

MCN

Metal Construction News

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Telehandlers are able to place materials at height with the same precision as a crane—possibly better, especially when equipped with remote boom control.

SOURCE: JLG INDUSTRIES INC

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Melanie Kowal
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Midyear reflections on progress, people, and community

June always feels like an important checkpoint in the year. It's a chance to look back at everything that has happened over the past six months while looking ahead at what remains to be done.

What I've always appreciated about this industry is its ability to keep moving forward no matter the circumstances. Just as important, the people in metal construction continue to support one another. That sense of community is one of the things that makes this industry so strong.

Speaking of community, MCN recently welcomed Anthony Capkun as its new editor-in-chief. Some of you may recall meeting him at the MBCEA and MBMA joint conference in Colorado, where he joined me on stage for MCN's Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony.

Anthony grew up a drywaller before joining the world of construction magazines over 20 years ago, and he's looking forward to connecting with as many of you as possible.


June is also an active month for industry events, with many professionals gathering at the Florida Roofing and Sheet Metal Contractors Association convention in Orlando, or the Summer Meeting of the Metal Construction Association in Rosemont, Ill. These events are about more than schedules and presentations. They are a reminder that this business is built on relationships, shared experience, and the willingness to learn from one another.

If you're attending either event and happen to see us, please take a moment to say hello. I always value the opportunity to meet readers in person and hear what's happening in your part of the industry.

This month's issue touches on several areas that reflect where many businesses are focused right now. We look at smarter ways to build, better performance in exterior systems, and practical ideas that improve productivity on the jobsite.

Success in our industry rarely comes from one big breakthrough. More often, it comes from steady effort, smart decisions, and pride in doing the job right every day. It also comes from the people around us who help push us forward.

As we move into the second half of 2026, I hope business has been strong and opportunities continue to grow. Thank you, as always, for reading *Metal Construction News* and for being part of an industry that continues to build with strength, skill, and a real sense of community.

Enjoy the June issue, and I hope to see many of you this month. 

Melanie Kowal

Would you know if employees were stealing from you?

Running a construction company involves not just managing projects but also ensuring a trustworthy workplace. A recent story from one of my clients highlights the importance of vigilance when preventing employee theft and unethical behavior.

My client hired a new controller, and what they uncovered was a shocking level of deception. In one case, the controller found unauthorized company cell phones linked to the office manager's children!

This alarming discovery marked the beginning of a landslide that revealed significant financial misconduct across the organization.

The new controller discovered an essential project manager was charging personal expenses and home renovations expenses to company jobs. The payroll manager was increasing her paycheck without documentation, and her employee friends took unrecorded vacations. Some field foremen were abusing company gas cards, filling up personal vehicles at the company's expense.

Other employees may have been aware of these unethical practices, but chose to stay silent, further perpetuating the problem.

Understanding the risks

My client had always prioritized a trusting work environment, believing that delegating responsibility to employees was the best approach. But without proper oversight, this trust led to rampant misconduct and significant financial loss.

As leaders, construction business owners establish vision, core values, and performance goals, expecting employees to follow through, yet it is crucial to recognize that *too much trust* can lead to a culture of entitlement and greed.

Warning signs and countermeasures

Here are some red flags that should raise concern:

- Employees undertaking home renovations or building pools
- Sudden purchases of luxury vehicles or recreational items


- Signs of personal distress, such as marital issues or financial pressures
- Excessive personal leave or inconsistent working hours

To protect your business, consider implementing the following safeguards:

- Install GPS in company vehicles to monitor locations, which helps ensure accountability.
- Audit company credit card charges and verify all expenses against GPS data to validate the legitimacy of charges.
- Direct bank statements to your home, not the shop, so you can review all transactions without fear of tampering.
- Ensure the owner signs all major contracts and approvals. If unavailable, require dual signatures on checks and significant documents.
- Maintain accurate personnel records. Implement timecard systems to track work hours, ensuring proper deductions for late arrivals or early departures.
- Enforce employee manuals rigorously. All employees, regardless of tenure or relationship with management, must adhere to company policies.
- No exceptions to labor laws. All employees must abide by established legal and company protocols.
- Monthly job cost updates. Regularly review invoices and financial records to catch discrepancies early.
- Trust ... but verify. Have confidence in your team while ensuring accountability through established rules.

And if I had to add one more, make sure you hire a really good controller!

Trust and monitor

Building trust within your team is vital, but so is implementing robust checks and balances to protect against dishonest actions. By recognizing the potential for misconduct and establishing clear procedures, you can safeguard your construction business from costly mistakes. 



By George Hedley

George Hedley, CPBC, is a certified professional construction business coach and speaker. He helps contractors build better businesses, grow, profit, improve estimating and field production, and get their companies to work. He is the best-selling author of "Get Your Construction Business to Always Make a Profit!" available on Amazon. Visit Construction Business Coaching to schedule a free introductory coaching session, receive his monthly Hardhat Hedlines Biz-Tips e-newsletter, download his template package, or watch his webinars and online video courses.



By Christen Funk

Christen Brooker Funk is the president of Butler Manufacturing, a founding MBMA member company. She is the first female president of Butler Manufacturing and the first woman to chair MBMA's board of directors.

Defining accountability and dependability with IAS AC472 accreditation

Becoming a member of the Metal Building Manufacturers Association (MBMA) is not granted with a secret handshake or a hidden agenda. Instead, membership is based upon maintaining the high quality standard that the association has been known for since 1956.

Key to this quality standard is the requirement that every metal building manufacturer member must be AC472 accredited by the International Accreditation Service (IAS).

The advancements in metal buildings have made them indistinguishable from other building systems, like traditional brick and mortar. Requiring AC472 accreditation ensures that high-quality manufacturing standards are being met as the popularity of metal buildings continues to grow.

The truth is a metal building manufacturer can say they are operating the right way, but only AC472 proves it.

Defining AC472

AC472 is a third-party quality assurance system that verifies that design, engineering, and manufacturing and fabrication standards are met in compliance with the International Building Code (IBC) Chapter 17. Having a third party involved means that statements made about the quality compliance of a metal building system go beyond what a manufacturer says and falls to the accreditation requirements set by IAS, which is a subsidiary of the International Code Council (ICC).

Annually, manufacturers undergo two onsite, independent audits as part of the AC472 requirements at a company's design and manufacturing facility. Representative projects

also are reviewed to ensure the appropriate standards are in place and being applied.

During this process, several quality management system documents, procedures, and records are reviewed. For instance, audits include an examination of:

- The order documents to ensure customers understand what was ordered.
- The design/detailing process to confirm adherence to requested codes and that the project requirements are met in a rational engineering manner. This audit verifies the proper use of design standards set forth by AISC, AISI and others.
- The raw material usages, including proper ASTM standards, ordering practices, tracking of mill certifications, product traceability and additional points.
- The traceability of materials and workmanship.
- The manufacturing practices, such as machinery calibrations, measuring tools and weld certifications.
- A manufacturer's quality assurance system and staff. During this portion of the audit, IAS verifies the credentials of the licensed professional engineers who design and detail the metal building system and the certified weld inspectors.

The accreditation covers all the major metal building components from the primary frames to the cold-formed secondary framing and the wall and roof panels. Once a metal building manufacturer is accredited to AC472 requirements, the accreditation covers all of a company's manufacturing plants that have been audited. All of their plants must be audited and accredited individually.

Cost and time savings are among the added benefits of this MBMA membership requirement. Building officials can deem AC472-accredited manufacturers as approved fabricators as defined in Chapter 17 of the IBC, eliminating the need for additional audits and delivering cost savings to verifying code compliance of the metal building fabrication.

A metal building manufacturer can say they are operating the right way, but only AC472 proves it.

MBCEA and AC478

Within the industry, a commitment to excellence also comes from the efforts of the Metal Building Contractors and Erectors Association (MBCEA), which encourages the AC478 accreditation program for its members. Also administered by IAS, AC478 is considered a critical tool for the professional advancement and development of metal building contractors and erectors.

As part of the process, accredited assemblers must demonstrate that they have the personnel, organization, experience, and management procedures and competence to assemble and erect metal building systems in accordance with specified requirements and the IBC. IAS-accredited assemblers are required to operate under a documented management system that includes a safety and training program and annual jobsite inspections to verify continued compliance with the criteria.

Recommending AC478 accreditation ensures that high-quality assembly standards are being met and is a way that metal building assemblers can prove their capabilities.

You can discover more about AC478 and the importance of it at www.mbcea.org, or reach out to MBCEA executive director Sasha Demyan at sdemyan@mbcea.org.


Demyan says “We strongly believe that AC478 accreditation establishes a platform to drive improvements in accountability, safety, training and ultimately the ‘in-place’ product.”

Setting a benchmark

Accreditation levels the playing field and sets a standard of expectations when it comes to quality. While there may be other quality certification programs, IAS AC472 addresses all aspects of a metal building system manufacturer’s operation, starting with design engineering.

Metal building systems are being used to build schools and churches, recreation centers, museums, retail and office spaces, and beyond. The popularity of metal building systems stems in part from the manufacturing process that ensures components are created efficiently under consistent quality and sustainably.

MBMA is passionate about representing members that create high-quality solutions in every market while adhering to the highest manufacturing standards. The accreditation process is backed by years of experience—MBMA is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year, and IAS marked 50 years of service last year. Together, we have a long history of establishing the benchmark in metal building manufacturing, construction and performance.

Visit mbma.com and head to the “Technical” tab to discover more details about how IAS AC472 accreditation ensures excellence for metal building systems. More can be found at iasonline.org. 

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With the right attachments, telehandlers can be used for more than just steel placement and lifting applications.

A jobsite crane isn't always the answer

Getting more from telehandlers on metal building jobsites

By John Boehme

SOURCE: JLG INDUSTRIES INC

Expanding the versatility of telehandlers on metal construction jobsites is all about the different types of attachments that can be used on the front of the machines.

With fork-, coupler-, and permanent-mounted attachment options, contractors and erectors—as well as steel fabricators—can use telehandlers to perform a range of tasks to aid in the design, fabrication, supply, and erection of metal building systems and structural steel components simply by changing the attachment.

On many metal building jobsites, telehandlers are already a primary tool for unloading deliveries and staging materials. With the right attachments, they can be used for more than just steel placement and lifting applications, such as raising structural steel into place.

The equipment can also support hoisting and precision placement tasks. For example, by switching out attachments, telehandlers can be used for the precision placement of metal wall and roof panel bundles, steel joists, purlins, and trusses, alongside material handling duties, like unloading delivery trucks and moving steel bundles across mud or uneven ground when equipped with a boom-mounted lifting lug attachment (also referred to as hooks or clevises). These types of attachments allow operators to put a chain or strap through them to efficiently handle suspended (a.k.a. hoisted) materials.

Because they are purpose-built to move heavy objects with great maneuverability, using a telehandler for this type of material-handling work is often more cost-effective than bringing in a crane.

Telehandler selection

Before using a telehandler for hoisting or material-handling tasks on a metal construction project, it is important to evaluate the scope of the lift and the conditions of the jobsite.

The most important thing is to answer these two questions:

1. What is the work that needs to be completed?
2. Where will the work be completed?

To answer these questions, we start by calculating the “maximum pick” that the machine will need to handle, which can be done in three steps:

1. Identify the maximum weight of the steel or material load that needs to be lifted and handled (i.e. how heavy is the heaviest object/material that needs to be picked up?). Make sure the telehandler has enough capacity to support all of the required lifts.

2. Calculate the maximum angle the machine requires to be able to lift and place the load (i.e. what is the furthest up, over, and/or out the telehandler needs to achieve?). It is important to know how much space is available onsite for maneuvering and positioning the load. Depending on the site, trade-offs may need to be made when selecting a telehandler's size versus its capacity.

Space restrictions will influence not only the size of the telehandler but also the style. For example, if the machine needs to feed the material from a stationary position—similar to how a crane would perform onsite—a rotating telehandler should be considered.

3. Determine the maximum height that the load needs to be placed (i.e. how high do the structural steel or metal building components need to be lifted?).

Armed with these measurements, operators can then refer to machine load charts—the same type of planning tool used for many structural steel picks—to guide them toward selecting the appropriate telehandler. It is important to note that all telehandler attachments have their own load chart, which should always be referenced before use.

Once a model is chosen, it's important to consider which attachments are needed to complete the work. Telehandlers are called “tool carriers” for a reason; they can handle a range of hoisting and material-handling applications because of the large variety of attachments with which they can be equipped, from buckets, carriages, and truss booms/lift hooks to specialty attachments like tire handlers.

Understanding the nature of the work to be accomplished and the capabilities of each type of attachment is crucial to safe and efficient use. This means knowing whether a load needs to be picked or placed. Does the job require loose material to be scooped or a load suspended? Does the operator need to grapple loose material or pipes? Answering these questions will help you select the appropriate attachments.

The final step in selecting a telehandler is to know where the machine will be operated, and what the jobsite conditions will be during operation. For example, will the machine be working on undeveloped surfaces like dirt or rocky soil, or on finished surfaces like turf or concrete?



It is important to know how much space is available onsite for maneuvering and positioning the load.



This information helps to determine the tires that are needed on the machine. Foam-filled/solid tires are great for undeveloped terrain, while non-marking or turf tires are needed for developed areas to protect the ground.

