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BY ROCKY LANDSVERK

Observations From Knoxville

What We Learned at Our Garage, Shed & Carport Builder Show

Trade shows are learning experiences, and that is the case even when you're one of the people running the show. Here are two things that I learned at our third annual Garage, Shed & Carport Builder Show, held in late January in Knoxville.

Steel Trusses

Some of the possibilities with steel trusses have been underrated and builders/contractors should stop and take a look at them. Two companies erected post-frame structures that centered

around small steel trusses and they really make somebody think. You can add walls and insulate the ceilings or you can use them as really nice outbuildings for a home or barn that deserves a garage or shed or home office that looks alike. We'll follow up on this topic in future issues.

Offline Doesn't Mean What It Used To

There were several manufacturers on the show floor who are actively trying to reach Amish/Mennonite builders who do not have websites by offering marketing services that involve getting leads

and selling packages to buyers, for the purpose of then having those fulfilled by a company that simply receives the plans and an address for delivery. Basically, the website service is acting as a dealer for an offline builder, who in this case is like a manufacturer. Not every plain community builder is interested in such an arrangement but it's there if you want it. Again, we'll discuss this trend in future articles.

Our next opportunity for you to be on either side of that aisle can be found at shieldwallmedia.com/shows.

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Mid-South Perma-Column needed a lot of help at its booth because of the large audience.

GSCB Show Sets New Standard in Knoxville

‘This Event Was Impressive’

BY ROCKY LANDSVERK

Records were set for exhibitors and attendance as the industry gathered in Knoxville, Tennessee, on January 24-25 for the third annual Garage, Shed & Carport Builder Show.

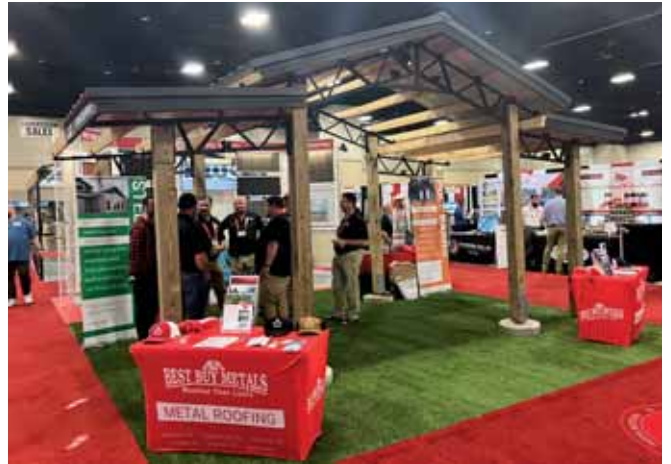
Almost 70 manufacturers, suppliers, and companies dedicated to all things regarding the construction of small residential buildings were exhibiting. There were well attended educational sessions, a happy hour with a great mid-Southern meal, and a positive vibe all around.

“I would like to thank the exhibitors and attendees at this year’s show for making it the best Garage Shed & Carport Builder Show to date,” said Missy Beyer, Shield Wall Media’s Director of Events. “We strive to make sure our shows are profitable on both sides of the aisle but also to allow for a fun and family friendly atmosphere to network within the industry. I believe we hit the mark with this year’s show. Our next event is the Post-Frame Builder Show in June, hosted in Branson, Missouri. I hope to see you all there.”

SHOW REVIEW



Chris Davis of Dr!pstop explains the company's condensation control system.



Best Buy Metals (above) and True Metal Supply (below) each erected post-frame structures to show builders some of the new and cool options for creating sheds, gazebos, and other outbuildings. You can even put walls on these and turn them into cabins or offices. Adam Clark, owner/CEO of True Metal Supply, is shown below, and Best Buy Metals had a full staff at the show, above.



Acu-Form wins the award for perseverance. This photo was taken after 90% of the exhibitors had taken down their booths, but Acu-Form still had prospects, so Wayne and his crew worked overtime.

The show set a new bar for attendance, beating the previous best by 30%, and as always at a Shield Wall Media show, almost all those attendees were decision-makers and budget-managers.

"This event was impressive, and it was well attended by both contractors and companies. An audience that was interested in what we had to share," said Jason Heifnar, Director Operations, Best Buy Metals. "It was also good to meet members of the event team from Shield Wall as well. Best Buy Metals and American Pole Barns by Best Buy Metals greatly appreciated the opportunities this show provided."

What makes these Shield Wall Media industry events different than most is that they are about relationship-building, and that



SHOW REVIEW



The Happy Hour, which included a bluegrass band, was enormously popular in reviews from showgoers.



T&H Lemont ran a presentation to help people learn how to clean and maintain their roll formers.

includes being family-friendly. As a result, you wind up with features like the Rest Stop area where families including children can stay busy during the event, and there's a great Happy Hour event on the show floor the first night of each event, featuring music, great food, and free drinks.

"I would like to give credit to Missy and Kathy Budsberg

[SWM Executive Advertising Assistant] for the idea of the Rest Stop," said Gary Reichert, SWM CEO/Publisher. "Having a place for kids and family to relax and hang out is a fantastic idea and frankly something that would not have ever occurred to me. We have a great team.

"Our happy hours always seem to turn out great. Good food,



Lyon Metal Roofing assembled a small shed and the booth was full much of the show.



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Steven Choi, COO of ShedPro, explains how the company's program can be turnkey for a builder's marketing program, including customer acquisition, whether you have a website or not.



Jhet Burkhardt of The Bradbury Co. mans the booth.

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SHOW REVIEW

music and beverages help lighten the mood and present the chance to get to know customers and peers on a different level. Our shows are about actually doing business and sometimes I think more happens in the Happy Hour than on the trade show floor.”

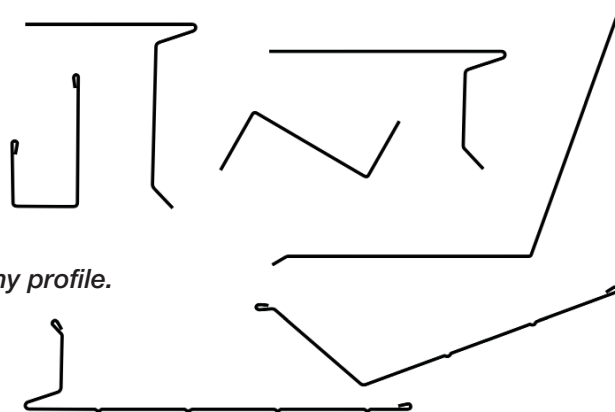
Attendee Reactions

Paul Rankin lives in Minnesota and wants to become a shed builder. He’s not sure where he’s going to live and what he’s going to build, but he’s now farther along than he was before the show. “The show was great not only in presenters but the manufacturers, and also the people who were there,” he said. “I spoke to manufacturers. It was a good experience all the way.”

Alex Walker of Walker Buildings said the show is primarily a networking event for him but he also learned a lot. “I thought it was very educational,” Walker said. “We use these shows for networking and as a great tool to meet the right people and make connections.” A highlight of products and ideas that he saw on the show floor came from BETCO, which makes rollup



ShelterLogic erected a carport to show business owners just a piece of its wide assortment of product lines, many of which require the involvement of a builder. There are also drop-shipping and digital marketing programs available.



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The iFAB booth demonstrated its powered automatic-sawing machines.



Sensei Digital has 3D builders and CRM tools for carport and shed companies.

self-storage doors. “One of the coolest things that I saw was a bolt-on motor for the rollup doors that would really be useful for a lot of our customers,” said Walker, whose company sells metal buildings nationwide. “They’re also the manufacturer that we buy our doors from, so it’s supported with the rollup doors that we’re already using.”

Jeremiah Martin of Sloping Ridge Structures in Tennessee is a builder/manufacturer who builds onsite and ships to the local region. The company uses Central States Metal protected by Cen-

tral Guard and painted by Valspar, and Piva windows. He said his goal for the show was to “meet new suppliers and connect with existing suppliers. Our walk-through doors are from Midco and I wanted to see them again. And I wanted to meet new suppliers.”

Martin said he and his wife “enjoyed it and we felt it was worth the time. It was a long day; it was 15 hours and 10 minutes [including travel]. But we felt it was worth it and walking away from that show, it’s getting better each year and the staff works really hard.”



The view from the entrance during the opening morning of the show.

Educational Sessions

Robbie Ward of Ascential Buildings has retail locations in Virginia and West Virginia. Ascential sells sheds from Pine View Buildings in Statesville, N.C., and metal from several companies. He said his company had a successful show walking the floor and attending the educational sessions.

“The objectives were to find sales training to implement, and to network with other dealers, and looking into marketing,” Ward said. “We have a full-time marketer but we’ve been looking to outsource our website.”

Given that sales advice was his goal, it’s not surprising that Ward said his highlights were in the educational sales sessions, including back-to-back sales sessions by L.J. Obenauer and Andrew Boyle of Making Sales Simple. Another goal was learning how to offer financing to customers, so he spoke with RTO National and a couple others on the show floor about improving that area of his business.

Put it all together, and Ward likely found a sales training program at the show, a financing/RTO partner, and a website



Cold Spring Enterprises unveiled its VersaBend tube benders.



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management company. Not bad for a day and a half of walking a show.

Ward added that the show and this magazine are critical to his business. "It is a closed market and (the show and magazine) help branch it and pull us all together," he said. "So we cling to this stuff."

Corey Stephenson of Ozark Portable Buildings, which has

locations centered around Missouri and Illinois, said the education sessions were just that, educational. He mentioned a social media marketing program run by Barbara Garcia of Shed U, which he called the best class he's attended. "She was very specific with the details that she gave, including actual advertising budgets," he said. He said Garcia went into specifics with LinkedIn on how to reach dealers and potential customers.

2024 GSCB Show New Products

Neil's Roofing demonstrated a PVC roof vent that Neil Miller makes himself in Indiana. He ships nationwide in boxes of 10 or more. As usual with PVC, the vents are paintable, but most people just leave them white. Neil's Roofing also showed off a metal roof ladder that is made by a business partner (see photo).

Premier Building Products LLC showed off a fiberglass door for sheds. It has a compression type weatherstrip, composite sill, form filler corner seal pad, polyurethane foam core, and full-length composite stiles. Premier says it's low-maintenance and performs well in extreme weather conditions, while being resistant to warping, dents, and rot.

ShelterLogic showed off many new products including gazebos in its Sojag brand, sheds via its Arrow brand, and smaller lawn care storage products that could be a nice add-on sale for shed builders and sellers.

Lyon Metal Roofing has a new premier metal siding product called Board and Batten. It can handle 26-gauge metal roofing, is low maintenance, and is less likely to show wear and tear compared to vinyl. This new product has the ability to make siding panels look seamless and sleek, while maintaining the same integrity offered with other types of metal siding material. They can be finished with a new product from AkzoNobel called CERAM-A-Star Select Frost, which is especially good for coastal environments.

