

JULY 2022

Metal Builder

RURAL BUILDER MAGAZINE SPECIAL SECTION

SEE HOW
METAL
BUILDINGS
HAVE EVOLVED
AT METALCON'S
METAL BUILDING
MARKETPLACE

METAL AS DYNAMIC COLOR ACCENTS

INTEGRATING ERP
INTO YOUR DIGITAL DESIGN,
PLANNING & SALES
STRUCTURE

Making a Comeback

Launching something new is always exciting, and usually fun. In this case it is a bit of a stretch to call Metal Builder new. Metal Builder (MB) was a section in Rural Builder starting in 2006 that featured a metal building contractor each month. In 2007 it became a supplemental magazine that would polybag with Rural Builder and continued until 2011. The supplement emphasized all aspects of metal in construction. It was a natural potential sister publication, and it would fill the same niche for metal that Frame Building News filled for post frame, covering light gauge, red iron, SIPs and virtually everything that could be considered a metal building.

September 15, 2008, Lehman Brothers filed bankruptcy and the "Great Recession" put a huge dent in construction. During the recession in

2009 steel prices plummeted from \$175 per metric ton to \$55 per metric ton. When the economy came back, it went from a -2.4 decline to growing 2.6%. Unfortunately that growth was accompanied by steel going to nearly 200 per metric ton in 2011. That increase in material costs crushed the metal building industry and Metal Builder as a viable section of the magazine.

Eleven years later it is time to bring Metal Builder back to life.

Metal Builder will run as a quarterly section in Rural Builder for the remainder of 2022 and launch as a separate new magazine in 2023. I hope you enjoy the oldest, new member of the Shield Wall family. **MB**



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On the cover: Photo Courtesy of Polyvision

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Reed's Metal Leads with Technology

If you think “metal buildings” in the south, the name Reed's Metals probably comes to mind. That's because for over 24 years, the company has been an industry leading provider of metal roofing systems, metal roofing panels, post frame, tube buildings and pre-engineered steel buildings. The company is comprised of 8 manufacturing sites (3 with IAS Certification) and a total of 2 store front locations utilizing state-of-the-art technology and fabrication methods to provide unprecedented quality and service. They offer same-day availability on in-stock standard roofing orders and supplies, on-site roll forming for standing seam projects, and job-site delivery within 72 hours on most projects.

What's unique about Reed's Metals is their customizable metal building offerings. In fact, says Special Projects Manager Anthony Jasay, “We have one location that provides wood post frame exclusively, two that provide all steel buildings only, and five that provide both wood and steel buildings.” They get several thousand quotes monthly from all over the southeast and central US. With this kind of volume, it can be a challenge for any business to provide quality services. For this reason, they looked to source reputable companies with advanced technology platforms that could help. “We identified our bid process as the business process that was the most important to improve by deploying automation,” said Jasay. “We wanted to reduce the money we spent on the bid process by making the process more efficient for both our customers and employees.

“With the current workflow process, it was taking over three hours on average to do a takeoff and create a bid,” said Jasay,



SmartBuild's Visualizer



The Final Build. PHOTOS COURTESY OF SMARTBUILD

“and all too often, it could be days before we got our quote into our customers’ hands. Depending on the location, our close ratio was only between 14 and 17 percent. This prompted us to conduct an extensive investigation into software systems that could help automate takeoff processes and generate bids. We identified several software programs that were being used in the wood post frame industry. After reviewing each of them, we made the decision to purchase the SmartBuild Post Frame system.

“A key reason we settled on the SmartBuild system was that it showed a live, 3D view of the building while it was being designed. People want visual gratification and we thought it could be helpful in our selling process. We could see how that software would accomplish what we wanted for our wood building business, but we were frustrated we could not identify a similar system for our steel buildings. We asked the developers at SmartBuild if they could make the required changes. We had to wait several months but eventually, with those changes being made, we can now bid both kinds of buildings with the same system,” said Jasay. The investment in automation technology looks like it will accomplish what the Reed’s Metals team hoped for.

“We’ve run a lot of comparisons on software generated bids versus what used to be generated by hand. Bids are within \$100 of what they used to be and frankly we have more confidence in the automated bid versus the manual method. The average time it now takes is between 15 and 20 minutes to generate a complete material takeoff and professional looking bid.”

Reed’s conducted a bit of an experiment at its Benton location. “We decided to invite potential customers to sit down with us at our contractor desk while we designed their building live in real-time. The customers could see their building right on the screen. We could do ‘what ifs’ for them and we could show them the change in price for each feature we added onto their building design.”



SmartBuild's Visualizer



The Final Build. PHOTOS COURTESY OF SMARTBUILD

The experiment was a success. “Out of the first ten customers who visited with us, our success rate was 100%. Obviously, we don’t expect to maintain that batting average, but what we learned is invaluable for our bid process going forward. We are going to make this a standard practice in all our locations, when customers are on-site. When we can’t sit down with them in person, we plan on using a virtual meeting system such as Zoom to conduct meetings. We intend on making that 14 to 17 percent close ratio a thing of the past.

