



Planning for Metal Building Prosperity Now and for the Future

By Steve Browning, Chairman, Metal Building Manufacturers Association

Let's face it: our industry has challenges to maintain and expand market share in a world where there are so many viable building options that are safe, efficient and affordable. But for every problem we encounter in business or in life, we have opportunities to develop smart solutions.

In this industry, we know certain things to be self-evident: the average metal building manufacturing cycle is about eight to 12 weeks; erection is generally about a third faster than other forms of building construction; metal buildings create little—if any—job-site waste; steel is the most recycled material in the world; standing seam metal roofs are solar-panel ready and can last 50 years or more; single-source systems save time and money; and clear spans offer imaginative design options.

One problem we continually face is that architects, as owner influencers, often don't think to recommend metal buildings to their clients for low-rise projects. Maybe they haven't been exposed to the many values of metal buildings in architecture courses. Maybe their company has not tried using a metal building solution. Maybe they think code officials won't be as friendly toward metal building designs.

Time for Solutions

Whatever the reasons, the Metal Building Manufacturers Association (MBMA) is implementing an aggressive approach to educate and inform the architectural community by creating an Architect Committee. A volunteer group representing over 25 MBMA member companies met in January to kick off this effort. Led by longtime industry veteran and MBMA volunteer, Robert Tiffin, as its committee chairman, the group expressed overwhelming enthusiasm. They clearly envision great opportunities for impacting our industry by becoming advocates to help architects recognize the value metal buildings can bring to

their clients. I couldn't agree more. I believe this group can truly have a major impact on our future as an industry.

The Architect Committee will also work closely with MBMA's Education Committee (led by another long-term MBMA volunteer, John Underwood) to implement an architecture student design competition. What better way to influence the next generation of designers than to give them hands-on experience in using the systems approach during their formative years in graduate and undergraduate studies? A steering committee is completing the award materials and developing the outreach plan in order to have students participating in the awards program for the Fall 2020 semester. For details, contact Tony Bouquet at mbma@mbma.com.

Time to Get Involved

I also want to encourage you to participate in the upcoming joint conference of MBMA and the Metal Building Contractors & Erectors Association (MBCEA) coming soon! For the fourth year in a row, MBMA will be co-locating its spring meeting with the annual MBCEA conference. It will include combined social events, speakers, a trade show and reception as well as multiple awards celebrations.

The welcome reception will once again feature the Metal Construction Hall of Fame Awards. The reception will begin immediately following the opening session where we will present MBMA's 2019 In-plant Safety Awards, as well as MBCEA's Building of the Year recognition. The rest of the meetings will be packed with presentations that are of interest to all. Whether your firm is a member of MBCEA or MBMA—or is considering membership in either association, or you would simply like to exhibit at the trade show even—please consider participating. The events take place May 7-9 at the beautiful Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center in Aurora, Colo.

Help Educate Architects

Finally, I was very pleased to learn that 1,600 architects have taken MBMA's new online continuing education course in just the first 60 days since its introduction. The course, titled "Creative Design Alternatives Using Metal Building Systems," was produced in partnership with the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and *Architectural Record* magazine and is now available through *Architectural Record's* Continuing Education Center website and via a mobile device app. The course provides one Learning Unit credit for AIA members. Please be sure to share this learning opportunity with the architects in your network. 

Steve Browning is chairman of the Metal Building Manufacturers Association. More information about the association is available at www.mbma.com.

Materials to Help You and Your Team

MBMA recently introduced materials to educate and inform your teams and to share with your clients and consultants.

- The 2019 Annual Report, "Beauty and the Beam, A Salute to Metal Building Architecture," celebrates engaging metal buildings from a range of end uses across North America. It provides useful information for anyone who works with metal building systems, has an interest in metal buildings or is involved in the low-rise commercial building market.
- The Retail & Wholesale case study is a 10-page report that highlights eight businesses using metal building systems to thrive in today's evolving retail and warehouse store market.

Both are available for free download at the MBMA blog, blog.mbma.com.