

# Metal Builder

RURAL BUILDER MAGAZINE SPECIAL SECTION

WHAT COLD-FORMED  
STEEL BUILDERS  
NEED TO KNOW

THE RISE OF  
STEEL-FRAMED  
FARM BUILDINGS

HIGH-END  
BARNDOS

SHOW  
REPORTS

CONSTRUCTION  
ROLLFORMING  
SHOW

METALCON

# Become A Leading Voice In The Industry

**Here's your opportunity for professional growth and development: Get involved in Shield Wall Media's construction magazines.**

We're looking for a few new voices to write about the subjects that matter to our readers.

**SWM** specializes in serving its B2B audience with the information it needs to be successful.



If you have a talent for writing and would like to make a difference — and you'd like to establish yourself as a voice in the industry — we should talk!

If you can:

- Produce engaging, well-researched content tailored to our audiences
- Meet deadlines consistently while maintaining high standards of quality and originality
- Collaborate effectively with our team to develop ideas and refine content strategies

**Contact us today at**  
[editorial@shieldwallmedia.com](mailto:editorial@shieldwallmedia.com)

# Sensational Steel

**C**old-formed steel (CFS) construction is known by a number of names and acronyms, such as light gauge steel (LGS), light-weight steel framing (LSF) and cold-rolled steel (CRS). But regardless of what it's called, it offers attributes that make it a great choice for many buildings.

Stick-built and post-frame builders who haven't yet considered adding steel-framed construction to their options might want to research it, as it

can expand business opportunities. As steel-framed buildings become more in demand, the competition to build them will become greater, and it's always easier to be ahead than to try to catch up after other builders already have a head start in industry contacts, equipment, employees, advertising, sales, marketing, completed projects, customer endorsements, local word-of-mouth, etc.

Delving into something new might not seem feasible, but the barrier to entry may be lower than you think.

As Matthew Ackley points out in his article, "Building Cold-Formed Steel Structures: What Construction Crews Need to Know," a husband-and-wife team was able to put up a 50' x 100' steel-framed building by themselves.

Hopefully you were able to attend the Construction Rollforming Show and/or METALCON. But if not, you can read about them in this issue and make plans to attend next year. Best wishes for a prosperous 2025!

—Dan Brownell

## Contents

**Feature:**  
**The Rise of Steel-Framed Ag Buildings:**  
 Farmers Turn to CFS  
**PAGE 4**

**Building Cold-Formed Steel Structures:**  
 What Construction Crews Need to Know  
**PAGE 6**

**High-End Barndominiums:**  
 Opportunities to Expand Options  
**PAGE 8**

**Industry News**  
**PAGE 10**



**METALCON Atlanta:**  
 Show Report & Top Product Awards  
**PAGE 12**

**Construction Rollforming Show Grand Rapids:**  
 Show Report  
**PAGE 14**

*On the cover: Agricultural buildings featuring American Building Components' Imperial Rib® metal roof panels in burnished slate and Imperial Rib® wall panels in clay. IMAGE COURTESY OF CORNERSTONE BUILDING BRANDS*



Agricultural buildings featuring American Building Components' Imperial Rib® metal roof panels in burnished slate and Imperial Rib® wall panels in clay, built for durability and easy maintenance. IMAGE COURTESY OF CORNERSTONE BUILDING BRANDS

# The Rise of Steel-Framed Farm Buildings

## As Ag Structure Requirements Evolve, Farmers Are Increasingly Turning From Post-Frame to Steel-Frame

The picture of the American farm is an everchanging one. No doubt you have seen both new and old agricultural buildings on farmsteads. Some are still being used for their original use, while others have been repurposed.

Most of the repurposed and new structures look completely different from the old ones. That's largely because the requirements for farm buildings have changed and are still changing, maybe faster now than ever. Although some of the new buildings are designed for long-term use, others may be intended to be temporary.

Agricultural buildings have traditionally been post-frame, but they can also be framed in steel. In fact, steel frames are becoming more widely used. The benefits of wood and steel depend on the purpose of the building and its size. In certain cases, steel framing may be a better choice.

The choice comes down to a combination of client needs and the relative benefits of wood versus steel construction.

### STRENGTH VERSUS COST

While steel-frame buildings can cost more initially, they become competitive with wood frames when the building span increases beyond a certain point. My father-in-law, a Kansas contractor with some 50 years' experience said, "Around 100 feet is where steel starts to get competitive with wood, even though you still can frame that with wood." Others who sell kit builds for steel buildings suggest that, even at 80 feet, steel may be cheaper than wood framing.

At those widths, the benefits of the strength of steel start to outweigh the cost increase over wood framing, as the steel outperforms wood at this scale and the per-square foot cost begins decreasing for

steel. This scaling issue with wood versus steel often means that the larger the building is, the greater the advantages of framing with steel.

### MORE OPEN SPACE

Additionally, the ability to span greater distances with steel is a bonus, along with the increased headspace clearance available with steel framing over wooden trusses. Often, a wood-frame building will require some internal columns and have less vertical open space due to the inherent lower strength of wood compared to steel. Having more open space allows for greater flexibility in the interior design of the building.

### THE DURABILITY OF STEEL

Even though steel may cost more to start with, depending on the building size, most people in the industry suggest that

the cost difference disappears with the durability and lower maintenance of steel versus wood framing. Another positive point of steel framing over wood, particularly in an agricultural setting, is steel's resistance to rot, pests, and fire.

Agricultural buildings are usually not air-conditioned spaces and are open to the elements much of the time and so are subjected to moisture and humidity. This is an invitation to fungi that rot wood. Even if the wood is treated, the treatment will eventually fade over the years. Also, pests, such as termites and carpenter ants, can destroy wood framing.

