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Doors, Degrees and a Little Bit of Wonder

November is when a builder's year starts talking back. The punch lists get shorter, the wind gets sharper, and every building you put up this season is about to face its first real test. This issue covers the parts of a building that get tested hardest: the openings, the envelope, and what happens when things go wrong.

We start with the biggest hole in the wall. Our **Big Door Retrofit** feature follows what happens when an owner outgrows the door they built around. Headers have to be rethought, loads have to go somewhere, and the customer usually wants it done before the weather turns. The engineering is tricky, and the payoff can be huge.

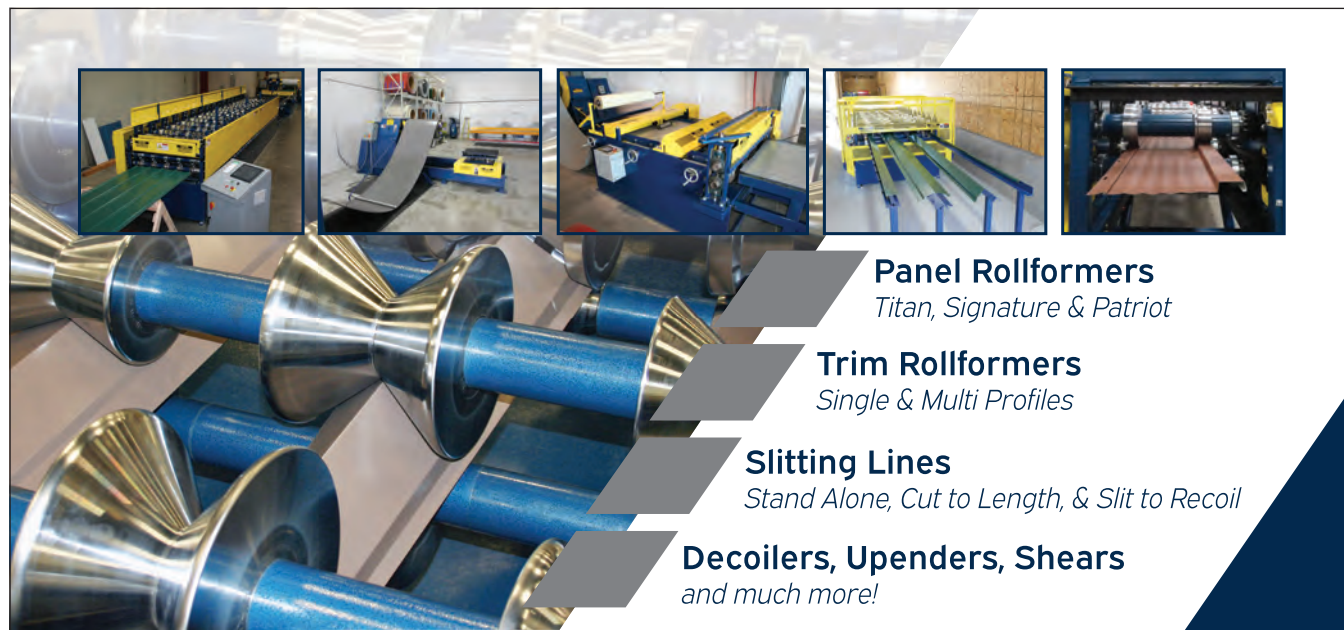
Then we're picking a fight we've picked before. **Does R-Value Really Matter?** returns, revisited, because the conversation hasn't settled. Air leakage, thermal bridging, and installation quality all affect how a wall performs. If you've ever had a customer shop insulation by the label alone, this one is for you.

Our **Fire-Rated Products** roundup looks at the materials and assemblies that buy time when time matters most. Ag buildings full of hay, shops full of fuel and equipment, and structures with people inside all raise the stakes. Knowing your options makes you the builder with an answer when the question comes up.

On the lighter side of the envelope, **Garage Door Trends** shows where style is heading. Glass, color, hardware, and smart controls are turning the building's most utilitarian panel into a design statement.

And finally, a **Flashback** worth the trip. We revisit the Miracle of Birth Center, where fairgoers crowd in to watch calves, lambs, and piglets take their first wobbly steps. For many kids, it's the first time they've seen new life arrive. It's a reminder that a frame building isn't just a structure. Sometimes it's where people see something they'll remember for the rest of their lives.

Turn the page. There's a lot here worth opening. **FBN**



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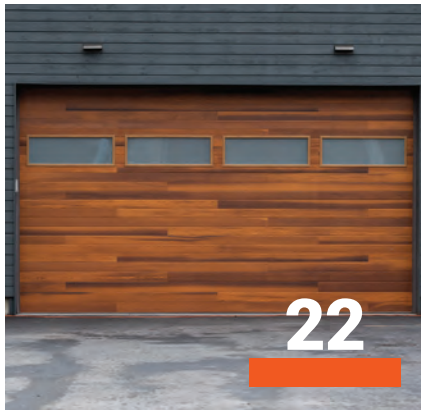
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Big Door Retrofits

Bringing Bi-Fold and Hydraulic Lift Doors to Existing Post-Frame Buildings

■ By Frame Building News Staff

A building's usefulness is often defined by what can — and can't — fit through its largest opening. As farms add wider implements, ag retailers upgrade to taller sprayers, and shop owners bring in equipment that won't clear a standard overhead door, more building owners are looking at a door retrofit instead of a new building. Swapping an aging sliding or sectional door for a bi-fold or hydraulic lift door is one of the more cost-effective ways to extend the working life of a post-frame structure, and it's a project post-frame builders are fielding more often as existing buildings age into their second and third decades of service.

A door retrofit is rarely a simple swap-and-go job, though. Both bi-fold and hydraulic doors carry substantial wind and dead loads, and moving from a cable-drawn or sliding door to a lift-style door usually means rethinking the header, the end wall posts, and sometimes the foundation beneath them. Here's what builders should know when a customer starts asking about a big door upgrade.

Why Owners Retrofit Instead of Rebuilding

The most common trigger for a retrofit is equipment that has outgrown the door. A shop built a decade ago for a single tractor may now need to clear a combine head, a fire truck, or an RV with roof-mounted air conditioning. Other owners are retrofitting

because their existing sliding door has become difficult to operate, lets in wind-driven snow, or has worn out its track hardware after years of use. Still others want to add automation—moving from a manually cranked or hand-slid door to one that opens at the push of a button—without the cost of a full building replacement.

Because a retrofit works within an existing footprint, it can also be the more economical path when the rest of the building — roof, siding, slab — is still in good condition. The door and its supporting structure become the focus of the project rather than the whole envelope.

Bi-Fold Doors:

Bi-fold doors hinge in the middle, with the lower panel folding up and under the upper panel as the door lifts, so the door tucks nearly flat against the header rather than swinging out into the yard or sliding along the wall. That folding action is typically driven by an electric winch and lift-strap system rather than hydraulics, which keeps ongoing maintenance straightforward once the door is set up correctly. Most builders don't install these systems every day, though, so the winch strap routing, and balance adjustments may be new territory, and following the manufacturer's installation instructions and calling on its technical support is the safest path.

Schweiss Doors, based in Hector, Minnesota, is one of the



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best-known manufacturers of bi-fold doors built around a lift-strap system, offering both the strap-driven bi-fold design and a hydraulic one-piece door line for building owners who want a different opening motion. The company also offers a cable-to-liftstrap conversion package for owners who want to keep an existing bi-fold frame while upgrading the lift mechanism, a useful middle-ground retrofit for a building that already has a bi-fold opening but outdated hardware.

Bi-fold doors are commonly specified in retrofits because they offer headroom and clearance with a folding panel design and because many post-frame builders are already comfortable framing and flashing a bi-fold opening. That familiarity can translate into a more predictable installation timeline compared to a door style the crew hasn't worked with before.

Hydraulic Lift Doors:

Hydraulic doors, sometimes called one-piece or lift doors, open as a single solid panel that pivots outward and upward on hydraulic cylinders, rather than folding in the middle. Because the door doesn't need a center hinge, the opening can present a cleaner, unbroken sightline when closed, and many owners like that hydraulic doors have fewer moving hinge points than bi-folds.

PowerLift Door Consultants, based in Lake Benton, Minnesota, manufactures one-piece hydraulic doors and holds patents on door designs. Schweiss Doors also produces a hydraulic "one-piece" door line alongside its lift-strap bi-fold doors. Both PowerLift Door Consultants and Schweiss Doors offer free-standing header frame designs that let a hydraulic door carry its own structural load rather than transferring that force into the building's existing posts and header. This detail matters a great deal in a retrofit, where the existing structure was likely never engineered for a door of the new size.

Because the hydraulic cylinders push against the door frame itself, hydraulic doors generally require a well-engineered header and door-post assembly that can resist both the door's dead weight and the leverage of the cylinders at full extension. The bottom rollers of a bi-fold doors also push on the door or building frames, often with forces greater than a hydraulic door of equal size. In a retrofit, that often means engineering the door posts and header as a stand-alone unit rather than relying on the building's original framing.

What Changes Structurally in a Retrofit

Whichever door style an owner chooses, a few structural questions come up on nearly every retrofit job:

- Header capacity: Can the existing header carry the new door's dead load and wind load, or does it need to be replaced or supplemented with a free-standing frame?
- Door post foundation: Larger doors concentrate more load onto fewer posts. Existing post embedment or footings may need evaluation or upgrades.
- Wall opening size: Enlarging an opening means removing and re-engineering wall girts, and may affect nearby trusses or purlins.

- Power and controls: Hydraulic doors and electric bi-fold lift-strap systems both need dedicated electrical circuits, and owners increasingly want wireless or app-based controls added during the retrofit.
- Insulation and sealing: Older buildings being upgraded for climate-controlled use often pair a door retrofit with insulated door panels and better perimeter sealing than the original door offered.

Because of these structural questions, most manufacturers and experienced post-frame builders recommend an on-site evaluation before quoting a retrofit, rather than assuming the existing header and posts can carry a new door without modification.