“Mission accomplished at Reed’s Metals,” said Jasay. “We dramatically reduced the cost of generating a takeoff and bid. We don’t yet know what our new closing ratio will be, but all indications are that it will be a dramatic improvement. Our investment in technology has definitely paid dividends and, most importantly, we’ve improved our workflow which ultimately increases customer satisfaction.” **MB**

reedsmetals.com
smartbuildsystems.com

Making a Statement

Architectural Elements in Public Spaces

Public spaces like offices, transportation hubs, and hospitals are often thought of as utilitarian structures designed to serve a specific purpose. While it is true many public and commercial projects are developed to fulfill a functional requirement, strategically utilizing architectural

elements can make a significant impact on those using or occupying the space.

Americans for the Arts, a nonprofit organization that supports the need for art in public spaces, issued a paper several years ago for The Amherst Public Art Commission. The report noted that the thoughtful use of design

can enhance physical environments and promote livability and quality of life while cultivating community pride. The organization also found that artistic elements enliven workplaces, which can improve employee morale and productivity.

By incorporating into commercial projects structural features that are equal parts durable, functional and aesthetically pleasing, builders and designers can elevate their project while also enriching the community.

THE IMPACT OF COLOR

As any graphic designer knows, color theory is the science behind how color schemes impact the human mind. Builders and architects can apply the same practice when designing exterior and interior spaces.

A thesis developed for the University of Southern Mississippi cited a correlation between color in healthcare environments and feelings of positivity. Blues and greens invoked a sense of cleanliness, happiness, and rest – precisely what is needed to help patients and their families remain calm.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF POLYVISION CORP.



The investment made to incorporate these colors is best made on products that can stand up to high traffic areas, withstand multiple touchpoints, potentially serve as wayfinding tools for visitors, and be easy to clean and maintain.

Scientific evidence also shows that color impacts cognition and memory functions – which is particularly important for learning spaces, workspaces or residential care spaces. As these facilities seek to build community and collaboration, a colorful, durable and safe surface is key in bringing everyone together.

Additionally, installing colorful elements in areas like transit hubs provides visual interest for travelers while commuting and may also provide a calming effect – which in turn, may offer a better travel experience and help to minimize stress, which is especially important for daily commuters.

An impactful way for builders to bring colorful accents into commercial projects is through the use of ceramic steel panels.



A blend of porcelain and steel, the resilient panels are suitable for a diverse range of interior and exterior applications. They are available in multiple color options, support high definition color printing, and can be produced in custom shapes

– providing almost limitless design versatility.

In addition, due to its flexible nature, ceramic steel can be used on flat or curved surfaces such as columns to create continuous, uninterrupted designs and navigation elements. Because the material is field trimmable, installers are able to easily make needed modifications on the jobsite – for example, to accommodate outlets and media cutouts. The durable, low-maintenance surface is also resistant to bacteria, scratches, dents, fading from UV exposure, chemicals, and stains – important considerations in busy public spaces.

If the design scheme calls for a natural, organic look, there are many rolled metal options that beautifully mimic the look of wood. Or a graphic overlay can be applied to ceramic steel panels to create or reproduce any desired color scheme, graphic concept, or image. Some manufacturers also offer custom design solutions.





required maintenance and long-term durability are particularly important in high foot traffic areas.

BUILDING BETTER EXPERIENCES

The discriminating builder demands a variety of structural and aesthetic factors when developing commercial projects. Utilizing durable, aesthetically appealing design elements to improve functionality, help to maintain wellness, and reduce maintenance costs will provide an enhanced experience for end users while protecting the design and brand elements for years to come. **MB**

THE SHAPE OF THINGS

Like color, shapes impact the human psyche – meaning that certain shapes can invoke emotional responses. So, builders should consider shapes a critical factor for interior and exterior design elements.

Commercial builders and architects often specify square or rectangular buildings because that form is usually faster and more economical to build than irregular shaped structures. Additionally, popular building products like stone or concrete work well with linear geometric structures, whereas an alternative-shaped building may generate more product waste and require longer labor times.

While a square or rectangular build may not appear distinctive, builders can add interesting shapes and touches to building exteriors with products like ceramic steel or pliable metal. Metal products can be incorporated into cladding and shaped to achieve the architect's aesthetic vision. And, because these types of products are made from high-performance steel compounds, they will withstand even the most extreme weather conditions.

Ceramic steel accents can also elevate interior spaces. Builders and designers can add dimensionality through unique shapes and patterns while using the same product to display informational messaging or wayfinding. The lack of



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Metal Building Is Growing

Metal Building Marketplace to Showcase Improvements

The versatility of metal buildings is no longer a secret. More and more, architects and contractors are taking advantage of the benefits offered by metal buildings to grow the market.

