amount of unhappiness” and “a significant amount of discontent,” driven in part by rising everyday costs such as groceries. At the heart of that discontent, he said, is “high and rising prices.” He noted that overall inflation has climbed 29% since May 2020, while core inflation has risen 25.7% over the same period.

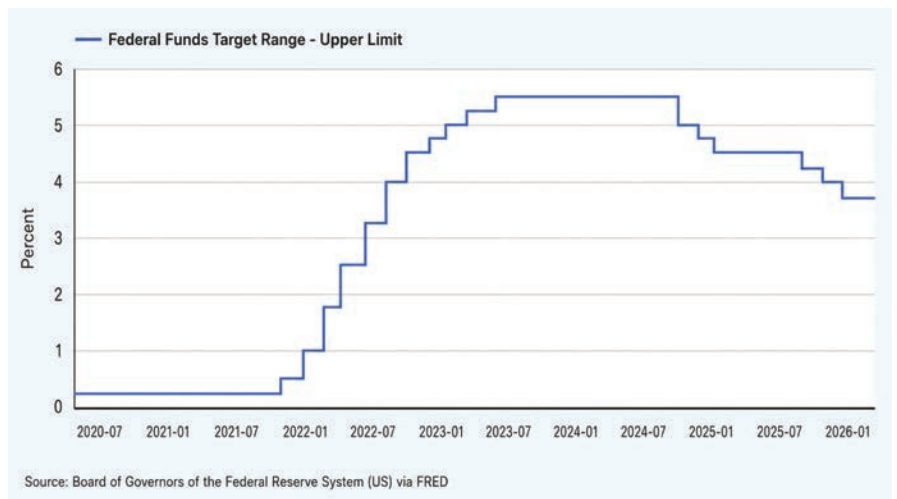
That matters because inflation continues to keep interest rates elevated, raising the cost of capital and making many projects harder to pencil. Basu noted that after holding its benchmark rate near zero early in the pandemic, the

Federal Reserve raised it to about 5.5% before later easing, but borrowing costs remain high relative to the pre-pandemic environment.

As he put it, “Borrowing costs go up, project financing costs go up. That’s not good for construction projects.” Basu said inflation is likely to linger, keeping interest rates higher for longer — an unwelcome outlook for the construction industry, which needs private financing costs to come down to support more construction starts.

That pressure is most visible in residential construction and parts of the commercial market. Basu pointed to declining housing under construction, weak permit activity and continued softness in multifamily, where many projects are simply not viable at today’s financing and input-cost levels.

He also emphasized that the office sector remains a weak spot, with remote and hybrid work continuing to weigh on vacancy in major metropolitan areas,



putting pressure on property values, lender appetite and municipal tax bases. As a result, private-sector work tied to traditional office, speculative multifamily and other rate-sensitive development remains under strain.

WHERE STRENGTH IS CONCENTRATED

At the same time, Basu made clear that not all construction sectors are struggling. He singled out data centers and the energy generation and distribution infrastructure needed to support them as two of the strongest opportunities ahead. “These two segments of construction tend to be the strongest going forward,” he said.

He described artificial intelligence as one of the defining drivers of capital spending in today’s economy, with hyperscalers, such as Amazon and Meta, spending about \$450 billion last year on related architecture and infrastructure and expected to spend \$700 billion to \$725 billion this year. He also noted that data centers used about 4.4% of U.S. electricity in 2023 and could consume well above 12% by 2028. Those trends will keep driving demand for power generation, transmission and related utility work, while also reinforcing the