Matching the Door to the Building

There's no single right answer between a bi-fold and a hydraulic lift door—the choice usually comes down to opening size, wind exposure, budget, and how the owner plans to use the building. Both doors remain a strong fit for many agricultural and general-purpose shops, particularly where a crew is already comfortable

SOURCES & RESOURCES

- PowerLift Door Consultants — www.powerliftdoors.com. Lake Benton, Minnesota, with locally owned and operated fabrication locations across the country. Manufacturer of one-piece hydraulic doors for aviation, agricultural, commercial, and architectural buildings, and a specialist in retrofitting old sliding, bifold, fabric, and overhead doors.
- Schweiss Doors — www.schweissdoors.com. Hector, Minnesota. Manufacturer of lift-strap bi-fold doors and hydraulic one-piece doors, including free-standing header frame designs and cable-to-liftstrap conversion packages.
- National Frame Building Association (NFBA) — www.nfba.org. The primary trade association for the post-frame construction industry. Publishes the Post-Frame Building Design Manual and other technical resources, hosts the annual Frame Building Expo, and offers a builder certification program.
- University of Missouri Extension — extension.missouri.edu. Offers the "Basic Principles for Post-Frame Construction" self-study course and, in partnership with NFBA, administers the NFBA Post-Frame Certification Program exams.
- American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) — www.asabe.org. Publishes the engineering practices most directly referenced in post-frame design, including EP486 (Shallow Post and Pier Foundation Design), EP484 (Diaphragm Design of Metal-Clad, Post-Frame Rectangular Buildings), and S618 (Post-Frame Building System Nomenclature).
- University of Minnesota Extension — extension.umn.edu. Provides agricultural engineering and building-related educational programming relevant to post-frame and farm building owners.
- Land-grant university extension programs generally — extension.org. Many state land-grant universities maintain extension offices that field questions on farm building design, wind loading, and post-frame construction practices specific to their region and climate.



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with the bi-fold or hydraulic systems and where the building's existing header can be reused or modestly reinforced. Hydraulic doors tend to get a closer look in aviation hangars, larger commercial shops, and buildings where owners want the cleanest possible sightline.

For builders fielding these projects, the retrofit conversation is as much about structural engineering as it is about door selection. Bringing in the door manufacturer's engineering team early — before demolition of the old door and opening begins — gives the builder accurate header and post specifications and helps avoid surprises once the old door comes down and the new opening is exposed.

Retrofit by Building Type

The reasons for a big door retrofit — and the door style that makes the most sense — tend to track closely with how the building is used.

Agricultural buildings are the most common retrofit candidates. Farm equipment has grown steadily wider and taller over the past two decades, and a shop or machine shed built for a mid-size tractor often can't clear today's planters, combines, or sprayers with their booms folded. Because agricultural retrofits often happen between seasons on a tight schedule, bi-fold doors with lift-strap systems remain popular.

Aviation hangars present a different set of priorities. Wind loading is a bigger concern given how exposed most hangar sites are, and owners are often willing to invest more in a door that opens cleanly with minimal obstruction to wingspan and tail height. Hydraulic one-piece doors are often the choice for hangar retrofits, partly because the single-panel opening avoids the center hinge line of a bi-fold and gives pilots a completely unobstructed sightline when the door is open.

Commercial and light-industrial buildings — repair shops, fire stations, equipment dealerships — split fairly evenly between bi-fold and hydraulic doors, with the decision usually coming down to how frequently the door will cycle in a day, how much the owner values a fast open/close cycle, and whether the building's architecture calls for a particular look. High-cycle applications, where a door opens and closes dozens of times daily, put more wear on lift-strap and hinge components, and some owners choose hydraulic cylinders specifically because they tend to hold up well under frequent cycling.

Sizing, Engineering, and the Retrofit Design Process

A well-run door retrofit typically follows a similar sequence regardless of door style. It starts with a site visit to measure the existing opening, verify post spacing and header dimensions, and assess the condition of the framing that will carry the new door. From there, the manufacturer's engineering team—or a structural engineer working from the manufacturer's specifications—sizes the header, posts, and any bracing needed to handle the new door's dead load and the site's local wind design criteria.

This engineering step is where retrofits differ most from new construction. On a new building, the door opening is designed into the structure from the start, so posts, header, and footings

are sized together. In a retrofit, the builder often works around an existing slab, existing sidewall framing, and sometimes existing roof trusses that were never intended to carry the loads of a much larger opening. That's part of why free-standing header frame designs have become more common in the industry: a door system engineered to support its own dead and wind loads independent of the surrounding structure reduces the amount of retrofitting required elsewhere in the building, since the load path doesn't need to run back through the existing posts and trusses.

Local wind speed and exposure category matter more on large doors than on almost any other component of a post-frame building, simply because of the surface area involved. A 20-foot by 16-foot door presents a large sail to wind loading, and the engineering behind the header and posts needs to reflect the actual site conditions rather than a generic assumption. Builders working on a retrofit in a high-wind region should expect the engineering process to account for this with larger posts, deeper footings, or additional bracing than the same-size door in a more sheltered location.



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Automation, Controls, and Insulation

Many door retrofits are driven as much by a desire for automation as by opening size. Older sliding and hand-cranked doors require an operator to physically move the door, which can be a real limitation for a one-person shop or a building that opens and closes multiple times a day. Both bi-fold and hydraulic doors are commonly paired with electric or hydraulic power units that open and close the door at the push of a button, and remote and wireless controls — including smartphone-app-based systems — have become a standard option rather than a specialty add-on.

Insulation is another frequent companion upgrade. A retrofit is a natural point to move from an uninsulated door panel to one built with rigid foam core or insulated steel panels, particularly for buildings being converted to heated shop space or climate-controlled storage. Because the door is typically the largest single opening in a building's envelope, upgrading its insulation value can meaningfully change the building's overall heating and cooling performance, and it's worth evaluating alongside wall and ceiling insulation upgrades if the retrofit is part of a broader renovation.

Perimeter sealing is worth the same attention. Wind-driven



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rain and snow infiltration around an aging sliding door is one of the more common complaints that pushes an owner toward a retrofit in the first place, and both bi-fold and hydraulic door manufacturers offer weatherstripping and seal packages designed to close the gap between the door panel and the framed opening more effectively than older hardware typically did.

Installation Timeline and Working Around an Active Building

Because most retrofits happen on buildings that are still in use, scheduling is often as important as the engineering. Manufacturers and builders typically coordinate a delivery and installation window that minimizes the time the building is without a functioning door — critical for a working farm shop, an active fire station, or a commercial garage that can't simply shut down for a week. Pre-engineering the header and door frame off-site, so that on-site work is limited to structural modification and door installation rather than custom fabrication in the field, helps keep that window as short as possible.

Weather is a practical constraint too. Removing an existing door exposes the opening until the new door and any header work are complete, so retrofit projects in northern climates are frequently scheduled for late spring through early fall. Owners planning a retrofit for a building they rely on through the winter should build in extra lead time to order and engineer well before the door needs to come out.

Budgeting for a Retrofit

Cost on a big door retrofit is driven less by the door panel itself and more by the structural work required to support it. A straightforward swap into an opening that's already framed for a similar-size door — replacing an old bi-fold with a new one, for example — is generally the least expensive path. Enlarging the opening, adding a free-standing header frame, or upgrading foundations for larger door posts all add cost. Still, they're often what make the retrofit worthwhile if the goal is to accommodate equipment that wouldn't fit through the original opening at all.

Owners evaluating a retrofit should expect a quote to separate door and hardware costs from structural and installation costs, since the two vary independently: a modestly priced door on a heavily reinforced opening can end up costing more overall than a premium door installed into a straightforward, already-adequate opening. Quotes that break out both halves make it easier to compare options across manufacturers and understand where the project's money is actually going. **FBN**

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Fire-Rated Products in Post-Frame Construction

Why Not All Protection Is Equal

■ By Frame Building News Staff

With increasing wildfire risk and stricter codes, post-frame builders face more inquiries about fire-rated materials. Examining fire-retardant-treated wood, recent testing data, and new ember-protection products highlights the importance of these details.

Fire performance is now a central topic in post-frame construction. Builders in wildland-urban interface areas are receiving more questions from clients and code officials about fire-retardant-treated wood (FRTW), while homeowners in fire-prone regions are seeking information on supplemental products for ember intrusion. Both issues require careful attention, as important details can be easily overlooked.

Fire-Retardant-Treated Wood: What the Code Actually Requires

The International Building Code (IBC) addresses structural fire-retardant-treated wood in Section 2303.2, which defines FRTW as wood “impregnated with chemicals by a pressure process or other means.” The code is explicit that surface treatments don’t qualify: “The use of paints, coatings, stains or other surface treatments are not an approved method of protection as required in this section.”

The distinction between pressure-impregnated and surface-applied treatments is central to a testing program commissioned by the Western Wood Preservers Institute (WWPI), with support from the Southern Forest Products Association (SFPA), and

released in December 2025. WWPI represents preserved-wood treaters and preservative manufacturers in western North America and has provided technical support to the industry for over 75 years.

SOURCES & RESOURCES

- Western Wood Preservers Institute (WWPI), “Fire tests confirm not all fire-retardant treatments are equal,” December 16, 2025. <https://fireretardantwood.org/blog/fire-tests-confirm-not-all-fire-retardant-formulas-are-equal/>
- FireResistantWood.org — WWPI’s fire-retardant-treated wood resource site, including a sources list and technical library.
- PreservedWood.org — WWPI’s overview of fire-retardant-treated wood uses and specifications.
- International Building Code, Section 2303.2 (Fire-retardant-treated wood).
- ASTM E2768-11 (reapproved 2018), Standard Test Method for Extended Duration Surface Burning Characteristics of Building Materials (30-Minute Tunnel Test).
- safe soss® — manufacturer site for the Universal Ember Guard Carbon Filter and related wildfire defense products. <https://safesoss.com/>
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The Testing: Not All Fire-Retardant Treatments Are Equal

The WWPI/SFPA program tested lumber and plywood treated with six fire-retardant formulations: three pressure-applied and three non-pressure-applied. Testing was conducted at an independent laboratory using ASTM E2768-11 (reapproved 2018), the protocol specified in Section 2303.2 for structural FRTW. In this test, a Steiner Tunnel exposes samples to direct flame for 30 minutes. To pass, the flame front must not progress beyond the 10.5-foot mark at any time.