“Over the last 20 years, as the construction industry has grown more sophisticated, so have pre-engineered metal buildings,” says Jay Kocon, Director of Group Sales & Talent at Nucor Buildings Group. “Metal building manufacturers have evolved to meet industry demands by adopting advanced tools, practices, and products. Because of their capability to supply building solutions for all markets, from retail to warehouse, distribution and manufacturing, the market for metal buildings has never been better. Pre-engineered metal buildings are ideal for anything from the simplest of structures to the most complex of designs.”

Kocon says metal buildings are not relegated to simple boxes anymore. “They are versatile systems capable of the additions of stone, glass and architectural elements that make them suitable for high-end retail and office spaces,” he says. “They are completely customizable to meet the requirements of any market. Because of these reasons, in recent years, architects have embraced metal buildings and they are more widely accepted. Engineered tools, aesthetic enhancements, products and design advancements have all contributed to a more complex and modern metal building industry.”

Nucor Buildings Group is slated to be one of the companies exhibiting in the Metal Building Marketplace at this year’s METALCON at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis on Oct. 12-14. NBG is represented by American Buildings, CBC Steel Buildings, Kirby Building Systems and Nucor Building Systems.

“We are proud to not only supply our own steel for our metal buildings, but our



ACI Building Systems Project.
PHOTO COURTESY OF METALCON

own insulated panels, by expanding our trusted brand portfolio to include Metl-Span, TrueCore and CENTRIA,” Kocon says. “IMPs are an optimal wall and roof panel solution and they work seamlessly with metal buildings.”

Quantum Impact Steel of Seguin, Texas, and ACI Building Systems of Batesville, Miss., will also be exhibiting at METALCON. Tim Davis, Vice President-Sales at ACI says the metal building evolution is ongoing and is a direct result of the versatility of metal buildings.

“The metal building industry has evolved into the leading source to meet the broad demand of low-rise building systems,” Davis says. “In the early days, a metal building was referred to as a ‘pre-engineered metal building.’ Today, the industry is offering all but a pre-engineered building, as each building is custom-engineered for a specific job. When we get the question, ‘What if?’ it is rare if we can’t find a solution for an architect or customer’s conceptual ideas.

“I started my career in the metal building industry over 40 years ago. It’s been exciting to see the positive changes that have occurred over the years. The stringent certification requirements in

place for an IAS-certified manufacturer gives architects and engineers the confidence our products meet their standards throughout the engineering and manufacturing process. The speed, quality and cost has allowed our industry to gain market share from other options.”

Cierra Dunagan, Marketing Director at Quantum Impact Steel says metal buildings have simply gotten better through evolution.

“The metal building industry has changed over the years from mostly agricultural use to being used in all markets, including families buying them and living in them,” Dunagan says. “Metal buildings are better and more efficient. They offer a higher resale value because they are structurally better than regular homes; they last longer.”

Dunagan says metal buildings offer faster building times, easier permitting and are fireproof.

Kocon says NBG will also showcase its Elevated Solar Panel Structures and Nucor PowerShingle Solar Roof Panels at METALCON. “The solar support structures are ideal for parking garages, solar farms, carports, canopies and charging stations,” he says. “By adding



METALCON Show Floor

PowerShingle, an innovative solar panel system with a unique water-shed design that serves as the structure's roof, customers will be ready to evolve right along with us."

At METALCON, ACI Building Systems will showcase recent projects from its Building Division, Roofing Division and Self-Storage Division, along with the company's new Accelerated Building System.

"The Accelerated Building System will be constructed out of cold-form frame and can be delivered in as little as three weeks with stamped drawings and foundation plans," Davis says. "We are excited about this opportunity to meet a need in the marketplace."

ABOUT METALCON

Established in 1991, METALCON is the largest international event in the metal construction industry. Unique in both its service and show management to this growing industry, METALCON is the only annual tradeshow and conference devoted entirely to the application of metal in industrial, institutional, light commercial and residential projects. Its success is based on three key methods of education: exhibits, an extensive conference program and interactive learning. For information, visit www.metalcon.com, or call (800) 537-7765. METALCON is sponsored by The Metal Construction Association and produced by PSMJ Resources Inc.

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Mark Swagerty is the Exhibit Sales Manager for METALCON. He has more than 20 years of experience in the industrial trades and has helped thousands of customers feature their goods and services at high-profile events.



The only publication dedicated to the effects of weather and climate on roofing.

Roofing Elements Magazine deals with the physical environment and how "Elements" like heat, moisture, wind, and sun affect roofing. The Elements need to be considered in every aspect from material choice and design to installation techniques. *Roofing Elements Magazine* provides both industry white papers and institutional knowledge from the experts who learned their trade in the real world.



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