Also consider options for the machine that will keep operators safe and productive during long hours in the cab. For instance, will they need an enclosed cab equipped with heat and air-conditioning? Depending on the climate and time of year, this choice is very important. Will they need to work before the sun comes up or after it goes down? If so, getting a model with work lights is necessary. When working in heavily congested areas, beacons should be considered.

Attachments for hoisting and handling

Once the appropriate machine has been selected, the next consideration is choosing the right attachment for the task.

Attachments for handling suspended loads include jibs to give operators extra reach, along with options for hoisting and handling materials that aren't necessarily heavy, but are big, bulky, and need to be set precisely. Examples of this would be truss boom attachments (as mentioned previously, lifting lugs are good for this type of application).

It is critical to reference the device's load chart before use, as it provides information about how the machine will operate with the specific tool attached,

including details like capacity and range of motion. To get the right machine to do the work, always read and understand the load chart associated with the machine and the attachment.

When to use a telehandler as a hoisting device

For many metal building projects, there are two primary scenarios where telehandlers can serve as an effective alternative to cranes.

First, they are ideal when construction crews need to cost-effectively lift heavy loads and move them around a jobsite. Cranes are costly to rent and require a certified operator, whereas multiple operators can be trained to run a telehandler.

Second, a telehandler may be the right solution when space restrictions on the jobsite could significantly limit a crane's ability to handle the suspended loads.

Telehandlers are able to place materials at height with the same precision as a crane—possibly better, especially when equipped with remote boom control. The remote allows an operator to work outside the cab for better visibility of the load, opening up opportunities for owners/operators to choose a smaller, less expensive machine to get the work done.

To best determine whether a telehandler can serve as an appropriate substitute for a crane, consult the machine's load chart. It features an X and Y axis for distance from the front tires and height needed for placement.

Using the load chart and a tape measure, a determination can be made to see whether the machine can safely place the load.

Alternatively, project managers and machine operators can go through a dry run of the lift or pick to be performed—with no load on the forks—to test whether the solution could work for the application. Using the indicators on the side of the boom, operators can complete a dry run placement and compare it against the load chart.

Telehandler safety considerations

As with any material-handling activity on a steel construction site, safety planning must remain a top priority.

When operating any machine, it is important to always reference the model's operation and safety manuals. Before using a machine for handling suspended loads, consult the load chart to understand how to safely and productively hoist and handle loads.

Other safety considerations include the people who will be working near the suspended load. For example, when the job requires riggers to control the suspended load and keep it from spinning during placement, it is important for the operator to know where they are working and what they are doing at all times.

In fact, a clear line of sight and full visibility of the entire pick is extremely important, including the hoisted material, people in the area, and nearby infrastructure.



Consider a rotating telehandler when the machine is expected to feed material from a stationary position.

Expanding the role of telehandlers

For metal building contractors and erectors, efficient material handling can significantly impact project timelines and overall jobsite costs. With the right machine, attachment, and lift planning, telehandlers can provide a flexible and cost-effective alternative to cranes for many construction applications.

By carefully reviewing load charts, selecting the appropriate attachments, and ensuring operators understand the work environment and safety requirements, crews can use telehandlers to safely place structural steel, roof panels, and other materials with precision.

When matched correctly to the task, telehandlers can help construction teams streamline material movement, improve jobsite productivity, and get more value from a single piece of equipment. **///**

John Boehme is senior product manager, telehandlers, at JLG Industries Inc., a designer, manufacturer, and marketer of access equipment. JLG is an Oshkosh Corp. business.

Operators should also work in low gear for better speed and control when moving, turning, and placing the load.

Finally, consider how the terrain—especially slopes and potholes—will

impact the productivity and the performance of the machine. Going over bumps with a suspended load feels very different from traveling with the boom lowered!

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Hatching a plan to protect rooftop workers

Every fall is preventable when workers are given the right resources

By Philip Jacklin

SOURCE: DIVERSIFIED FALL PROTECTION

Roof access comes in many forms, depending on how a facility is initially designed. The most common forms are internal stairways leading up to a secure roof access point, exterior fixed ladders ascending the side of the building, or internal ladders leading up to a hatch door.

Roof hatch access systems are convenient for the building developer and are considered less intrusive to rooftop equipment layouts, but pose

certain risks for workers who use them to access the rooftop.

This article will describe the various fall hazards presented by roof hatch systems, OSHA's requirements to provide fall protection, and simple solutions for mitigating risk and protecting workers.

OSHA fall protection for roof hatch systems

Unlike many common rooftop fall hazards, hatches are specifically called out by OSHA, and employers must ensure workers are protected from falls when using them.

According to OSHA 1910.28, *Duty to have fall protection and falling object protection*, employers are required to provide a "hinged floor-hole cover" and guardrail to protect employees from falling through the hatch when it is open. When the guardrail must be removed to accommodate a work operation (materials are being passed through the open hatch, for example), then employers are required to provide a travel restraint or personal fall arrest system to protect workers from the exposed opening.



Safety-conscious owners are installing automatic roof hatch openers that can be operated from both above and below the roof hatch.

However, these systems limit worker mobility and can compromise productivity. This is why many employers decide to use personal fall arrest systems instead, since both solutions are deemed equally compliant with OSHA requirements.

Personal fall arrest systems

Personal fall arrest systems are more commonly used by workers but pose a greater overall risk to the user. Fall restraint systems prevent falls, while personal fall arrest systems do not. Fall arrest equipment simply provides a means to limit the free-fall distance and the amount of force a worker experiences during a fall.

Minor injuries can still occur during fall arrest, but if the wrong connection device is used or harnesses are not properly adjusted, workers can face significant injury. In fact, a 2021 study conducted by the Center for Construction Research & Training (CPWR) found that nearly 60% of fatal falls occurred while the user was wearing fall protection equipment!

Whenever personal fall arrest systems are used, it is important to consider the anchorage location when selecting the appropriate connection device, such as a lanyard or self-retracting lifeline (SRL).

Whenever anchorages are located beneath the user's dorsal D-ring, Class 2 SRLs must be provided to the worker.

Roof hatch fall protection solutions

Railing kits

Roof hatch safety railing kits are a common and affordable solution for mitigating risk to roof hatch operators. They can be easily installed directly into the hatch door and often include a self-closing swing gate that allows easy access to the hatch area while simultaneously creating an enclosure around the hatch.

Fall restraint systems

As previously stated, some work operations may require removing the hatch guardrail

to allow material to pass through the hatch door. Workers will be more exposed to hazards during these tasks and must be protected from falling into the hatch.

Fall restraint systems are an effective way to prevent falls when the guardrail is removed. These systems require a fixed-length lanyard or other device connected to a nearby anchorage. As long as the anchor is installed a distance greater than the length of the lanyard, the worker's movement is restricted enough to not allow them to fall through the open hatch.



With an automatic roof hatch opener, workers don't have to remove their hands from the ladder. Plus, an open hatch better illuminate the ladder area.

Unlike Class 1 SRLs, which are designed exclusively for overhead anchorage, Class 2 SRLs have additional shock-absorption capabilities that make them specifically equipped to handle lowered anchorages and sharp edges.

Since rooftop anchorages used during hatch operations will likely be located beneath the user's dorsal D-ring, Class 2 SRLs will be necessary. Failing to do so could lead to equipment failure and increase the chance of significant injury to the worker.

Fixed ladder safety

Once the rooftop hatch fall protection solution is implemented, building owners must also consider the safety of the worker when climbing up or down the fixed ladder to reach the hatch door.

As of 2018, OSHA requires all permanent fixed ladders 24 feet or greater (20 feet or greater in California) to be equipped with a ladder safety system or personal fall arrest system. Ladders of that height installed before 2018 have until 2036 to be retrofitted to remain OSHA-compliant.

However, it would behoove companies to not wait until 2036 and retrofit as soon as possible to prevent injuries or fatalities.

Further risk during opening and closing

An open hatch door, or climbing up and down the fixed ladder while accessing

the hatch, both pose hazards for rooftop workers, but those are not the only risks involved with operating hatches.

Opening and closing the hatch door is a common precursor to a fall, as users must take at least one hand off the ladder to operate the hatch. Additionally, the extreme contrast between the interior ladder leading to the hatch and the rooftop's brightness can disorient workers, making them more prone to accidental falls.

For this reason, safety-conscious owners are installing automatic roof hatch openers that can be operated from both above and below the roof hatch. These systems make operating a hatch safer in two key ways. First, the worker does not have to remove their hands from the ladder to open or close the hatch. Second, keeping the hatch open during their climb will better illuminate the ladder area and increase visibility while climbing up or down.

Risk, complacency, and forward thinking

Roof hatches are a commonly used piece of equipment for roof access, and it precisely their commonality that makes them an underrated source of risk. Workers can easily develop complacency when using familiar equipment and, over time, can underestimate the risks involved in using it.

From falling into an open hatch, accidentally slipping from a ladder, or

compromising balance while opening/closing the hatch, there are many ways operating a simple roof hatch can expose workers to significant injury ... or worse.

OSHA specifically requires employers and building owners to provide fall protection to workers around hatches, skylights, or unprotected roof edges. Before rooftop work begins, crews should survey the area to ensure the proper protections are in place, and consider whether any additional precautions are necessary.

Many guardrail solutions are available prefabricated, but crews are allowed to erect their own guardrail so long as it complies with OSHA 1910.29 specifications.

Every fall is preventable when workers are given the proper resources and training to mitigate the risk. A few simple additions to an existing roof hatch system will not only ensure a business remains compliant with OSHA requirements, but also protect workers from avoidable tragedies. **WIPAC**

Philip Jacklin is continuing education program manager for Diversified Fall Protection. As a Qualified Safety Sales Professional (QSSP), his understanding of standards and regulations enables him to properly specify and recommend safety equipment, matching the right system to the application. Philip is also an AIA continuing education provider and has completed advanced jobsite safety training through OSHA-30.

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The smallest component, the biggest risk in metal roofing

Fastener selection, quality, and installation determine long-term performance

By Don Bratcher

SOURCE: MARMON FASTENERS



The fastener washer forms the primary seal in an exposed-fastener roof system.

A metal roof may be sold on longevity, but on many projects, the service life of the system is determined by one of the smallest components on the roof.

Panels, coatings, and profiles usually get attention, but when exposed-fastener metal roofs begin to show premature problems, the issue often traces back to the screw, the washer, or the installation.

One of the most common field failures is fastener back-out caused by excessive torque during installation. When the screw is overdriven, the threads can strip the substrate or crush the washer, reducing holding power and allowing the fastener to loosen over time, often resulting in raised screw heads and early leak points.

For contractors, that reality is easy to overlook at bid time ... and hard to ignore later. Fasteners typically represent less than 1% of a roofing project, yet they're often the first place people try to save a few hundred dollars on a five-figure job.

That may improve the quote upfront, but it's not much of a savings when the fastener becomes the first point of failure—especially when the cost to upgrade to a long-life fastener with a lifetime warranty is relatively small.

If you are installing an expensive metal roof, use a premium fastener. Moving from a standard roofing fastener to a long-life fastener is a small upgrade compared to the overall cost of the project, and that seemingly small decision can determine whether the fastener ages with the roof or becomes the maintenance issue that shows up years earlier than anyone planned.

In the field, fastener failure often appears as loosening, leaks at penetration points, or visible deterioration such as washer cracking or red rust on the fastener head. Any of these conditions can compromise the seal, allowing water intrusion long before the panels or coatings show signs of distress.

The bottom line is this: if you're selling a roof that is expected to deliver decades of service, the fasteners you use should deliver the same long-term expectation.

Not brand, not price, but application

The first question in fastener selection is neither about brand nor price, but about application.

Metal-to-wood and metal-to-metal assemblies demand different designs, and treating them interchangeably can create problems that may not show up until well after the roof is installed.

For wood substrates, the fastening screw's thread geometry must develop a strong pullout without destroying the fibers that provide the holding power. In steel, the point and thread design have to cut and engage cleanly enough to prevent stripping and incomplete bites.

When a fastener designed for steel is used in wood, the threads may not develop sufficient pullout resistance, leading to loosening as the roof cycles thermally. In steel, using a wood fastener can result in stripped holes or incomplete engagement, creating connections that feel tight on day one but gradually lose holding power in service.

The fastener has to match the substrate. You can, of course, drive in the wrong screw, but that does not mean you have a connection that is going to perform over time alongside the roof.

The washer ... where the real trouble starts

Contractors know the screw must hold, but long-term performance is often won or lost at the seal.

In exposed-fastener roofing, the washer is doing more than finishing the assembly. It must stay resilient through UV exposure, heat, cold, moisture, and the constant expansion and contraction that comes with metal panels in service. A leak path begins when the sealing material hardens, cracks, shrinks, or loses compression.

Most exposed-fastener metal roofs rely on EPDM or similar elastomeric washers to form the primary seal. Under prolonged UV exposure and repeated thermal cycling, lower-quality washers can harden, shrink, or crack, reducing compression and creating a leak path. Dual-seal washer designs help maintain sealing pressure and provide redundancy as conditions change over time.

A lot of contractors still buy fasteners like they are just a commodity, but on a metal roof, the sealing system matters every bit as much as the thread. If that seal breaks down, you have created a vulnerability at every penetration.

For contractors selling metal as a premium system, that point carries real weight. A roof designed for decades of service should not depend on a sealing point that was treated like an afterthought.