The results were clear. All 10 pressure-treated FRTW samples met the standard. Of the 21 non-pressure-applied samples, 19 failed to reach 30 minutes without the flame front passing 10.5 feet. Two non-pressure-applied samples lasted the full duration. However, WWPI notes that the substrate, Select Structural Douglas fir, may have influenced results. An untreated sample of this substrate lasted 27.3 minutes, over 90 percent of the test window, before failing.

Because fire-retardant-treated wood is used in high-occupancy structures such as multi-story apartments, it is critical to avoid potentially ineffective products based on questionable marketing claims.

WWPI's findings highlight a marketing trend: non-pressure-applied fire-retardant products are sometimes promoted as "code-compliant," "Class A rated," or "ASTM E84 tested." However, these claims alone do not qualify a product as FRTW under IBC

Chapter 23. ASTM E84 is a 10-minute flame-exposure test for interior finishes under Chapter 8 of the IBC, which is a shorter and different test than the 30-minute ASTM E2768 protocol required for structural FRTW. A product may have an E84 or Class A rating and still not meet the structural fire-retardant requirements.

For post-frame builders, the key takeaway is clear: when a project requires FRTW, whether by code, insurance, or owner request, confirm that the product was pressure-treated and tested to ASTM E2768, not just labeled as fire-rated. WWPI's FireResistantWood.org provides a list of pressure-treated FRTW sources and a summary distinguishing code-compliant FRTW from other products.

A Different Layer: Ember Protection at the Vent

Fire-retardant-treated wood protects structural members from direct flame contact. However, it does not address another common ignition source in wildfire-prone areas: wind-borne embers entering through attic, gable, soffit, or foundation vents. The Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety has identified ember intrusion through vents as a leading cause of structure ignition during wildfires, regardless of whether the building's framing is fire-retardant-treated.

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Defend" system developed by Nicholai Allen, a Southern California wildland firefighter. This self-extinguishing, phosphate-infused activated-carbon filter installs behind existing code-approved vents and metal mesh screening without requiring vent replacement. It is designed to reduce ember intrusion and smoke infiltration while maintaining normal ventilation. The product is sold with a heat-resistant ember guard tape for temporarily sealing small gaps and a hose-applied wildfire risk-reduction spray, and is available through Lowe's.

Help block wind-borne embers and smoke from getting into your vents. Embers are the leading cause of home loss during wildfire.

— safe soss® product messaging

It is important to clarify the product's intended use. The Ember Guard Carbon Filter is marketed as a supplemental, retrofit defense for existing structures, not as a code-compliant material or a substitute for pressure-treated FRTW

where required by code, insurers, or jurisdictions. Its installation guidance specifies placement behind existing vents, not as a replacement building material. For post-frame builders working on agricultural, commercial, or residential structures in fire-prone areas, this product is a useful option when clients seek additional protection beyond framing and cladding. However, it should be considered as an ember defense layer, alongside defensible space and vegetation management, not as a replacement for a structural fire rating.

What This Means on the Jobsite

- Confirm pressure treatment, not just a fire-related claim. Ask suppliers if FRTW was pressure-impregnated and tested to ASTM E2768, as required by Section 2303.2, rather than relying on "Class A" or "ASTM E84 tested" language for structural applications.
- Understand the difference between interior and structural requirements.

ASTM E84's 10-minute test applies to interior finish materials under IBC Chapter 8. It is not equivalent to the 30-minute ASTM E2768 test required for structural FRTW.

- Use ember-entry products as supplements, not substitutes. Vent-mounted ember filters and similar retrofit products provide additional protection against ignition pathways that FRTW does not address, but they do not meet structural fire-retardant requirements.
- When in doubt, go to the source. WWPI's FireResistantWood.org publishes a source list. When uncertain, consult the source. WWPI's FireResistantWood.org provides a list of pressure-treated FRTW suppliers and technical documentation for direct reference by builders and clients. Builders who can speak to all three, with the testing data to back it up, are in a stronger position with code officials, insurers, and clients alike. **FBN**

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Do R-Values Really Matter?

What Frame Builders Need to Know

■ By Frame Building News Staff

Editor's Note: This article draws on original reporting first published in the February 2025 issue of Rural Builder magazine, adapted here for Frame Building News readers.

Ask a post-frame or metal-frame builder whether R-values matter, and the honest answer is yes—but not in isolation. High energy costs and increasingly strict building codes have made insulation performance a routine part of the bid conversation. Understanding what an R-value actually measures, and where it falls short, helps builders answer client questions accurately and stay on the right side of code officials.

R-Value vs. U-Factor: Two Different Measurements

R-values measure an individual insulation product's resistance to heat flow. U-factors measure something broader: overall heat transfer through an entire building assembly—a wall, roof, or floor system—including framing, windows, doors, and other components that aren't insulation at all. David Tomchak, Director of Marketing & Technical Services for Bay Insulation Systems, put it this way: "R-value relates to specific insulation products

while U-factor relates to insulation assemblies."

R-values are the number most builders and customers recognize, partly because higher is intuitively better. That wasn't always the industry standard. According to GreenBuildingAdvisor's article "Understanding R-Value," the insulation industry relied on U-factors until Everett Shuman, director of Penn State's Building Research Institute, proposed the R-value — the mathematical inverse of U-factor — because a rising number was easier to market than a falling one.

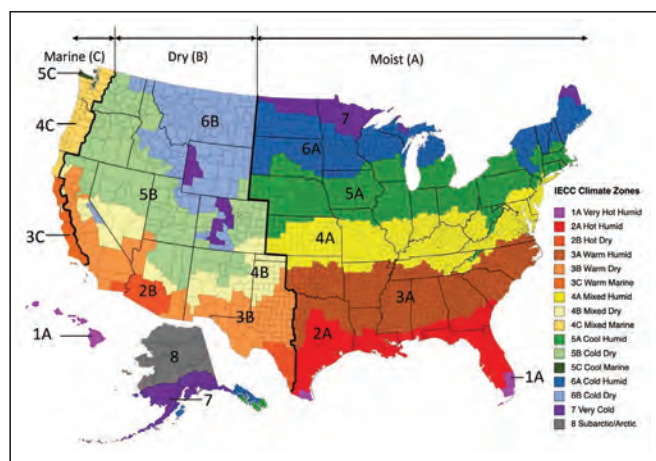
Why This Matters More in Frame Construction

Post-frame and metal-frame buildings have a structural advantage that shows up as a thermal disadvantage: repeating framing members. Every wood post, girt, or steel stud that interrupts a run of insulation creates a thermal bridge — a path of lower-resistance material that conducts heat between interior and exterior faster than the insulation around it. Air infiltration

through gaps at penetrations, service openings, and door and window rough openings does the same thing, but through a different mechanism. Because R-value only rates the insulation product itself, a wall system can be built with high-R material and still underperform if you don't address thermal bridging and air sealing. That's the gap U-factor calculations are meant to close, and it's why an insulation package that looks good on a spec sheet doesn't always translate into the assembly performance a building actually needs.

Climate Zones, Codes, and Which Standard Applies

The International Residential Code (IRC) and International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) both reference the same map, which divides the U.S. into eight climate zones. Each zone carries its own minimum R-value requirements: colder zones require more insulation, and warmer zones require less. ASHRAE — the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers — publishes a separate energy standard, ASHRAE 90.1, that some state and local jurisdictions adopt instead of, or alongside, the IECC.



“Typically, to determine what insulation is required, the factors you need to consider are climate zone and what the local and/or state municipalities have adopted as code, including the year,” Tomchak said. “Both ASHRAE 90.1 and the IECC publish a new standard every three years. However, they don’t do it concurrently or communicate directly with each other. They are two different bodies. Therefore, it is important to understand what may have changed from IECC 2012 to IECC 2015 to IECC 2018 to IECC 2021 to IECC 2024; or from ASHRAE 90.1-2013 to ASHRAE 90.1-2016 to ASHRAE 90.1-2019 to ASHRAE 90.1-2022, etc.”

Required R-values also vary by which part of the building envelope you’re insulating. A floor assembly in Climate Zone 1 might need only R-13, while the same floor in Zone 7 or 8 might need R-38.

Mass vs. Reflective Insulation

Insulation generally falls into two categories: mass and reflective. Mass insulation, such as fiberglass batting, reduces heat

RESOURCES

- David Tomchak, Director of Marketing, Bay Insulation Systems — <https://www.bayinsulation.com>
- David Yarbrough, R&D Services, Inc., consultant to the Reflective Insulation Manufacturers Association International (RIMA-I) — <https://rdservices.com>
- Reflective Insulation Manufacturers Association International (RIMA-I) — <https://rimainternational.org>
- International Code Council — International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) — <https://www.iccsafe.org>
- ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) — <https://www.ashrae.org>
- U.S. EPA ENERGY STAR — recommended insulation levels — <https://www.energystar.gov>
- Home Innovation Research Labs — insulation certification — <https://www.homeinnovation.com>
- GreenBuildingAdvisor.com, “Understanding R-Value” — <https://www.greenbuildingadvisor.com/article/understanding-r-value>
- R-foil — <https://rfoil.com/>
- Central States Manufacturing — <https://centralstatesco.com>
- Everlast Roofing, Inc. — <https://everlastroofing.com>
- Direct Metals, Inc. — <https://directmetalsinc.com>
- EPDM Coatings — <https://www.epdmcoatings.com>
- Levi’s Building Components (PoleSaver PF) — <https://www.levisbuildingcomponents.com/polesaver-pf>
- Stockade Buildings, Inc. — <https://www.stockadebuildingsinc.com>
- Marion Manufacturing — <https://marionmanufacturing.com>
- Creekside Manufacturing — <https://creeksidemanufacturing.com>
- Cold Spring Metal — <https://www.coldspringmetal.com>
- Construction Rollforming Show — <https://rollformingmagazine.com/construction-rollforming-show-registration/>
- Bay Insulation Systems — <https://www.bayinsulation.com>
- R&D Services, Inc. — <https://rdservices.com>
- RIMA International — <https://rimainternational.org>
- International Code Council (ICC) — <https://www.iccsafe.org>
- ASHRAE — <https://www.ashrae.org>
- ENERGY STAR (U.S. EPA) — <https://www.energystar.gov>
- Home Innovation Research Labs — <https://www.homeinnovation.com>

transfer mainly through conduction and convection. Reflective insulation works differently. David Yarbrough of R&D Services, Inc., a consultant to the Reflective Insulation Manufacturers Association International (RIMA-I), explained that reflective products “have thermal resistance (R-values) like all insulation products used in buildings.” Still, their performance depends on

“a significant reduction in heat transfer by thermal radiation” rather than conduction — achieved through low-emittance, high-reflectance surfaces installed to form enclosed reflective air spaces.