That said, steel is vulnerable to corrosion. With steel, however, there are durable coatings to help prevent corrosion.

## ADVANTAGES OF OFF-SITE COMPONENT MANUFACTURE

Steel framing can require a specific skill set, but there are kits available for certain builds that are nearly bolt-together operations. A little training for the crew or contractor can go a long way toward making skills a nonissue. With a well-trained crew, a steel-frame can go up even faster than a wood-frame.

Also, pre-engineered steel building kits come with the steel components precut

off site with very close tolerances. With the steel precisely cut and arriving on site ready to be assembled, less time is needed



*With steel precisely cut and ready to be assembled, less time is needed on the jobsite for fabrication and correcting mistakes.*

on the jobsite for fabrication and correcting mistakes. Also, there's less material waste.

## INSULATING STEEL-FRAMED AG BUILDINGS

Steel conducts heat much more than wood, which means it may require more insulation in a residential building. But because most agricultural buildings are machine sheds and livestock buildings and aren't tightly climate controlled, it's less of a factor with these buildings. However, it is still a consideration for buildings, or sections of a building, such as an office, that are climate controlled.

## TEMPORARY STEEL-FRAMED, FABRIC-COVERED BUILDINGS

Because machine sheds are such a big part of agricultural building use, and the size and types of equipment are always changing on a farm, it may be prudent for your client to consider a temporary fabric-on-steel building for housing large equipment. Such structures, also known as tension fabric buildings, hoop buildings, or poly buildings, are quite durable and can handle weather well. A bonus is that they can be dismantled and sold when no longer needed, or if the building is to be used long-term, it can be recovered or patched when the fabric wears.

These temporary buildings may fill a needed niche in agricultural buildings with some cost savings over permanent steel-framed structures. Smaller steel-framed buildings (fabric covered or otherwise) may be a good option in agricultural settings as well, due to the potential for some to be dismantled and rebuilt on another site, whether changing hands or not. These simple structures can have a lot of flexibility in the foundation requirements and can provide more options for changing farm needs.

## OTHER BENEFITS OF STEEL-FRAMED BUILDINGS

There are a few more pros for steel-framed construction, including the sustainability of the material (steel is recyclable) and lower insurance premiums due to the better fire rating for a steel-framed building compared to a wooden framed one.

With all variables considered, such as lower maintenance and insurance, and greater longevity and resistance to pests and the elements, a steel-framed building may be the best choice for your clients. Helping them determine the most suitable costs and benefits for them will help you to have a satisfied customer in the long term. **MB**



*Even an older combine can be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. A steel-frame tension fabric building can be a cost-effective way for a farmer to protect it from the elements.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF JACOB PRATER

# Building Cold-Formed Steel Structures

## What Construction Crews Need to Know

Builders who haven't put up a steel-framed building before may assume that the barriers to entry are too high, but the answers to these questions show that's not the case at all.

### Q: What is a cold-formed steel (CFS) building?

A: A cold-formed building (CFB) is a pre-engineered metal building system built using cold-formed steel sheets or strips to create structural components. Unlike hot-rolled steel, which is shaped at higher temperatures, cold-form metal buildings are formed at room temperature using roll-forming or bending methods. CFBs are typically a cost-effective, easy-to-install option that feature a higher strength-to-weight ratio, greater longevity, and more durability compared to structures made of wood and other organic materials.

### Q: What are the key properties and behaviors of cold-formed buildings (CFBs)?

A: CFBs are typically made with lightweight, 12- to 16-gauge structural members, available in galvanized and red oxide, which allow the structural load to be distributed across more load-bearing points. This design typically requires less concrete for foundations, reducing both foundation costs and installation time. Lightweight pieces also enable erection crews to maximize productivity because components are easier to maneuver at the jobsite. Alternatively, CFBs can also feature larger structural members that require fewer bolted connections to help speed up the erection process.

### Q: What advantages do cold-formed buildings (CFBs) offer compared to post-frame buildings?

A: There are several benefits to choosing CFBs over post-frame buildings, including:

**Durability:** When properly designed and constructed in accordance with building codes, CFBs can better withstand heavy loads and extreme weather like high winds, snow, earthquakes, and hurricanes, making them suitable for a wider range of climates.

**Longevity and Maintenance:** CFBs offer exceptional long-term



A cold-formed steel structure like this Hypersteel™ farm building has many benefits, such as ease and speed of construction; high strength-to-weight ratio; large clear span capabilities; and fire, pest, termite, and mold resistance. PHOTO COURTESY OF CORNERSTONE BUILDING BRANDS.

value by protecting against pests, termites, fire, and mold, as well as by resisting corrosion. They also generally require less maintenance over time compared to wood, which may need regular treatment or replacement.

**Speed of Construction:** The high strength-to-weight ratio of steel allows for greater structural integrity with less material. This not only results in lighter framing that is easier to transport and install, but also comes with fewer foundation requirements.

**Design Flexibility and Quality:** Because they are manufactured in controlled conditions and can be designed with custom shapes and sizes, CFBs allow for more creative architectural design options without sacrificing quality, which can vary with wood. The flexibility of steel and highly configurable nature of CFBs also enables designers and builders to easily adapt to specific project requirements.

**Fast Delivery:** The efficient manufacturing process for CFBs enables them to be delivered faster than post-frame buildings, lowering lead times and shortening construction cycles.

**Q: What should construction crews know about reading cold-formed building (CFB) construction drawings?**

**A:** CFB construction drawings follow industry standard practices similar to drawings for other building types. As with any basic construction plans, CFB drawings include step-by-step installation details to guide assembly and feature QR codes and links to expedite and add clarity to the installation process, which is typically faster than buildings made with organic components like traditional post-frame buildings.