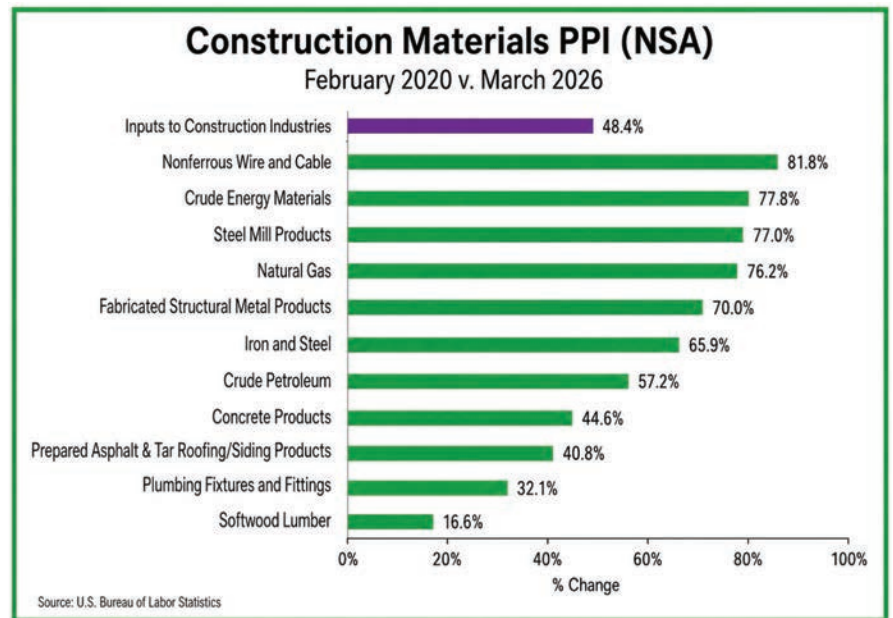
appeal of fast-track, durable building systems.

Public construction is another relatively bright spot. Basu showed that while total nonresidential construction has flattened, infrastructure-related categories such as transportation, water supply, sewage and waste disposal, and conservation-related work continue to benefit from public funding already moving through the system. In practical

terms, that means companies with exposure to civil, utility and public-sector work may find better near-term stability than those dependent on speculative private development.

MATERIALS COSTS REMAIN A PROBLEM

Basu underscored rising construction input costs, particularly in metals-related categories. He said construction





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materials prices overall were up 48% from February 2020 to March 2026. The more targeted figure may be even more important: Basu said the producer price index – the price received by producers – for architectural and structural metals manufacturing was up 7.4% year over year and 75% since February 2020. He also pointed to steep increases in steel mill products and fabricated structural metal products, highlighting how tariff policy and supply-side pressures continue to affect pricing.

Materials volatility continues to shape pricing, bidding, procurement strategy and project timing. In a market where owners are already struggling with financing, further escalation can push work from delayed to dead.

LABOR AND LOCATION STILL MATTER

Labor remains another complicated piece of the outlook. Basu noted that construction job openings have not surged the way some expected, even with changes in immigration policy affecting workforce availability. He said about 25% of the construction workforce is foreign-born, but the expected increase in advertisements for native-born or documented workers has not materialized. The reason, he suggested, is that between residential and nonresidential construction, overall construction spending has been in decline, even though some individual segments continue to grow. That means labor availability, wage pressure and productivity remain key concerns, particularly in labor-intensive trades. Even where demand exists, execution still depends on workforce access and retention.

Basu also urged the audience to think regionally, not just nationally. Some markets can transcend a weakening economy, particularly when population growth continues to drive demand. Economic momentum remains strongest in places that continue to attract people and business investment, including parts of Texas, Florida and the Carolinas. Those regions are more likely to support job creation and construction demand. Markets dealing with population outflows, weak office fundamentals or fiscal strain face a more difficult path.

WHAT COMES NEXT FOR METAL CONSTRUCTION

As the industry looks ahead to METALCON 2026, the same questions Basu raised continue to shape conversations about where work is coming from, which projects still pencil and how companies can position themselves for the next phase of the cycle. Strength remains concentrated in a relatively narrow group of drivers – artificial intelligence spending, data centers, power infrastructure and public work – while other parts of the market remain constrained by financing costs, input prices and softer demand.

In closing, Basu said, “So there are four things I’m watching to

4 Recession Signals to Watch

Key indicators to watch when assessing recession risk

1



Middle East conflict

Markets may be treating the conflict as temporary, but it has not ended yet and further escalation could create new risks.

2



Hyperscaler spending

Watch what major technology companies say about capital spending and investment plans.

3



Stock market performance

Market performance is closely tied to hyperscaler spending and broader investor confidence.

4



Layoff activity

Hiring remains soft. A meaningful increase in layoffs could push unemployment higher and add pressure to consumer spending.

Source: Summary of recession indicators discussed by the user.

determine whether or not we’re going to enter recession.” First is the conflict in the Middle East, which he said the stock market appears to be treating as temporary, even though “it hasn’t ended yet, and things can go wrong.” Second is hyperscaler spending, particularly what major technology companies say about their investment plans. Third is the stock market’s performance, which is closely tied to that spending. Fourth is layoff activity, because hiring remains soft and a meaningful pickup in layoffs could quickly push unemployment higher and put more pressure on consumer spending.