Mid-South Perma-Column said it has a new pre-cast skirt board for post-frame construction methods. The bottom half is pre-cast concrete.

Cold Spring Enterprises has a new product called Versabend. It's a square- and rectangular-tube bending machine that allows for repetitive and consistent frame bending for carports and enclosed buildings.

Innovations Manufacturing Inc. introduced its IM Drip Guard and IM Drip Cap for rainwater protection on sheds. It has heavy aluminum extrusion and is available for new construction or after-market.

Amerilux showed off 8" EZ FORMS concrete form assembly system that has horizontal push-click installation.

Onduline North America had a new color to show for its ONDURA Premium Series waterproof asphalt corrugated panels. Joe Paparella says the green and brown combo produces a "camo" look. It is "quieter than metal" and is very lightweight.

LP ProStruct has a roof sheathing product with Silvertch



Neil Miller of Neil's Roofing in Middlebury, Indiana, displays its unique PVC roof exhaust adapter kits and also demonstrated a roof ladder called Safe Steps, manufactured by Neil's friends at CALM Welding.

that reduces sun's radiant energy through the shed roof panels. Reps said it has better aesthetics and a clearer finish. It's better than a radiant barrier and keeps things 30% cooler.

Wildcat's Justin Yoder says it has a new fastener that has a very sharp point and a slot in the tip. This helps when you are cutting wood and gives it a "drilling action."

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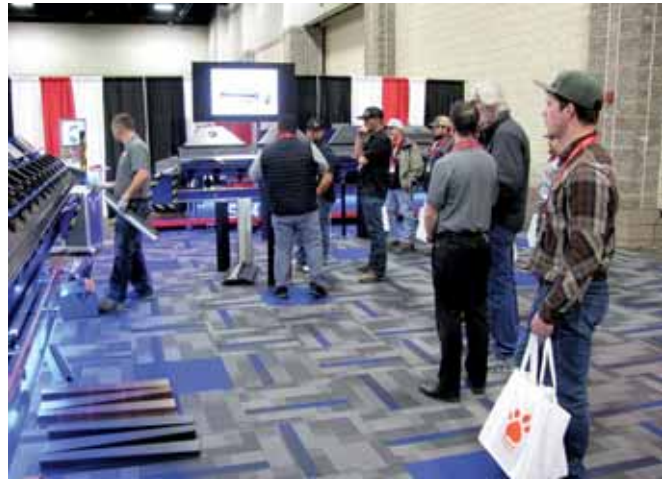
SHOW REVIEW

Added Jonathon Steinsultz of Ozark Portable Buildings, “I learned how to build forms to generate leads, and how to create ads to solve problems for your customers to tailor the solutions they need.” Garcia recommended quarterly ad campaigns on LinkedIn, and then changing to a new ad every quarter.

Show Floor Highlights

Among the highlights on the show floor were post-frame structures erected by Best Buy Metals and True Metal Supply that centered around metal trusses. Other products that would interest builders and contractors included the Wall-Lift system for more easily lifting walls during construction, and a couple roofing products from Neil’s Roofing (a roof ladder, and a PVC vent).

In addition to the show’s exhibitor booths and educational sessions, Shed University presented its programming to shed lot owners and salespeople on January 23-24 (the days leading into



Hershey’s Metal Meister showcased many of its machines at its in-booth machinery demo.



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the GSCB show, in the same conference center).

The next Shield Wall Media show is the Post-Frame Builder Show in Branson, Missouri, in June. Learn more about the company's shows at shieldwallmedia.com/shows. For exhibitor information, contact Missy Beyer (920) 216-3007 or send her an email at missy@shieldwallmedia.com. **GSCB**



Northwestern Holding Company represented three steel manufacturers.



Wall-Lift is a powered hoist system for lifting walls. Each unit can lift 440 pounds. A small but powered demonstration unit was on display.



Sales brilliance abounds with Ray Gage (left) and Gary Bontrager (right) of Gage-Bontrager Consulting and longtime sales consultant Randy Chaffee, who also writes for our magazines.

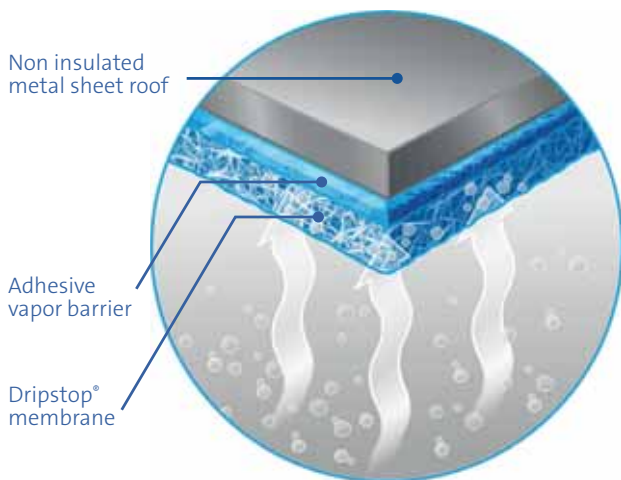


Onduline's PVC and other building panels were on display, here being shown by VP/Sales Joe Paparella.

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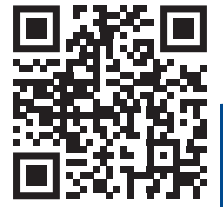
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Industry Forecast 2024

Building Your Business

BY LINDA SCHMID

Shield Wall Media and METALCON conducted an industry survey that generated a lot of information, and we are providing a few of the basics here. Watch for our new *Construction Survey Insights — Annual* (a stand-alone magazine mailing in April) for more in-depth construction industry insights.

The new year is underway and business is humming along, but what is your plan for the year? For creating or revisiting your plan, it may be beneficial to review the state of the economy and where it seems to be headed. Let's start by seeing what the economists have to say.

From The Economists

Ken Simonson, Economist at the Associated General Contractors of America, said that after a torrid third quarter in 2023, he sees growth ahead, but slower growth and job creation are likely in 2024.

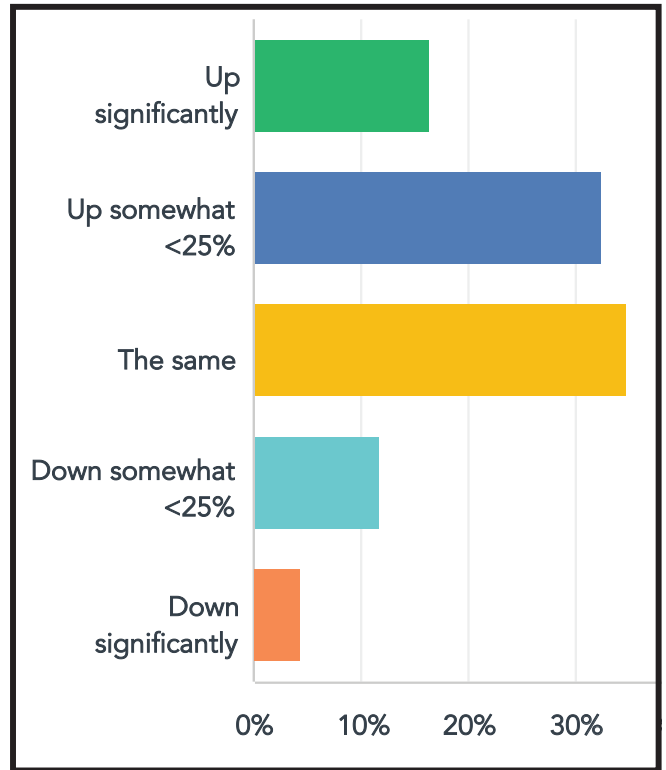
"I expect a modest reduction in the inflation rate," Simonson said, "though not enough to get down to the 2% range the Fed wants to see before lowering its short-term interest rate target."

He expects both short and long-term interest rates to stay where they are or move higher.

Anirban Basu saw many positive indicators in the state of the industry as 2023 was coming to a close, as well as some reasons for concern.

The positives include the job market which remained strong, people were returning to offices, inputs to the Producer Price Index for construction were down considerably from pandemic levels, multi-family residential permits were above average, single family permit numbers were back up to pre-pandemic levels, and the construction backlog remained strong.

Some of Basu's concerns include credit card debt which has been moving steadily upward. (At the end of the third quarter of 2023, it stood at \$1.079 trillion.) High borrowing costs and infla-



Construction Sales in 2023 Compared to 2022

tion are also red flags for Basu.

"Even amid this growth," Basu said, "it's prudent to remain wary."

Insiders Report

"Many of our customers are optimistic for a better 2024 than 2023," Scott Lowe, Roofing Sales Director at ProVia said. "I feel like we slowed down a bit in the last quarter of 2023 and I am curious to see if that will carry over into the first quarter of

2024.”

Steve Swaney, Account Manager at Mid-South Aluminum, said that they are expecting sales will be up a bit as metal prices fall and demand picks up.

“Coil rebounded nicely in 2023,” said Steve Rutkowski, PPG coil senior manager, Americas, “and we expect positive growth this year.”

However, Shannon Latham, the Shed Geek at Shed Geek Podcast.com, believes that sales will be fairly flat while profitability may be up due to higher price tags.

Swaney believes that the agricultural building market should do well in 2024 since the price of food is up.

“I think remodeling and renovation will go through another stronger period the 2nd half of 2024,” Swaney added, “as people decide to stay in their homes, or people that moved into a new home during COVID do some more upgrades and personalization.”

Gabriel Schlabach, Manager at LuxGuard, believes the

construction industry overall could be flat to slightly down. However, he adds that it’s hard to say; the economy doesn’t act “normally” any more, not since the pandemic years. This seems reminiscent of something Basu said about the economy and the construction industry, it all seems to just keep going regardless of warning signs to the contrary.

The industry overall has been successful through labor shortages, high interest rates, high material costs ... whatever obstacles have been put in its way. Will that continue though?

“During COVID people overspent and we are seeing the results of that now,” Schlabach said. He is referring to the fact that many people purchased sheds at that time, so fewer people are buying them now. “However,” he added, “if spending remains loose and people have cash, they will keep buying sheds.”

The Industry’s Greatest Challenges

Rutkowski agrees. “Interest rates are a challenge as they impact spending, especially in building and construction. We saw



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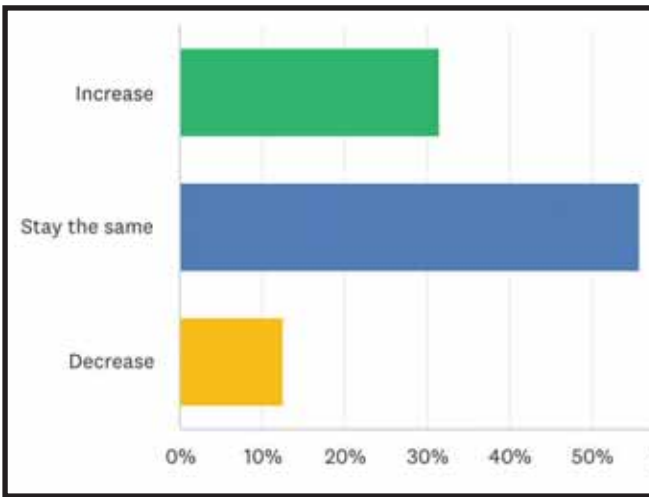
a boom in remodeling and upgrades during COVID. However, this year, less discretionary income and concern about interest rates could dampen growth in the industry, but we are cautiously optimistic.