Installation makes or breaks the system

Even the best-designed fastener cannot overcome poor installation. Over-driving can crush the washer and damage the seal before the crew leaves the site. Under-driving can leave the assembly insufficiently seated, allowing movement



that enlarges the hole over time and stresses the sealing point.

Visually, an over-driven fastener often shows a crushed, split, or squeezed-out washer beyond the fastener head, while an under-driven fastener may leave the washer barely compressed or allow the panel to move around the screw. Both conditions are early warning signs that the connection will not perform in the long term.

On exposed-fastener roofs, those small inconsistencies are often where future maintenance starts. This is why contractors should think about fastener design and installation consistency in tandem, not separately.

Every manufacturer of metal roofing will tell you that “they never shipped a leak.” The best fastener in the catalog cannot fix a poor installation, but a well-designed fastener can absolutely help a crew get more consistent results, especially when paired with the right tools and good installation discipline.

The real cost question


Fasteners are often viewed as a quick cost-cutting opportunity, but that misses the bigger picture. When you look at the total roof package, the price gap between a standard fastener and a long-life solution is usually negligible.

What is not small is the cost of callbacks, leaks, repairs, and the hit to your reputation when the roof starts having issues because the attachment system was “value-engineered too far.”

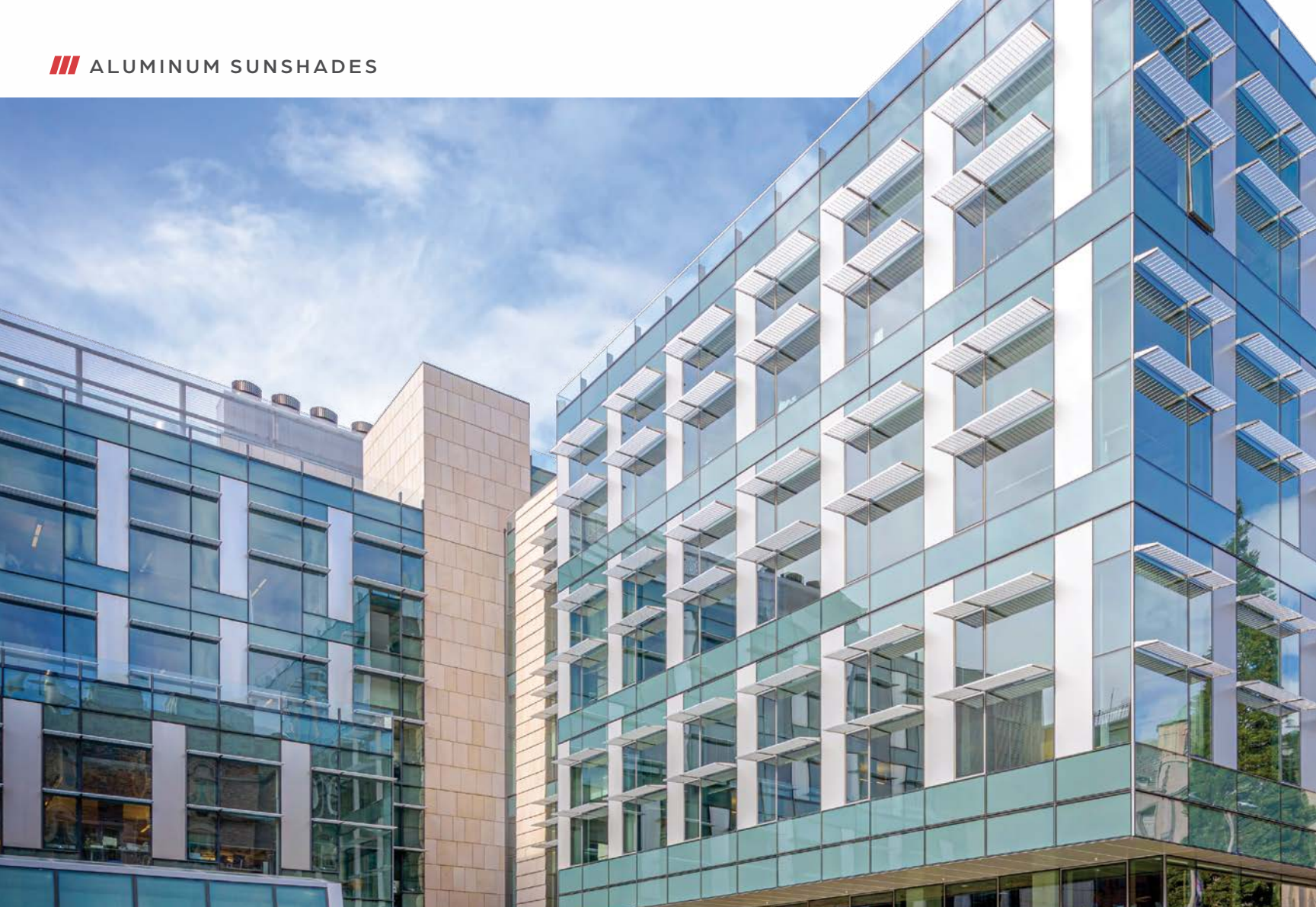
On a typical metal roofing project, upgrading from a standard fastener to a long-life fastener may add only a few hundred dollars to the total material cost. By contrast, a single callback for leak investigation and repair can quickly exceed that amount, even before accounting for labor disruption, warranty exposure, or reputational damage.

Fasteners rarely get top billing in a metal roofing specification, but they can set the upper limit for how well the roof performs. For contractors, that means looking beyond length, diameter, and piece price.

Substrate compatibility, sealing performance, corrosion resistance, installation consistency, and service-life expectations all matter. And for manufacturers and suppliers, it means the long-life story must include the attachment system, not just the panel.

A metal roof is only as good as the fastener holding it down. 

Don Bratcher is vice president of sales for OEM at Marmon Fasteners, leading sales strategy and execution for multiple brands, including Atlas. With more than four decades of industry experience, Don spent almost 30 years at Butler Manufacturing Company in various roles before joining Atlas Building Products 11 years ago. He then joined Marmon Fasteners in August 2025, leading the sales teams for OEM brands Atlas, Tenn-Tex, and Pan American. Throughout his career, he has focused on growing and maintaining customer relationships while selling quality products and services.



Aluminum sunshade systems

Balancing aesthetics, performance, and sustainability

By Brian Tobias

Sunshades present a recognizable and functional feature for commercial buildings, and their role is growing. Once associated primarily with warm-climate construction, exterior shading and solar control systems are now installed on buildings across every U.S. climate zone, appearing on educational campuses, healthcare facilities, corporate offices, and government centers alike.

As building teams face rising expectations for energy performance, occupant comfort, and sustainable material use, aluminum sunshades have emerged as a versatile and reliable tool to address these challenges. These architectural products

offer both functional performance and architectural expression.

Material advantages of extruded aluminum

Aluminum's combination of properties makes it especially well-suited for exterior shading applications. It can be extruded into a range of blade profiles, including tubular, rectilinear, trapezoidal, Z-shaped, airfoil forms, and custom designs.

Complementing the overall facade composition, blade shapes may be paired with different fascia styles. For example, a bullnose fascia may be specified with an airfoil blade, while a square fascia pairs naturally with a Z-shaped profile. Precision-cut end caps and snap covers can conceal

fasteners for a clean, finished appearance.

Color choice is nearly unlimited for sunshades. Aluminum components can be finished using high-performance architectural coatings to match fenestration framing for a unified look or specified in a contrasting color for visual impact.

Whatever the aesthetic intent, finish durability is essential given sunshades' continuous exposure to weather. Painted coatings should meet AAMA 2605, *Voluntary Specification, Performance Requirements and Test Procedures for Superior Performing Organic Coatings on Aluminum Extrusions and Panels (with Coil Coating Appendix)*, and anodize finishes should conform to AAMA 611,

Nano Engineering and Sciences Building at the University of Washington, see page 22.

PHOTO © AARON LEITZ PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY ZGF AND APOGEE ARCHITECTURAL METALS/WAUSAU WINDOW

Projects for inspiration



Bernalillo Elementary School

Emphasizing natural light, energy efficiency, and environmentally friendly materials, New Mexico's Bernalillo Elementary School features extruded aluminum sunshades, storefront, and curtain wall. The project's Albuquerque-based building team included FBT Architects, Enterprise Builders Corporation, and Southwest Glass & Glazing.

"Natural daylighting was very important to the design of the school," said FBT's Jeremy Trumble, LEED AP. "Students and teachers were being relocated from an existing facility that had very small windows, making the learning environment dark and stuffy, as well as limiting visual access for safety and security."

Providing students with natural views and light began with the school's orientation. "The majority of the classrooms faced north or south to help control the direct/indirect sun into each room," continued Trumble. "Exterior sunshades were added to increase the controllability of the natural light."

PHOTO © MATTOPHOTO ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY APOGEE ARCHITECTURAL METALS/TUBELITE



The Food Commons

The Food Commons building serves as a central, multifunctional gathering space for the students of Marysville Pilchuck High School in Washington state. Hutteball & Oremus Architecture designed the daylight destination with careful consideration to the students' comfort and the school's long-term operation.

Installed by Pacific Glass & Door, the strategy optimizes natural light, manages solar heat gain, and minimizes glare

through a combination of horizontal sunshades and vertical shade fins.

Aluminum with no-VOC anodize finishes on sunshades, storefront, and entrance systems also support lower maintenance and bolster green building goals.

Following Washington Sustainable Schools Protocol, this construction project is targeting a 15 percent reduction in energy consumption.

PHOTO © DALE LANG, COURTESY APOGEE ARCHITECTURAL METALS/EFCO



Edward Zorinsky Federal Building

The renovation of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Edward Zorinsky Federal Building in Omaha, Neb., involved upgrades to its security, energy efficiency, and appearance.

Leo A. Daly's design modernized the 1960s facade with extruded aluminum sunshades engineered as integral components of the blast-mitigating curtain wall. All the aluminum framing and solar control devices were finished in clear anodize in accordance with AAMA 611 performance standards.

PHOTO © TOM KESSLER, COURTESY APOGEE ARCHITECTURAL METALS/WAUSAU WINDOW



Millennium Science Complex

Designed by Rafael Viñoly Architects, the LEED Gold-certified Millennium Science Complex at Pennsylvania State University serves as a visual campus icon and a cross-discipline educational center.

The L-shaped structure houses the research departments in two distinct perpendicular wings that join at the

fourth floor to form a striking cantilever stretching over the building's main entrance and open-air, public plaza.

The curtain wall on the building's second and third floors is accented by exterior sunshades, helping control solar heat gain and glare, while emphasizing the horizontal lines of the structure.

Along with its high thermal performance, the fenestration systems supported LEED criteria with framing manufactured using aluminum with a high recycled content.

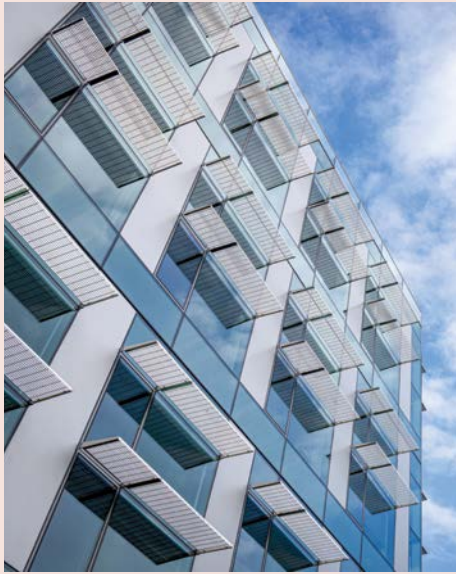
PHOTO © JEREMY BITTERMANN PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY APOGEE ARCHITECTURAL METALS/WAUSAU WINDOW

Specification for Anodized Architectural Aluminum, to ensure long-term color stability and resistance to corrosion and UV degradation with minimal maintenance. AAMA 2605 and AAMA 611 are Fenestration and Glazing Industry Alliance (FGIA) documents.

Sustainability credentials are increasingly important in material and product selection, and aluminum performs well on this front. The metal is lightweight, which simplifies shipping logistics while reducing installation time and labor. It also is highly durable, requiring minimal upkeep over a long service life.

At the end of its long life on a building, aluminum is fully recyclable. Many

Projects for inspiration



Nano Engineering and Sciences Building

The University of Washington's LEED Silver-certified Nano Engineering and Sciences Building in Seattle, designed by ZGF, illustrates how shading components can be coordinated with other facade elements for a cohesive architectural appearance and high performance.

Helping save energy and increase occupant comfort, the building envelope includes high-performance entrances with curtain wall, windows, custom shadow boxes, and sunshades.

To ensure a high-quality, uniform appearance, all of these aluminum components were finished in accordance with

AAMA 2605 and environmentally responsible practices.

As the sunshades are integral to the facade, thermally improved attachments further minimize thermal bridging at the connection points.

PHOTO © AARON LEITZ PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY ZGF AND APOGEE ARCHITECTURAL METALS/WAUSAU WINDOW



Will Rogers Elementary

Will Rogers Elementary in Oklahoma demonstrates extruded aluminum sunshades installed on the south elevation, paired with aluminum-framed storefront and entrances.

Together, they contribute to achieving the architectural design goals of daylighting quality, energy performance, and lasting durability.