For now, Basu said, initial unemployment claims remain low — a sign that employers are still largely holding on to their workers. That, he said, “speaks to economic stability.” His conclusion was cautiously optimistic: “My forecast is for growth in 2026.”

That leaves the industry with a message that is neither alarmist nor complacent. Opportunity remains, especially in segments tied to infrastructure, energy and advanced technology. But so do serious headwinds, particularly for projects that depend on easier financing, steadier input costs and broader private demand. That conversation will continue across the industry in the months ahead — including at METALCON 2026, scheduled for Oct. 7–9, 2026, in Orlando, Florida. **RF**



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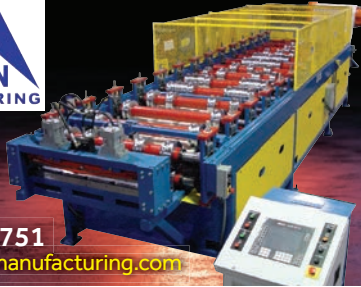
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Tech Support

Where to turn for equipment help from select manufacturers

■ By Karen Knapstein

PHOTO COURTESY OF METAL ROLLFORMING SYSTEMS

When a machine goes down, production stops—and every minute of downtime can mean missed deadlines, delayed shipments, frustrated customers, and lost revenue. In today's fast-paced construction roll-forming world, technical support has evolved beyond a simple service call. Manufacturers are expected to function as long-term technical partners, helping customers maximize runtime, train operators, troubleshoot problems remotely, and keep equipment running efficiently for years—or even decades—after installation.

The quality of technical support behind a machine can be just as important as the machine itself. Fast access to knowledgeable technicians, readily available replacement parts, remote diagnostics, preventative maintenance programs, and ongoing operator education all play a major role in determining how quickly a shop can recover when problems arise. In many cases, the difference between a minor interruption and a multi-day shutdown comes down to the responsiveness and expertise

of the equipment manufacturer.

The following interviews with several equipment manufacturers reveal a common theme: support is no longer viewed as a separate department—it is part of the overall customer relationship. Companies such as Acu-Form, The Bradbury Group, Englert, Howick Ltd., Metal Rollforming Systems, MetalForming, New Tech Machinery, and SWI Machinery each approach support in their own way, but all emphasize rapid response, operator training, preventative maintenance, and direct access to experienced technicians.

Some manufacturers prioritize highly personalized support with direct access to in-house technicians, while others leverage sophisticated remote diagnostics, global ticketing systems, and field service teams capable of rapid deployment. Several companies stress the importance of preventative maintenance and operator education to reduce emergency service calls altogether. Others point to spare parts availability and internal communication systems as key factors in minimizing

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New Tech Machinery • <https://newtechmachinery.com/>

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Ron Dies leading a training class at a customer's facility.
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRADBURY GROUP

downtime.

Together, these conversations provide insight into what you can expect for modern equipment support—and why evaluating technical service capabilities has become an essential part of purchasing and operating metal-forming equipment.

ACU-FORM: KEEPING SUPPORT PERSONAL AND PRACTICAL

For Acu-Form Equipment, technical support starts with direct access to knowledgeable people who understand the machines firsthand. According to Wayne Troyer, support calls are handled entirely in-house rather than outsourced through a call center.

“Our calls are all answered by in-house techs,” Troyer explained. It will be either Wayne himself or the floor manager.

That direct access allows many problems to be solved quickly over the phone. When remote troubleshooting is not enough, the company aims to move quickly with field service support.

“If we can't fix the problem over the phone, normally we can have a tech crew out at their facility within 24 hours,” Troyer said.

Parts availability is another major focus. Troyer noted that approximately 95 percent of replacement parts are stocked on shelves and available for next-day shipment. Rather than encouraging customers to overstock spare components, Acu-Form prefers maintaining inventory internally so customers can rely on rapid delivery when needed.

Training also plays a central role in the company's support philosophy. Customers receive owner's manuals, maintenance schedules, and detailed checklists covering weekly, monthly, and quarterly service items during installation and startup training.

“We make sure they know what to do if there is something they're missing or something that they have a question on,” Troyer said.

At the same time, Troyer cautions operators against

attempting major adjustments without guidance, particularly as equipment becomes more electronically sophisticated.

“If you're not sure, please give us a call,” he said. “We can help you rather than the operator going in there making adjustments, moving parts, and then in the end it's actually more work for us.”