Installation method matters as much as material choice. Spray foam is applied as a liquid and must reach a consistent thickness to meet its rated R-value. Fiberglass batts are manufactured to a consistent thickness but are soft enough to compress, which lowers effective R-value on the job site. Both are vulnerable to gaps that can pull an installed assembly below code minimums even when the product itself is correctly specified.

Documentation Builders Should Keep

Reputable insulation suppliers carry third-party certification of R-value, such as Home Innovation Research Labs’ certification mark for fiberglass products. The IECC also spells out what to document on the job site. Under Section C303.1.1, insulation must carry a manufacturer’s R-value identification mark, or the installer must certify the type, manufacturer, and R-value installed in each building element. For blown-in or sprayed fiberglass and cellulose, that certification must list initial and

settled thickness, settled R-value, installed density, coverage area, and bags installed. For spray polyurethane foam, it must list installed thickness and R-value. The installer signs, dates, and posts the certification on site.

The Bottom Line

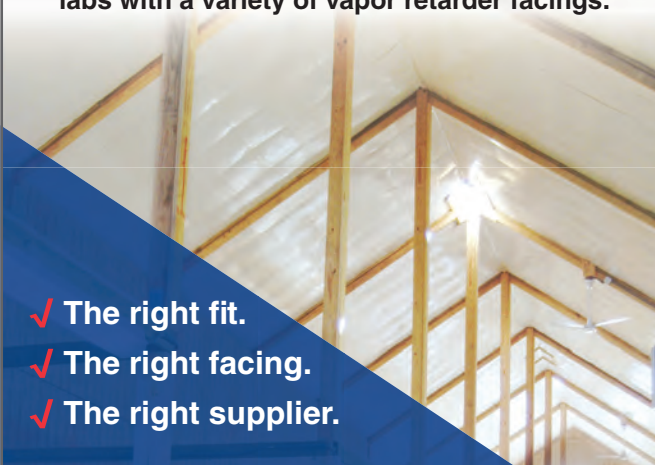
R-values matter — they’re the baseline number that codes, suppliers, and customers all reference. But an R-value only describes a single material, not the wall, roof, or floor assembly it ends up in. For frame builders, thermal bridging through repeating structural members and air leakage at penetrations are the details that decide whether an insulation package performs the way its rating suggests. Tomchak put the larger point plainly: “Just because new energy codes are established, it doesn’t automatically mean that they must be followed. It is the local and state jurisdictions that decide what to adopt, whether it is a code or standard, and the applicable date of that code or standard.” Builders who track both the number and the assembly it lives in stay compliant, competitive, and able to answer for the building’s performance after the crew has left the site. **FBN**



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Garage Door Trends

What Builders Need to Know

■ By Frame Building News Staff

The overhead door is now a major cost and design consideration for post-frame, metal, and residential-accessory projects. Overhead doors are being considered earlier in the design process to help builders avoid costly changes, challenges and scheduling delays. With rising material costs, steel tariffs, and customers arriving with specific color and R-value preferences, the following outlines the market outlook for 2027.

A Market Growing Despite a Soft Housing Backdrop

U.S. garage door manufacturing has faced challenges over the past five years. According to IBISWorld, higher interest rates and slower housing starts have kept revenue nearly flat, declining at about 0.8% annually, with a modest rebound to \$6.5 billion expected in 2026. Manufacturers have responded by focusing on repair and replacement, where most design-trend spending now occurs. Globally, the market is stronger: research estimates the worldwide garage and overhead door market at \$19–24 billion, with commercial overhead doors projected to grow from \$3.6 billion in 2026 to \$4.9 billion by 2030, driven by warehouse, logistics, and automation demand.

Steel Costs and Tariffs Are Back in the Conversation

Most garage doors continue to use steel skins, and tariff policy

remains a key factor in production and pricing. Trade researchers note that recent U.S. tariffs and trade tensions have increased domestic steel and aluminum prices while reducing import competition. This benefits domestic mills but creates cost pressures for manufacturers and builders quoting projects in advance. The Door and Access Systems Manufacturers Association (DASMA) has monitored these trends through previous tariff cycles and remains an important resource as manufacturers typically pass steel cost increases to dealers and installers.

Matte Black, Charcoal, and Faux Wood Lead the Style Trends

Matte black, dark charcoal, and faux-wood finishes are currently the most requested styles for modern homes. Dealer-focused trend reports consistently highlight the following style categories:

- Full-view glass and aluminum — slim aluminum frames paired with large clear or frosted glass panels for a bright, contemporary look.
- Flush-panel and linear steel — smooth, minimalist flat panels suited to mid-century and modern properties.
- Modern carriage house — the traditional barn-style silhouette updated with black or minimal hardware for a hybrid classic look.
- Vertical slats — vertical lines that add geometry and height to

contemporary architecture.

Regarding color and finish, the same sources identify a consistent group of leading options:

- Matte black and charcoal — high-contrast dark tones replacing the traditional plain-white door.
- Warm wood-grains — deep walnut, espresso, and composite faux-wood overlays that provide organic warmth without the maintenance of real wood.
- Iron ore and warm grays — softer than pure black, and versatile enough to pair with blond woods, warm whites, and brick.

On the functional side, three upgrades are consistently highlighted in dealer and manufacturer trend reports:

- Slim windows — narrow, horizontal windows placed high or stacked vertically, favored over large traditional window grids.
- High insulation (R-value) — thicker, multi-layer insulation as more homeowners convert garages into gyms, offices, or workshops.
- Smart integration — built-in Wi-Fi connectivity and smartphone apps for remote monitoring and voice control.

For builders, the key consideration remains consistent across styles: dark colors, faux-wood finishes, and glass usually involve higher costs and longer lead times than standard steel doors. It is

SOURCES & RESOURCES

- American Garage Door Factory — americangaragedoorfactory.com. Manufacturer of premium and custom garage doors, including its Lexington custom door series and related hardware lines.
- Kevmar Manufacturing — kevmar.net. Garage door hardware and component supplier; carried as a brand line by regional overhead door dealers.
- Integrity Overhead Door — integrityoverhead.com. Overhead door dealer and installer based in Lagrange, Indiana, serving Northeast Indiana and Southwest Michigan.
- C.H.I. Overhead Doors — chiohd.com. Arthur, Illinois-based manufacturer of residential and commercial sectional and rolling steel doors.
- Overhead Door Corporation (Overhead Door and Wayne Dalton brands) — overheaddoor.com. Lewisville, Texas-based manufacturer of residential, commercial, and industrial doors and openers.

important to communicate these factors during the estimating stage rather than after an order is placed.

Insulation Is No Longer an Upsell

Polyurethane-injected panels are replacing polystyrene cores,

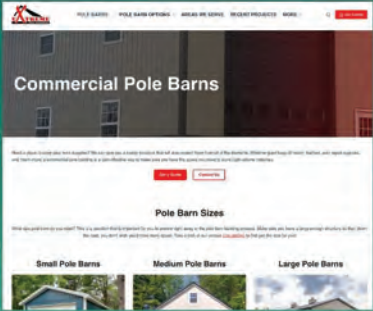


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offering both structural rigidity and improved R-value. This combination is increasingly important as post-frame buildings are used as workshops, gyms, or living spaces. Builders should anticipate that customers in 2026 and 2027 will request specific R-values and expect clear information on whether a door's foam is laid in or injected under pressure.

Smart Openers Are the Default, Not the Upsell

Wi-Fi-connected openers with smartphone control, remote diagnostics, and battery backup are now standard for residential and light-commercial projects. In commercial settings, these features enable automated scheduling and traffic monitoring to reduce energy loss from doors remaining open unnecessarily. Builders can highlight these benefits when customers consider basic and connected openers.

The Takeaway for Builders

As 2027 approaches, customer expectations for features such as insulation, finish options, and smart openers are increasing, while material costs remain volatile due to tariffs and steel pricing. Builders who address both customer demands and cost fluctuations, and who allow for schedule flexibility in their quotes, will be better positioned to avoid challenges on long-term projects. **FBN**

MARKET DATA & DESIGN-TREND SOURCES

"Garage Door Manufacturing in the US" — IBISWorld, June 2026. Industry revenue trends, tariff and material-cost pressure, and the shift toward repair/renovation demand.

"Garage and Overhead Doors Global Market Report" — The Business Research Company. Global market sizing, plus specific analysis of tariff and trade-policy impact on steel, aluminum, and door components.

"Commercial Overhead Doors Global Market Report 2026" — GII Research. Commercial-segment sizing and growth drivers through 2030.