“Inflation is no doubt the largest issue looming over the industry,” James Alpeter, Marketing Manager of Siding, Stone, and Roofing at ProVia said. “I think many homeowners are trying to hold off on large purchases in the hopes that inflation will slow or fall.” Of the various markets, Alpeter said that the residential market is the toughest one to forecast.

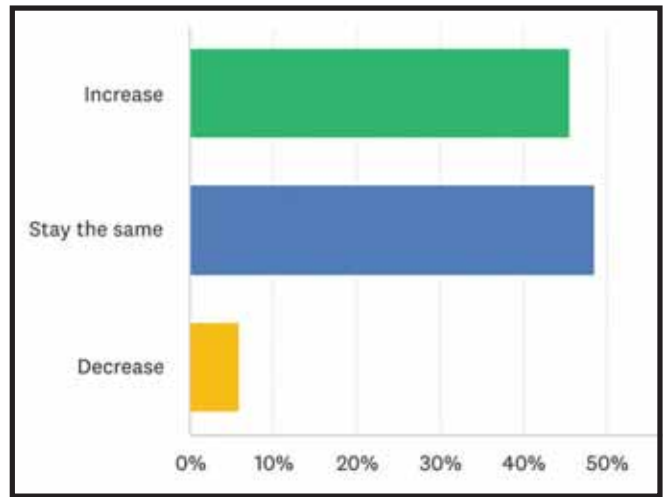
“I think that builders are cautiously optimistic and expecting growth, but at the same time preparing for a flat result,” he continued.

Lowé added that inflation and interest rates are the two biggest concerns that their customers talk about.

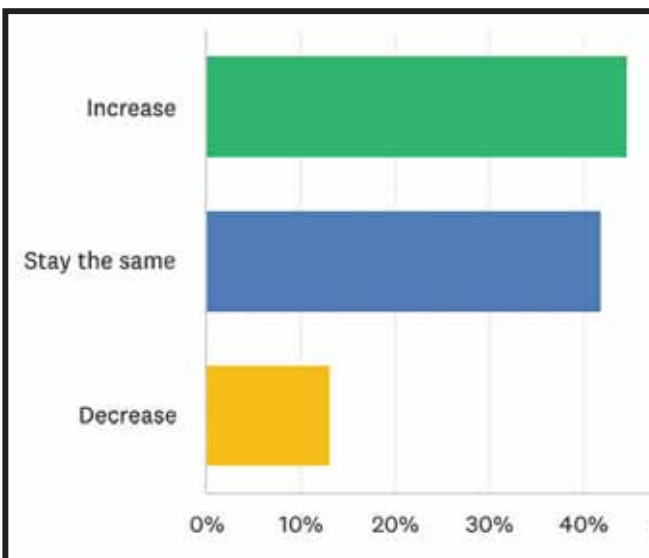
Latham believes that in a maturing industry, like the shed market, making the sale is the biggest challenge. “In a conservative industry that doesn’t tend to embrace new ideas, those taking advantage of new marketing sales technology, such as 3-D configurators and SEO optimized websites, will take a larger



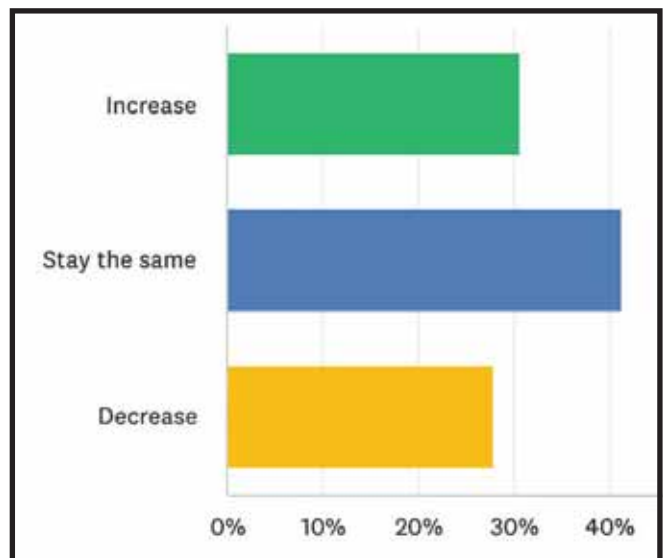
Southern Builders' Expectations for Residential Construction
FROM SHIELD WALL MEDIA'S INDUSTRY SURVEY



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Western Builders' Expectations for Residential Construction
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Midwestern Builders' Expectations for Residential Construction
FROM SHIELD WALL MEDIA'S INDUSTRY SURVEY

market share in their region,” he said.

Latham is also concerned about the economic unrest that tends to occur in election years and how it affects purchasing decisions

“Labor is a big concern; many trades are shrinking in number and skilled labor is getting ever harder to find,” Alpeter said.

Swaney added that Gen Z does not want to do physical labor, meanwhile the older tradesmen are retiring.


Latham agreed that it seems that today’s kids don’t want to work hard. Maybe we are setting them up to expect everything to be easy, he said. On the other hand, many of the jobs offered to them are subcontractor jobs, so they don’t have health insurance, taxes aren’t handled for them, and they have no benefits.

“Often these people will just move on to a better job,” Latham said. “Perhaps making subcontractors into W2 employees, giving them workers comp, benefits, and giving them a chance to build a career would help the industry.

“If you are not investing for the long term, you are creating a rotating door,” Latham said. **GSCB**

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Getting Floored

Staying on Top of Shed Floor Options and Attributes

BY MARK ROBINS

Outbuildings and backyard buildings like sheds house valuable items, are exposed to the unpredictable elements and frequently sit directly on the ground.

Because of this, their flooring is as important as their walls and roof, and will determine a shed's longevity.

A shed floor is more than just something that gets walked on. A level, well-built, and sturdy shed floor prevents objects from rolling around, possibly damaging themselves and the shed in the process. The correct shed floor is a protective barrier ensuring the safety of a shed's contents. Without the correct shed floor, moisture can seep in, leading to mold, decay, and damage.

What are some of the options for shed floors? And why is this an opportunity for a builder?

Pre-Build Means Built-In Floors

Pre-manufactured sheds almost always come with a built-in floor. "I would say that the building comes with a floor almost 10 out of 10 times," said Justus Eaton, founding partner and president of marketing and sales at Alpine Buildings. "I think in my approximately 15 years in the shed industry, I remember maybe one instance when a building was built without a shed floor. The reason that a shed needs a floor is because they are normally portable. If they didn't have a floor, they wouldn't really have a foundation. In the rare situation that a customer doesn't want the floor, someone could build a building on-site on a concrete pad."

The weight capacity of shed flooring can vary depending on the material used and the shed's construction. To determine the best shed floor type, know how much weight is being placed on it.

PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON BACKYARD BUILDINGS



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALPINE BUILDINGS

it. A shed floor can hold about 20 pounds per square foot. A 10' x 12' shed floor can hold about 2,400 pounds in total. "If you are putting really heavy items in the building, I would recommend doing 12" O/C floor joists," Eaton said. "Our 10', 12', and 14' wides all come with pressure-treated 2" x 6" floor joists on 4" x 6" notched runners. Our garage package automatically includes 12" O/C joists and 4 - 4" x 6" notched runners."

Custom Shed or Outbuilding Floor Materials

If the customer wants a custom shed or special outbuilding (see the article in our most-recent issue about buildings like music studios), then you will likely be needing to consider your options for a floor.

Concrete flooring is very durable and can store heavy items. It is resistant to rot and moisture. Concrete is relatively easy to sweep and clean. However, it will also be more expensive than a lot of options, and because it is so hard, standing on it for long periods of time can be uncomfortable. It will also be challenging to remove if the shed is relocated. It's a good choice depending on the usage and future of the building.

Oriented Strand Board (OSB) flooring is an inexpensive flooring material option (it uses leftover wood material), but it lacks moisture resistance, which could lead to the floor rotting. Jorgan Cattin at Oregon Backyard Buildings said OSB is a cost-effective option, suitable for non-humid conditions. OSB has exposed end grain, which readily absorbs water, but there are options to buy waterproof OSB flooring. It is easy to use for large or odd-sized sheds because it doesn't require a lot of joints

Waterproofing

If you plan on using your shed for an application that is possibly corrosive/wet/abrasive then you may need to waterproof the floor. The options may include epoxy, rubber, vinyl, marine grade paint, etc. If waterproofing is necessary, it may be necessary to install a floor drain and seal the joint between the wall and floor. The underside of the flooring would still be exposed to moisture so if you need to have it completely sealed, let your manufacturer know from the beginning.

*Sheree Holmes,
owner of Superior Sheds*

on the floor. However, Eaton cautioned, "OSB is too thin and wouldn't be recommended as it's not designed as a shed floor."

Pressure-treated plywood is widely considered to be a very good flooring option. To many people, it looks better than concrete and OSB, but it doesn't have a finished look. It's cheaper than concrete and easier to stand on for long periods of time. Plywood is easy to clean and doesn't require a lot of maintenance. One of its main benefits is that the wood surfaces are sealed, preventing water from seeping into the wood causing rot or decay. Also, the wood is treated with a chemical preservative making it insect and fungus-resistant. However, even pressure-treated wood will suffer from corrosion and weathering over time.

Patio blocks or pavers can be placed on a leveled surface to create a stable and attractive flooring option. They are easy to install and can be rearranged if needed. Roll-out vinyl or rubber flooring offers a quick and straightforward way to cover the shed's interior floor. These materials are easy to clean and provide some insulation against cold or moisture. Vinyl withstands extreme temperatures and weather and is available in a variety of mat sizes, colors, and patterns. It can be rolled out onto a shed



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floor and trimmed to the floor's size. If the shed will be used as a living space, vinyl is a great choice.

Carpet, rugs, and remnants add a plush, comfortable, indoor-like floor. Cattin said they add warmth and soundproofing, and are suitable for studios or living spaces. "Living spaces like mother-in-law suites or accessory dwelling units (ADUs) may prefer carpeting over plywood for comfort," Cattin said.

But carpet isn't moisture-proof, is hard to clean and isn't a good option for storing mowers, ATVs, or other machinery that leak oil, gas, corrosives, or chemicals. Mold can grow on dirty carpets. So typically, these products will be used as a floor covering but not as the floor itself.