THE BRADBURY GROUP: LARGE-SCALE SUPPORT WITH LONG-TERM FOCUS

At The Bradbury Group, customer support revolves around minimizing downtime through a combination of in-house expertise, remote diagnostics, field service, and preventative maintenance.

“When production stops, customers need fast answers and experienced people that understand the equipment,” said Ron Dies, Field Service Manager at The Bradbury Company.

The Bradbury Group consists of 16 companies operating under one organization, giving customers access to a broad network of technical resources. The Bradbury Company alone employs 17 dedicated Field Service Engineers supporting customers throughout North America and internationally.

The company maintains 24/7 support capabilities, with emergency responses often beginning within an hour. Same-day technician dispatch is frequently possible, depending on travel logistics.



Picking parts from inventory. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRADBURY GROUP

Closer Look))

Remote diagnostics have also become an increasingly important part of the support process. Dies explained that many problems can now be identified remotely through controls systems analysis before determining whether onsite support is necessary.

“When customers are down, those situations move to the front of the line,” Dies said. “If necessary, we will redirect inventory, move parts already allocated to other projects, or expedite manufacturing efforts.”

Training remains another core priority. The company provides onsite operator and maintenance training designed to improve troubleshooting skills, machine understanding, and overall production efficiency.

“One thing that separates The Bradbury Group is the depth of experience available to customers,” Dies said. “Many of the machines we continue to support have been operating in the field for decades.”

Rather than viewing support as something limited to startup and installation, the company emphasizes long-term relationships throughout the life of the equipment.

ENGLERT: PROACTIVE SERVICE AND ONGOING PARTNERSHIP

For Englert, support begins with speed and accessibility. According to James Hazen, Director of Roofing Sales, machine downtime is treated as an emergency because contractors are often operating on active jobsites where delays can quickly become costly.

“When one of our machines goes down on a job site, we treat it as an emergency because we know your time is money,” Hazen said.

Customers typically work directly with a Territory Manager who already understands both the equipment and the customer’s operation. Troubleshooting may happen over the phone, through live video, onsite, or through one of Englert’s Field Service Locations.

If additional support is needed, the company’s customer service line creates an immediate CRM ticket and routes the issue to the appropriate technical expert. Hazen noted that callbacks are typically immediate and always within two hours.

Training is customized based on the customer’s experience level. Rather than offering a rigid standardized program, Englert tailors instruction to the operator and maintenance staff involved.

“We provide as much training as needed—not a one-size-fits-all package,” Hazen explained.

Support also continues well beyond warranty periods. Englert offers ongoing preventative maintenance programs, inspection visits, seasonal service trips, and scheduled “tune-up” days at Field Service Centers.

“We believe the best way to serve you is to prevent problems before they happen,” Hazen said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOWICK LTD.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOWICK LTD.

The company also ties service programs to material purchases, allowing customers to earn loyalty service hours that can be applied toward maintenance and repairs.

HOWICK LTD: GLOBAL COVERAGE AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Howick Ltd. has built its support strategy around accessibility, global coordination, and helping customers become increasingly self-sufficient over time.

According to Deon Anderson, Head of Global Sales, many customers still prefer speaking directly with a technician rather than navigating automated systems.

“Our techs always answer the phone,” Anderson said. “They never not answer the phone.”

The company also utilizes an online portal and ticketing system where customers can upload photos, videos, and service requests. Because support teams operate across the United States, United Kingdom, and New Zealand, tickets can often be picked up quickly regardless of time zone.

“We pride ourselves on our support and backup,” Anderson said. “If they’re not moving, production loss is costing them



PHOTO COURTESY OF METAL ROLLFORMING SYSTEMS

money.”

Training begins during machine commissioning and setup, with additional support available based on customer needs and experience levels. Rather than relying heavily on standardized classes, Howick focuses on individualized training and direct communication.

“We try and focus on individual needs rather than try to catch everyone as a whole,” Anderson explained.

The company’s online portal also provides customers with maintenance schedules, documents, videos, and knowledge-base resources designed to help operators troubleshoot and maintain equipment independently.

“The way our machines are built, maintenance is relatively easy to do so people can be self-sufficient,” Anderson said.

Preventative maintenance service agreements are also common, with some customers scheduling multiple service visits per year for tooling inspections, punch checks, and overall machine evaluations.

Anderson emphasized that support extends throughout the entire organization—not just within the service department.

“We’re quite unique at Howick,” he said. “Someone can ring sales or the tech team and they’re still going to get an answer or resolution because they all have that knowledge base.”