**Q: How many crew members are needed to construct cold-formed buildings (CFBs)?**

**A:** Crew size for constructing CFBs depends on the building's size and complexity, but typically requires a minimum of two crew members with general building and construction knowledge. For example, a 50' x 100' Hypersteel™ CFB from Fortify Building Solutions (Hypersteel.com) — part of the Cornerstone Building Brands family — was erected by a husband-and-wife pair because of the product's straightforward design and ease of assembly. Some projects with accelerated construction schedules or jobsite constrictions may need more crew members.

**Q: How are structural members (pieces) fastened together in cold-formed building (CFB) construction?**

**A:** Structural members are typically bolted together using mechanical fasteners, which require standard tools like impact wrenches. CFB design eliminates the need to preset anchor bolts into a poured concrete foundation before it is set, saving time and reducing misaligned bolt placement that hinders installation. Because they are bolt-up and not stick-framed structures, CFBs don't require as much field modification or activities that introduce fire hazards like welding.

**Q: Are any specialized tools required for cold-formed building (CFB) construction?**

**A:** No specialized tools or heavy equipment are needed for CFBs beyond basic tools that are common for steel building construction and available in most hardware stores.

**Q: Why are cold-formed buildings (CFBs) considered safer and easier to construct?**

**A:** CFB components are lighter than conventional steel components, reducing the need for heavy equipment. Designs also often allow fewer pinch points and typically do not require specialized training to erect, as components are precut and predrilled, allowing for straightforward assembly on-site.

**Q: How do cold-formed buildings (CFBs) comply with building codes and standards?**

**A:** When using Hypersteel design software, CFBs are designed to meet the International Building Code and the AISI S-100 standards. It's the contractor's responsibility to ensure compliance, but CFBs like Hypersteel™ from Fortify Building Solutions in-

clude compliant design specifications to assist.

**Q: What safety procedures should be followed during cold-formed building (CFB) construction?**

**A:** While CFBs generally have fewer pinch points and use lightweight structural members, installers should follow the same safety practices required for any construction environment when working on a CFB site. This includes using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and following OSHA guidelines.

---

**A husband-and-wife team was able to erect a 50' x 100' Hypersteel™ building by themselves because of the product's straightforward design and ease of assembly.**

---

**Q: How does cold-formed building (CFB) construction impact coordination with other trades?**

**A:** CFBs can be designed to achieve efficient erection at the jobsite, enabling downstream trades to begin their work and compress the overall project schedule.

**Q: What kind of cladding can be put on a cold-formed building (CFB)?**

**A:** CFBs can accommodate a variety of cladding materials, each offering different aesthetic and performance benefits. Common types of cladding that can be used for CFBs include metal panels, vinyl siding, stone veneer, brick or brick veneer, fiber cement board, wood siding, stucco composite, and glass cladding.

**Q: Where would someone buy a cold-formed building (CFB)?**

**A:** CFBs can be purchased through leading building materials retail outlets and distributors, as well as by working directly with manufacturers, as they can provide regional recommendations.

**MB**

*Matthew Ackley is the President of Cornerstone Building Brands' Shelter Solutions business unit, including the Fortify Building Solutions and Mueller brands, which offer the Hypersteel™ cold-formed building product line.*

*Cornerstone Building Brands (cornerstonebuildingbrands.com) is a leading manufacturer of exterior building products for residential and low-rise non-residential buildings in North America. Serving residential and commercial customers across the new construction and repair and remodel (R&R) markets, its market-leading portfolio of exterior building products spans vinyl windows, vinyl siding, stone veneer, metal roofing, metal wall systems, and metal accessories.*

# High-End Barndominiums

## Great Opportunities in Steel Frame Are Available

When considering a barndominium, people choose between wood post-frame and steel-frame. Each have their strengths; steel can be stronger and lighter than wood, while wood is a non-conductor, thereby bringing fewer insulation challenges.

One thing different about post-frame barndo construction versus steel-frame barndo construction is that steel-frame more often involves a pre-engineered plan, a kit that includes everything needed to build the frame for a specific pre-planned building. A feature they have in common, though, is that both post-frame and steel-frame buildings are versatile in interior layout and design because they don't rely on load-bearing interior walls.

### WHAT ARE "HIGH-END" STEEL FRAME BARNDOMINIUMS?

"High-end" is not the same for everyone. Some people feel they are already building high-end when they build a barndo, due to factors like energy savings and low maintenance if they have stayed with the standard metal roof and wall cladding.

According to Sean Jones of Elite Build Co., a high-end barndo often means higher quality materials that go into customers' homes rather than crazy-expensive features.

"These people are drawn in by the possibility of saving money on their build, so often they are not looking for wow-factors in their homes," Sean said.

That said, it does not mean that people never add luxurious features. Sometimes when a person walks from the big garage or workshop, which is iconic in a barndominium, into the residential area, the change from utilitarian to beautiful living can hit you fast, according to Matt Ackley, President, Shelter Solutions at Cornerstone Building Brands. Let's take a look at some of the features that people ask for to upgrade their barndo to high-end.

### METAL PANELS AND INSULATION

One of the common things that comes up when new barndominium owners are trying to build a littler nicer barndo than the usual is color. They look beyond the standard color palettes and gravitate toward blues, reds, and graphite. Black and white with wood accents is very modern looking.

Often they request a textured coating or a pattern in Kynar or Hylar. Customers may also choose custom soffits or roof extensions and, of course, the roof is almost always standing seam.

Insulation is another of the practical things that people up-

grade, taking it from basic insulation to spray foam that, if well installed, will fill every nook, cranny, and crack, thereby improving energy efficiency.