The LEED-certified building offers generous amounts of controlled daylighting and exceptional indoor air quality conditioned by an energy-efficient geothermal system.

PHOTO © RALPH COLE INC., COURTESY APOGEE ARCHITECTURAL METALS/EFCO

manufacturers offer sunshade products that incorporate recycled content and are finished with low- or no-VOC painted or anodized coatings. Some also provide Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) and Declare Labels, giving project teams the documentation needed to support LEED and other green building certification efforts.

Functional solar control drives performance

Effective solar shading begins with site analysis of a building's latitude, orientation, and surrounding context. This analysis includes neighboring structures, trees, and reflective surfaces, all of which influence how much solar radiation reaches each elevation and at what times of day.

In North America, southern elevations receive the most direct solar exposure throughout the year. At higher latitudes, the sun's lower angle in winter can cause early morning and evening glare from the north-facing east and west exposures. No single sunshade configuration is universally appropriate; each project requires specific analysis.

Using the project's location, orientation, and surroundings, daylight building simulations can assist teams with this

analysis. Several software and digital tool options are now available to architects, building envelope consultants, and sunshade and fenestration system manufacturers.

The most common configuration is a horizontal, multi-blade outrigger system that cantilevers from above the glazing daylight opening. These systems should be engineered to work with curtain wall, window wall, storefront, and other fenestration assemblies. Sunshades also may be installed as vertical fins. The two orientations serve different shading functions—horizontal shades block high-angle sun, while vertical fins are more effective at managing low-angle east and west exposure. The two are not interchangeable and must be specified in coordination with the fenestration system.

The depth and placement of sunshades are driven primarily by performance requirements, though appearance is also a factor. Some multi-blade aluminum systems can span up to 142 in. (360 cm) and project as far as 44 in. (112 cm) from the facade. For larger spans and projections, structural review is necessary to confirm that the assembly can appropriately handle dead loads, wind loads, and snow or ice loads.

When properly designed and installed,

exterior sunshades can reduce annual cooling energy costs by up to 15 percent, making a meaningful contribution to overall building energy performance. Unlike interior blinds and shades, which block occupant views and impede natural ventilation without preventing solar heat gain from entering the building, exterior sunshades intercept solar radiation at the building envelope.

This distinction matters both for energy performance and occupant experience: exterior shading preserves views to the outdoors and access to daylight, supporting the connection to nature that green building programs recognize as a contributor to human health and well-being.

For projects seeking maximum daylight optimization, sunshades can be combined with interior light shelves. While the exterior shades manage heat gain and glare, the interior light shelf—often finished in white or clear anodize to maximize reflectance—redirects daylight upward and deeper into the building's interior.

Diffused, indirect daylight reduces glare on screens and reflective surfaces, improving occupant comfort and productivity. Studies link excessive glare to eye strain, headaches, and other stress-related conditions, making thoughtful



North Charleston industrial building

Extruded aluminum sunshades add an aesthetic flourish as well as a functional enhancement to an industrial building in North Charleston, S.C., designed by Triad Design Group and installed by Gate City Contract Glazing.

PHOTO © JERRY COLI, COURTESY APOGEE ARCHITECTURAL METALS/EFCA

daylight management a genuine contributor to occupant health.

Fixed-blade sunshades represent the most common and cost-effective approach for exterior solar control, with blades set at a predetermined angle calibrated to the sun's seasonal path. Motorized, articulating blade systems are also available and can be connected to light sensors or preprogrammed to adjust throughout the day. Daylight modeling and snow load analysis can help the building team compare the long-term energy savings of a responsive system against the lower initial cost and simpler maintenance profile of a fixed system.

Loading considerations: snow, ice, and structural requirements

The expanding use of exterior sunshades in cold-weather climates has prompted legitimate questions about snow and ice accumulation on horizontal shading surfaces. Ice build-up can occur in every U.S. climate zone and on any exterior building surface, regardless of slope or orientation.

When ice or snow is dislodged, it can affect adjacent surfaces, equipment, and people below. Building teams

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Projects for inspiration



Wausau Wisconsin

One of the first LEED Silver-certified U.S. manufacturing centers, Wausau Window in Wisconsin features a curtain wall with integrated extruded aluminum sunshades on the exterior and light shelves on the interior.

PHOTO COURTESY APOGEE ARCHITECTURAL METALS/WAUSAU WINDOW



New College House

The University of Pennsylvania's New College House illustrates how aluminum sunshade systems can be integrated into large-scale residential and academic complexes, addressing visual consistency and occupant comfort across many individual units.

PHOTO © DANIEL BURKE, COURTESY APOGEE ARCHITECTURAL METALS/WAUSAU WINDOW



Armstrong World Industries

One of the first LEED Platinum-certified buildings in the world, Armstrong World Industries in Lancaster, Pa., showcases a high-performance, aluminum-framed curtain wall with exterior sunshades and interior light shelves.

Designed by Gensler to emphasize the benefits of natural light, the integrated fenestration glazing system minimizes solar heat gain and glare, while providing 90 percent of the workspaces with access to outdoor views.

PHOTO COURTESY ARMSTRONG AND APOGEE ARCHITECTURAL METALS/WAUSAU WINDOW



Fraser Hall

Located in a northern climate with significant seasonal variation, the University of Minnesota's Fraser Hall showcases a custom sunshade design with vertical fins made from extruded aluminum and finished in copper anodize.

PHOTO © BRENNAN PHOTO+VIDEO, COURTESY APOGEE ARCHITECTURAL METALS/LINETEC

should consider sunshades as both potential sources and potential targets of falling ice and snow.

AAMA 514, *Standard Test Method for Static Loading and Impact on Exterior Shading Devices*, an FGIA document, provides a laboratory procedure for evaluating both downward static ice and snow loads and falling ice impact loads on horizontal exterior shading systems. Specifying systems tested to this standard helps ensure realistic performance expectations for projects in all climate conditions.

For large-scale installations, reinforcing stays may be required depending on system size, weight, and load demands. Sunshades at building corners can present challenges, where intersecting planes must be resolved to maintain both performance and appearance. These conditions warrant early coordination with the sunshade manufacturer.

Installation and facade integration

Sunshades are anchored either directly to the building structure or to the facade system's mullions, jambs, or designated framing members. Because shading systems typically are manufactured to project-specific dimensions and blade counts, careful coordination between the sunshade manufacturer and the fenestration supplier is key, particularly when the sunshade is integral to the facade assembly.

Most sunshade systems are assembled in the field rather than arriving preassembled. Installers follow the manufacturer's instructions and attachment guidelines to ensure proper alignment and load transfer.

One evolving approach uses detachable mounting brackets that fasten to the pressure plate area of the curtain wall, window wall, or storefront system. The brackets connect to sunshade outriggers via screw-spline connections and can be detached in individual sections to accommodate future reglazing. Along with easier installation, this serves a practical function for long-term building management and maintenance access.

Thermal performance of the connection should also be considered. When sunshades are integral to the facade, thermally improved attachments help minimize thermal bridging at the connection point, preserving the overall thermal performance of the building envelope.

Attention to insulation and sealing at these connections supports the comprehensive whole-building performance approach that an effective facade requires.

The aluminum components of a sunshade system are finished in a single batch to ensure color consistency across the installation. On projects where the shading system spans multiple floors or a significant facade area, this batch-finishing process is an important quality control measure. All components should be inspected upon delivery and prior to installation to confirm that finish quality meets project specifications.

Common mistakes with aluminum sunshades

Skipping site-specific solar analysis. Assuming a single sunshade configuration will work across all orientations is a critical error. Each project requires an analysis of latitude, building orientation, neighboring structures, and other contextual factors.

Confusing horizontal shades with vertical fins. Each serves a distinct function, and while both may be used on the same building, they are not interchangeable. Horizontal blades block high-angle sun while vertical fins manage low-angle east and west exposures. Specifying the wrong orientation undermines the system's solar control performance.

Underestimating structural and load requirements. Snow, ice, and wind loads must be accounted for in every climate zone, not just warm ones. Large spans and projections require formal structural review, and systems should be tested to AAMA 514 to ensure realistic performance under real-world load conditions.

Neglecting coordination between sunshade and fenestration suppliers. Because sunshades are typically manufactured to project-specific dimensions, coordination between the shading system manufacturer and the fenestration supplier is essential to ensure alignment, proper load transfer, and integration.

Assuming anchorage and attachments can be modified. When sunshades are designed as part of an integrated


fenestration system, their attachments also are a key part of the system's integrity. Sunshade and fenestration system manufacturers do not verify or calculate anchorage to materials provided by others. Third-party engineers should determine anchorage methods and coordinate with the manufacturers and installers. Failures can occur if any substitutions or changes are made to these attachments or their surrounding framing materials.

Overlooking thermal bridging at attachment points. When sunshades are integral to the facade, failing to use thermally improved attachments at connection points can compromise the overall thermal performance of the building envelope and may undermine the energy benefits the sunshades are meant to provide.

Well-positioned for high-performance buildings

Aluminum sunshade systems offer an appealing combination of aesthetic

flexibility, measurable energy performance, and long-term durability to support both building owner objectives and occupant quality of life. Successful applications involve careful analysis of site conditions, climate, and orientation; coordination with the fenestration system; structural evaluation for load conditions; and attention to finish quality and installation details.

As climate performance expectations continue to rise and interest in healthy, daylight interior environments grows, exterior aluminum sunshades are well-positioned to remain a standard feature of high-performance commercial building design, across all climate zones and building types. 

Brian Tobias serves as a senior product marketing analyst for Tubelite, a brand of Apogee Architectural Metals. He draws from nearly 40 years of construction industry experience and is well-versed in the USGBC's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System. He can be reached at btobias@apog.com.



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MCN's report from the Rockies

MBCEA Annual Conference and MBMA Spring Meeting recap

By Anthony Capkun



The Metal Construction News team on its way to the MBCEA Annual Conference and MBMA Spring Meeting in Colorado Springs, Colo. This view never gets old.

PHOTO ANTHONY CAPKUN



Outgoing MBCEA president Robert Tiffin (right) passes the gavel to incoming president David Leinbach.



COURTESY MBCEA

As a newbie, there is perhaps no better way to sink my teeth into the metal building industry than by attending the Annual Conference of the Metal Building Contractors and Erectors Association (MBCEA) and Spring Meeting of the Metal Building Manufacturers Association.

Which is why, after just two weeks under my belt as the new editor-in-chief of *Metal Construction News*, I was on a jet with my MCN teammates, heading to Colorado Springs, Colo., to do just that.

Located next to the U.S. Air Force Academy, the one-year-old Hotel Polaris served as the backdrop for this gathering of metal professionals, who were there to support their associations, learn from both the conference's expert speakers and solutions providers in the exhibition, and to simply reconnect with one another.

I played the part of a sponge, trying to soak up as much as I could so that I could share it with you.

Will there be a recession?

As economists go, you would be hard-pressed to find one more engaging than Sage Policy Group's Anirban Basu, who managed to weave about a dozen Sylvester Stallone movies into his economic forecast keynote address. (I didn't think it was possible, but there you have it.)

Word to the wise: he did not have anything good to say about Alarum.

Anyone would be hard-pressed to provide an economic forecast without first explaining where we are now. Basu's presentation focused mainly on data from May 2020—when our current economic expansion commenced—through to March 2026.

While the stock market has been hitting record highs, many Americans still feel uneasy, he said. Not surprising, considering the high prices we're paying for everything from groceries (up 29.3%) to energy (up a whopping 74.4%). (Figure 1)

There is also a massive increase in borrowing costs for financing construction projects, business investment, and household borrowing. Despite those higher financing costs, some parts of the economy continue to perform well, especially hyperscalers (hyperscale data centers).

After OpenAI launched ChatGPT, hyperscalers began spending aggressively to compete for global leadership in artificial intelligence. They are spending hundreds of billions of dollars on data centers (DCs) and associated systems, Basu noted, which is one of the reasons that corporate earnings forecasts remain strong. (Figure 2)

DCs also carry serious implications for electricity. Private construction spending on electric power generation and distribution has risen sharply, Basu said. Some of that relates to the Inflation Reduction Act and the subsidies it

FIGURE 1

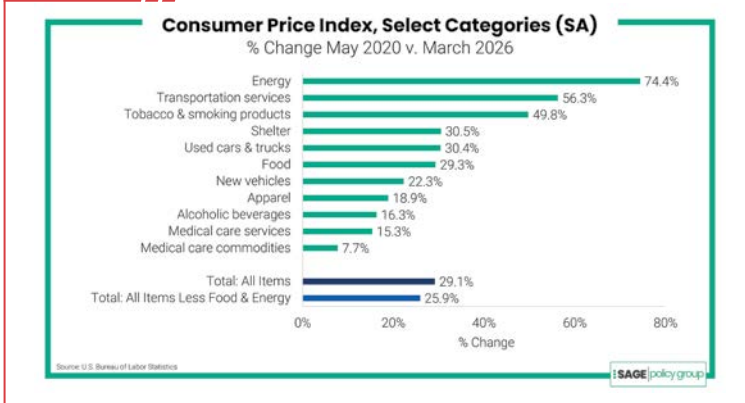
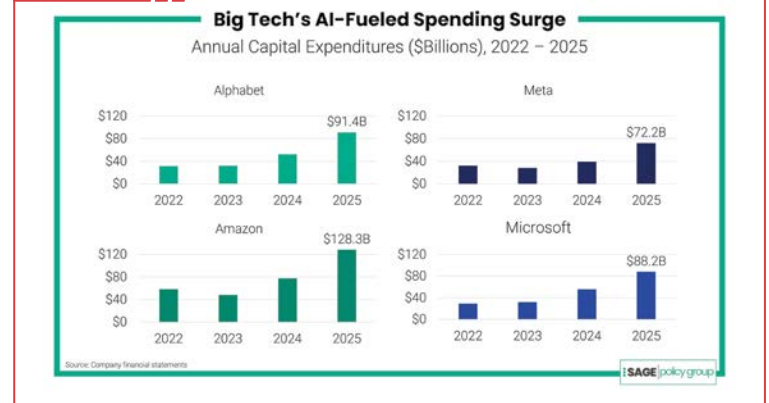


FIGURE 2



created for investment in clean energy, but a great deal relates to the power needs of DCs.