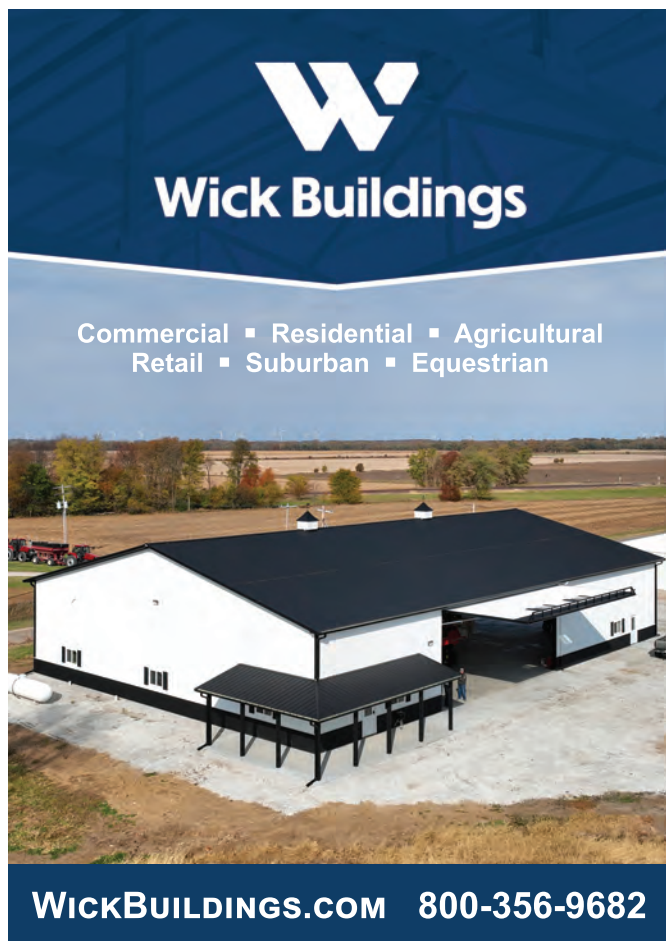
Door and Access Systems Manufacturers Association (DASMA) — dasma.com. The door and access systems industry's trade association; publishes Door & Access Systems magazine and tracks tariff and steel-cost impacts on manufacturers.

"Modern Garage Door: 8 Design Trends & Top Styles 2026" — Apple Door and Cheney Door Co. Style, material, and pricing roundups behind the full-view glass, flush-panel, and vertical-slat trend data above.

"Top 5 Garage Door Trends You Can't Miss" — Newman Windows and Doors, Stay Glassy Ep. 5. Dealer-perspective video and transcript covering insulation R-values, smart openers, and finish trends.

"New Garage Door Styles" — Garaga and Action Overhead Garage Door. Manufacturer and dealer trend pages covering iron ore and warm-gray color trends, wood-tone finishes, and slim window styles.

"Top Garage Door Trends for 2026: What Homeowners Are Choosing Now" — Sears Garage Doors. Consumer-side color, material, and glass-panel trend coverage.



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Why Do Pole Barn Posts Settle?

A pole barn's structural integrity depends heavily on its foundation. When posts settle, an entire building can shift or lean. This movement often indicates that the soil's load-bearing capacity beneath the structure has been compromised or was never properly prepared, leading to uneven weight distribution causing frame distortion over time.

Pole barns are often built using agricultural exemptions to building code requirements, or in areas that don't require structural plan reviews or inspections. Fully engineered post-frame buildings, conversely, involve highly trained design professionals who follow sound engineering practices to prevent columns from settling.

How can one tell if pole barn posts are sinking?

When a pole barn structure begins to settle, signs are often subtle at first, appearing as small, manageable issues. However, these can escalate if left unaddressed. A noticeable slope at doorway thresholds or doors suddenly requiring a shoulder check to close suggests the frame itself is twisting due to uneven support. Exterior splash plank gaps are particularly telling, as they often reveal independent movement between building and surrounding grade.

You can confirm active settlement by marking cracks and monitoring them over time to see whether movement is ongoing.

Visual indicator checks include walking the perimeter after rain to see whether steel siding is separating from the splash plank, a major red flag for foundation failure.

Every pole barn project starts with dirt. To achieve a quality outcome, it takes a quality beginning. It's hard to believe, but there is a lot of "stuff" to cover about dirt.

Building site preparation begins with proper drainage. Plan to keep the building grade higher than the surrounding site. On an ideal site, water drains naturally away from the building. Since few sites are ideal, grade work is often required to keep surface water away from the building. Keeping the finished building floor higher than the surrounding site reduces the chance of flooding during heavy rainfall or rapid snowmelt.

In floodplains, consult your building department first to determine their requirements. A typical recommendation is to set the finished floor level higher than the flood level. This may require importing fill to raise grade. You can hire a surveyor to determine these heights accurately. In some cases, vents may be installed below flood level to equalize interior and exterior pressures,

Many sites can be graded with a skid steer (a.k.a. Bobcat) or backhoe. Some cases require heavy equipment to properly grade the site so water drains away from the building.

At a minimum, site preparation includes removing all sod and vegetation. For ideal site preparation, remove topsoil and

stockpile for later use in finish grading. In frost-prone areas, remove any clays or silty soil from within the future building “footprint”. Replace subsoil removed around the building with granulated fill to help drain subsurface water from the building. Distribute all fill, free of large debris (no pit run), uniformly around the site in layers no deeper than six inches.

Compact each layer to a minimum of 90% Modified Proctor Density before adding the next layer. A soil (geotechnical) engineer can be engaged to perform this test and verify that compaction is adequate. Usually, adequate compaction takes more than driving over fill with a dump truck or earth moving equipment. When any building portion sits on fill, rest columns, as well as any concrete encasement, on or in undisturbed soil. In many cases, building inspectors will require engineering to confirm compaction adequacy on filled sites. Geotechnical engineers can be expensive; however, they are even more costly when called in to do analysis “after the fact”.

Soil compaction is defined as the mechanical process of increasing soil density. If performed improperly, soil settlement can occur, leading to unnecessary maintenance costs or structural failure.

So, what is soil actually? Soil is formed in place or deposited by various forces of nature – such as glaciers, wind, lakes, and rivers – residually or organically. Key factors in soil compaction are soil type, soil moisture content, and the compaction effort required.

There are five principal reasons to compact soil:

1. Increase load-bearing capacity,
2. Prevent soil settlement and frost damage,
3. Provide stability,
4. Reduce water seepage, and
5. Reduce swelling and contraction.

Soil can be compacted by vibration, impact, kneading, or pressure. These compaction efforts can be accomplished using two main force types: static or vibratory.

Static force is simply machine dead weight, applying downward force on the soil surface and compressing soil particles. The only way to change effective compaction force is by adding or subtracting machine weight. Static compaction is confined to upper soil layers and is limited in depth. Kneading and pressure are two examples of static compaction.

Vibratory force uses a mechanism, usually engine-driven, to create a downward force in addition to the machine’s static weight. The vibrating mechanism is usually a rotating eccentric weight or a piston/spring combination (in rammers). Compactors deliver a rapid sequence of blows (impacts) to the soil surface, affecting top and deeper layers. Vibration moves through soil, setting particles in motion and moving them closer together for the highest density possible. Based on the materials being compacted, a certain amount of force must be used to overcome a particular particle’s cohesive nature.

Poor, improper, or no compaction can result in concrete slab cracks or frost heaves, foundation erosion, and/or building settling. Proper compaction can extend structural life.

Every soil type behaves differently with respect to maximum density and optimum moisture. Therefore, each soil type has unique requirements and controls for both the field and testing purposes. Soil types are commonly classified by grain size, determined by passing soil through a series of sieves to screen or separate different grain sizes. Soils found in nature are almost always a combination of soil types. A well-graded soil consists of a wide size range, with smaller particles filling voids between larger particles. This results in a dense structure that compacts well. Soil makeup determines the best compaction method. Three basic soil groups exist: cohesive, granular, and organic. Organic soils are not suitable for compaction.

Cohesive soils, such as clays or silts, have the smallest particles. Cohesive soils are dense and tightly bound together by molecular attraction. They are plastic when wet and can be molded but become very hard when dry. Cohesive soils feel smooth and greasy when rubbed between fingers. Clay soil is less than ideal for constructing a pole barn and should be removed and replaced.

Granular soils range in particle size from .003” to .08” (sand) and .08” to 1.0” (fine to medium gravel). Granular soils are known for their water-draining properties. Sand and gravel obtain maximum density in either a fully dry or saturated state. Granular soils feel gritty when you rub them between your fingers. When you shake water and granular soils in your palm, they mix; when you stop shaking, they separate. When dry, a soil sample will crumble.

Gravel and sand can be compacted either by vibration (using a vibrating plate compactor, vibrating roller, or vibrating sheep’sfoot) or kneading with pressure (using a scraper, rubber-tired roller, loader, or grid roller). Both are good to excellent in foundation support terms and as a subgrade. They compact easily and are not expansive (expansive soils tend to be prone to frost heave issues).

Soil’s response to moisture is very important, as soil must carry loads year-round. Rain, for example, may transform soil into a plastic state or even into a liquid. In this state, soil has very little or no load-bearing ability.

Soil moisture content is vital to proper compaction. Moisture acts as a lubricant within soil, allowing particles to slide past each other. Too little moisture means inadequate compaction – particles cannot move past each other to achieve density. Too much moisture leaves water-filled voids and subsequently weakens load-bearing ability. Most soils reach highest density at a certain water content for a given compaction effort. As soil dries, it becomes more resistant to compaction. In a water-saturated state, voids between particles are partially filled with water, creating apparent cohesion that binds them together. This cohesion increases as particle size decreases (as in clay-type soils).

To determine whether proper soil compaction is achieved for

a specific construction application, several methods have been developed. The most prominent is soil density.

Soil testing measures soil density to compare the degree of compaction against specifications for the structure to be built; measures the effect of moisture content on soil density vs. specifications; and provides a moisture-density curve identifying optimum moisture content.