### WINDOWS

Windows, and lots of them, are important to many people in their homes to let in lots of light, not to mention to bring the



PHOTO COURTESY OF WORLDWIDE STEEL BUILDINGS



PHOTO COURTESY OF CORNERSTONE BUILDING BRANDS



PHOTO COURTESY OF CORNERSTONE BUILDING BRANDS



outdoors in. With barndo construction, you can install windows right up to the roof in vaulted ceiling areas. Some people install walls of windows in these areas.

## PATIOS AND ACCENTS

“Often one of the things people want when they are creating the barndo of their dreams is a wraparound porch for family gatherings and entertaining,” said Ackley.

Columns may be added to porches, and porch columns can be wrapped to look like wood. Multi-level porches and oversized porches also feel high-end.

Some barnDOS’ exterior cladding is accented with brick walls, wainscot, or woods. Interior walls can be given this treatment, too, with board and batten panels, shiplap, and reclaimed barn planks. You can use just about any wood you can imagine.

## SHAPE AND SIZE

Of course, a large size is often associated with a nicer home, Ackley said. BarnDOS, usually feature a huge garage or workshop. They can feature country accents like cupolas and barn “hayloft style” windows, window eyebrows, and dormers. As it gets larger, the roof line can become quite complex. Sometimes different parts of the building can be built at different elevations with multiple levels and layouts, which can be quite aesthetically pleasing.

## COATED FLOORS

The barndo’s cement slab finished with epoxy, or stained and blended coatings, sometimes with diamond grinding, are popular. These coatings deliver a very polished look that carpeting can’t match.

## INTERIORS

Warren Bott of Worldwide Steel said that one of the aspects of barndominiums that people appreciate is the fact that their interior layout is so flexible. No interior walls are load-bearing, so



PHOTO COURTESY OF CORNERSTONE BUILDING BRANDS



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TAYLOR BUILDINGS

you can place them anywhere. Also, this framing means wide-open spaces, which makes cathedral ceilings easy. The freedom of design is in itself a “luxury.” Many people make good use of this option, creating interesting ceilings with wood accents or allowing trusses to show, creating open staircases with beautiful wood or modern industrial-style accents like metal railings and agricultural-type ceiling fans. Often people take advantage of the high ceilings to hang large chandeliers for lighting.

Naturally, the customer may incorporate high-end appliances, granite or marble countertops, and any other number of lovely interior features, just as they would in any home; the options are endless.

## SELLING UP

Jones said that usually the builder does not really benefit financially from upselling unusual features because it may raise their exposure to liability, and the cost of the project will certainly go up. Therefore, it’s not really worth trying to upsell something unless it is something that you know will truly benefit the customer like better insulation. Sometimes people will want to add high-end features at the expense of the quality of the roof panels and exterior cladding, Jones warned, in which case builders need to educate people about the quality of what they are purchasing.

On the other hand, if a customer is truly trying to create something out of the ordinary, and you have an option you think they would like, don’t be afraid to try something new. Pleasing the customer with the best barndo they can imagine is the ultimate goal.

## SUMMING UP

The steel market construction industry has been steadily growing for decades, and, interestingly, according to some builders, the market’s ever-shifting pricing could mean it is more profitable to build with wood at times, other times with steel. Then there are the preferences of the client to take into consideration. Extending into residential building with steel frames make a builder more versatile and less tied to one building form, and it adds to the options a builder can offer customers. **MB**



**Nucor's new Metl-Span Manufacturing Facility in Utah.**

**NUCOR EXPANDS WITH NEW METL-SPAN MANUFACTURING FACILITY IN UTAH**

Metl-Span®, a Nucor® company, has officially opened its new insulated metal panel manufacturing facility in Brigham City, Utah. This is Metl-Span's eighth manufacturing facility in the U.S. and Canada. Renowned as North America's largest steel producer and recycler, Metl-Span's parent company, Nucor, produces steel by recycling scrap metal in electric arc furnaces to make high-quality steel products, positioning itself as a global leader in sustainable steel manufacturing.

"The opening of our new insulated panel facility in Utah marks a significant expansion that allows us to better reach and serve our customers in the western United States and Canada," said Thad Chapman, VP/General Manager, Nucor. "This state-of-the-art facility will greatly enhance our ability to deliver the unparalleled level of service that our customers have come to expect."

The new \$35 million, 127,000 square foot facility will produce Metl-Span's comprehensive range of insulated wall and roof panels for use in various end markets including warehousing, distribution, and data centers. Insulated Metal Panels (IMPs) offer a cost-effective solution for regulating indoor climate conditions, reducing energy consumption for building owners and lessees.

Designed with sustainability in mind, the new facility features cutting-edge energy efficiency thanks to a facade of high-performance IMPs used for walls and roofs from Metl-Span. The panels achieve high insulation values with a foam system that features low global warming potential and zero ozone depletion potential.

**CORNERSTONE BUILDING BRANDS COMPLETES ACQUISITION OF MUELLER, INC.**

Cornerstone Building Brands, Inc., a leading manufacturer of exterior building products in North America, has completed its previously announced acquisition of Mueller Supply Company, Inc. ("Mueller"), a leading manufacturer of residential metal roofing and components and steel buildings in Texas and the Southwest. This strategic acquisition further strengthens Cornerstone Buildings Brands' presence in the high-growth residential metal roofing market in key geographies.

"We're excited to add Mueller's deep industry expertise, capabilities and talented team to our business," said Matt Ackley, Shelter Solutions President, Cornerstone Building Brands. "This acquisition doubles our metal building materials footprint and enables us to better serve the widest set of residential metal roofing and simple metal building customers through the most channels. Additionally, we'll leverage Mueller's successful greenfield ex-

pansion strategy to further accelerate our organic growth."

**AKZONOBEL INVESTS IN EXPANDING COIL COATINGS PRODUCTION IN NORTH AMERICA**

AkzoNobel is investing \$3.6 million at its coil and extrusion coatings manufacturing facility in Garcia, Mexico, to increase production capacity and efficiency for its customers..