As those projects move forward, we are likely to see continued strength in construction related to DCs and associated energy generation and distribution.

On the construction labor front, Basu expected that tighter immigration policy and enforcement would produce a more visible increase in demand for native-born or documented construction labor.

“But we have not really seen that to the degree I expected. Despite shifting immigration policy, there has not been a surge in construction job openings,” he said. One reason could be that construction spending itself is not strong enough in the affected categories to produce a hiring surge.

Basu shared data from U-Haul showing Americans are moving to Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Tennessee, and South Carolina—jurisdictions that have been doing well at attracting investment. And, where people move, jobs often follow. More people also create demand for housing, healthcare, retail, professional services, and construction.

Most economists agree the United States still has a housing shortage, Basu said, yet residential construction has weakened. “Why? Financing costs are high. Materials prices are still elevated. Tariffs on steel, copper, aluminum, and related inputs raise costs further. Delivering construction services is more expensive.”

This *could* create opportunities for cost-saving building approaches, including certain prefabricated and metal building systems, but the reality is that residential construction remains weak. Building permits show little momentum, and

even multifamily construction activity has cooled.

Offices remain one of the weakest major property types. Even though some large employers have pushed return-to-office policies, remote and hybrid work remain common. As a result, office vacancies are still very high in many cities. (Figure 3)

San Francisco is one of the clearest examples, but Chicago and other major downtowns also have a large amount of vacant office space. That has implications not just for building owners and suppliers, but for the broader economy.

In some cases, buildings that once sold for hundreds of millions of dollars now trade for a tiny fraction of their earlier value. That means lenders face collateral write-downs and will be more cautious about financing new development.

Cities are also affected because commercial real estate helps support the property tax base. When office values fall, municipal finances come under pressure, limiting their ability to support future public projects. This is bad news for construction, Basu concluded.

He also pointed to the Architecture Billings Index published by the American Institute of Architects—a leading indicator for commercial construction. Readings below 50 indicate contraction, and while recent readings have been below this threshold, they haven’t been disastrous—but they have been in retreat. (Figure 4)

Some construction categories are still growing, particularly publicly funded segments such as water supply, sewage and waste, flood control, and transportation.

Construction input prices remain a major challenge. Using February 2020 as the pre-pandemic baseline, construction input prices are up about

48%. Some of the biggest increases are in materials that are most directly affected by tariffs and industrial supply pressures. Copper products have risen sharply. Fabricated structural metal products are also up dramatically.

If you look across a range of U.S. forecasters—the Fed, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Goldman Sachs, the Conference Board, and others—most forecasts for 2026 GDP growth fall between about 1.5% and 2.5%. On average, that is a little above 2%.

Not bad, yet the risk of recession is higher than normal because the current economic expansion has become narrow and lopsided. So while Basu feels that the most likely outcome is continued growth in 2026, the odds of recession are higher than normal.

Awards and honorees

Beyond learning where our economy may be headed, a conference highlight was, of course, the awards program. MBMA general manager Tony Bouquot (a.k.a. Travels with Tony) presented this year’s MBMA Safety Awards, which recognize member companies demonstrating exceptional performance in maintaining workplace safety.

(With every location mentioned, Bouquot would share something unique or interesting from TripAdvisor about that facility’s location.)

Following MBMA’s awards, MCN’s Melanie Kowal and I took to the stage to formally induct this year’s MCN Metal Construction Hall of Fame honorees. It is difficult to get everyone together at the same place at the same time, so we were very grateful for those who were able to attend, or to have someone accept on their behalf.

FIGURE 3

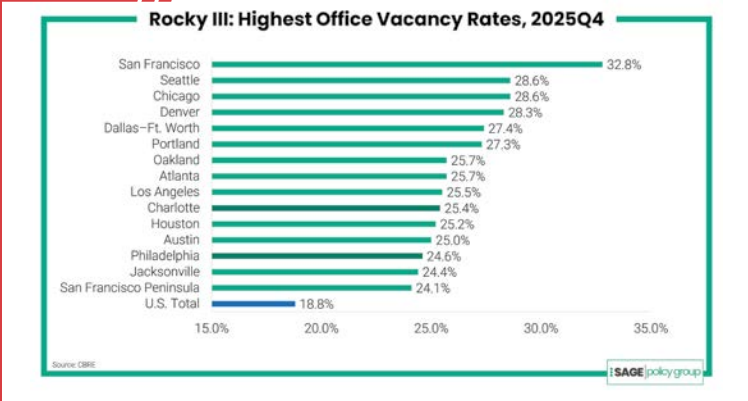
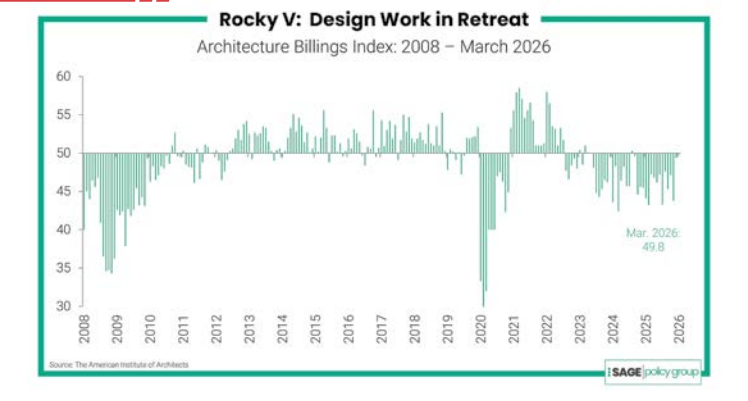


FIGURE 4



SOURCES: ANIRBAN BASU, SAGE POLICY GROUP (APRIL 23, 2026)

Thank you: Mark Detwiler, Arnold Corbin, Christen Funk, Tony Raimondo, Jr., and Patrick Raimondo!

MBCEA kicked off its awards segment by adding new members to its Pioneer Club—members who have demonstrated decades of leadership, craftsmanship, and commitment to advancing the metal building industry:

- Randy Haefli of Component Construction Company (Fort Worth, TX)
- Steve Herrman of S&H Construction Co. Inc. (Oak Grove, MO)
- Barry Daigle of BB Gunn Contracting Ltd. (Linwood, ON)

Joseph Allen of Thomas Phoenix International was named this year’s recipient of the Robert and Beverly Ketenbrink Service Award (a.k.a. the “oil can” award) in recognition of his outstanding service and dedication to both MBCEA and the industry. (When I congratulated Allen afterward, he told me he had been taken completely by surprise.)

MBCEA also presented its 2026 Building of the Year awards, which will be explored in greater detail in next month’s Metal Construction News, but here is a quick recap of the awards of Merit (M) and Excellence (E) across several categories:

Commercial (under 30,000 sf)

- Jersey Meadow Golf Clubhouse, Red Dot Buildings (E)
- Premier Custom Paint and Collision, C. Tucker Cope & Associates Inc., Chief Buildings (M)

Commercial (over 30,000 sf)

- Mitchell Subaru, PDS Engineering & Construction Inc., Metallic Building Systems (E)

- Ring Power Facility, Steel Worx Solutions LLC, Kirby Building Systems (M)

Community

- St. Vrain Sanitation District Administration & Maintenance Buildings, Baker Steel Erectors, Alliance Steel Buildings (E)
- Trinity Presbyterian Church, Metal Building Industries (M)

Manufacturing

- IMC Metals America Upcast, Hoke Enterprises Inc., Schulte Building Systems (E)
- Nucor Towers and Structures, Kaiser-Martin Group Inc., Nucor Building Systems and Metl-Span (M)

Building of the Year 2026

- The Refinery Sports Complex, GBS Enterprises, Behlen Building Systems

Education tracks

BIM for the win

While AI continues to dominate the headlines—and many of the conversations at construction conferences—the world of BIM (building information modeling) is becoming ever-harder to avoid.

Kim Harrell with All Weather Insulated Panels (AWIP) is an unabashed BIM enthusiast. During his session “Driving efficiency and sustainability through digital construction,” he dove right into why BIM is important for builders and erectors.

“With BIM, you can see detail you couldn’t see before. So what’s important, practical for you guys? Clash detection: are there conflicts between your work and someone else’s?”

I think we would all rather uncover conflicts in a project *before* they turn into costly rework during actual construction.

So what is BIM? It’s a single 3D *model*—a digital twin—of whatever is being built, whether that’s a data center or cold storage facility. BIM *objects* are the things that go into that model. Objects can be anything from IMPs to bicycle racks, but each object can display varying Levels of Development (LODs).

At the low end is LOD 100, where objects provide basic information, such as area, width, and height. As we go from LOD 100 to LOD 500, that object becomes infused with progressively richer information, moving from things like rough area to precise dimensions and MEP penetrations to, eventually, the as-built drawings. At LOD 500, that object should contain information that pertains to maintenance, environmental product declarations, LEED, and more.

BIM also provides accurate cost estimation, streamlines scheduling, and reduces rework. Harrell cited a global survey of very heavy BIM users, in which 34% of respondents reported fewer errors as the most important reason for using BIM. Those same users expect a 5% to 10% cost savings on jobs. Around the world, BIM users, on average, see a 25% ROI.

But for BIM to work and deliver the promised benefits, Harrell said everyone involved in a project must share information and share early—ideally two years before the start of construction.

“If you’re doing BIM during construction, it’s too late. You’ve missed the window for true BIM benefit.”

And here is why you cannot afford to ignore BIM: it will become the expected standard across construction. For large GCs, BIM penetration is already nearly 100%.



From left: Metal Construction News editor-in-chief Anthony Capkun, MCN Hall of Fame 2026 inductee Arnold Corbin, and MCN executive publisher Melanie Kowal. COURTESY MBCEA



From left: Metal Construction News executive publisher Melanie Kowal with MBMA chair Christen Funk, accepting on behalf of Butler Manufacturing's Ted Wolfe. COURTESY MBCEA

Damned if you don't ... and if you do (maybe)
Earlier in the conference, Zach Giglio shared practical AI applications for construction leaders and teams, and even conducted live demonstrations.

"AI takes on chores so that we can focus on higher-value tasks," he said. But there is more to AI's exponential growth than just handling drudgework, Giglio said, pointing to reasons like workforce shortages and margin compression as key drivers.

So I was intrigued by what speakers Josh Quinter and Karin Corbett would say about AI for business during their session "Policy and risk management in the age of artificial intelligence."

After conceding that AI provides "unbelievable opportunity" for the advancement of everyone's businesses, they moved directly to: "We're here to talk about the dangers of AI. It's a tool, and all tools carry risk."

Some of those risks—like data integrity—are already known in the pre-AI world. When you input incorrect data, you cannot expect the AI to identify and correct it. Nothing new here.

What is new, however, is data ownership. When you upload your forecasts, client lists, and accounts receivable into an AI, do you still own that data, or does the AI company now own it? Will it remain private, or will the AI share that information with other users? You may have just become the unwitting cause of your own trade secret leak.

Attorney-client privilege could also be at risk if you were to share information about a legal dispute with AI.

"AI usage is still like the Wild West," Quinter said, adding that this is not necessarily a bad thing because "you have the opportunity to set the tone in your contracts."

To that end, the presenters feel AI should start being addressed right away in construction contracts to address questions such as:

- Do we mandate or prohibit the use of AI? Who will pay for it?
- Who will be responsible for any AI "hallucinations" or data corruption? What do we do if the AI company becomes insolvent?
- Who will be responsible for developing project data and training models?
- Do we need AI indemnity and insurance?
- Who gets paid for an AI-generated work product?

Although the speakers themselves are supportive of AI, their session largely focused on how its use can expose companies to technological, legal, ethical, privacy, and contractual risks. Their message was clear: use AI cautiously, define its use in contracts, and do not let it replace good human judgment.

Association business and AC478

On the association side, outgoing MBCEA president Robert Tiffin passed the gavel of leadership to incoming president David

Leinbach, who then swore in several new board members and directors.


He also promoted the importance of the AC478 accreditation program, asking more member companies to commit to getting themselves accredited. According to MBCEA, AC478 is the most comprehensive quality assurance accreditation of its kind for metal building assembly.

AC478 provides third-party validation that assemblers have the people, processes, training, and quality systems in place to do the work properly. It can help you compete for more jobs, particularly projects that specifically require accredited assemblers.

Accreditation also signals your commitment to quality, giving owners, architects, specifiers, and regulators greater confidence in your company. A perk of MBCEA membership is free consultative support for this program.