Epoxy flooring can transform a shed into a polished, resilient space. This protective coating provides an impressive shield against wear and tear, and resistance to water and chemicals. Eaton said, "Epoxy wouldn't be a good idea on a wooden surface. It would cause the epoxy to crack if the flooring flexed under heavy weight."

Rubber mats and overlays are affordable and can protect shed floors from scratches, stains, and scuffs, while ensuring a smooth surface. They can be secured to the floor with nails or a staple gun. Eaton said, "depending on the needs, this could be a great option." Safety and comfort are strong attributes of rubber flooring. This slip-resistant material provides exceptional traction, reducing the risk of accidents. Cattin said, "it's perfect for sheds that function as gyms, play areas, or workshops."

Furthermore, rubber flooring offers a cushioning effect, which is beneficial for prolonged periods of standing. Dropping heavy items on a heavy rubber floor mat won't damage it. It will also protect the floor beneath. Cattin cautioned rubber can

retain odors.

Interlocking tiles are a great alternative for an adaptable and user-friendly flooring solution. Flooring patterns can be designed due to their simple installation technique, and a variety of colors and patterns can create a floor that matches shed decor.

Shed Floor Variables

With the many shed flooring choices available, the decision generally comes down to intended use, climate, budget, and personal preferences. “I would definitely choose a quality floor for any application,” said Sheree Holmes, owner of Superior Sheds. “Quality begins from the ground up. Sheds are so very versatile; the possibilities are endless. Just make sure your flooring is the best match for your use.”

Again, a shed’s usage is most often the key factor to determine its flooring material. Heavier items require a floor that can withstand additional weight. If people are going to stand on the shed floor for long periods of time (such as a workshop), flooring should be comfortable to do so.

So, an important guideline is knowing how the shed will be used; if it’s for storage, a simple and cost-effective solution may suffice. Durability is a key consideration. “Heavy equipment over the engineered loads can stress and damage less durable floors,” Cattin said. “High foot traffic areas may require more durable options.” For a workshop or office, a more durable and comfortable flooring option may be necessary. One problem Holmes has seen is when someone uses a shed for animal containment. “In those cases, we use deck boards or composite decking because it’s easier to replace/clean than a solid surface flooring.”

Consider the weather. “Understanding the specific needs of your climate, especially in areas with high humidity or frequent rainfall, is crucial,” Cattin said. Also, consider how well the floor covering will adhere to the subflooring. Some have better adherence properties than others. Price will influence flooring options; some floor options are more budget-friendly than others. Aesthetic preferences and design choices also should be factored in.



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Where the Rubber Meets the Shed Floor

Submitted by LuxGuard

Unlike most shed floors, LuxGuard is actually a shed floor covering that goes on top of your existing shed floor. The flooring comes in rolls that are 100 feet long and widths of 8, 10, 12, and 14 feet. This allows for a seamless floor on any shed up to 14 feet in width.

The most obvious advantage of LuxGuard is its neat and clean appearance. With the material being made in the factory, it is very consistent both in appearance and in thickness across the entire shed floor. It will cover up the cracks, seams, nail holes, and any stains that may be showing on the subfloor and it does not take any expertise to install it.

Since it is impervious to water, it will keep the floor looking good even with repeated exposure to water and mud, and it won't let your wood subfloor mold, stain, or rot.

The second advantage to using LuxGuard is the speed of installation. Most shed builders like to get their sheds built quick and LuxGuard will fit right into a fast-paced production line. It will take one person around 30 minutes to install the flooring on an average-sized shed and there is no down time for drying or curing. As soon as the floor is installed it is ready to work on immediately.

It is also cost-effective. Because of the consistency in the thickness of the material, your costs from one shed to the next will be consistent.

When people walk into a shed with an ordinary wood floor, and then they walk into one of these with a rubber flooring, the upgraded appearance can sell the shed.

LuxGuard
Hamptonville, North Carolina
(800) 202-8841
www.luxguard.com

Selling and Upselling Shed Floor Opportunities

Since shed flooring is so important, let it be a strong selling point. Higher-quality shed floors produce higher-quality sheds. Materials make all the difference. Too often, sheds are seen as commodity products. By offering customers a range of quality shed floor solutions, you are providing them with a high level of performance giving peace of mind against unexpected conditions.

Cautioning customers to pay a little bit more to avoid a shed with a potentially weak floor is a good measure to take. "Based on the customer's needs, recommending upgraded flooring options can be a great opportunity to upsell while providing significant long-term value," Cattin said. "Educating customers on the long-term benefits of higher quality flooring can increase sales. Encouraging customers to think long-term about their flooring choices can lead to greater satisfaction and fewer issues down the line." **GSCB**

 Check out Garage, Shed & Carport Builder Magazine online: www.garageshedcarportbuilder.com

Resources

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Mocksville, North Carolina
(704) 659-5638
www.alpinebuildings.com

Oregon Backyard Buildings
Eugene, Oregon
(541) 612-0376
www.oregonbackyardbuildings.com

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New EverPlank Luxury Vinyl Siding from Mastic

Mastic Siding & Accessories by Ply Gem introduces the new EverPlank Luxury Vinyl Siding collection to its portfolio of innovative siding solutions. Vinyl siding reimagined, EverPlank Luxury Vinyl Siding combines a true-to-wood look with the trusted performance and durability of vinyl. Featuring a patented technology that allows for end-to-end installation, EverPlank delivers a high-end plank look with no overlapping seams, easy-install benefits, and a lifetime warranty.

EverPlank luxury vinyl siding features the look and feel of real wood grain for timeless style and everlasting curb appeal. The 6" wide planks are available in 12 colors. EverPlank's matching trim and accessory packages make design decisions easier than ever for completely cohesive exteriors.

EverPlank's innovative install method includes interlocking panels and bonded seams to fasten the panels together on the wall both horizontally and vertically, offering security even in high winds. Like traditional vinyl siding, EverPlank resists warping and fading from extreme heat and UV rays, is water resistant, and never requires painting. Additionally, EverPlank weighs less than competitive materials yet boasts a solid, reinforced construction that is easy to transport and work with on the jobsite.

EverPlank is backed by Mastic's limited lifetime warranty. Trade professionals can learn more about using EverPlank Luxury Vinyl Siding by Mastic on their next project by visiting the website below.

www.plygem.com/siding/brands/mastic/everplank-professional

New Tub O' Towels Heavy Duty Cleaner and Degreaser Spray Delivers Powerful Cleaning

Tub O' Towels® has expanded its revolutionary heavy duty cleaner product line to include a cleaner and degreaser in a spray bottle, ideal for grease and grime found at the job site, home/job repairs, manufacturing plant floors and more. Tub O' Towels Heavy Duty Cleaner and Degreaser spray is now available to ship nationwide.

The powerful cleaner and degreaser — specifically formulated to perform like the company's popular Tub O' Towels Heavy Duty Cleaning Wipes product — is ideal for any contractor, plant manager or tradesperson as it quickly tackles any oily, greasy job, removes paint, caulk, gas, leaks/drips and solves so many other messy situations on the job site.

Tub O' Towels Heavy Duty Cleaner and Degreaser spray works hard to remove the oil, grease, dirt, gas, paint, caulk, glue, and adhesive residues that are seen daily. With this powerful, heavy duty cleaning spray, it is easy to keep work areas, machinery, plumbing, electrical, and construction sites clean, often helping to avoid accidents and to increase repair speed and job completion.

Tub O' Towels Heavy Duty Cleaner and Degreaser spray features a unique formula that combines the cleaning power of Tub O' Towels Heavy Duty Cleaning Wipes with the convenience of a spray. Similar to Tub O' Towels Heavy Duty Cleaning Wipes, Tub O' Towels Heavy Duty Cleaner & Degreaser spray is alcohol and solvent free, has a pleasant citrus scent, and is proudly made in the U.S. It quickly dissolves grease and grime and can be used in conjunction with Tub O' Towels Heavy Duty Cleaning Wipes.

tubotowels.com

Haas Door Unveils 2400 and 2500 Series Impact Windows

Haas Door, a leading manufacturer of residential and commercial garage doors, is excited to announce the launch of their COM & RES 2400 and RES 2500 Series Ranch and Standard impact windows.

These windows are designed to enhance both the aesthetic appeal and functionality to perform in impact-rated areas of the country.



Key features of the new line of impact windows include:

- Five impact glazing polycarbonate options, ensuring versatility and customization options for every customer.
- Consistent impact glazing color options across various Haas Door garage door series, ensuring seamless integration with existing design elements of Haas' diverse range of doors.
- Enhanced durability and safety features.

Haas Door is located in Wauseon, Ohio, where the company manufactures steel and aluminum residential and commercial garage doors. The family-owned company holds memberships in IDA and DASMA, and produces products that are sold throughout North America.

haasdoor.com

S-5! Introduces Its New Solar Attachment Solution

S-5!, the leading authority on attachments for metal roofs, introduces its newest addition to its balance of systems lineup, the MLPE (Module Level Power Electronics) Mount.

The S-5! MLPE Mount™ provides a universal, cost-effective




method for attaching module level power electronics (MLPE) directly to solar PV module frames. Designed for use with most solar modules, the MLPE Mount secures optimizers and microinverters along the underside of the module frame at desired locations so wire management is simplified. This provides the versatility needed to better handle module-to-module wire management and electrically bonds the equipment together to easily comply with grounding requirements.


The MLPE Mount is ideal for use with all S-5!'s solar attachments and can be used in rail-based installations or paired with the PVKIT® rail-less solar mounting solution for direct attachment to metal roofs. A unique tab feature makes installation quick and easy, and less likely to rotate during installation, eliminating hassle—one hand can easily position the MLPE device on the frame, while the other hand tightens the bolt to secure it.












“We were looking for a simple and cost-effective way to quickly secure optimizers and microinverters to PV frames for rail-less solar installations,” said Ricardo Barroso, director of research and development at S-5! “The MLPE Mount is a UL2703-certified component, making it a world-class product”

The MLPE Mount is designed for solar developers, EPCs, installers and end-users who desire an economical, flexible and easy-to-install MLPE mounting device for PV module frames, without having to rely on attaching to rails.








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NEW PRODUCTS



Barricade Unveils ThermoPro Rigid Insulation System

Barricade Building Products has released ThermoPro Rigid Insulation System, now available in two variations: the metallic reflective facer and the poly facer with a clear facer on the back.

The ThermoPro Rigid Insulation System represents an advancement in insulation technology, designed to provide exceptional thermal performance without the need for transitioning to 2x6 studs, thus enabling builders to meet the new 2021 IECC code requirements seamlessly.