METAL ROLLFORMING SYSTEMS: TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN TROUBLESHOOTING

At Metal Rollforming Systems, support combines direct communication with increasingly advanced troubleshooting technologies.

“We operate with 100 percent in-house support—no call centers, no phone trees, and no runaround,” said Bill Griffin, President of Metal Rollforming Systems.

Support technicians begin their careers as equipment assemblers, giving them firsthand mechanical knowledge of the systems they later support in the field.

The company utilizes a wide range of remote diagnostic tools, including remote software access, augmented reality headsets, photo sharing, FaceTime, WhatsApp, and traditional phone support.

“That translates into faster, more accurate diagnostics and real-world solutions—not scripted responses,” Griffin said.

If remote troubleshooting fails to resolve the issue, field technicians can be dispatched immediately. In urgent situations, scheduled preventative maintenance visits may even be reassigned to prioritize emergency downtime.

As the OEM, Metal Rollforming Systems maintains inventory for current equipment as well as obsolete components supporting machines more than 30 years old.

Training remains heavily hands-on. Every installation includes onsite commissioning and practical operator instruction focused not only on machine operation but also on troubleshooting and field service.

“Our goal is to make customers as self-sufficient as possible,” Griffin said.

The company also emphasizes preventative maintenance programs, post-service reporting, customized spare parts strategies, and ongoing technical communications designed to keep customers informed and connected.

“One of our biggest differentiators is continuity of people,” Griffin explained. “Customers typically work with the same individuals over time.”

METALFORMING LLC: COMBINING SCALE WITH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

For MetalForming, technical support relies on a large internal team combined with aggressive investment in digital systems and remote diagnostics.

According to Martin König, Executive Vice President of Operations, the company currently maintains 20 technical support personnel in the back office alongside 17 field technicians.

“When calling into the main number, the customer can select the department that most fits their need and directly talk to a person that can help,” König explained.

Every service request generates a ticket that is immediately assigned to the appropriate technician. If a machine is

Closer Look))

completely down, the assigned technician responds within an hour of first contact.

The company estimates that approximately 90 percent of reported issues can be resolved remotely through TeamViewer access or manufacturer diagnostic tools.

“Machines that are completely down are MetalForming’s top priority,” König said.

Each morning, company leadership reviews all machine-down cases to determine escalation needs and identify the fastest resolution path. The company keeps the most requested spare parts in stock to limit machine downtime. In some situations, MetalForming will even cannibalize components from inventory machines to restore customer production.

Training is integrated into every installation, with operators and maintenance staff receiving instruction on operation, maintenance schedules, and troubleshooting procedures. For more complex applications, application engineers become heavily involved in the training process.

MetalForming offers preventative maintenance including training plus customizable Service Level Agreements and parts packages if the customer is interested in keeping critical components on hand.



Customers receive training from New Tech technicians.
PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW TECH MACHINERY.

MetalForming also offers free lifetime refresher training at its Peachtree City, Georgia, facility.

“Our experienced technical support team will talk the operators through the troubleshooting and educate the customer what to look out for going forward,” König said.

The company is also investing heavily in integrated CRM, CPQ, and ERP systems aimed at improving response times, knowledge tracking, parts availability, and machine uptime.

“Everybody at MetalForming understands that everybody is touching the customer,” König said.

NEW TECH MACHINERY: ACCESSIBLE SUPPORT AND CONTINUOUS TRAINING

For New Tech Machinery, technical support follows a structured process designed to quickly connect customers



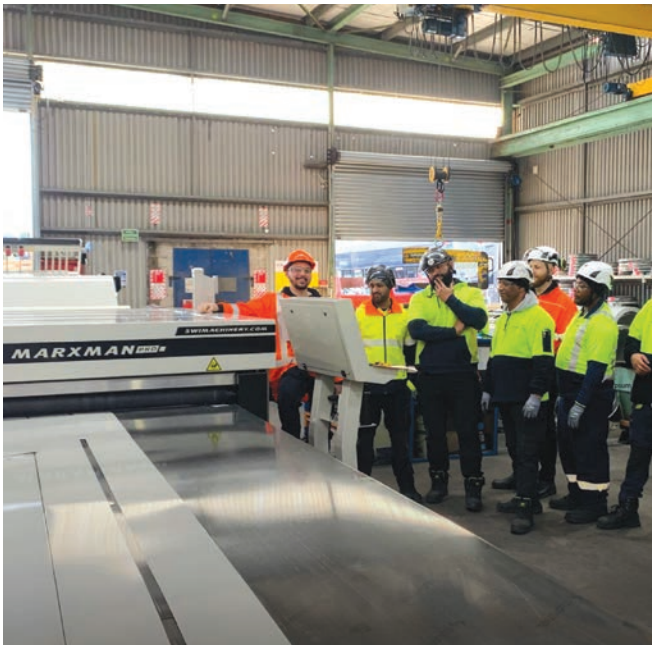
Customers receive training from New Tech technicians.
PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW TECH MACHINERY.