To new friendships

There are simply too many people to mention and thank for their warmth and hospitality, but Rob Haddock and the S-5! team warrant a special thank you for the pre-conference tour of their Black Forest headquarters and prototyping lab.

Next year's MBCEA Annual Conference and MBMA Spring Meeting will be held May 5-7 at the Sheraton Kansas City Hotel at Crown Center in Kansas City, Mo. Hope to see you there! 

Anthony Capkun is the editor-in-chief of Metal Construction News

Saving you trips back to the truck

A professional tool bag enhances image *and* improves productivity

By Jim Brooks

ADOBE STOCK/TOMASZ ZAJDA - STOCK.ADOBE.COM



Despite being used daily on thousands of jobsites around the world, tool bags are frequently treated as an afterthought.

Often one of the most visible and highly used accessories in a contractor's workflow, tool bags (including backpack-

style) have come a long way since the old days of lugging around a heavy metal box full of loose hand tools.

Workers frequently waste time digging around in their tool bags to find the right tool, yet high-quality modern tool bags

are intentionally designed for specific jobs and roles to ensure there's no wasted weight or space in the bag.

Tool pockets and pouches are designed to organize tools, and are purpose-built to fit the shape of a contractor's

From an efficiency standpoint, anything that improves productivity on the job can lead to greater profitability.

Quality tool bags are also easy to carry while making a great first impression with your customers.

When paired with quality tools for the job at hand, professional tool-carrying solutions enhance your image and that of your workers while improving productivity.

Productivity gains

From an efficiency standpoint, anything that improves productivity on the job can lead to greater profitability.

Wasting time looking for tools is an exercise in frustration and aggravation: having to stop work to go on a tool “search-and-rescue mission”—at the truck, in the tool bag, or on the jobsite—interrupts the flow and work routine.

Running back and forth to the truck, or dumping and digging to find the tool you need, all contribute to lost time and lower productivity. An organized tool bag reduces trips back and forth to the truck, setting the stage for a frustration-free and productive workday.

In one of our studies, users of high-quality tool bags saved 2.7 trips to the truck. Assuming 10 minutes per trip and, conservatively, \$30 an hour for labor costs, a quality bag can save the contractor over \$3,000 annually.

A well-organized bag also helps keep tools from getting lost. When workers are organized, they can easily see and access their tools. And, by extension, they will also quickly notice when a tool is missing from its dedicated space. In one of our studies, workers reported saving over \$100 in the prevention of lost tools.

Professional image

As a contractor, small or large, competing in today’s environment demands that we also pay attention to our professional image.

First impressions are important in any business relationship, and a cheap-looking, disorganized tool bag sends the message that your company and its workers do not take pride in their trade

or workmanship. This is not the message you want to broadcast to your customers.

Outfitting all your employees with the same high-quality tool bag creates a strong company brand identity, and improves your workers’ sense of pride in both your company and their profession.

Invest in professional-grade bags

Although most tool bags serve their purpose as storage solutions, if they’re not professional-grade, they won’t deliver the benefits discussed above, and they certainly will not stand up to the rigors of the jobsite.

In one of our user studies, over 72% of respondents said that they normally replaced their big-box store tool bags within two years of purchase.

So, what makes a tool bag professional-grade? It should be constructed with materials like high-denier polyester, leather, Hypalon, metal hardware, large-gauge zippers, polypropylene base, and strong Velcro or magnets—all of which contribute to long-term jobsite survivability.

It should display thoughtful organization that is designed for trades professionals, with purposefully sized pockets and features for trade-specific tools, and some degree of modularity so that it can be adapted to the way individuals work.

Look for ergonomically designed handles, straps, and similar features for maximum comfort, padded shoulder straps for backpack-style tool bags, good weight distribution, and a warranty that goes beyond just one year.

Taken as a whole, outfitting construction pros with professional-grade tool bags is an exceptional investment for contractors to improve the brand and image of a business and its employees, while savings costs through increased.

Jim Brooks brings 37 years of executive leadership to The Malco Group’s worksite solutions category, where he serves as director. Malco is a manufacturer and distributor of building construction systems and solutions.

tools while still being easy to open and close. High-end tool bags are also designed for the jobsite, resisting the daily wear-and-tear of being carried, dropped, shoved around, or left out in the sun.



Taking control of gutter production

When to consider getting your own gutter machine

By Matt Werner

COURTESY OF THE BRADBURY GROUP

For many contractors, one of the biggest challenges isn't the work itself, but rather maintaining control over costs, timelines, and materials. They are always searching for ways to improve tight margins, reduce delays, and gain a competitive edge.

One solution that can transform the way companies operate is to bring gutter production in-house by investing in their own gutter machine.

The main reason to invest in such a machine is usually high volume, but improving quality and ensuring availability are also factors. Commercial gutters made on folders and press brakes

often face length limitations. Purchasing a gutter rollformer reduces labor costs and expands your product range.

This is not simply about the equipment. It is about taking full control of your business. Delays in material delivery can bring entire crews to a standstill, impacting both schedules and profitability.

Customization and efficiency

One of the biggest advantages to producing your own gutters is the ability to fully customize your product. When you rely on third-party suppliers, you are limited to their inventory, styles, and timelines. In-house production allows you to create unique gutter profiles tailored specifically to your brand and fulfill your customers' needs.

Efficiency is critical in any construction-related business. Delays in materials can slow down entire projects, leading to missed deadlines and frustrated clients. By producing your own gutters, you eliminate many of the bottlenecks associated with ordering, shipping, and supplier availability.

With a gutter machine onsite or readily available, you can create materials on demand. This streamlines your workflow and significantly reduces downtime. Crews can complete jobs faster, move on to new projects sooner, and ultimately increase overall productivity.

Cost savings, waste reduction, and flexibility

Material waste is a common issue when working with pre-manufactured



In-house production allows you to manufacture gutters to exact specifications, reducing unnecessary scrap.

gutters. Ordering standard lengths often results in excess material that cannot be used. Over time, this waste adds up, cutting into your profits. In-house production allows you to manufacture gutters to exact specifications, reducing unnecessary scrap.

You produce only what you need when you need it. This not only saves money but also contributes to more sustainable business practices—a desirable bonus for numerous customers.

Every contractor understands how quickly costs add up. Purchasing gutters from suppliers involves markups, delivery fees, and sometimes even rush charges. These expenses can significantly impact your margins over time. By investing in your own gutter machine, you eliminate

many of these costs. Over time, the machine pays for itself, turning what was once an expense into a profitable asset.

Flexibility and responsiveness

Construction projects rarely go exactly as planned. Changes in measurements, last-minute requests, and unexpected challenges are part of the job. Having the ability to adapt quickly can make the difference between a smooth project and a costly delay.

With your own gutter machine, flexibility becomes one of your greatest strengths. You can adjust in real time and respond immediately to customer needs. This level of responsiveness not only improves project outcomes but also enhances your reputation for reliability and professionalism.

Inventory control and long-term value

Managing inventory is a delicate balance. Overstocking materials ties up capital and requires storage space, while understocking can lead to delays and lost opportunities. Traditional supply methods often force businesses to estimate their needs, which can result in inefficiencies. In-house gutter production allows for a just-in-time approach.

You produce materials as needed, reducing the need for large inventories. This ensures that your resources are used efficiently and that your cash flow remains healthy. You maintain the right supply levels without the risks associated with over- or under-ordering.

A high-quality gutter machine is built to last. Unlike consumable materials, it remains a long-term asset that continues to generate value for your business. With proper maintenance, these machines can provide years of reliable performance. This durability means that your investment continues to pay off well in the future. Each project completed using your own equipment contributes to your profitability, making the machine a cornerstone of your business operations.

Maintenance and operation

A standard gutter machine has a simple maintenance routine that can be handled in-house after manufacturer training: daily cleaning and inspection, weekly lubrication and checks, periodic

alignment and wear inspections, and an annual deeper review of shear blades, rollers, and fasteners.

Most upkeep is preventive and operator-level, not specialized mechanical work, and companies with basic fabrication or rollforming experience typically manage it themselves.

Major service—such as roller reprofiling, structural damage, or major electrical issues—is infrequent and usually handled by the OEM or an authorized service provider. Day-to-day reliability depends more on operator discipline and limiting adjustments than on technical complexity.


Most organizations designate one primary operator along with one or two backup operators, ensuring minimal and well-documented adjustments to machine settings.

While these machines are straightforward to operate, consistently producing high-quality results depends primarily on correct setup procedures and disciplined operational practices more than the machine itself.

Staying competitive

In a crowded marketplace, standing out is essential. Businesses that can deliver faster, customized, and cost-effective solutions have a clear advantage. In-house gutter production positions you as a leader in efficiency and innovation. Customers notice when a contractor can complete jobs quickly without sacrificing quality. They value businesses that offer flexibility and tailored solutions. By bringing production in-house, you not only improve your operations but also elevate your brand in the eyes of your clients.

As the construction industry continues to evolve, businesses must adapt to stay competitive. In-house production is not just a trend but a strategic move toward greater control, efficiency, and profitability.

Contractors who embrace this approach are better positioned to handle challenges, meet customer demands, and grow their operations. Those who continue to rely solely on traditional supply chains may find themselves at a disadvantage in an increasingly fast-paced market. 

Matt Werner is the senior sales and marketing manager with The Bradbury Group—a provider of automated production and systems integration for the metal processing industry.



When goofing around on the job is OK

Goof screw selection for metal roof revitalization

By Andrew Mullen

ADOBESTOCK/EMMASTOCK- STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Are you getting called in to fix an installation where metal roofing panels are leaking or loose? The installation may be suffering from old, worn, backed-out, or corroded roofing fasteners. The good news is that you may be able to revitalize that metal roof without replacing the full roofing system by using replacement fasteners.

Also known as “goof screws,” replacement fasteners exist to help solve mechanical fastening failures in the original installation, which could have been caused by anything from incorrect fastener selection to poor workmanship.

Selecting the replacement fastener

When choosing the appropriate goof screw, you must consider:

- The substrate
- The original fastener size
- Service life expectations

Determining the substrate beneath the roofing panel is the first step. Are you dealing with dimensional lumber, plywood, oriented strandboard (OSB), or light- or heavy-gauge metal? Knowing your substrate will help you select the right goof screw from the get-go.

Replacement fasteners are larger in diameter than the original installation screws. Upsizing the shank diameter is typically the way to go when revitalizing an installation. (Unless you are driving replacement screws into dimensional lumber, an increase in fastener length will deliver little to no additional benefit.)

For wood substrates, upsizing two sizes is typically suggested: #9 to #12, #10 to #14, #12 to #17, and #14 to #20.

For steel substrates, going up just one size in diameter will often do the trick: #12 to #14, #14 to #17, and so on.


The next consideration is service life expectation and value for your investment.

The replacement fastener itself typically accounts for only 5% to 15% of the total cost of the revitalization project,

with the bulk of the costs wrapped up in labor, logistics, and insurance.

That said, it’s still cheaper than a full roofing system replacement!

With that in mind, I suggest you not only upsize the shank diameter but also upgrade to long-life fasteners. Fastener manufacturers offer solutions such as stainless steel cap-headed fasteners like SCAMP, zinc alloy-headed fasteners like ZMAX, ZAC, or Ultimate.

Selecting the right replacement fastener is a small decision that can have a big impact on the service life of a metal roof. When the substrate, fastener size, and service life are all considered, a goof screw can be a practical fix that helps extend roof performance without the cost of full replacement. 

Andrew Mullen is the CEO of a growing fastener group that includes Lakeside Construction Fasteners LLC and DMI Direct Metals LLC (formerly Direct Metals Inc.), which was founded by a team of metal and fastener professionals in 1993. The groups’ solutions are carried by over 1,800 distributors across the country.

SOURCE: SUPPLIED



MCN welcomes new editor-in-chief

Anthony Capkun has joined the team as editor-in-chief of Metal Construction News and its sister publication Metal Architecture. No stranger to the jobsite, Anthony grew up working in the trades as a drywaller in the family business. He has over 20 years of experience covering the construction, energy, and building sectors.

Email acapkun@metalconstructionnews.com to share your news and stories.

MBCEA launches job board for the metal building industry

The Metal Building Contractors and Erectors Association launched the MBCEA Job Board to connect metal building professionals, contractors, and erectors with talent.

“Whether you’re hiring in the field, in the office, or at the leadership level, this new platform is designed specifically for the metal building industry,” says executive director Sasha Demyan.

Visit jobs.mbcea.org to get started.

SOURCE: CENTRAL STATES INC.



Kurt Weaver

Central States names Kurt Weaver incoming CEO; Sliker to focus on board chair role

Central States Inc. welcomed Kurt Weaver as its incoming CEO of the enterprise business, which includes Central States Manufacturing, Central States Building Works, and Elevate Structures, effective June 1.

“His track record of scaling businesses, operational depth, and alignment with our values make him a strong fit for our employee-owned culture,” said Christopher Harrison, lead board director.

Central States serves customers through three operating business units, which provide metal roofing, siding, walls, doors, and other components; material-only metal building packages, including self-storage and PEMB; and mid-rise, multi-story construction.

“I am excited to join the team at Central States. Recognizing the alignment of the company culture with my team-based

leadership style made the decision to join the company easy,” said Weaver, who possesses over 30 years of experience in the automotive and flooring sectors.