Tests to determine optimum soil moisture content are done in a laboratory. The most common is the Proctor or Modified Proctor Test. A particular soil needs to have an ideal (or optimum) moisture amount to achieve maximum density. This matters not only for durability but also for cost, because less compaction effort is needed to achieve the desired results.

A quick moisture-determining method is known as a “Hand Test”. I love these test kinds – they are quick, simple, and I don’t have to get out my checkbook or credit card to pay for them.

Pick up a handful of soil and squeeze it. Open your hand. If the soil is powdery and won’t hold the shape your hand makes, it is too dry. If it shatters when you drop it, it is too dry. If soil is moldable and breaks into only a couple of pieces when dropped, it has the right amount of moisture for proper compaction. If soil is plastic in your hand, leaves moisture traces on your fingers, and stays in one piece when dropped, it has too much moisture for compaction.

Backfilling pole holes with soil rather than concrete can significantly increase settlement risk, as earth-only foundations often lack the bearing capacity to distribute structural loads. Backfilling with soil offers no mechanism to prevent posts from being pushed deeper into the ground under the building’s own weight.

Over time, that loosened or disturbed soil will settle and compact naturally. Soil particles that are moved around and aerated will eventually be pulled down by gravity and water, densifying into a compact mass rather than loose soil. This happens when loose or disturbed earth densifies under gravity and moisture, causing structures on top to sink. When builders place a post in a hole and refill it only with displaced earth, this material remains susceptible to this natural compaction process. That is why many pole barns move significantly without a proper foundation.



Concrete cookie footings placed at the bottom of holes are a common but often inadequate way to save costs. Usually, they fail to meet the required load-bearing surface area. A footing should distribute building dead weight PLUS all imposed snow and live loads to the soils beneath the building.

Examine a typical pole barn example – a 40-foot-wide building with columns spaced every eight feet. Actual building weight (dead load) varies greatly depending on the materials used. Steel roofing and siding will be lighter than shingles and wood siding. For this example, we will use a light building weight of 10 psf (pounds per square foot). The building code specifies a minimum 20 psf roof live load. This means each footing must carry the weight of one-half of the width (20 feet) times column spacing (eight feet) times 30 psf, or 4800 pounds.

In many areas, soil bearing pressures are as little as 1500 or even 1000 psf. Basically, the easier it is to dig, the lower the soil’s capacity to support a vertical load.

For every foot of depth below grade, soil capacity may be increased by 20%. Other than with 1000 psf soil, for every foot of width over one foot, this capacity also increases by 20%.

With 1500 psf soil, and footing bottom four feet below grade, a 12-inch diameter footing will support 2400 pounds per square foot.

A 12-inch diameter footing covers 0.785 square feet; a 16-inch diameter covers 1.4, 18-inch 1.77, 24-inch 3.14.

An 18-inch diameter footing would support 4513 pounds from our example. Close, but no cigar. However – lots of places have snow loads (footings must support them) and many buildings are wider than 40 feet, or have columns placed over eight feet apart.

Increasing to a 40 psf roof snow load, with the same eight-foot column spacing, would mean resisting an 8,000-pound load! With 1,500 psf soil, even a two-foot-diameter footing would be inadequate.

How about Sakcrete® ready-mix concrete for footings?

The most familiar and most available option is Sakcrete® general-purpose High Strength Concrete Mix. When mixed per manufacturer’s instructions, this mix affords a compressive strength of 4,000 psi (pounds per square inch) at 28 days.

Instructions: Empty contents into a mortar box, wheelbarrow, or mechanical mixer. When mixing by hand, form a crater for

adding water. Add water slowly. Avoid a soupy mix. Excess water reduces strength and durability and can cause cracking. Mix a 60-pound bag with three quarts of water, and an 80-pound bag with four quarts.

Now, realities of using bagged concrete for pole barn footings....

It is not unusual to have concrete encasements 24 inches or larger in diameter and 18 inches or more in depth, to prevent building settling and uplift issues. One hole this size would take 4.71 cubic feet, or about 700 pounds of concrete! Even a very small building with an 18-inch diameter and depth takes 2.65 cubic feet, or about 400 pounds of concrete.

With either 60- or 80 lb. bags, it is going to take a lot of bags! An average building could easily have 20 posts, and if looking at 700 pounds per post, we are talking about seven TONS of concrete (3-1/2 yards).

Setting aside the huge bag numbers, other realities remain. Some builders insist on throwing an entire bag (usually including the bag) into a hole. They believe groundwater will cause ready-mix to harden. Why does this not resemble the manufacturer's instructions?

Engineering a reliable foundation requires addressing both a structure's downward pressure and potential for vertical uplift caused by wind. Professional industry guidelines emphasize that a properly treated post with a concrete base provides essential vertical load distribution necessary to prevent long-term shifting. Relying solely on original soil leaves a building's stability to chance, particularly in areas where soil bearing capacity is inconsistent or prone to high moisture. Concrete bottom collar pours extending up post sides serve a dual purpose: preventing the building from sinking while also resisting wind-driven uplift forces. **FBN**

Mike Momb has been Technical Director for Hansen Pole Buildings, LLC of Browns Valley, Minnesota for more than 20 years. His daily post-frame blog, as well as his weekly "The Pole Barn Guru" column can be followed at the company website, www.hansenpolebuildings.com/blog/.



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I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanction and civil actions.

Strategies for Closing a Sale

Somewhere along the way, salespeople were taught that closing is a moment.

It's the big finish. The point where you reach into the sales toolbox, pull out your favorite closing technique, say the magic words, and get the customer to sign on the dotted line.

I've never bought into that.

After more than four decades in sales, I've come to believe something very different.

You don't close a sale at the end. You earn it all the way through.

That's especially true in post-frame.

A lot of the people reading this aren't sitting in a sales office all day. You may own the company. You might have been checking a crew at 7:00 this morning, meeting with a building prospect at 10:00, figuring material at noon, and answering a customer call from your truck later that afternoon.

Selling is simply one more hat you wear.

Others work specifically in sales for a post-frame builder, maybe even a larger operation with a sales team and sales manager.

Either way, the fundamentals don't change.

By the time you ask for the business, most of the work should already be done. You've asked questions. You've listened. You understand what the customer is trying to accomplish. You've helped them work through the choices. You've established value and built trust.

At that point, asking for the order shouldn't feel like a dramatic moment.

It should feel like the logical next step.

You're Not Selling a Pole Barn

I've given a talk called "You're Not Selling Pole Barns."

Why?

Because you aren't.



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Yes, the customer may tell you they want a 40-by-64 building. They may want two overhead doors, a certain roof pitch, black steel, a row of windows, a cupola, wainscot, or any number of other things.

Those are specifications.

They aren't necessarily why the customer is buying the building.

That 40-by-64 may finally give somebody a place to restore the cars they've been collecting for 20 years.

It may be the shop that allows a small contractor to add equipment, hire another employee, and grow his business.

Maybe they want horses.

Maybe they're tired of the boat, camper, lawn mower, side-by-side, and everything else fighting for space in the garage.

Maybe this is the barndominium they've been dreaming about for a decade.

Maybe they want a place where the kids and grandkids can gather on Saturday afternoon.

That's what they're buying.

You're selling what happens inside the building. You're selling a lifestyle.

That matters when we talk about closing because people rarely make a major

investment based solely on a list of posts, trusses, steel panels, doors, windows, and fasteners.

They buy what all those pieces will allow them to do.

Your job is to figure out what that is.

Closing Starts With Listening

One of the most valuable sales skills I know is pretty simple.

Ask a question.

Then shut up and listen.

Simple? Yep.

Easy? Not always.

We know buildings. We know metal roofing. We know doors, windows, fasteners, ventilation, insulation, trim packages, snow loads, and everything else that goes into getting a building from an idea to a finished structure.

It's tempting to show the customer how much we know.

Slow down.

First, find out what they know about what they want.

"What are you going to use the building for?"

"What matters most to you?"

"How do you see yourself using it five years from now?"

"What made you decide that now is the time to build?"

Those answers matter.

A customer who wants a 40-by-64 woodworking shop and a customer who wants a 40-by-64 place to store equipment may need the same square footage. They are not buying the same building.

The better I understand the why, the better I can help with the what.

That changes the close because I'm no longer trying to convince somebody to buy a building.

I'm helping them get something they've already told me they want.

Build Agreement Along the Way

Closing doesn't happen only at the end.

It happens in little decisions throughout the process.

Call them mini closes if you want. I'm less concerned with what we call them than I am with recognizing their value.

We agree that 40-by-64 is the right size.

Good.

We determine where the overhead doors need to be based on how the customer will use the building.

Good.

We talk through ventilation, insulation, windows, colors, roof style, or whatever else matters to this particular project.

Another decision made.

These aren't tricks designed to maneuver somebody toward yes. They're checkpoints.

Are we still headed in the right direction?

Are we solving the problem the customer came to us with?

If we've worked through those decisions together, the final proposal shouldn't arrive as some giant surprise. The customer has been part of building the solution.

That makes the final decision much more natural.

Price or Investment?

There is a price attached to every building.

No getting around that.

But there is also an investment attached to what that building is going to provide for the next 10, 20, 30, or 40 years.

That's a different conversation.

If you make the entire sales process about price, don't be surprised when the customer makes the final decision based entirely on price.

Of course budget matters. People have real numbers they need to work within. Pretending otherwise would be foolish.

Our job is to help the customer understand what they're getting for their investment.

What is the value of the better door?

What does proper ventilation mean over the life of the building?

If you're putting a quality metal roofing system on that building, does it make sense to save a few bucks with a fastener that may not offer the same longevity?

Would spending a little more today on the right size building prevent the customer from saying, "I wish we'd gone another 10 feet," three years from now?

Those are legitimate conversations.

And this is where our suppliers matter too. A good supplier doesn't simply give the builder another item to put on a quote. They help that builder understand the value of the product well enough to explain it to the end user.

Features are nice.

Value closes sales.

If You're Afraid of Your Price, Your Customer Will Be Too

Here's one I've watched happen more times than I can count.