With the metallic reflective facer, the

ThermoPro Rigid Insulation System actively addresses moisture management concerns while ensuring optimal energy efficiency. Similarly, the poly facer with a clear back facilitates a balanced approach, offering durability and enhanced structural support, along with an increased focus on environmental sustainability.

barricadebp.com

Wright Expands Line With Two New Adjustable Wrenches

Wright introduced two new adjustable wrenches including an extra-slim jaws wrench and a reversible adjustable wrench, both with extra-wide capacity. The line previously included chrome, black industrial, and ultimate grip models. The extra-slim adjustable wrenches feature an extra-slim jaw design, super-wide



opening and feather weight that's up to 50 percent thinner, 78 percent wider and 68 percent lighter than standard adjustable wrenches of similar sizes. The slimmer jaw design makes it easier to access tight spaces. The extra-wide capacity wrench with extra-slim jaws is available in sizes 6" and 8".

The reversible adjustable wrench is two wrenches in one — an adjustable wrench and a pipe wrench. The reversible jaw has the teeth and the angle to make it easy to work on pipes. Designed with an extra-wide jaw capacity, it allows operation over a wider range of nuts and bolts using the same size wrench. The reversible adjustable wrench features a double scale that has millimeters on the front and inches on the rear for multipurpose use. The reversible adjustable wrench is available in sizes 6", 8", 10", and 12".

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NEW PRODUCTS

S-51 Unveils New Clamp for Riverlock Profiles

S-51, the inventor of engineered, manufactured, metal roof attachments, introduced its new S-5-RC™ clamp for attaching a wide range of rooftop accessories to the Riverlock's metal roof profile. The two-piece design of the S-5-RC interfaces with the rib geometry and creates a mechanical interlock strong enough to support most rooftop applications with certified holding strength, protecting the roof from corrosion and preserving the metal panels' thermal cycling characteristics. Applicable for small- and large-scale industrial, commercial and institutional projects, the clamp can be installed anywhere along the seam for placement flexibility. Installers can utilize the S-5-RC with rails or pair the clamp with the S-51 PVKIT™ solar solution for streamlined rack-less and penetration-free solar mounting to save time and money. Made of high-tensile structural aluminum to match Riverlock's long-lasting performance, the S-5-RC requires no maintenance or reinspection and is warranted for the life of the roof.

New Stanley's Control-Lock™ Tape Measures

Stanley has released the new Control-Lock tape measures that feature an integrated finger brake, providing users with maximum control and protection when extending and retracting the blade. Coming in lengths of 12, 16, 25, 26, and 30 feet, they're made to reach out to 12 feet. Features listed:

- An integrated finger brake that provides improved control of the blade when measuring and retracting

Malco Products Expands Line of C-REXEX Drivers

Malco Products, SBC, one of the nation's leading solution developers and manufacturers of a variety of high-quality tools for the building trades, today launched an extension of its line of award-winning, Cleasable, Reversible Magnetic Hex Drivers: the Building Construction Series, which features deeper sockets for installing fasteners with higher head heights such as concrete anchors, pole barn screws and other common fasteners for roofing, siding and gutter applications.

The C-REXEX Building Construction Series models are available in six lengths from 2" through 12". Reversible 1/4" and 5/16" hex sockets allow for quick changes between sizes, and the Building Construction Series drivers are designed to work effectively with painted fasteners, as well as specialized polishes in the internal sockets prevents fastener sticking.

End-users can save valuable time and effort by having access to two reversible hex sizes in one driver with color-coded grooves for easy identification. These drivers are built with S2 hardened steel

Bosch: New Cordless Rotary Hammer Has Corded Power

Bosch has released a new cordless rotary hammer that it says has the power of a corded tool. The concrete rotary hammer is called the Proxactar 18V SDS-max 1-5/8" Rotary Hammer (GBH18V-40C) and outperforms its corded counterpart, the Bosch 11264EVS, according to Bosch. Features listed:

Cordless Design: Delivers corded hammer performance, with 6.7 Ft.-lbs. of impact energy (EPTA) powered by a single 18V CORE18V 8 Ah or 12Ah battery, making concrete work easier.

KickBack Control: Reduces the risk of sudden tool reactions in binding conditions.

Soft Start and Controlled RPM: Adjusts the tool rpm and bpm for more controlled drilling and chiseling applications when working with softer materials like brick and tile.

Anti-Vibration System: Helps to reduce tool vibration, due to the longer air cushion built into the hammer tube and dampers added in the handle.

Lock-On/Lock-Off Button: Keeps the tool running when locked on (hammer mode only) and helps prevent accidental activation of the tool trigger when locked off.

NEW PRODUCTS

The introduction of EnergyShield XR, a new polyiso insulation product specifically engineered to provide continuous insulation for foundation walls and under-slab use. EnergyShield XR expands upon their industry-leading portfolio for both commercial and residential applications. "EnergyShield XR effectively insulates the building foundation to help improve energy efficiency and interior comfort for occupants," said Len Frey, Senior Product Manager at Atlas. "It's effectively reduce energy from walls with excess heat loads from soil sure."

The product has a very 5-year thermal warranty. The amount of power to tackle some of the toughest applications on the jobsite without being connected to a cord," stated the press release. "Plus, the graphene battery cells, which translates to 1200 charges on a single battery, with a 5-year warranty to stand behind it."

All cordless tools on the Cat 18-volt 5.0Ah graphene battery. Cat also said the Hammer Drill features "25 percent more power, provides 50 percent longer runtime, and adds 10 percent longer life, compared to traditional brushed motors." RB

NEW PRODUCTS

• Pro-grade performance 1-in. blade width and 12-Ft. max reach
 • Protective rubber over-molded casing
 • BladeArmor coating treated to the first 3 inches.

for long life and superior durability, and the protected heavy-duty magnet is easy to clean and doesn't contact the screw, so the fasteners spin true. The magnet will retain its strength for years to come. These new models join Malco's existing C-REXEX portfolio, which includes 6 mm and 8 mm; 7 mm and 8 mm; 8 mm and 10 mm; 5/16" and 3/8"; 1/4" and 5/16"; and award-winning SAWTOOTH C-REXEX drivers.

Bosch has released a new cordless rotary hammer that it says has the power of a corded tool. The concrete rotary hammer is called the Proxactar 18V SDS-max 1-5/8" Rotary Hammer (GBH18V-40C) and outperforms its corded counterpart, the Bosch 11264EVS, according to Bosch. Features listed:

Cordless Design: Delivers corded hammer performance, with 6.7 Ft.-lbs. of impact energy (EPTA) powered by a single 18V CORE18V 8 Ah or 12Ah battery, making concrete work easier.

KickBack Control: Reduces the risk of sudden tool reactions in binding conditions.

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Anti-Vibration System: Helps to reduce tool vibration, due to the longer air cushion built into the hammer tube and dampers added in the handle.

Lock-On/Lock-Off Button: Keeps the tool running when locked on (hammer mode only) and helps prevent accidental activation of the tool trigger when locked off.

NEW PRODUCTS

DX13 Brushless Power Tool

This state-of-the-art battery delivers three times longer life than-ion batteries. Recharge a 5Ah battery in 20 minutes and have twice the amount of power to tackle some of the toughest applications on the jobsite without being connected to a cord," stated the press release. "Plus, the graphene battery cells, which translates to 1200 charges on a single battery, with a 5-year warranty to stand behind it."

All cordless tools on the Cat 18-volt 5.0Ah graphene battery. Cat also said the Hammer Drill features "25 percent more power, provides 50 percent longer runtime, and adds 10 percent longer life, compared to traditional brushed motors." RB

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SteelGrip SAMM: Sure Footing

“Our Mission: Preventing Injuries and Saving Lives!”

BY LINDA SCHMID

Some ideas are just so right that people ask, “Why didn’t anyone make this sooner?” Lin Warner says that is what people ask about the SteelGrip SAMM Mat. Lin, Administrator, and Neil Warner, CEO, are the founders and principals of SteelGrip SAMM.

An Idea That Drew People In

Neil and a partner ran a painting business, and they discovered that they were spending man-hours creating scaffoldings to reach dormer windows three stories up. They were sure there must be a better way. They developed the initial idea of magnetic mats and when Neil said they should market it, his partner opted out. Neil forged ahead.

That led to 5½ years of R&D with each component scrutinized and tested extensively, in the field and by a third party who did 1000 hours of weather and stress testing. Formulating fabric, magnets, and design led to developing SAMM (Safety Assist Magnetic Mats), a product that would work on many types of steel. Of course, with this much time spent on a product that was not yet salable, financing could have become an obstacle to success. However, people Neil knew from the local business community and his former painting customers believed in him and this unique safety invention and lent the fledgling company money.

The answer to the question we started with, why did no one make this sooner, was answered during the R&D phase. The materials that make this product so reliable, the magnets and fabric, weren’t around until recently. The mat’s components are themselves products of advancing technology.

The final designs offered mats that won’t move unless you intentionally grip the corner and lift toward the center of the mat. This provides roofers with surer footing and relieves the tension workers often experience in their back and legs as they brace themselves on pitched roofs. These mats provide a place



to set the tools needed to perform a job while preventing tools from sliding off the roof and scratching the panels as they go. They even work on wet roofs. Having tools at hand reduces trips up and down the ladder, a true productivity killer.

In 2019, the SteelGrip SAMM mat became available with mats for pole barn and standing seam style roofing. The Warners stayed in contact with contractors and began selling to them. The mats are used by roofers, painters, solar installers, pest control, chimney cleaners, masons, equipment washers, homeowners, and firemen. One guy even started using them on the fender of his car and under the hood to hold his tools while doing engine maintenance!

Pulling In Sales

Early on, orders overtook production as Lin and Neil were cutting fabric off large rolls to hand-glue the mats. Then they began modifying equipment they had to make it work for their purposes. For example, they modified jigs for glue application and screen printing equipment. Now they work more efficiently



using a CNC for glue application. They are ready to ramp up sales.

The majority of sales have been through word of mouth, Facebook and internet searches leading to the website. They are now actively shipping to 49 states (only missing Nevada for sales) and Canada from their headquarters in Elk Rapids, Michigan.

What's New!

In 2023, the company introduced the new SAMM PRO mat that will conform to every style of steel roofing including pole barn, standing seam, corrugated, and architectural. The neodymium magnet, or rare-earth magnet incorporated into this mat is even stronger than the original. It is so strong that part of the testing included coating a 7/12 pitch steel roof with Vaseline. The mat did not budge. One restaurant roof-cleaning company uses it to stay in place while cleaning off the cooking grease expelled from roof fans.

Positive Attraction

So far the company has operated with a shoestring crew: Neil, Lin, and brother-in-law Glenn who sub-contracts with them. But the plan is to hire positive people and open offices in various locations around the country. The Warners say that the company culture is positive and upbeat, and they believe that new employees will be drawn in when they see the pride they can take in producing a quality, long-lasting product that helps keep people safe. They want their new employees to learn every

piece of the business from assembly to shipping to tracking.

SAMM's tagline is: "If you've got the grit to work on a steel roof, you need the grip to keep you there." Roofing is the fourth most dangerous job in America. Neil and Lin wish to extend their deepest respect to roof workers who literally help keep everyone sheltered by putting a roof over our heads.