He also holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Ferris State University and an MBA from Michigan State University.

Weaver’s appointment comes more than two years after current CEO Jim Sliker was elected the chair of the board for Central States Inc., where he will continue to provide leadership for the seven-member board.

“I am proud of what the collective Central States team has built together over the years,” said Sliker. “As I move more fully into this next chapter, I have full confidence in Kurt as our new CEO.”



SOURCE: A. CAPKUN / CHATGPT

Construction workforce eager for AI, but where is the training?

The construction workforce is eager for AI, but lacks the hands-on training needed to unlock its full potential, according to a new survey by toolmaker DeWalt.

“Our research shows that trades professionals are eager to develop and apply AI skills that will enhance their effectiveness and adaptability on the jobsite, yet too many still lack access to this essential training,” said Bill Beck, president, Tools & Outdoors, Stanley Black & Decker.

DeWalt’s “AI in the Trades” study finds that 90% of U.S. construction professionals believe AI will be indispensable within five years, yet only 8% currently use AI on the job.

The primary barrier cited is a lack of formal, job-relevant training. 87% of respondents say AI education must be embedded in trade schools and technical programs, while 59% expressed a need for hands-on training directly tied to real construction tasks.

“As jobsites become increasingly complex and technology-driven, the need for practical AI training has never been more important,” Beck added.

Key survey findings include:

1. AI is rapidly expanding on the jobsite

- 88% expect adoption to increase over the next year
- 83% say AI will be standard within three years
- 90% believe it will be indispensable within five years

2. Everyday AI use is limited

- 37% are piloting and researching AI
- Only 8% say AI is part of their day-to-day work currently

3. For early adopters, jobsite workflows come first

- 46% report exploring AI in site operations and monitoring
- 46% report leveraging AI in the planning and design phase of projects
- 41% are using AI to help with estimation, procurement, and supply chain processes

While 86% of respondents feel somewhat or very prepared to work with AI, most cite fragmented, informal learning as a barrier. Currently, tradespeople rely heavily on self-directed resources such as YouTube (40%) and online platforms like Coursera (39%) for AI education. Video tutorials are also popular, with 42% citing them as a preferred learning method.

Among early adopters, the top benefits cited include increased productivity (35%), cost savings (34%), and improved quality control (35%).

To begin addressing this training gap, DeWalt is launching a pilot program with the Innovation and Technology Center at Associated Builders and Contractors' Central Florida chapter. The goal is to deliver the hands-on, jobsite-relevant AI training that's been missing.

To provide access to AI education across the nation, DeWalt has also committed \$75,000 to ABC's Trimmer Construction Education Fund toward Trimmer grants that include AI-related initiatives.

"Education is vital to bringing fundamental AI skillsets to our future workforce," said ABC vice president of construction technology and innovation Matthew Abeles. "ABC thanks DeWalt for its generosity and dedication to lifelong learning in the construction workforce."

The survey was conducted online in December 2025 across six countries among skilled trade workers and decision-makers working in small, medium, and large companies across residential, commercial, and industrial construction.

The results above are the survey findings from the United States exclusively. Respondents included carpenters, concrete workers, electricians, HVAC technicians, general contractors, and construction technicians, as well as company decision-makers.

TopBuild acquisition strengthens QXO's position in insulation and specialty distribution

QXO Inc. announced it will acquire TopBuild Corp. for approximately \$17 billion, in a transaction unanimously approved by the boards of directors of both companies.

"TopBuild will be our most significant acquisition yet, making QXO the second-largest publicly traded building products distributor in North America," said QXO chair and CEO Brad Jacobs.

QXO explained that TopBuild is the largest distributor and installer of insulation and related building products in North America, adding that the deal is complementary to its offering in roofing, waterproofing, lumber-related building materials, and associated products.

"The TopBuild transaction will also give us critical mass in the insulation sector and expand our exposure to large, complex projects like data centers, where scale matters," Jacobs continued. "We plan to replicate their best practices across QXO, including deploying their 'special OPS' teams to continuously improve operational excellence and customer service."

Following the acquisition of TopBuild, QXO will have approximately 28,000 employees, 1,150 locations across 50 states and seven Canadian provinces, and a fleet of more than 10,000 vehicles.

"We're excited to join QXO and combine our leadership in insulation installation and specialty distribution with QXO's scale, technology, and procurement capabilities," said TopBuild CEO Robert Buck.

Over the past 11 months, QXO has undertaken more than \$13 billion in acquisitions, closing Beacon in 2025 and Kodiak in April.

The deal is expected to close in the third quarter of 2026, and is subject to customary closing conditions, including approval by the shareholders of both companies.

U.S. Senate committee unveils bills to expand apprenticeships and accelerate approvals

U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy, M.D. (R-LA), chair of the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, introduced legislation aimed at expanding apprenticeship opportunities by making it easier to see what is already working, and establishing consistent guidelines for federal and state governments when



SOURCE: ADOLFO STOCK/RIDDO - STOCK.ADOBE.COM

registering prospective apprenticeship programs.

"Apprenticeships empower Americans to achieve the American Dream and strengthen the economy," said Cassidy. "Let's make apprenticeships more enticing to employers,

helping to build a workforce for the future."

Cassidy and U.S. Senator Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) introduced the Apprenticeship Data Value Improvements to Create Employment (ADVICE) Act, which aims to make it easier for states and apprenticeship program sponsors to measure success in apprenticeship models by allowing them to create critical pay, retention, and program completion data.

The ADVICE Act should help states and apprenticeship program sponsors replicate proven models so that more workers will have opportunities to participate.

"Four-year degrees aren't for everyone, and the skills needed for some industries are better learned in the field than in the classroom," said Senator Tuberville.

"Apprenticeships are a great way to provide students with on-the-job training while filling critical workforce demands. I'm proud to support this legislation, and will continue to champion creating accessible pathways for students to find good-paying jobs," Tuberville added.

Cassidy is also co-leading legislation with U.S. Senator Jim Banks (R-IN), the Streamlining Timely Apprenticeship Registration and Transparency (START) Act, which guarantees prospective programs will receive faster responses as they seek registration, enabling industries that are unfamiliar with apprenticeships to participate more easily.

"This is about getting more Americans into the good-paying jobs our country actually needs," said Banks. "If you're ready to learn a trade and get to work, we should be helping you do that, not slowing you down."

According to Associated Builders and Contractors, the construction industry needs to attract an estimated 349,000 net new workers in 2026 to meet demand. In 2027, the industry will need to bring in 456,000 new workers, as construction spending growth is expected to resume.



SOURCE: ATAS INTERNATIONAL

From left: Jim Bus, Angel Colon, Mark Oyer, Andrew Seigel, Jim Bush, and Mark Bus.

ATAS recognizes Seigel, Oyer, Colon with 2025 Malan S. Parker Award

Congratulations to Andrew Seigel, CSI, Mark Oyer, and Angel Colon, first-time recipients of the 2025 Malan S. Parker Award, which recognizes the top ATAS International sales professionals each year.

Founded in 1963, ATAS is a manufacturer of metal roofing, wall cladding, ceilings, perimeter edge metal, and accessories. Its portfolio

includes aluminum, steel, zinc, stainless steel, and copper products.

“The team of Andrew, Mark, and Angel not only delivers solid sales performance, but also represents our company with professionalism and a team-first attitude,” said ATAS Midwest District sales manager Dave Willard.

Andrew Seigel is the product representative for Michigan, as well as parts of Indiana and Ohio. He has been with ATAS for over two years and has a total of over nine years of experience in building products sales.

Mark Oyer is an inside technical salesperson and has been with ATAS for over two years, providing support to Seigel from June through December of 2025.

Angel Colon is also an inside technical salesperson who provided support to Seigel, from January through May of 2025. He has been with the company for two years and resides in Saylorsburg, Pa.

“Their dedication, work ethic, and overall goal to create long-term value for both our customers and our organization make them truly deserving of the Sales Team of the Year award,” Willard added.

Malan “Steve” Parker was an exemplary ATAS product representative in the New England territory who passed away in 2002. Since then, ATAS has recognized the sales team of the year with the Malan S. Parker Award.

Seigel, Oyer, and Colon were chosen as the 2025 winners for their teamwork in overall sales growth, and observance of corporate goals.

Standing seam roof supports Kingspan solar installation in Mendota

Alongside project partners REC Solar and Dynamic Energy, Kingspan Insulation North America celebrated the completion of a new rooftop solar installation at its Mendota, Ill., manufacturing facility with a ribbon-cutting event in April.

“This project is a tangible example of our Planet Passionate commitment in action as we continue to reduce operational carbon, increase our use of renewable energy, and invest in long-term solutions that strengthen both our environmental performance and our business,” said Kingspan Insulation president Kyle McEnroe.

The 881-kilowatt solar photovoltaic system was installed across roughly 50,000 sf of roof space. The system is expected to generate roughly 1 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, offsetting approximately 700 metric tonnes of CO2 emissions.

The solar PV system was installed on a standing seam metal roof, with racking

attached directly to the seam ribs using clamps—no roof penetrations required.

Dynamic Energy served as the engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) firm for the Mendota project. The system itself is owned and operated by REC Solar through a 25-year power purchase agreement.

“As companies increasingly seek strategies to lower emissions and strengthen supply chain sustainability, this project shows how clean, reliable, and affordable solar energy—delivered through a long-term power purchase agreement—can help achieve those goals,” said REC Solar CEO Robb Jetty.

The Mendota installation is Kingspan’s third in North America, following similar installations at its facilities in DeLand, Fla., and Winchester, Va. The company’s sustainability program includes the goal of installing solar PV systems on all wholly owned sites and achieving 60% direct renewable energy use by 2030.



Kingspan Insulation North America president Kyle McEnroe cuts the ribbon to celebrate the completion of an 881-kW rooftop solar installation at the company’s Mendota, Ill., manufacturing facility. He is joined by Mendota City Council members Amy Short and Emily McConville, REC Solar’s Mike Arent, Dynamic Energy’s Jessica Nee, and members of the Mendota facility team.

SOURCE: KINGSPAN INSULATION NORTH AMERICA

“With U.S. industrial electricity rates continuing to rise, this project demonstrates how sustainability and sound business planning go hand in hand,” explained Dynamic Energy president and COO Oliver Davis. “We applaud [Kingspan’s] forward-thinking approach to reducing emissions while gaining control over rising energy costs.”

The Mendota facility employs 39 people and produces expanded polystyrene (EPS) insulation used in a range of commercial and residential building applications.

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SOURCE: ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS



Construction backlog rebounds and profit expectations hold despite Iran conflict

Associated Builders and Contractors reported that its Construction Backlog

Indicator rose to 8.6 months in March, up 0.5 months from February and up 0.1 months from March 2025.

According to an ABC member survey conducted March 23 to April 6, the 15% of ABC member contractor respondents under contract to perform work on data centers had a significantly longer backlog (10.6 months) than the 85% of contractors not involved with data centers (8.3 months).

“Backlog has fully rebounded from January’s four-year low and, at 8.6 months, is now back to levels not seen since last summer,” said chief economist Anirban Basu. “Contractors appear unfazed by the sharp rise in oil prices precipitated by the conflict in Iran. Even with the potential for accelerated materials price escalation, profit margin expectations improved to the highest level since February 2025.”

The backlog indicator provides a snapshot of how much work contractors have under contract, serving as a measure of construction activity and near-term economic momentum in the industry.

The organization’s Construction Confidence Index readings for profit margins and staffing levels increased in March, while the readings for sales fell. The readings for all three components are higher than they were one year ago and remain above the threshold of 50, indicating expectations for growth over the next six months.

“Staffing expectations, up in each of the past four months, are now at the highest level since April 2022,” Basu continued. “This increase is particularly surprising given that the industry’s hiring rate fell to the lowest level ever recorded in February, although it aligns neatly with the uptick in employment growth observed in the March jobs report.”

Whether this optimism proves justified likely depends on how quickly the conflict in Iran comes to a resolution, Basu added.

“A lengthy dispute will put continued upward pressure on oil prices and borrowing costs.”

SOURCE: MULEHIDE



Matt Bost

Matt Bost promoted to MuleHide regional director, Southeast

Low-slope roofing manufacturer MuleHide has promoted Matt Bost to Southeast regional director, which encompasses Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and part of Georgia.

Bost had served as territory manager for West Central and Southwest Florida since joining the company in 2022. He has over 15 years of experience in the roofing industry.

In his current role, Bost will lead the region’s team of territory managers and be responsible for achieving regional sales goals.

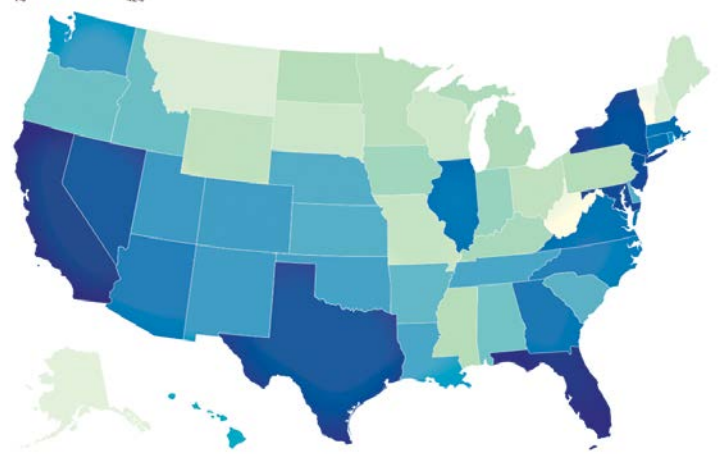
“Matt has been an exceptional partner to our customers and distributor partners in his territory, and to his MuleHide colleagues throughout the region and beyond,” said MuleHide managing director Dan Williams. “We look forward to having him build on that success as regional director.”