The proposal is ready.

You go through the building.

Then comes the number.

"The total investment is \$86,500."

Silence.

One second.

Two seconds.

Three.

I've been in that moment more times than I can count. I like to talk—I really do—but I've learned the hard way that the second you start filling that silence, you're

not selling anymore... you're negotiating against yourself. I've literally caught myself halfway through a sentence thinking, "What are you doing? Nobody asked you to discount it." And I had just to stop talking and let it sit.

Now the salesperson gets uncomfortable.

"Well, I might be able to sharpen my pencil a little."

The customer hasn't said anything.

"We could probably change a couple things and get that down."

Still nothing.

"I could check and see if there's anything else we can do."

Congratulations.

You just negotiated with yourself.

Worse yet, you may have created a price objection that didn't exist.

If you are afraid of your price, you will make your customer afraid of your price.

Present the number confidently. Explain what the customer is getting. Make sure there aren't any unanswered questions.

Then be quiet.

Sometimes silence is your best friend.

The customer may be thinking about financing. They may be comparing your number with something else they've seen. They may simply be processing the fact that they are about to spend \$86,500.

Give them a minute.

Don't buy back the sale.

If there's an objection, let the customer tell you what it is.

Then you can deal with the real issue instead of fixing something that wasn't broken.

Don't Ignore the Elephant

That doesn't mean we wait until the end to uncover every concern.

If there's an elephant in the room, talk about it.

Maybe the customer has another quote.

Maybe the project is pushing the top end of their budget.

Maybe husband and wife don't completely agree on the size.

Maybe they're worried about timing.

Maybe they're trying to decide between building now and waiting until next spring.

You don't need an interrogation.

You need a conversation.

"What else are you looking at?"

"What concerns do you still have?"

"Is there anything we haven't covered that could keep you from moving ahead?"

I'd rather know that early enough to have an honest conversation than discover it when I ask for the order.

There's another benefit.

Customers appreciate people who are willing to discuss the hard stuff.

Trust isn't built by pretending there are no concerns.

It's built by helping work through them.

Earn the Right. Then Ask.

Eventually, you have to ask for the business.

I believe deeply in relationships. I believe people do business with people they know, like, trust, and believe will answer the phone after the check clears.

But relationship selling still includes selling.

There comes a point when you've listened, helped design the right building, answered the questions, handled the concerns, and presented a fair investment.

You've earned the right to ask.

So ask.

You don't need a fancy close.

You don't need pressure.

You certainly don't need some line you learned at a sales seminar in 1987.

"Shall we move forward?"

That's it.

And here comes that silence thing again.

Ask the question.

Then let them answer it.

When Yes Means Yes

Here's another place salespeople get themselves in trouble.

The customer says, "Let's do it."

And we keep selling.

Stop.

They bought the building.

You're done.

I've seen people talk themselves right back out of an order because they couldn't recognize when the selling part of the conversation was over.

Once they say yes, move to what happens next.

Thank them.

Explain the deposit, paperwork, engineering, scheduling, site preparation, or whatever the next steps are in your process.

Then deliver what you promised.

Because getting the signature may close the sale, but it opens the relationship.

No Might Mean No

And sometimes, after doing everything right, the answer is still no.

That's sales.

Maybe another builder gets the job.

Maybe your price really is higher.

Maybe the customer decides not to build at all.

Sometimes no means no.

Respect it.

But sometimes no means not yet.

Financing changes.

Timing changes.

Businesses grow.

Families change their minds.

The building that isn't happening this fall may suddenly become very important next spring.

Stay in the game.

That doesn't mean calling every three days with, "Just checking in."

Stay useful. Stay relevant. Keep the relationship intact.

And if they buy from someone else? Handle that professionally too.

There will be another building.

There may be a referral.

There may be another opportunity you can't see today.

I've always believed relationships have a much longer shelf life than transactions.

Losing one sale doesn't mean you have to lose the relationship.

Stay in the game to fight another day.

The Close Usually Happens Before the Close

When I think about the best salespeople

I've known, very few were great because they knew some magical way to close.

Customers trusted them.

They asked good questions.

They listened.

They knew their products.

They returned calls.

They followed through.

They admitted when they didn't know something.

They were willing to tell a customer when something wasn't right for them.

And they understood that helping someone make a good buying decision is a pretty effective way to sell.

For the post-frame builder, closing starts with that first phone call, email, website inquiry, or handshake.

Everything after that either moves the opportunity forward or pushes it backward.

Every question matters.

Every promise matters.

Every follow-up matters.

Every time you say, "I'll get back to you tomorrow," and actually do it, matters.

So understand what your customer is really trying to accomplish.

Sell the lifestyle, not just the building.

Help them understand the investment.

Believe in your price.

Get comfortable with silence.

Don't buy back your own sale.

And once you have truly earned the right, look your customer in the eye and ask the simplest question in sales:

"Shall we move forward?"

Then shut up and let them answer. **FBN**

Randy Chaffee brings four-plus decades of experience to the post-frame and metal roofing industries. Author of #1 Amazon Best Seller "Asphalt and Algorithms," he is a board member for the Buckeye Frame Builders Association and the National Frame Builders Association. Find his podcast at facebook.com/BuildingWins or call (814) 906-0001 at 1 p.m. Eastern on Mondays to listen in.





SENCO Launches FN71T1 Coil Nailer, A Versatile Workhorse Designed to Maximize Productivity

SENCO, a global leader in power fastening systems, is introducing its new 3-1/2" 15-degree coil nailer. The performance and versatility of the FN71T1 is perfect for professional contractors working on framing, truss building, sheathing, subflooring, decking, siding, and fencing jobs.

The FN71T1 drives both wire and plastic collated nails in a wide range of sizes from .099" to .148" in diameter and 2" to 3-1/2" in length, making it one of the most versatile and capable tools on the jobsite. It delivers the power to consistently drive into dense substrates like LVL and OSB and the speed to drive up to 7 nails per second. Weighing just 7.9 lbs., it is one of the lightest coil nailers in its class, reducing user fatigue on long workdays.

With productivity essential to the FN71T1's design, it features a high-capacity magazine that holds up to 275 nails for more time spent fastening and less time spent reloading. The selectable trigger easily switches between contact and sequential firing modes for fast-paced work or precision placement. A tool-free depth adjustment allows users to quickly change depth of drive for consistent flush or countersunk drives into a wide range of materials.

www.kyocera-senco.com

LP Building Solutions Expands Design Options With New LP® SmartSide® Primed 8" Brushed Smooth Shake Lap Siding

LP Building Solutions (LP), a leading manufacturer of high-performance building products, today announced the expansion of its

LP® SmartSide® Trim & Siding portfolio with the introduction of the new LP® SmartSide® Primed 8" Brushed Smooth Shake Lap Siding, designed to give homeowners and building professionals greater flexibility in achieving refined, traditional exterior designs.

Demand for shake-style accents remains strong across many housing markets, particularly for gables and architectural focal points. The new profile addresses that trend with a smaller reveal that creates a more detailed appearance than larger-format shake products.



The LP® SmartSide® 8" Brushed Smooth Shake Lap Siding is available primed, features a customizable 5-inch to 6-inch reveal, and measures 8 inches wide by 4 feet long. Its reversible design allows installation with either a straight or staggered edge, giving builders and homeowners additional design flexibility.

The new offering complements existing LP SmartSide 12-inch shake products, which support larger 7-inch to 10-inch reveals. Together, the expanded portfolio allows builders and

homeowners to select the profile that best matches their architectural vision.

www.lpcorp.com



ProVia® Announces Two New Facilities to Support Growth in Vinyl Windows and Patio Doors

ProVia announces two new facilities designed to support the growth of the company's vinyl window and patio door business. This expansion includes a 310,000-square-foot facility in Dover, Ohio that is expected to create 400 jobs, and a 580,000-square-foot facility in Davie County, North Carolina that is expected to create 400 jobs.

Together the facilities will help ProVia meet growing demand for windows and patio doors while expanding the company's manufacturing footprint into the southern United States. The additional manufacturing capacity will enable the company to increase window and patio door production, maintain excellent lead times, and streamline shipping and distribution. Once these projects are completed, ProVia will own and operate 10 production facilities located in Ohio, Mississippi and North Carolina.

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BY FRAME BUILDING NEWS STAFF

EPS Completes Miracle of Birth Building

FFA facility staged lived births at Minnesota State Fair

**NOVEMBER 2006
FLASHBACK**



Twenty years ago this month, Frame Building News introduced readers to one of the Minnesota State Fair's most beloved fixtures: the FFA Miracle of Birth Building. Our November 2006 coverage took builders behind the scenes of this post-frame structure, where more than 1 million fairgoers walk through its doors each August to watch calves, piglets, chicks, lambs, kids, and an occasional seasonal addition of poult and ducklings, arrive in real time. It's a reminder that our industry's work often shows up in unexpected, high-traffic places - not just barns and shops, but buildings where a new generation gets its first up-close look at agriculture.

The original piece looked at the design and how the structure meant to hold thousands of daily visitors while keeping livestock calm, clean and safe - a balancing act between crowd control, ventilation, and animal welfare that few post-frame projects ever have to solve at once. Two decades later, the building remains a fair institution, and the construction choices behind it still hold lessons for anyone building public-facing agricultural spaces.

Here's a look back at how we told that story.



EPS Buildings of Graettinger, Iowa recently completed an important project worthy of public note: The Miracle of Birth/FFA Chapter House. The project was supported by contributions from the FFA, EPS Buildings, and a dozen other project partners. EPS Buildings was given less than six months to complete the entire project.

IFFA needed a facility where animals could give live birth at the Minnesota State Fair. The local FFA chapter also needed a new chapter meeting house. EPS Buildings met the challenge by designing and building an 84x200, 14-foot tall post-frame building, with an 80x40, 12-foot high R-33 Solid Core SIP wing.