This investment follows the previously announced \$70 million investments in the company's other industrial coatings manufacturing site in North America in Huron, Ohio, and its manufacturing and R&D facilities at High Point, North Carolina. These groundbreaking advancements support the company in achieving industrial excellence, enhancing product offerings, and accelerating time-to-market.

The investment in the Garcia site will enable the plant to increase production of coatings by approximately 35 percent by the third quarter of 2024, meeting the growth ambitions of customers while delivering superior supply performance. Stage one of the investment has already been completed, with the installation of 12 new portable tanks with varying batch size capacity, two new mixers for portable tanks, and a new fixed tank with 1,200 gallons of capacity.

The company's Garcia site in Mexico is

one of its three coil and extrusion coatings-focused manufacturing facilities in North America, including Columbus, Ohio, which specializes in coil and extrusion coatings, and Huron, Ohio, a site producing the resins required for these coating systems.

The site in Huron includes a recently completed pilot plant enabling more agility in meeting market demands. “Our customers are increasingly prioritizing sustainability, durability, and performance and demand for coil and extrusion coatings is projected to increase over the next few years.

By expanding production and increasing efficiency at our facilities across North America and elsewhere, we’re able to continue growing with our customers, whilst driving innovation and delivering high-quality products,” said Manoel Rodrigues, AkzoNobel’s Regional Commercial Director for Coil Americas.

### **MILL STEEL WELCOMES NEW VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES FOR CONSTRUCTION MARKET**

Mill Steel Co., one of the nation’s largest distributors of flat-rolled carbon steel and aluminum, is pleased to announce the appointment of Evan Keebler as Vice President of Sales for its Construction segment. Keebler is a dynamic sales leader with a proven track record of increasing market share while building strong commercial teams that deliver results.

Keebler has been immersed in construction materials since the beginning of his career. With an impressive resume spanning over 25 years in national sales facilitation and management, he brings a deep understanding of the diverse needs of the construction market.

Before joining Mill Steel Company, Keebler served as Regional Sales Manager of the Northeast territory at Interior Supply, where he increased sales by 50% for the last three years. He was instrumental in positioning the company as the market leader for interior building products. Prior to that, Keebler spent 12 years at

Marino\WARE, where he advanced from National Accounts Manager to Vice President of Sales, overseeing the company’s high profile national accounts. In each role, Keebler contributed to sales strategy and execution, financial reporting, and expanding Marino\WARE’s reach.

Headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Mill Steel operates six service center locations including Grand Rapids and Melvindale, Michigan; Mansfield, Ohio; Jeffersonville, Indiana; Birmingham, Alabama; and Houston, Texas.

### **FRAMECAD LAUNCHES COLD-FORMED STEEL FRAMING PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT PLATFORM**

FRAMECAD, a world leader in steel frame building innovation, has announced the launch of FRAMECAD Nexa, the first end-to-end production management platform designed specifically for cold-formed steel framing. Nexa empowers cold-formed steel panelizers and modular builders with complete visibility and control of their operations from the factory to the jobsite.

Nexa also includes a free, entry-level version that allows manufacturers to seamlessly bring production-ready files into the FRAMECAD manufacturing process from any design software.

With Nexa’s centralized platform, both manufacturers and contractors benefit from visibility to production scheduling and monitoring, traceability of materials and better coordination from the factory to the jobsite. Nexa delivers a smooth, continuous, real-time flow of project data within a single platform to streamline project delivery from the factory to the field and enable billing on completion milestones for improved cash flow.

*Open to Any Design Source:* With Nexa, manufacturers can feed production-ready manufacturing files directly into the FRAMECAD manufacturing process, regardless of design software, without time-consuming file conversions.

*Optimized Factory Operations:* Real-time

data and capacity management drive efficient production and high-quality output. Inventory management tools track materials, helping maintain regulatory compliance and maximize quality by ensuring materials and processes are traceable.

*Powerful Project Management:* Complete visibility into project progress ensures every project stays on track and within budget. The ability for all stakeholders, from the factory to the field, to access and manage relevant data in one centralized platform improves collaboration and accelerates work. Live dashboards updated in real-time provide valuable insights and analytics that empower manufacturers to make data-driven decisions, better understand performance and plan for growth.

*Improved Jobsite Efficiency:* Streamlined workflows and resource management reduce downtime and maximize productivity on the jobsite. Manufacturers can streamline stacking and packing processes and coordinate and stage deliveries to optimize logistics and minimize delays. With the Nexa mobile app, workers in the field can access project drawings and models for accurate, fast assembly with minimal labor resources.

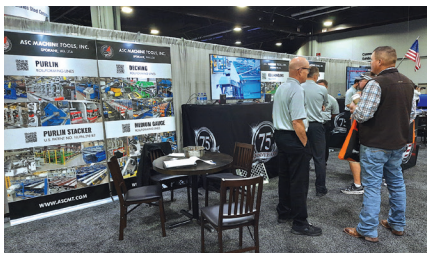
“Until now, cold-formed steel manufacturers had to rely on numerous disconnected solutions to manage their operations, resulting in a lack of visibility into project progress, ineffective communication and time-consuming processes,” said Ray Bagley, director of enterprise solutions at FRAMECAD.

“With decades of experience working with cold-formed steel manufacturers, we saw a clear need for a single production management platform. With Nexa, we’re unlocking access to critical data and making the platform open to any design software so our customers can manage operations and projects in a way that furthers relationships and collaboration with owners, general contractors and other stakeholders. It’s a win-win on the path to more efficient, sustainable and profitable construction.” **MB**

# METALCON 2024

## Atlanta Show Delivers World-Class Business Opportunities

This fall, the world's largest metal construction show took center stage in Atlanta. The premier event, held Oct 29 to Nov. 1 at the Georgia World Congress Center, immersed exhibitors and attendees in three intense days of networking, keynote addresses, educational seminars, and hands-on demonstrations.