SOURCE: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS

IMMIGRANT WORKERS IN CONSTRUCTION, 2024

Share in the Construction Labor Force

1% 42%



Immigrants’ share of the workforce reaches record high in 2024

Immigrants’ share of the construction workforce reached a record high in 2024, with foreign-born workers accounting for more than a quarter of the industry’s labor force (26.3%). The share is even higher among construction trades, for which one in three craftsmen is foreign-born.

That, according to a report authored by Natalia Siniavskaia, Ph.D., the assistant vice president for housing policy research at the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

Her article “Which states and construction trades depend the most on immigrant workers?” also finds that reliance on foreign-born labor is especially pronounced in California and Florida (where immigrants make up more than 40% of the construction workforce), Texas (39%) and Nevada (38%).

The concentration of immigrants is particularly high in construction trades that are essential to building homes, such as roofers (53%).

The two most prevalent construction occupations, laborers and carpenters, account for more than a quarter of the industry’s labor force. Among them, 35% of carpenters and 43% of construction laborers are foreign-born.

“These trades typically require less formal education, yet such workers consistently rank among those with the most severe labor shortages,” Siniavskaia writes.

In a survey from April 2025, more than half of builders reported either some or a serious shortage of workers performing finished carpentry. Shortages are similarly widespread for other construction trades directly employed by builders, such as bricklayers and masons.

More than half (52%) of the nation’s three million immigrant construction workers reside in the four most populous states (California, Texas, Florida, New York), which comes as no surprise.

“These states are not only the largest by population but also longstanding immigrant gateways, making them particularly reliant on foreign-born construction labor,” writes Siniavskaia.

Immigrants comprise 42% of the construction workforce in California and 41% in Florida, followed by 39% in Texas and 37% in New York.

That said, reliance on foreign-born labor is expanding beyond these traditional hubs. Nevada, for example, recorded the fourth-highest share of immigrant construction workers in 2024 (38%), closely trailing Texas.

Maryland and New Jersey also reflect this broader trend, with immigrants accounting for 37% of the construction labor force in each state.

In Connecticut, Massachusetts, Georgia, Virginia, Illinois, Arizona, and North Carolina, more than one-quarter of construction workers are foreign-born.

At the other end of the spectrum, several states, including New Hampshire, Montana, Alaska, West Virginia, and Vermont, have immigrant shares below 5%.

“Because immigrant workers are disproportionately concentrated in construction trades, their presence among craftsmen exceeds their overall share of the industry in every state,” Siniavskaia notes.

In California and Texas, immigrants account for more than half of all construction tradesmen. In Florida, Maryland, and Nevada, the shares are similarly elevated, approaching 50%, while in New Jersey and New York, more than 45% of craftsmen are foreign-born.

While most states draw most of their foreign-born workers from the Americas, Hawaii relies more heavily on Asian immigrants. European immigrants are a significant source of construction labor in New York, New Jersey, and Illinois.

Temoyan possesses more than two decades of experience in construction, restoration, and property services. He will work with HCR companies Highland Commercial Roofing, Skycraft Roofing, Fidelity Roof Company, North-West Roofing, and Warren RoofCare to strengthen sales execution, support training and development, and help bring greater consistency to how the organization pursues and wins work.

“[John’s] background working with many of the same property and construction stakeholders we serve makes him a natural fit for our organization,” said Erekson.

Kelley brings more than 15 years of marketing leadership experience across construction, commercial property services, manufacturing, and architectural products to HCR.

As vice president of marketing, she will lead marketing strategy and execution across The HCR Group platform to support brand development, demand generation, and marketing programs that help regional teams grow within their local markets.

“Gina understands how to build marketing systems that support field teams and generate real business results,” said Erekson.

SOURCE: METALFORMING LLC



New Tech partnership expands MetalForming's roof and wall panel capabilities

Thanks to a new authorized distributor agreement, New Tech Machinery's equipment is available through

MetalForming boasts a purpose-built trailer for New Tech Machinery's SSQ portable rollformer.

SOURCE: THE HCR GROUP



John Temoyan

The HCR Group bolsters bench strength with new VPs Temoyan and Kelley

With the goal of becoming the commercial roofing partner of choice across the Western United States, The HCR Group is bolstering its bench strength with the appointment of John Temoyan as vice president of sales and Gina Kelley as vice president of marketing.



Gina Kelley

The HCR Group is a commercial roofing platform that provides established regional roofing businesses with shared resources across safety, operations, finance, and more.

“We are intentionally building a leadership team that can support the next phase of growth for this platform,” said HCR CEO Mike Erekson. “John and Gina bring complementary strengths that will help our regional companies continue to grow while maintaining the local leadership, relationships, and reputation that have made each of these businesses successful.”

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“As fabricators modernize their operations, they need equipment backed by responsive support,” said MetalForming president & CEO Stephen Gosk. “This partnership lets us deliver proven NTM machines with the training, commissioning, and service our customers expect.”

NTM is a manufacturer of portable rollforming, and roof and wall panel machines based in Aurora, Colo. Based in Peachtree, Ga., MetalForming is a distributor of metal-forming equipment for architectural and precision fabrication applications.

“MetalForming’s technical expertise and customer-first approach make them an ideal distribution partner,” said NTM vice-president Terry McGuire. “Together, we’re making it easier for customers to access quality equipment and ramp up production faster.”

With this partnership, MetalForming keeps several NTM machines in stock and ready to ship, cutting weeks or months of wait time. The distributor also boasts a purpose-built trailer for the SSQ3 portable rollformer, which is ready to ship along with the machine.

Fabricators gain access to NTM’s portfolio of roof and wall panel machines for a variety of production profiles, while MetalForming’s experts offer pre-sale engineering, in-plant demos, installation, and certified operator training.

The distributor also provides local ongoing support through preventive maintenance, repairs, and readily available parts, as well as flexible financing.



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Project planning momentum fueled almost entirely by data centers in March

Planning momentum in March 2026 was powered almost entirely by data center projects, said Sarah Martin, associate director of forecasting at Dodge Construction Network.

“For some categories, this reflects a natural reset after the outsized growth in late 2025. But for others, elevated macroeconomic risks are likely beginning to feed into planning decisions,” she said.

Martin was referring to the March 2026 Dodge Momentum Index (DMI), which increased 1.8% that month to 250.5 (2000=100) from the downwardly revised February reading of 246.2. Over the month, commercial planning grew by 7.0%, while institutional planning momentum declined by 8.8%.

On the commercial side, momentum slowed across all sectors except data centers. Institutional planning saw widespread weakness, with only education and public buildings showing moderate gains.

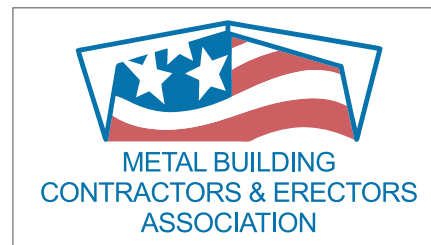
Despite recent declines, the DMI remains elevated. Year-over-year, the DMI is up 25.8% when compared to March 2025. The commercial segment is up 28.5% (-12.7% when excluding data centers), and the institutional segment is up 19.6% over the same period.

A total of 54 projects valued at \$100 million or more entered planning throughout February. The largest of those included 17 individual buildings, each valued at \$500 million, for the Amazon Data Center Campus in Hamlet, N.C.

Similarly, 10 individual buildings—each valued at \$250 million—entered planning for the Microsoft Data Center DSM50 in Dallas, Iowa.

The largest institutional projects were the \$245-million MCLJ Outpatient Pavilion in San Diego, Calif., the \$183-million Orlando Health Viera Hospital (Phase 1B) in Viera West, Fla., and the \$175-million Bachelor Enlisted Quarters renovation project at Camp Pendleton North in San Diego, Calif.

Published by Dodge Construction Network, the DMI is a monthly measure based on the 3-month moving value of nonresidential building projects going into planning, which has been shown to lead construction spending for nonresidential buildings by a full year to 18 months.



CMBT achieves accreditation in metal building assembly

Carolina Metal Building Technologies Inc. (New London, N.C.) has met the standard recognizing metal building assemblers

committed to excellence.

The Metal Building Contractors and Erectors Association (MBCEA) reports that its contractor member now holds AC478 accreditation, which means CMBT has the personnel, organizational skills, experience, knowledge, management procedures, and commitment “to assemble metal buildings in accordance with code, specifications, costs, and deadlines.”

“Achieving AC478 accreditation exemplifies the culture and reputation of Carolina Metal Building Technologies, transforming construction processes into experiences that are safe, seamless, and even enjoyable for clients and partners,” said MBCEA president David Leinbach. “Congratulations to the entire Carolina MBT team on this outstanding accomplishment!”

Administered by the International Accreditation Service (IAS), AC478 accreditation requires documented management systems, rigorous safety training, quality management, OSHA training, documented safety plans, site-specific plans, and other documentation.

“The AC478 accreditation is the way we are able to demonstrate our commitment to the highest standards of metal building assembly,” said CMBT president Dan Carney, adding that the accreditation “helps us to stand out to clients, general contractors, designers, and those who are looking for top-level and dependable partners.”

Construction employment rebounds in March, but cause for concern remains

The construction industry added 26,000 jobs in March 2026, according to an Associated Builders and Contractors analysis of data released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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On a year-over-year basis, industry employment has grown by 57,000 jobs, an increase of 0.7%.

Non-residential construction employment increased by 12,200 positions, with gains across all three subcategories. Non-residential building added the most jobs, increasing by 4,500 positions. Specialty trade and heavy and civil engineering added 3,900 and 3,800 jobs, respectively, in March.

The construction unemployment rate was 6.7%. While unemployment across all industries dropped to 4.3%, it is still 0.1 percentage points higher than one year ago.

“Industry-wide employment has expanded by an average of 19,300 jobs per month in 2026,” noted ABC chief economist Anirban Basu. “That’s a marked improvement from 2025, when construction employment actually declined, but there remains cause for concern about the industry’s outlook.”

Basu noted that the March jobs data does not capture “the detrimental ways in which the conflict in Iran will continue to affect the construction industry.”

He pointed out that oil prices have risen to prices not seen since 2022, with diesel pricing soaring to \$5.40 per gallon, up more than \$1.90 per gallon from the start of this year. At the same time, higher treasury yields are putting renewed pressure on borrowing costs.

“While contractors were relatively optimistic about the near-term outlook as of February, according to ABC’s Construction Confidence Index, it remains to be seen how long that optimism can persist under current economic conditions,” Basu added.

Roofing Alliance names Cori Vernam 2026 Bennett Award recipient

The Roofing Alliance has named Cori Vernam of Antis Roofing & Waterproofing Inc. as the recipient of the 2026 Bennett Award, in recognition of her outstanding commitment to advancing the roofing industry.

Vernam, director of marketing, cause and business development, was honored for her leadership and longstanding commitment to the alliance’s partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC).

“Cori’s volunteer spirit, industry leadership, and commitment to helping others embody the essence of the Bennett Award,” said Roofing Alliance executive director Alison L. LaValley. “Her impact is measured not only in projects completed, but in the lives touched and communities strengthened.”

Vernam served on the original task force that helped launch the Roofing Alliance’s relationship with RMHC, helping establish a partnership that continues to support families nationwide. She connected contractors with RMHC locations throughout California and engaged her own company.



PHOTO LAUREN GREEN, COURTESY THE ROOFING ALLIANCE

From left: Bill Good, Roofing Alliance; Susan DeGrassi and Cori Vernam, Antis Roofing; Roofing Alliance president Greg Hudson; Greg Bloom, QXO; Roofing Alliance executive director Alison LaValley.

On a personal level, she currently serves on the RMHC Orange County board and has volunteered with the organization for more than 26 years.

Vernam is also active across the roofing industry. As a member of National Women in Roofing, she organized an outreach event during this year’s International Roofing Expo, during which members prepared breakfast for families staying at the Las Vegas Ronald McDonald House.

In addition to her work with RMHC, she supports numerous charitable organizations while continuing to lead marketing and community impact efforts at Antis.

She received the 2026 Bennett Award during the Roofing Alliance spring meeting in Jekyll Island, Ga. 



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The PNC Patio, Kansas City

In the heart of downtown Kansas City, Mo., lies the \$850-million KC Power & Light District. Spanning nine city blocks, The Cordish Companies' development features 50 unique restaurants, shops, and entertainment venues, and welcomes 9.1 million annual visitors.

Located within this district is the PNC Patio—a versatile event space with a range of seating options for both general visitors and VIP guests.

Sightline Commercial Solutions was tasked with enhancing the VIP stage area with a custom platform and railing system, including integrated platforms, IBC and SC90 guardrails, and drink rails.

Designed for flexibility, these modular railing and seating solutions support a range of events, from everyday social gatherings to high-energy experiences like concerts and Royals and Chiefs watch parties, while maintaining safety and comfort.

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