with the right expertise while keeping resolution times as short as possible. According to Rick Zand, support begins when a customer calls into the service line and is placed in a queue. “Once it is their turn, one of our service techs will call them to assess the situation,” he explained. From there, technicians evaluate the issue, including the age of the machine to determine whether it may be a warranty-related concern, and work to guide the customer through troubleshooting steps.

In many cases, problems can be resolved remotely. “We try to walk the customer through their issue, or in some cases all they need is to buy parts,” Zand said. When remote support isn’t enough, customers can schedule a service technician to visit their location or arrange to bring the machine in for service. Zand noted that customer feedback on the process has been consistently positive: “We get a lot of compliments on our service department and take pride in our abilities to help others.”

Training and ongoing education are also central to New Tech Machinery’s support approach. Internally, the company emphasizes continuous learning as machines evolve. “We are always working to learn more and more every day,” Zand said. For customers, training begins with free in-house instruction included with every machine, with optional onsite training available. In addition, customers can return at any time for retraining, whether to refresh skills or onboard new employees.

Beyond direct service, the company provides a range of self-guided support resources. “We can provide the customer with extensive videos on our website and YouTube channel that could help with their issues,” Zand said, adding that many customers benefit from online literature and service videos. A network of distributors may also offer localized support when needed. Zand emphasized one important operational rule: “Don’t ever operate the roll-forming machine without the safety covers on it.”



Training on the Marxman Pro. PHOTO COURTESY OF SWI MACHINERY

SWI MACHINERY: SPEED, GLOBAL COVERAGE, AND OPERATOR INDEPENDENCE

At SWI, technical support is built around rapid response, global coverage, and empowering customers to resolve issues efficiently.

According to SWI’s Jason Smoak, customers typically begin by contacting a field service technician directly. If that technician is unavailable, calls are quickly routed to the next available team member or to the company’s U.S. office, with response times typically measured in minutes.

All SWI slitters and folders are equipped with remote access software, allowing technicians to log in and assist with troubleshooting and diagnostics from anywhere. The company’s global footprint further strengthens response capabilities, with its Australia-based headquarters providing support during U.S. overnight hours.

In the field, SWI maintains seven U.S.-based technicians, each equipped with service vehicles stocked with parts. Additional inventory is held at the company’s Georgia facility, with late-day shipping available to expedite urgent repairs. Smoak noted that restoring production takes priority over administrative processes, allowing parts to be shipped immediately when needed.

Training is designed to support operator independence. Each machine installation includes hands-on instruction, supported by detailed manuals with illustrations and step-by-step guidance. Documentation is provided both in print and directly within the machine interface, giving operators immediate access to maintenance and troubleshooting resources.

Beyond emergency service, SWI emphasizes ongoing engagement throughout the life of the equipment. Preventative maintenance programs are customized to customer needs, and software updates are provided at no cost. While the company focuses on equipping customers to minimize service interruptions, it also encourages proactive communication to address potential issues early.

“We make a strong effort upfront to equip and empower our customers so they don’t need us,” Smoak said. “But we also welcome those proactive conversations—they’ve led to many of our technological advancements.”

TECHNICAL SUPPORT AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Across all the conversations, one theme becomes clear: technical support is not viewed as a secondary service added after the sale. For construction rollformers operating in increasingly competitive and time-sensitive markets, support has become part of the equipment itself.

Whether through direct access to experienced technicians, remote diagnostics, preventative maintenance, operator education, or aggressive parts stocking, manufacturers are increasingly being judged not only by how well their machines perform—but by how quickly they respond when something goes wrong.

For rollformers evaluating future equipment purchases, these support systems may ultimately become just as important as speed, profile capability, or production output. **RF**



All of SWI Machinery’s US-based technicians are equipped with fully stocked service vehicles. PHOTO COURTESY OF SWI MACHINERY

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