The Warners are proud to support the steel industry with a safety product that not only makes jobs easier for workers, but increases productivity. The fact that recyclable steel roofing is growing in popularity "is a win/win for everyone," Lin said.



Stick-to-it-iveness

Neil's advice to anyone in the industry who is treading the hard path of testing, development, and marketing of a new product is persistence. In fact, he suggests reading the book, "Irrational Persistence" by Dave Zilko. When developing a new product, he said, ask yourself if it solves a problem, have people try it, listen to their feedback, and make the changes needed.

"Your goal," Neil said, "is the highest quality you can produce, a product of substance created with quality materials."

Beyond this he advises educating yourself as much as possible; attending business seminars, legal seminars, whatever you have access to. An education is needed to produce a good product.

The Future

Neil and Lin's goal is to grow the company nationally, but internationally, too! They believe it's possible because they have a great safety product that partners well with the steel roofing industry which is growing due to its durability, recyclability, and survivability during many natural disasters. Steel roofing is now available in just about any style, texture, or color you could want as well. It's a great time to support the steel roofing industry!

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- Building Showcase
- **Product Feature:** Self Storage
- All About Team Rubicon
- **Advertising Deadline:** March 14, 2024

June/July 2024

- Sales Training
- **Product Feature:** Solar Panels
- Shed Offices/Work from Home
- **Advertising Deadline:** May 2, 2024

August/September 2024

- Finding Dealers
- **Product Feature:** Rollformers
- Mid-Year State of the Industry
- **Advertising Deadline:** July 11, 2024

October/November 2024

- Labor Challenges
- **Product Feature:** Insulation/Vapor Barriers
- Billboards/Roadside Marketing
- **Advertising Deadline:** September 12, 2024

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GSCB FEB/MAR 2024

The Problem-Solving Business

North Mountain Structures Sells Sheds and More

BY WILLY BRICKER

John Byers and his son Chris Byers started North Mountain Structures in 2004 in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. John had worked in construction most of his life.

I started working at the company in 2010, and Caleb Heckman joined in 2013. We've been managing the business since 2020, so the transition was smooth when we purchased the company from John and Chris in January of 2022.

What products and services do you provide?

We build and sell custom storage sheds, simple economy sheds, garages, double-wide garages, and two-story garages retail from our shop in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Additionally, we offer shed trade-ins and shed moving.

Three dealer lots sell for us on consignment: Needmore Structures in Needmore, Pennsylvania; Countryside Flowers in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania; and Double T. Homes in Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.

We also deal in Vinyl Playsets from Adventure World Playsets, and chicken coops for Bird-In-Hand Pet Structures. We deliver gazebos for Lancaster Backyard, too.

What is your current territory?

We service the Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, area and the outlying area to around 60-80 miles, plus or minus. This distance depends on the direction



Wiland Bricker and Caleb Heckman

the building is going and the size of the building.

What is the current business climate in your area?

The business climate is strong here in Chambersburg. We have several large local companies and a growing population. Main routes run through town (I.81 and Rt.11 run north and south and Rt.30 goes east and west) and help with access.

What is your primary customer base?

Our primary market is residential storage with an occasional commercial

project. We love helping people solve their problems, and the biggest problem we solve is the frustration of not having an organized space for valuable tools and lawn equipment.

Many people store their tools in their garage, but then have no room for their vehicles. When we provide a storage solution for their tools, they can keep their vehicles safe and not risk losing value due to hail and storms.

How do you differentiate yourself from your competitors?

There are several local shed builders in our area. We have a great relationship



The North Mountain Structures Campus

with them and we will work together if we can help each other out. Everyone is doing their best on quality and building a shed that will last. We want to exceed in quality, but we take the focus off the shed and put the focus on our customers.

I find that no one wants to just buy a shed; they have a problem that needs solving and we are here to learn about their pain point and offer the best solution for each individual customer. If we can't help them, I make sure we send them to someone who can.

Who are your main suppliers?

- Metal Roof from Cumberland Supply in Newville, Pennsylvania.
- Shingle Roofing from Lumbermans Associates
- Lumber from Lumbermans, Capital, US Lumber, Lowes, and several others
- Windows from W.E.H. Supply
- Doors from Bird-In-Hand Window & Door

Tell us about challenges the company has overcome.

Our manufacturing shop is located about 3.5 miles off the main route through town, so we do not have drive-by traffic. Since we are not easily found along the road, we had to ensure that we could be easily found online. We have invested in our website and getting our

inventory in front of our customers when they search for storage sheds online.

To what do you owe the success of your business?

First of all, the blessing of God in our lives. We owe every good gift to Him.

Word of mouth, local contacts, and networking help get our name out and build trust.

A large online presence helps people find a trusted place to learn more information before they start shopping.

What advice would you give yourself five years ago if you could?

I would focus more on local networking and promoting other small local businesses. Reaching out and building relationships takes a lot of work and time, but it is worth it for the support everyone receives.

What is your advice to somebody who is brand new in your line of business?

Focus on your customer and what they need. Build relationships with people even if they aren't customers.

Where do you see the biggest opportunities in the future?

I believe the biggest opportunities are

in collaborating with other business owners. Also focusing on the current trends and providing an attractive solution to current problems.

Where do you see the biggest challenges in the future?

One of my challenges is time management and getting everything done that needs done.

As a business owner, I am always praying to God for work for my guys, or praying for guys for the work.

God has provided both for the last 20 years and I believe He will provide in the future.

What would you love to learn more about?

I love the marketing and the sales side of the business and I would like to learn more about the website and SEO side of marketing. This is important to keep us in front of our customers and potential customers when they search for our products and services.

What are your Three Keys to Good Business?

God: Committing everything we do to God and serving Him. Matthew 7:12, The Golden Rule

Relationships: Building relationships and trust with everyone, customers and our team.

Customization: Focusing on our customer's needs, not our product.

Tell us about your company culture and business philosophy.

We are a Christian company and do our best to align our culture with God's principles of service. Our company is not looking to be the biggest or best, but to be a light where we are planted and serve the people in our local economy. We believe by doing this, God will provide. We all strive to do the best we can no matter what we are doing; we just happen to be in the shed business. **GSCB**

Back to the Start

Why Print Advertising Still Works in the Construction Industry

BY GARY REICHERT, PUBLISHER/CEO

For many companies, Spring includes building a marketing budget and getting proposals for advertising.

While I am not an expert on all advertising, I do have a reasonable handle on print and digital advertising for Business to Business. I will mostly limit myself to the B2B side, but most of the general information and concepts included here will apply to consumer advertising as well.

There is one HUGE difference between most B2B and B2C: B2B is predominantly branding and education. Using our publications as an example, a \$250,000 roll former or finding a new supplier is not usually an impulse buy. Capital equipment and building supplies have longer buying cycles.

If a contractor needs a fastener supplier, their existing supplier either fell through on an order or raised prices. There is no way to know when you can capitalize on a competitor's mistake. To be prepared is all about branding and frequency; when the customer needs you, they need to be able to find you. They will either find you in that publication, or they need to remember your name to find you online. SEO is good and necessary, but branding means they search for you by name.

Buyer Education

Education is about distinguishing your product so it is not seen as a commodity.



Customers purchase commodities primarily on price. Sophisticated customers purchase on features and benefits. Educating consumers combines editorial and advertising functions. Editorial presents the message in a credible and accurate form. Advertising repeats the message so consumers remember. The two together create sophisticated and knowledgeable customers.

This corresponds with big-ticket B2C items. Houses, cars, or major renovations are not usually impulse purchases. Much of the common information on advertising applies more to selling T-shirts than selling a custom home.

Print and Digital

At Shield Wall Media, we are obviously

firm believers in print media — especially in our niche. There are multiple reasons why:

1. A large portion of our audience is plain community.
2. Our audience is primarily decision makers or C-Suite level. This group is older and often prefers printed media.
3. Print is consumed in a different manner than digital. More time is spent viewing and more attention is paid to a specific item. Print readers have less tendency to bounce around.
4. Research shows that information from printed media is retained longer than information from digital media.
5. Printed magazines are physical, can easily be passed between readers and are seen multiple times.

Digital works best as a direct-response medium. In many ways, that is more suited to consumer products and an impulse buy. [I have many T-shirts that

made me laugh for inappropriate reasons. I may not be able to wear them in polite company, but they have my money.]

Branding in digital is largely companies with million-dollar budgets. Because the impression is not recalled as easily, more impressions are required. To achieve that frequency level on a large platform requires an investment beyond the reach of most companies.

Successful Planning

All successful advertising focuses on message, audience, and repetition.

Audience refers to the type of person, and how many of them receive the magazine or digital product. For B2B publications, demographics like age and sex are nearly irrelevant. You will want to know if the subscribers are applicable for your product and their role in the buying decision. Most advertising targets decision makers and influencers for obvious reasons.

Most B2B trade publications are “qualified” and “free requested” publications. For someone to be a subscriber, they must answer a few questions to say they are “qualified” and ask to receive the publication. For digital products this is an “opt-in” list. Opt in indicates someone asked to receive it but there are usually no criteria showing they are legitimate prospects.

After determining the magazine reached your audience, verifying the number of copies printed and mailed is the most important step. The circulation determines the advertising rates.

For print media, the U.S. Postal Service has several requirements to be a “publication” and qualify for discounted postal rates. The Post Office verifies subscribers when they audit a magazine or grant it publication status. They pick subscribers randomly from the list and confirm the address is valid and that they requested the publication.

The USPS requires that over half of the subscribers have been subscribers for

Always ask yourself these questions

1. What do I want to achieve with my advertising?
2. Do I think this product will reach my potential customers?
3. Will my message appeal to my prospective customers?
4. Will my audience be able to see and/or read my message in the ad?
5. Will my budget allow me the frequency required for consumers to remember my message?
6. Is the ad rate appropriate to the audience reached?

Always ask the company supplying the media these questions

1. Is your product opt in (if digital) or qualified / requested (if print)?
2. How many readers or subscribers do you have and how can I verify them?
 - a. Are you a registered periodical with the USPS?
 - b. What issue contains your Statement of Ownership?

less than three years. They also require an annual Statement of Ownership (SOO). These have to be submitted every year and published in the magazine. They state the ownership and the number of copies printed. The SOO is a simple way to verify the circulation of any magazine. An SOO is required for a magazine that is registered as a periodical and receives a lower postage rate. If a magazine does not publish an SOO, you should ask why.

Advertising is based on Cost Per Thousand, abbreviated as CPM. CPM is how rates are determined for both print and digital media.

For printed B2B/trade publications, CPM for a full page 4-color ad varies between \$150 and \$300 depending on the focus of the publication. The narrower the focus, the more requestors will be in your specific target audience. Rural Builder incorporates different types of construction, all parts of the building and everything from residential to agricultural. Rollforming targets metal forming for construction. Since Rollforming is more targeted, the CPM will be higher.