ASC Machine Tools Inc. booth.

### EXHIBITORS

More than 200 exhibitors from over 45 countries interacted with contractors, builders, fabricators, architects, engineers, designers, and developers, presenting and demonstrating their lines, with some unveiling brand-new products and services. For example, the New Zealand-based company FRAMECAD introduced Nexa, which it describes as “the first end-to-end production management platform designed specifically for cold-formed steel framing. Nexa empowers cold-formed steel panelizers and modular builders with complete visibility and control of their operations from the factory to the jobsite.”

### SEMINARS

Keynote speakers included former NFL MVP quarterback and Super Bowl Champion Joe Theisman, who presented a “Game Plan for Success.” in his inspiring delivery, he explained how to translate the experiences he learned on the football field — dealing with pressure, adapting to new situations, setting goals, and correcting errors — to the business world.

Economist Dr. Anirban Basu, Chairman and CEO of Sage Policy Group,

presented the seminar, “The Good, The Bad & The Ugly: Financial Outlook and Trends for the Metal Construction Industry.” Dr. Basu covered topics such as the Federal Reserve’s impact on the industry, the influence of the current geopolitical conflict, the presidential elections, wages, rising consumer debt levels, high interest rates.

Dr. Melissa Furman of Career Potential spoke on the topic “Relevant Leadership: Navigate, Elevate, Accelerate.” In her session, Dr. Furman discussed the distinctions between management and leadership. She explained that as organizations deal with diversity, change, and disruption, the need for skilled leaders has increased. Her seminar was geared to inspire, challenge, and equip them with practical skills needed for success.

### TRAINING

Sponsored by Sherwin Williams/MetalVue and led by John Sheridan of Sheriden Metal Resources, the METALCON Training Zone gave attendees the opportunity for hands-on training using mock-ups and a range of materials, including painted steel, aluminum, zinc, and copper. Participants were shown how



FRAMECAD booth.



AkzoNobel booth.

to use the proper tools and techniques to provide customers with top-notch results.

In MCA’s Metal Mastery Demo Area, presenters demonstrated techniques and best practices for forming panels and installing metal roofing systems. They also covered retrofit systems and on-site roll-forming and machine maintenance.

### EDUCATION

Attendees had the opportunity to attend numerous educational classes and workshops over the three days of the show. The Design District Learning Sessions were held specifically for architects and engineers, where they were introduced to innovations and cutting-edge trends.

### NETWORKING

For those who wanted to connect with others in the industry, METALCON hosted roundtables, speed networking, Future Leaders Friday, Metal and Mimosas, and Global Matchmaking.

### LOOKING AHEAD

METALCON 2025 is scheduled to be held Oct. 21-23 at the Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nevada. **MB**

# Top Product Awards

Exhibitors were invited to nominate their standout products for the prestigious METALCON Top Products Award. The top three award-winning products were determined by an electronic voting process, which took place before and during the event, with more than 1,100 votes from industry professionals.

## FIRST PLACE

**Company:** PPG  
**Product:** PPG DuraNEXT™  
Energy Curable  
Coil Coatings



Unlike traditional coil coating systems that require very high temperatures to drive the curing process, PPG DuraNEXT™ energy curable coatings use an electron beam or ultraviolet energy to convert a liquid coating into a fully cured solid finish in seconds, without significant loss of thickness or weight. This family of backers, primers, basecoats, and topcoats represents an alternative to traditional coil coating systems.

“We are thrilled to be recognized as the number one top product in the metal construction industry,” said Craig Smith, PPG Global Technical Platform Director, Coil Coatings. “Our innovative technologies boost productivity by eliminating the need for substrate heating and reducing curing time, as there’s no waiting for solvents to evaporate. Additionally, our products are engineered to maintain the finish durability and aesthetic appeal of coil-coated products, offering exceptional hardness, scratch, and chemical resistance, and high flexibility.”

## SECOND PLACE

**Company:** Malco Tools, Inc.  
**Product:** Power-Assisted  
Seamer/Cutter



Malco’s power-assisted seamer and cutter is ideal for effortless seaming, cutting and removal of 1” or 1.5” single and/or double mechanical lock standing-seam panels efficiently. The new seamer enables the mechanical lock of standing seam panels in less time while enhancing safety and expanding the range of compatible panel profiles. The power-assisted cutter cuts below the mechanical lock and through clips with precision, allowing for quick and safe removal of standing seam panels without damag-

ing the cutting discs.

“Malco’s power-assisted seamers and cutters are the latest innovative, high-quality additions to our metal roofing portfolio, representing the fastest seaming and cutting machines on the market,” said Shane Norman, senior product manager at Malco. “We are honored to be recognized as a top product in the industry. These tools continue our legacy of innovation that combines state-of-the-art design with rigorous standards that have always been the hallmark of Malco products.”

## THIRD PLACE

**Company:** MetalForming LLC  
**Product:** Stolarczyk Coil  
Processing Solution



The all-new Stolarczyk Coil Processing Solution combines advanced technology, ease of use and robust performance in a single, comprehensive system. It features a Decoiler with seven-roll CNC straightening system and laser-hardened rolls to eliminate coil set and ensure flat sheets, along with a three-roll rotating film application for surface protection. The system’s Slitting-Cutting section (ST-1250) uses large-diameter slitting knives (over 8”) and a digital positioning system for precise cuts, while heavy-duty guillotine shears with four-sided blades handle length cuts. The Stacking Table automatically lowers as stack height increases, with adjustable side and end stops for alignment. The system smoothly transitions into a high-speed Tension Stand and Recoiler at up to 150 feet per minute with easy one-person operation.