The building had to be constructed to meet IBS Code 50 PSF ground snow loads, and a 90 mph wind load. The building was adorned with Power Vented Cupolas, a side covered porch, multiple split sliding doors, and Glacier Anchor Energy Designed Footings. The new building featured barn red steel sidewalls with a mortarless brick wain- scot, and solar collectors.

David Huinker of FFA says, "EPS was the most influential company to get this project off the ground. We appreciate their work coordinating this project, and their donation of time and materials." Chris Spaeth, Director of Sales and Marketing for EPS Buildings, says "The combination of post-frame and structural insulated panels offered the look and speed we needed. Post-frame and structural panels are much quicker to erect than other types of construction. They are also very energy-efficient, which will provide long-term value in the form of reduced operating expenses." **FBN**



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The Original “No-Wood-in-the-Ground” Post-Frame Solution

No Challenge is Too Difficult for This Innovator to Overcome.

■ By Linda Schmid

How it All Began

Dave Gruhlke built his first house in 1988. It was not only the first house he'd built, it was the first of its kind. Neither he or the county zoning department had ever heard of a home built using pole barn construction for the framing.

Gruhlke had seen a new pole-frame garage that he thought was attractive enough to be a residence. So he took the carpentry skills he'd learned from his dad, looked into pole-frame construction, and designed the house he wanted to build.

When Gruhlke took the plan down to Planning and Zoning to get a building permit, they told him it couldn't be done. They really didn't have a specific reason to turn it down; it was simply different than what they usually approved for homes, so eventually they signed off.

He didn't have the problems that some people had in the earlier days of barndominium builds, finding financing and insurance providers. He used the insurance company that he'd patronized for years. He went to the local bank and talked to the people who knew him. Relationships can make a big difference when you are

challenging the norm Gruhlke said.

He bought a piece of land, hired a local pole builder to put up the shell, and built the home he wanted. The shop portion of the barndominium was big so he could store his cars and snowmobiles in it and have space enough to work on them.

A New Enterprise

Gruhlke had been working in the car salvage industry, but when he looked at the unique home he had built, he knew this was his new career path. He started his company, “Homework Design” in 1990. The company was focused on building post-frame homes. And he did sell a few post-frame homes amongst some stick-built houses and many post-frame garages and commercial buildings.

Few people, however, were willing to take the risk of going with a building style that was usually reserved for barns and sheds. People also pointed out that he was putting wood into the soil, albeit treated wood. Still many had seen the rot that can eventually deteriorate wood in the ground. It seemed that this new style of



Left to right: Chris, Shipping, Dave, and Emily, Office Administration



A barndo in progress in Milaca, Minnesota, featuring Plasti-Sleeve, Plasti-Skirt, and in-floor heat. PHOTO COURTESY OF PLASTI-SLEEVE

residential building might be done before it ever really got going.

However, Gruhlke realized the criticism was valid, and he started thinking that more could surely be done to protect the posts. What if he encased them in plastic sleeves?

Once he got the idea, he was on his way.

Plasti-Sleeve is Born

In 1994 he got his patent for a “protective sleeve and started manufacturing Plasti-Sleeve for posts in post-frame construction. Of course, he now had the same problem he had with the post-frame home idea; it was something new and people were hesitant to try it.

Gruhlke called post-frame builders and suppliers and sent them samples. There were some nibbles, but no big catches until Morton Building found the sleeves were a great solution for their stub columns decaying at ground level and preventing movement during the freeze/thaw cycle. Morton Building and Plasti-Sleeve had an exclusive agreement for the first couple years of production. Morton still uses Plasti-Sleeve on their stub posts.

Plasti-Sleeve samples and literature were sent to many post-frame builders and suppliers throughout the midwest and eastern U.S. beginning in 1997. Gruhlke also began advertising in Frame Building News in the late 90s and displayed Plasti-Sleeve at the 2002 NFBA Expo. He was building relationships with industry people beyond Morton Buildings.

Then Gruhlke came out with a shortened version of the Plasti-Sleeve which was only 22” long to cover the area that usually encounters rot issues first – the areas a little below to a little above ground level. With this product, uses could expand to many outdoor-inground posts, and provide an economical alternative for extra protection of building columns.

Realizing that the posts in the ground are often not the only wood in danger of decay, Gruhlke came out with the Plasti-Skirt Board Cover. in 2002. Like the sleeves, it provides a decay-proof plastic barrier to protect the wood from ground contact.

Other Challenges

During the earlier manufacturing days, Gruhlke had a personal tragedy which intruded on his work life. Shortly after he began his manufacturing company, a snowmobile accident left him in a wheelchair. Despite this challenge, he continued with his construction company working as general contractor until 2002 when he began to focus solely on Plasti-Sleeve.

His physical situation makes travel to promote his business difficult at times, but he manages. His goals are to be as efficient as possible and avoid drama.

Above all, Gruhlke feels thankful that he has been able to make a good living based on the products he developed.

Business Today

The company is a small concern; Gruhlke, his daughter Emily as office adminis-

trator, and a shipping manager. Gruhlke manages most sales with a few independent sales representatives, and manufacturing is contracted with Homework Design molds.

Their culture is based upon the golden rule he said, and everyone is encouraged to think outside the box and be innovative in developing useful solutions.

This approach informs his advice for people starting out in business. “Whatever you endeavor, make sure the quality is there in your product and in your service,” Gruhlke said.

“True business success means not only keeping up with the industry but getting ahead of it. Look at what is being done and think about what would make a process or a product better.

“One of the keys to success is working with good people, people who know their products and the industry,” Gruhlke said. “Manufacturers have helped us with development and getting things to market.”

Framing the Future

More and more, people are moving away from treated wood in the ground, so Gruhlke sees a lot of opportunity ahead for every company that offers protection for wood in post-frame.

In the longer term, Dave is looking for a possible partner or perhaps someone who would like to buy the Plasti-Sleeve brand and manufacturing. But for now, he enjoys what he is doing and he looks forward to continued growth. **FBN**

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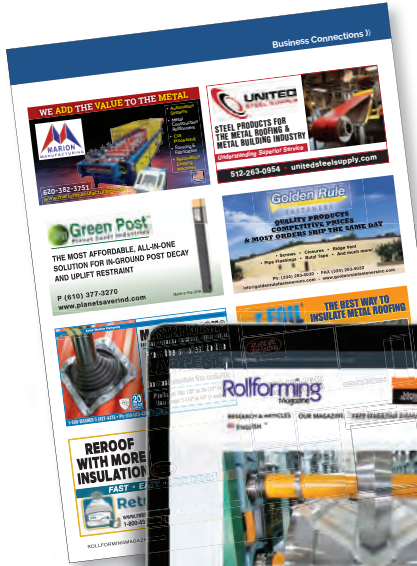
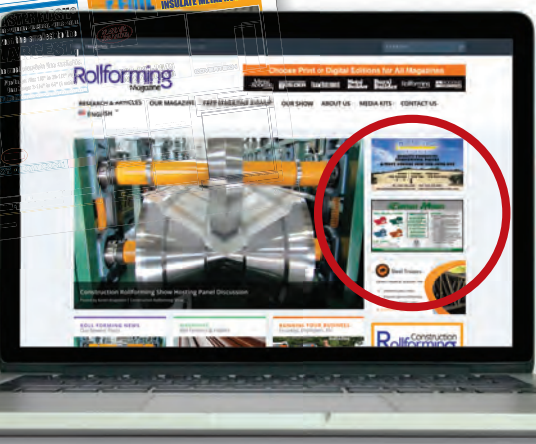
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Victorian-Style Horse Barn

Golden State Buildings

Built with both equine comfort and architectural appeal in mind, this custom horse barn was designed to complement the owner's Victorian-style home while providing a safe, functional environment for three horses. Decorative gables, ornate trim, and handcrafted corbels give the structure a distinctive Victorian character, making it appear as an original outbuilding rather than a modern addition. The exterior is finished with durable Hardie® Lap fiber-cement siding, chosen for its long-lasting performance, low maintenance, and classic appearance. The building sits on a solid concrete foundation that provides a stable, durable base for years of service. Heavy-duty rubber horse stall mats provide secure footing,

improve comfort, and make cleaning easier. Inside each stall, ¾-inch tongue-and-groove plywood lines the lower walls as kickboards, protecting the structure from daily wear while creating a safer environment for the horses. The owner's primary goal was to create a high-quality barn that would be as attractive as it was functional. The finished structure includes three spacious stalls with sliding fronts that maximize aisle space while providing convenient daily access. A dedicated 10-foot by 12-foot tack room offers organized storage for saddles, bridles, feed, and equipment, while the opposite end of the barn features a raised roof section with sufficient clearance to accommodate a hay squeeze for efficient hay delivery and storage. Connecting the entire facility is a 10-foot-wide

center breezeway that runs the full length of the barn. The open aisle provides excellent natural ventilation, creates a shaded work area during warm weather, and simplifies daily chores and barn maintenance. The wide passage also allows easy movement of horses, equipment, and supplies. To ensure year-round usability, the barn is fully outfitted with electrical service, energy-efficient lighting, ceiling fans, and ample power throughout the building. Every design decision balanced practicality with aesthetics, resulting in a facility that serves the horses' needs while reflecting the owner's vision. The custom architectural details seamlessly tie the barn to the adjacent Victorian residence, showing that agricultural buildings can be both highly functional and architecturally distinctive. **FBN**



PROJECT DETAILS

BUILDER: Golden Sate Buildings

LOCATION: Clovis, California

PROJECT & SIZE: 22x60

SHINGLES, SIDING AND TRIM: Hardie® Lap fiber-cement siding, GAF® Lifetime Shingles

TRUSSES: Engineered wood trusses 24" on center

WALL PANELS: OSB wall sheathing with 7" Hardie Lap siding & Hardie Shake gables

DOORS: Simpson Shed Doors custom built

ROOF PITCH: 12/12

FOUNDATION: 4" Concrete pad with rebar and footings per code. Dirt with rubber stall mats in stall areas.



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