As an example of CPM pricing, Frame Building News has 20,000+ requested subscribers. With a CPM of \$150 to \$300, the rate for a full page would range

between \$3,000 and \$6,000 depending on the focus of the magazine. Frame Building News is exclusively about post-frame, so it’s fairly targeted and falls in the middle of that range.

By contrast Garage, Shed & Carport Builder has 8,000+ subscribers. The range for a full page would be \$1,200 to \$2,400 ... A smaller circulation results in a smaller rate.

By contrast, CPM for digital advertising varies between \$25 and \$60. An email of 15,000 then would be between \$375 and \$900. The question to ask regarding any email campaign is: “Is it opt in?” That is the equivalent of being “requested” for a print publication.

Be wary of digital pretending to be print. Print ads often do not work as digital ads. This number increases every day, but currently about 49% of digital media is consumed on phones. Even a full-page ad scaled down to 2.75” sideways and 5.5” high will be virtually unreadable. The magazines should also be reformatted to be read on a device. A PDF or flip book does not work on a phone.

Advertising is a product like any other. To be satisfied with the product, understand what you are buying and how you plan to use it. **GSCB**

Expand Your Offerings and Help Non-Profits

Check Out the Couillard Foundation’s Solar Canopy

Solar installation has been encouraged for businesses and residences for several years. You have most likely seen more solar going in since the tax incentives began in 2022 when the Biden administration signed the Inflation Reduction Act into law, providing rebates for heat pumps, electric vehicles, and investments in solar energy.

One thing Cal Couillard, an engineer who owned an extrusion company, noticed was that there was nothing in this act for non-profits. Since they paid no income tax, tax rebates would do them no good. So when Couillard sold his business, he decided to invest the money he made into something good ... he was going to help non-profits access solar energy so they could save money on energy and focus more money on their missions. The Couillard Solar Foundation (CSF) was created.

High-Quality Solar Products

The Foundation is a non-profit that sells solar panels and canopies. When Couillard began looking into solar panels, he realized he didn’t want just any panels; he wanted the best bang for the buck. He discovered that bi-facial panels are considered the premium panel because while one side of the panel is processing captured light, the other side is processing reflected light, increasing output 5% to 25%.

Solar Canopies

The next thing that Couillard realized was that people don’t necessarily understand bi-facial panels, so the engineer in him got to work and he developed the Couillard solar canopy. The solar canopy is an elegant solution for solar arrays. They are composed of bi-facial panels attached to beams; placed in rows and mounted on a wooden support, thereby creating a “roof-like” structure.

These canopies are perfect over pergolas, pavilions, and carports. They are designed to be attractive so that people don’t object to solar arrays on their property, and they’re doubly functional, providing energy and shelter, plus they are designed to be weather-proof.

Jackie Harrison-Jewell, Executive Director at Couillard Solar Foundation, said, “If there is a light rain with little wind, people or items sheltering under the canopy will stay dry. The patent pending canopy beams channel water or melted snow to the edge of the canopy and off. However, the structure doesn’t have walls, so there are no guarantees that a strong wind won’t blow



the rain back under the canopy.”

These canopies are perfect over carports as plug-ins for electric vehicles can be attached to the post. They have great potential as product offerings for carport builders.

Foundation Gifts

The panels are purchased at wholesale costs and any profits are used to provide grants to non-profits in Wisconsin. Originally, the grants were issued in the form of cash to buy panels. However, the Foundation found that, since they were buying at wholesale prices in higher quantities, it made more sense to gift the panels. They will provide a non-profit with up to half the panels for their project and the non-profit comes up with the other half. They are not required to get the remainder of their panels at Couillard, but they usually do.

The Foundation has provided \$2,129,080 in grants to schools, human services, senior/low income housing, community/sports/recreation, and animal service/conservation organizations.

Current Solar Incentives

The federal tax credits for solar investment were supposed to end in 2022, but they have been extended at their original 30%. Now non-profits can benefit as well as businesses and residences. Non-profits get their incentive in the form of a check, called Direct Pay.

For residential customers, the benefits are multi-layered. Harrison-Jewell said, “Not only can homeowners receive the

tax benefits of investing in solar, but if they put a canopy on a pergola, they have increased the value of their property without increasing their tax burden because solar is not reflected in property taxes.”

A Win/Win/WIN

Investment in solar energy helps with decarbonization of the air and can provide your customers with energy savings as well as tax credits. By purchasing solar panels from CSF for your jobs, you could help make solar energy more accessible for Wisconsin non-profits. Finally, bi-facial panels and solar arrays could be your next product line add-on. What if you are interested in these benefits, but are not based in or near Wisconsin?

“While Couillard Solar Foundation is a pretty unique organization,” Harrison-Jewell said, “there is a Solar On Schools organization in Minnesota.”

A new Solar For All program was recently introduced through the EPA, but the application process is nearly complete at the time of this article’s writing. However, since these grants are being dispersed to states and territories, it may be that projects in your area can apply. We found this program online: <https://www.energy.gov/eere/funding/how-do-i-apply-eere-funding>, which



may be something your client can take advantage of. Other opportunities may be available at state or local levels.

If all else fails, there are similar organizations online offering to assist with creative financing solutions just like this one.

GSCB

www.couillardSolarFoundation.org

🏠 NEWS 🏠

Storage Structures Rebrands as Elevate Structures

Storage Structures, a division of Central States, announced the rebranding of the business to Elevate Structures. Elevate will continue to provide the self-storage industry with premier products and services while expanding into multifamily, hotel, and student housing construction markets. The move responds to customer demand for Elevate’s primary structure expertise and innovation in markets adjacent to self-storage. The patented Alpha Framing System with new enhancements remains a cornerstone of Elevate’s offering. Today, the product offering expands with the introduction of self-storage doors and hallway systems.

“We are thrilled to serve the storage market with game changing innovations and to bring our metal framing expertise to other construction segments where our customers build,” said Richard Allen,

President of Elevate Structures. “The new brand reflects our employee-owners’ commitment to forward-looking solutions and project excellence.”

Elevate is a 100% employee-owned business. In the spring of 2024, production of a new proprietary door and hallway system begins. As part of the metal building package, it is supported by the elevated service that self-storage customers require. Further, the patented Alpha Framing System will be offered with integrated lateral framing enhancements which further reduces in-field installation time for seismically sensitive multi-story buildings.

Elevate says its Alpha Framing System’s unique columns and beams, factory-assembled in Central States’ facilities, install up to 3x faster than traditional framing methods in the self-storage industry, resulting in significant construction time and money savings for each project.

The Bradbury Company Celebrates 65th Anniversary

The Bradbury Company, a global family of companies dedicated to the manufacturing of industry-leading metal processing equipment, is celebrating its 65th anniversary this year.

Founded in 1959, the Bradbury Company has expanded its global presence and diversified its product portfolio through several acquisitions and ventures to create The Bradbury Group. With a focus on innovation and customer satisfaction, The Bradbury Group caters to a wide range of industries worldwide.

The companies that make up the group include Alliance Machine and Engraving, American Machine and Rollform Tech, Athader Slitting Lines, Attica Precision Machining, Beck Automation, The Bradbury Co., Inc., Bradbury Metal Tile Roofing Solutions, Custom Rollforming Corporation, and many more. **GSCB**

ProVia Facility Expansions Support Company Growth

Throughout 2022 and 2023, ProVia invested in a wide range of facility expansions designed to support the ongoing growth of the company. It listed those in a recent press release. Some highlights:

- **Strasburg Facility:** A 425,000-square-foot space has been added to this plant, which is located on a 75-acre property. Strasburg houses production for ProVia windows, and shipping for doors and windows. Within this facility the footprint for glass production has doubled and gone from three to nine production lines. Automation has been added to glass cutting stations along with multiple retrieval systems. New capabilities include manufacturing for FlexScreen® and shaped windows, plus a new paint line.

- **Walnut Creek Facility:** Among many projects completed at this facility, a highlight is the 170,000-square-foot expansion to accommodate a new steel door line. Completed in 2022 this highly-automated, highly-innovative production line provides increased speed and efficiency. The picking process for steel door skins has been automated and includes a vertical storage system, which maximizes use of floor space. Other new additions include: three new sanding machines, automation systems for foaming, a new hinge machine for fiberglass doors, new quality inspection stations which enhance our ability to provide Quality Assurance, new automated packaging and banding, a new trim delivery track, and a new aluminum cladding slitter for custom sizing on exterior door frames.

- **New Philadelphia Facility:** Purchased, renovated, and remodeled the former Times-Reporter newspaper building to accommodate Premier Profile Lamination, Inc., which ProVia acquired in June 2023.

Other upgrades occurred at the Cherry Ridge Facility and Walnut Creek Facility.

Nippon Steel Corporation to Acquire U. S. Steel

Nippon Steel Corporation (NSC) (TSE:

5401), Japan’s largest steelmaker and one of the world’s leading steel manufacturers, and United States Steel Corporation (NYSE: X) (“U. S. Steel”), a leading steel producer with competitive advantages in low-cost iron ore, mini mill steelmaking, and best-in-class finishing capabilities, announced that they have entered into a definitive agreement pursuant to which NSC will acquire U. S. Steel in an all-cash transaction at \$55.00 per share, representing an equity value of approximately \$14.1 billion plus the assumption of debt, for a total enterprise value of \$14.9 billion. The \$55.00 per share purchase price represents a 40% premium to U. S. Steel’s closing stock price on December 15, 2023. The transaction has been unanimously approved by the Board of Directors of both NSC and U. S. Steel.

US LMB Acquires Florida’s Manning Building Supplies

US LBM, a leading distributor of specialty building materials in the United States, has acquired Manning Building Supplies, a top provider of building products and manufactured components to professional builders throughout Eastern and Central Florida.

Founded in 1979, Manning’s product portfolio includes lumber and trusses, along with custom doors, windows and millwork, which it also provides installation services for.

Headquartered in Jacksonville, Manning operates nine locations throughout Florida, seven building materials distribution yards, six of which include custom door shops, and two truss manufacturing plants in Jacksonville and Ocala.

With this acquisition, US LBM now operates 19 locations in Florida, which includes five truss manufacturing facilities.

DeWalt Celebrates 100th Anniversary

DeWalt, a Stanley Black & Decker (NYSE: SWK) brand, is celebrating its 100th anniversary of powering the pros. Through its commitment to innovation, safety and productivity, DeWalt has

been delivering tools to meet the needs of professional tradespeople around the world since 1924 when Raymond DeWalt’s forward-looking vision resulted in the founding of DeWalt.

DeWalt has championed the trades sector since its founding, and in 2019, the company began offering annual DeWalt Trades Scholarships to support and grow the next generation of trades professionals. DeWalt continues to expand its commitment to the future generations of tradespeople. In 2023, DeWalt pledged \$30 million over five years toward its Grow the Trades initiatives to support active and aspiring tradespeople. In addition, DeWalt contributed nearly \$7 million last year to programs that support tradespeople, including trade schools, VOCTEC schools and other training organizations, while also collaborating with industry and non-profit partners on increasing women, diversity and veteran participation in the trades.