“Each year, we look forward to discovering the latest technologies and innovations presented at METALCON,” said Stephen Gosk, MetalForming President and CEO. “This year, we are proud to be recognized for contributing one of the standout solutions. As a leader in coil processing, our newest Stolarczyk solution sets the standard for performance and establishes an industry-leading footprint.”

To be eligible for consideration, products must have been introduced to the market after Jan. 1, 2023, and its manufacturer a participating exhibitor at METALCON 2024.

“Following one of our most successful and well-attended shows in Atlanta, we’re excited to announce our top three product award winners,” said Judy Geller, METALCON Vice President of Tradeshow. “We can’t wait to see what next year’s showcase in Las Vegas will bring, with even more groundbreaking products and innovative technologies on display.” **MB**

# Fifth Event Bigger Than Ever

## Construction Rollforming Show Bows in Grand Rapids



*Taylor Steel has been processing and selling flat rolled steel to customers throughout North America since 1967.*

**D**eVos Place in Grand Rapids, Michigan, was the host venue of the fifth annual Construction Rollforming Show, which was held September 18-19, 2024. This trade show is the only event fully dedicated to forming light gauge metal for the construction industry. This year's event was the largest yet, with nearly 70 exhibitors filling the show floor and a record-setting number of attendees.

Once again, exhibitors and attendees benefitted from the tightly focused expo. Brad Wasley of AceClamp said, "I very much prefer the intimate setting of a smaller regional show that gets to the contractors that don't care to participate in the international shows that are much larger."

Acu-Form's Wayne Troyer shared his goals for the show: "Meeting new and existing customer, making friends, and selling machines. The CRS was a great place to do just that! The show was made up of a lot of quality people."

Noah Oberholtzer of Hixwood had similar goals: "My main goal for the show was



*MWI Components recently debuted its Metal Wrap, which was created to protect metal roofing and siding materials while being transported from the roll forming shop to the job site. ALL PHOTOS BY SHIELD WALL MEDIA STAFF.*

to meet new customer prospects and I believe we succeeded in doing that; however, we were also overwhelmed with how many existing customers were there that we got to meet and talk with. For some of them, it was the first time we got to meet them

face to face. Overall the show was a great experience!"

New this year was the Construction Industry Forum. Moderated by Source One Marketing's Randy Chaffee, this inaugural panel consisted of professionals who are experts in various aspects of the construction industry and have a combined experience of more than 200 years. (See sidebar.)

Returning features favored among attendees were the educational seminars, complimentary breakfast, and the Rest Stop Retreat. This year, the Rest Stop Retreat area was sponsored by Acu-Form and AkzoNobel. Acu-Form providing seating and AkzoNobel supplied coloring bags for all the children in attendance.

The next Construction Rollforming Show will be held at the Dayton Convention Center in Dayton, Ohio, on October 1-2, 2025. Watch the pages of Rollforming Magazine and [constructionrollforming-show.com](http://constructionrollforming-show.com) for show updates as they develop. **MB**

# Show Brings Out Roll-Forming Business Advice From Industry Experts

The 2024 Construction Rollforming Show, produced by Shield Wall Media, featured the tried-and-true elements event-goers have come to expect. It also featured some new ones, including the Rollforming Industry Panel. This new show feature was held the morning before the expo floor opened so attendees would not have to choose between meeting exhibitors and participating in the panel discussion.

Moderated by Randy Chaffee, Source One Marketing, the panelists included Ben Schmidt, who has been with The Bradbury Company for 19 years. He has served as industry sales manager for the metal building, trim, and decking industries since 2020.

Credit is due to Steve Swaney of Mid South Aluminum. After giving a talk at the Post-Frame Builder Show, which is also produced by Shield Wall Media, Steve suggested hosting a panel discussion so whatever questions attendees had could be addressed.

Steve followed his father into the industry and has spent 42 years in the prepainted metals sector. Throughout that time, he has worked for mills, coil coating companies, and service centers.

As mentioned earlier, Randy Chaffee served as the panel moderator. He has more than 40 years of experience in the metal roofing, post-frame, and metal building industries. He owns Source One Marketing, a manufacturers' rep agency, and is the host of Building Wins Live, a weekly vlogcast and podcast for the building materials industry.

Panelist Bob Kula is the sale manager for Mill Steel's Building Products business unit. Hailing from Houston, he's been in steel for 33 years, 28 of which have been with a service center and five were with National Steel (now known as United States Steel).

The final panelist was Mike O'Hara, who is the national sales manager at Levi's Building Components. Mike has 27 years of construction sales and marketing experience in a variety of professional trades.

Show personnel gathered questions ahead of the event to get the conversation started. The first question asked what are the questions that rollformers should be asking suppliers as they start lining them up for their business. O'Hara advises that you should make sure you understand lead times. "I think an important thing regardless

of what you're buying from your suppliers is to understand their lead times. Is there seasonality in that service. You'll probably know your competition to begin with. You might want to reach out to a fellow rollformer in the area and talk to them about who they're working with. And then once you decide, try to get a sales rep out there right away. A lot of these sales reps have a lot of experience and they understand the market and they can really help you build your business."

Bob Kula adds, "My biggest thing, being a coil supplier, would

be the financial end of it. Talk to your suppliers. Normally when you go into roll forming, you were either an installer or you used to work for a former company and you're starting your own business. You probably don't have any credit. If you were an installer, you have some credit, but it's not enough for a truckload of steel or multiple truckloads of steel.

"And and be honest with the credit people on the on the supply side," Kula continues, "whether it's the components or the steel. Tell them 'I'm new' and most times they'll work with you and grow that credit line."