Raymond DeWalt was a tradesman in Pennsylvania in the early 1920s and became a power tool pioneer when he sought a way to streamline and expedite wood-cutting operations without sacrificing quality or safety. His journey led to the invention of the “Wonder-Worker,” an adjustable electric radial arm saw that provided the ability to efficiently execute multiple operations on one affordable piece of equipment, and the creation of DeWalt. The “Wonder-Worker” set the stage for DeWalt to begin distributing products both nationally and internationally, with the company counting household names like Steinway & Sons and Westinghouse Electric Co. among its satisfied clients. By 1927, Sears, Roebuck boasted that DeWalt’s saw contributed to helping manufacture “50 ready-cut houses” each day.

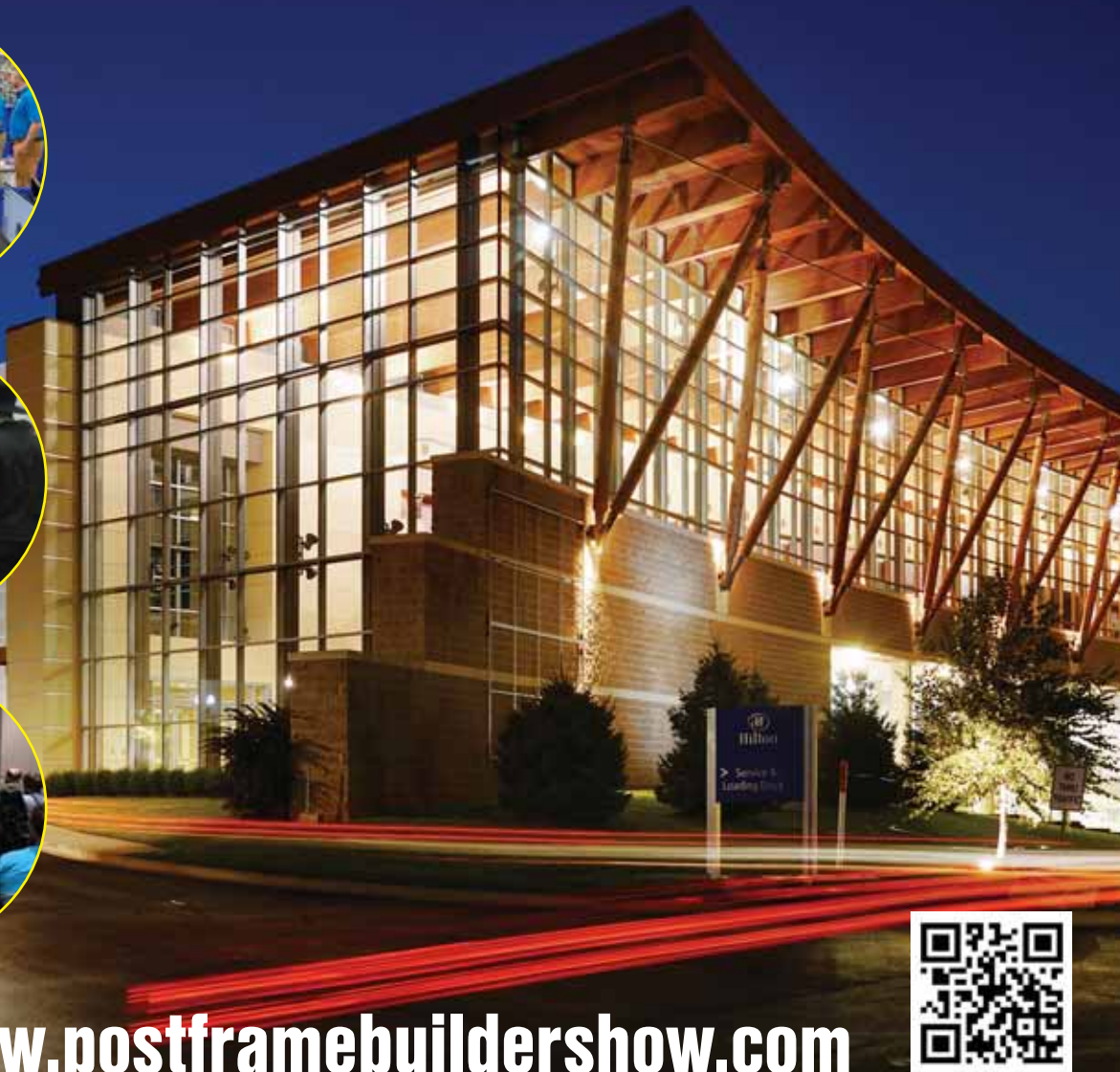
Later in life, DeWalt focused on helping close the skilled trades gap. He became a shop teacher at Mechanicsburg High School in Pennsylvania, educating the next generation of professional tradespeople. DeWalt passed away in 1961, but his trailblazing legacy lives on in the tools and outdoor products that bear his name. **GSCB**

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The Details:

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Shed Package: Trupoint Backyards

Deck Builder:
Olde Liberty Sheds & Structures

Additional Logistics:
Burkholder Management

Size: Building 12'x24', Deck 5'x12'

Flooring: LuxGuard Flooring
(Vinyl Structures LLC)

Wainscoting: Little Harvey's

Radiant Barrier: LP Building Solutions

Deck Fasteners:
Simpson Strong-Tie, GRK Screws

Deck Materials: Wolf Composite
Decking, RDI Avalon Railings

3D Builder: The Shed App

Robbie and Becky Cottrell needed a new shed but the situation wasn't normal. It was far back in the woods and required an experienced shed builder to orchestrate the improvement.

They called Virginia Sheds & Metal Buildings, which along with sister company Olde Liberty Sheds & Structures managed this project. Virginia Sheds & Metal Buildings is an authorized dealer for Trupoint Backyards sheds, Olde Liberty Sheds & Structures sheds and backyard structures, Longhorn Steel buildings, and Dogports dog kennels.

"We took a drive and looked at their site," said Chris Ashman, owner of Virginia Sheds & Metal Buildings, and

Olde Liberty Sheds & Structures. "We recommended a good retaining wall and putting the new shed right where the old one was."

Burkholder Management provided some logistics on this project. The first two steps in this process included tear-down and removal of existing shed, and the installation of a retaining wall, then fill with gravel and a level shed pad. Snyder Lawncare & Landscaping (Roanoke, Virginia) took care of those steps.

The new metal-sided shed is manufactured by Trupoint Backyards, with LuxGuard Flooring (Vinyl Structures LLC) and designer metal from its sister company Little Harvey's. LP Building Solutions OSB products were used for a radiant barrier on the inside. The shed



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WHAT WE NEED:

- Component List
- Brief Description
- Three to five attractive high resolution images (at least one must be the entire building).



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If you have any questions about the Project of the Month, contact the editor:

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PROJECT OF THE MONTH

has a 36-inch access door. Little Harvey's also helped provide the underpinning to match the metal stone wainscoting. "The bottom is completely enclosed, and we do have ways to ventilate that," Ashman said.

Olde Liberty Sheds & Structures built the 5-by-12-foot deck with materials supplied by Capps Home Building Center. Materials included pressure-treated lumber, Simpson Strong-Tie joist hangers, GRK Screws, Wolf Composite Decking (Amberwood on deck, and Black Walnut on cap rail). Hand rail caps and deck rail caps came from RDI Avalon Railings and Wolf Home Products.

"This building will last a lifetime, will not be a maintenance nightmare, and will stay free from woodland creatures," Ashman said. **GSCB**



The composite deck works nicely alongside the metal siding and wainscoting from Little Harvey's.



The new shed is next to an existing garage.



During installation with a mule among the machines used.



The shed that got replaced is above. At right is the new shed being trucked into the woods.

The 2023 Survey Says ...

We have closed out our annual survey and are working on the CSI Annual that will mail in April. Our efforts to improve our data collection seem to be working. We roughly doubled the total number of respondents from 2022 to 2023.

Our strong areas, like post-frame, remained constant, but we gained a significant number of responses in General Roofing, Metal Building and Wood Framed (Stick Built) construction. With the roll out of Metal Builder Magazine, the gain in “Metal Building” makes sense. The gains in General Roofing and Wood Framed construction should help act as a baseline or control group to measure against the specific markets we cover.

One of the interesting aspects comparing year over year are the changes in responses, hot markets, business climates and concerns. Going through the comparison from 2022 to 2023, this is what caught my attention.

Market Predictions

What Market Segments of construction do you build for?

No areas increased significantly. Agricultural, Commercial and Industrial all decreased as a percentage of respondents. Agricultural from 40% to 28%. Commercial from 67% to 30%. Industrial from 44% to 19%.

When combined with results from the question “Overall, across the industry will residential construction increase or decrease in 2024 to 2023?” the obvious assumption is the change in products is in response, preparative or reactive, to

the view of residential construction. In 2022, 47% predicted the market would decrease and 32% predicted the market would the same. In 2023, 37% predicted the market would increase and 47% predicted it would stay the same. The percentage predicting an increase grew by 16%, while the percentage predicting a decrease dropped by 31%.

The market predictions for Agricultural, Commercial and Industrial remained unchanged. This seems to indicate a shift in direction to take advantage of an increase in residential construction.

This is consistent with the level of concern regarding interest rates and inflation. In 2022, 58% of respondents listed Inflation as a major concern. In 2023 that percentage dropped to 27%. Inflation followed a similar path. In 2022, 67% listed it as a major concern and in 2023 that number decreased to 34%.

Expansion Plans

In 2022, 18% had immediate expansion plans and 50% had future plans. In 2023, 28% had immediate plans and 29% had plans farther in the future.

The areas for expansion remained the same with adding personnel (both construction and support) and new products or building types leading the way.

The one interesting drop was in trucks. In 2022, 24% of respondents planned on adding trucks. In 2023 that number dropped to 14%.

Financial Outlook

The predictions of gross sales remained consistent. Units sold remained consistent as well.

Profitability remained consistent. The

only significant change was an increase of approximately 7% predicting their profitability would increase by more than 25% in 2024.

Concerns for 2024

One bright spot is the level of concern across the industry seems to have generally decreased. The challenges still remain but respondents seem less concerned.

Area of Concern	2022	2023
Finding Employees	65%	39%
Cost of Materials	59%	43%
Material Availability	45%	24%
General Supply Chain Issues	48%	17%
Demand for Products and Services	24%	12%

Summary

Generally, concerning issues seem down. Residential construction is expected to remain strong enough as builders are shifting toward that market. Projections for gross sales, units sold and profitability remain stable, which is extremely positive considering the industry is coming off of some record years.

The CSI Annual will mail in April and should provide additional insight into the above topics and much more. We will be able to isolate regions, building types and specific market niches and examine our data and combine that information with input from industry experts and economists. The CSI Annual is free to all subscribers to Shield Wall Media publications. **GSCB**



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