Steve Swaney advises you know what your immediate objectives are before you begin. "Some of the main questions to ask suppliers would be, when you're looking at a new business as a roll former, are you going to be a component supplier, or are you going to be a turnkey building products supplier?"

"Are you going to have your own your own crews? Are you going to sell wholesale? Are you going to sell to the contractor sector? I think those things are very important. It's hard to be a blended company and do those without somewhere in the not-too-distant future, having some conflicts and issues.

"And then line up your supply chain based on where you think you're going to be if you're a component guy. You're going to, obviously, focus on panel and trim. If you're going to sell turnkey buildings, then you obviously have to supply a number of things, including fasteners, insulations, skylights, things of that nature. So, have a good concept and an idea of what you're looking to do going into your business and also know your competition in your region to know where you your niche may be."

Ben Schmidt addresses equipment considerations: "As far as the equipment side of things, equipment suppliers are gonna be selling you folders and roll formers. But probably the biggest thing is when



**New to the show this year, the Construction Rollforming Industry panel proved to be a popular feature. The panelists included, from left to right: Ben Schmidt, Bradbury Co.; Steve Swaney, Mid South Aluminum; moderator Randy Chaffee; Bob Kula, Mill Steel; and Mike O'Hara, Levi's Building Components.**

you're talking to somebody, you wanna make sure you understand when that machine's in there, its job is to produce parts. So if you're not making parts, you're not making money. Right? So the big thing is to understand the equipment supplier's ability to support you — the end user. And specific to that point, find out: 1) Do they have technicians that travel? And then, 2) How many of them are there?

"And so it means if you have just one or two guys out there, then you don't want to be waiting weeks upon weeks as we come in and fix your machine.

The other thing Ben recommends is asking them about the service capabilities. "I'd ask them about if they can dial in and support you remotely from a home base, from a headquarters area. That's very important. And then also ask where the parts come from because machines break. It doesn't matter whose machine it is. The goal was always 'How do we get that machine back up and going quickly.' And if you can go to Grainger versus having to wait for a part from wherever, that's very, very important.

"And then as far as questions to ask or a question that I'm going to want to know if you're talking to me," he continues, "and it's probably the biggest the biggest challenge and the same thing for the guys on the steel side, is volume ... are you currently buying out X number of truckloads a week, a day, what have you, so we can make sure we provide you a quote for the appropriately sized equipment."

Another important point the panel addressed is common mistakes newcomers make and how they can be avoided.

Mike says, "Well, I'm sure that some of the equipment folks will say buying subpar equipment isn't probably going to help your overall product." He adds, "Customers like options. They like unique colors. I think as we drive towards premium products, we can help each other improve our margins, our reputation. I think it's really important that we attempt to elevate this industry."

Bob cautions, "Don't try to be everything to everybody. If you were an installer before and now you're gonna roll form a certain panel, roll form one panel. Don't try to roll form 10 like McElroy Metals does, or 20 panels. You're gonna go broke. Offer six or eight standard colors and then everything else offer as special order. If you're good and you have service, people will come to you eventually. But if you overpromise and underdeliver and you don't have the funds to buy the coils or the material needed to make the panels, you're gonna be in trouble."

Steve adds to the advice: "Make sure you have enough business to substantiate a roll former. I mean, if it's only running five to 10 hours a week, it's probably not the right investment for you at that point in time.

"Know your business going in.

"Know your competition in the market as far as what you're go-

ing to do.

"Make sure you research your supply chain. I mean, find out who are the good suppliers that are heavily invested into the markets that you plan to serve and utilize them because they can definitely help you with reducing your inventory, bringing stock in. ... And look at the products that you plan to make and where you seem to have demand and then direct your business in that direction going forward."

Ben shares sage advice regarding equipment and shop layout: "As far as on the equipment buy side, before you have the equipment, the one thing that we always encourage people to do is whatever model of equipment, whoever you're working with, go see that piece of equipment making product in the field before you make that financial commitment because it doesn't matter if you were looking at a \$1.5 million high-speed, highly automated ag panel line or an \$80,000 one from overseas. If it's not making a product that you can sell that's consistent with what you're currently using and then reselling, even at \$80,000 it's an expensive paperweight. Go see the machines making the product and feel comfortable on that side.

"After you have the equipment," he continues, "probably the [newcomer mistakes] that we see would be plant flow. As you put your plant together, there's a lot to it, but it's not rocket science. What you want to have is all your raw product, your coil at one end and your finished product at the other. And it flows through so the material doesn't have to move back on itself.

"Now, of course, the world's not perfect. Sometimes you gotta start with a facility that may not be the perfect size, but if you can go from raw to finish in a linear motion, it's a big deal.

"The other thing is when you're talking about facilities, no matter what equipment it is, you need a proper foundation. If you don't have a proper foundation for a flying shear, for example, it's gonna eat up your concrete. If it's an uncoiler that's gonna rotate, it's gonna eat up your concrete. So having proper anchoring is huge.

"You'll spend more on the foundation, but it's important because this equipment, if it's not leveled in, it won't make product the way it needs to, the way that you expect it to.

"And then probably the last thing that I would say is as you're looking at your plants, having a way to store finished bundles, because roll formers will make a lot of panel. But the key is how do you get the finished product away from the line?

If you wanna go after, if you wanna do shrink wrapping, if you're gonna block and band or what have you, but having a way to stage those finished bundles is a huge deal as far as being able to get product out the door.

Several more important questions were addressed during the session. You'll find a continuation of the discussion in a future edition of Rollforming Magazine. **MB**



**An always relevant topic and engaging speaker, the only seats available were at the front of the room during Thomas Schwarzer's (ASC Machine Tools) seminar "Factors To Consider When Selecting Rollforming Equipment." As always, seminars are included with the cost of admission.**