

MAY 2002

# Metal Construction News

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THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY SINCE 1980

## John Bowes Named Inland President

John Bowes was recently named president of Inland Buildings, Cullman, AL. The company is a division of Behlen Mfg. Co., based in Columbus, NE.

Bowes has 25 years of leadership experience in the metal building industry with Behlen Mfg. Co. His primary focus has been in the marketing, sales and engineering areas. Most recently, he



John Bowes

To Page 4, Inland

## ABC To Open Michigan Facility

American Building Components (ABC) has announced plans to open a facility in Big Rapids, MI, to produce metal roof and wall panels for residential, commercial and agricultural markets. The company purchased land and a 52,000 sq. ft. building—which is expected to be operational by June—to serve new and existing customers in Michigan and portions of Indiana, Ohio and Wisconsin.

“The new facility will give us capacity in an area where we are already shipping components,” said Joel Viechnicki, ABC’s vice presi-

## METALCON Plans Return To Chicago

METALCON International will return to the Chicago area this fall when the annual industry conference and trade show—sponsored by the Metal Construction Association—is held October 1-3 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, IL.

According to METALCON organizers, this 12th annual event can be expected to attract 8,000 builders, designers, developers, owners and government officials from more than 40 countries to learn about the latest innovations in the metal construction industry.

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## Span Captures 12th Top Metal Builder Crown

By Krista Hovis  
Associate Editor

For the 12th year in a row, Span Construction & Engineering Inc. of

Madera, CA, has earned the honor of being named *Metal Construction News' Top Metal Builder* for 2001. “It is a rare privilege to receive the *Top*



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## VP Buildings Flourishing Following Purchase By IMSA

By Shawn Zuver  
Editor-In-Chief

Grupo IMSA, a multi-national conglomerate with a rich history in the building products arena, purchased VP Buildings on September 19, 2001. The acquisition released VP from the bankruptcy that had been filed by its parent company, LTV Corp., in late December 2000.

The purchase by IMSA marked a new beginning for VP Buildings, which continues to move forward in a leadership role as one of the premier manufacturers of metal buildings and components.

Running the ship at VP Buildings is Dave Gilchrist, who joined the

company as CEO in 1995. Possessing a bachelor’s degree in engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy and having been in combat in Vietnam, his experiences left Gilchrist well-equipped to deal with the dreadful combination of bankruptcy and a depressed market for metal building products that faced his company in 2001. Gilchrist, who



Dave Gilchrist

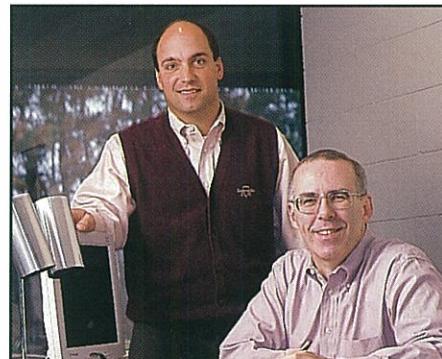
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## Fastener Manufacturers Become Strengthened Through Merger

By Krista Hovis  
Associate Editor

Located in Wyomissing, PA, Construction Fasteners Inc. has been a leading supplier of a variety of fasteners since it was founded by Irv Cohen in 1956. The company has always served the metal building industry but expanded into the commercial roofing market when Factory Mutual required mechanically-fastened roofing systems.

Cohen has served as president of the company since its beginning. He



SFS intec’s vice president of sales, Gary Martini (left), and president, Michael Mullen.

has had many offers over the years to sell the company but never felt the timing or offer was right until recently. As Cohen is growing older, he

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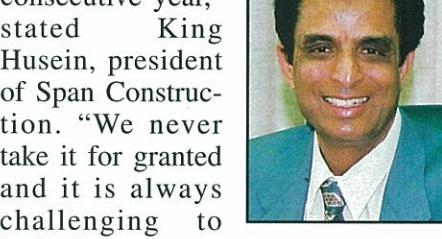
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King Husein

To Page 20, Span

Span Construction & Engineering has built numerous buildings over the past eight years for Escalon Premier Brands in Escalon, CA.

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Outside of this 105,000 sq. ft. warehouse is Escalon Premier Brands' 1,000 sq. ft. human resources department office



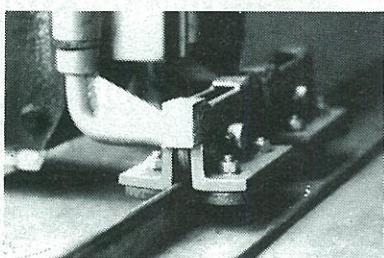
Span Construction added this fiberglass canopy to emphasize the entrance of the corporate office.

# StackDoor

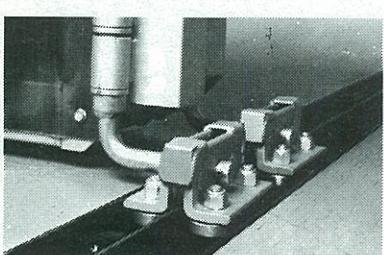


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## TOP METAL BUILDER

From Front Page, Span

been the leading factor in maintaining the company's success—consistency in its basic principles. According to Husein, these principles are unparalleled service, best quality, fair pricing and a meaningful safety program. This safety and training program is constantly expanding to include the most up-to-date information. It provides hands-on training in all critical aspects of the steel business, including special roof conditions. A special emphasis is placed on increasing efficiency through a reduction in man-hours.

Dave Gilchrist, president/CEO of VP Buildings, the manufacturer whom Span has been affiliated with since being founded in 1980, has his own theory on why the contractor has maintained this high level of success. "I would have a hard time finding anyone who has been as successful as King," he said.

"There are 8,000 builders in this industry. If any of those 8,000 wanted to know what the secret is, I think King would tell them that the secret is establishing a very intimate relationship with a high-quality architect, specifically MulvannyG2 Architecture," Gilchrist continued. (Located in Bellevue, WA, this architectural firm provides nearly half of Span's business.)

While Span has a steady flow of projects, the contractor, as most other metal building contractors, had an especially challenging 2001. Span's tonnage was down from 41,657 tons in 2000 to its still-remarkable 2001 tonnage of 32,518. "We had already experienced a slowdown in our business prior to the September 11th attack. After the attack, the business slowdown was significant," explained Husein.

### The Escalon Project

One of many bright spots for Span in 2001 was the completion of the new facility for Escalon Premier Brands, a division of Heinz USA, in Escalon, CA. Span Construction has

To Page 22, Span

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The Escalon Premier Brands warehouse contains palletized finished products, as well as empty cans waiting to be filled.



The corporate office contains offices, a kitchen, restrooms, dining area, reception area and the conference room above.

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## TOP METAL BUILDER

From Page 20, Span

completed several projects for Escalon over the last eight years. One such job included the demolition and reconstruction of a 50,000 sq. ft. tomato process facility while leaving most of the equipment in place and building an 18,000 sq. ft. addition to the facility with a cafeteria and restroom facilities. A 120,000 sq. ft. warehouse was also built. Those projects utilized metal building systems from VP Buildings. "Over the years, Span has consistently provided Escalon Premier Brands with a quality product and good service," said Scott Adrian, operations manager, Escalon Premier Brands.

Span has also had a standing relationship with Heinz USA for almost 15 years.

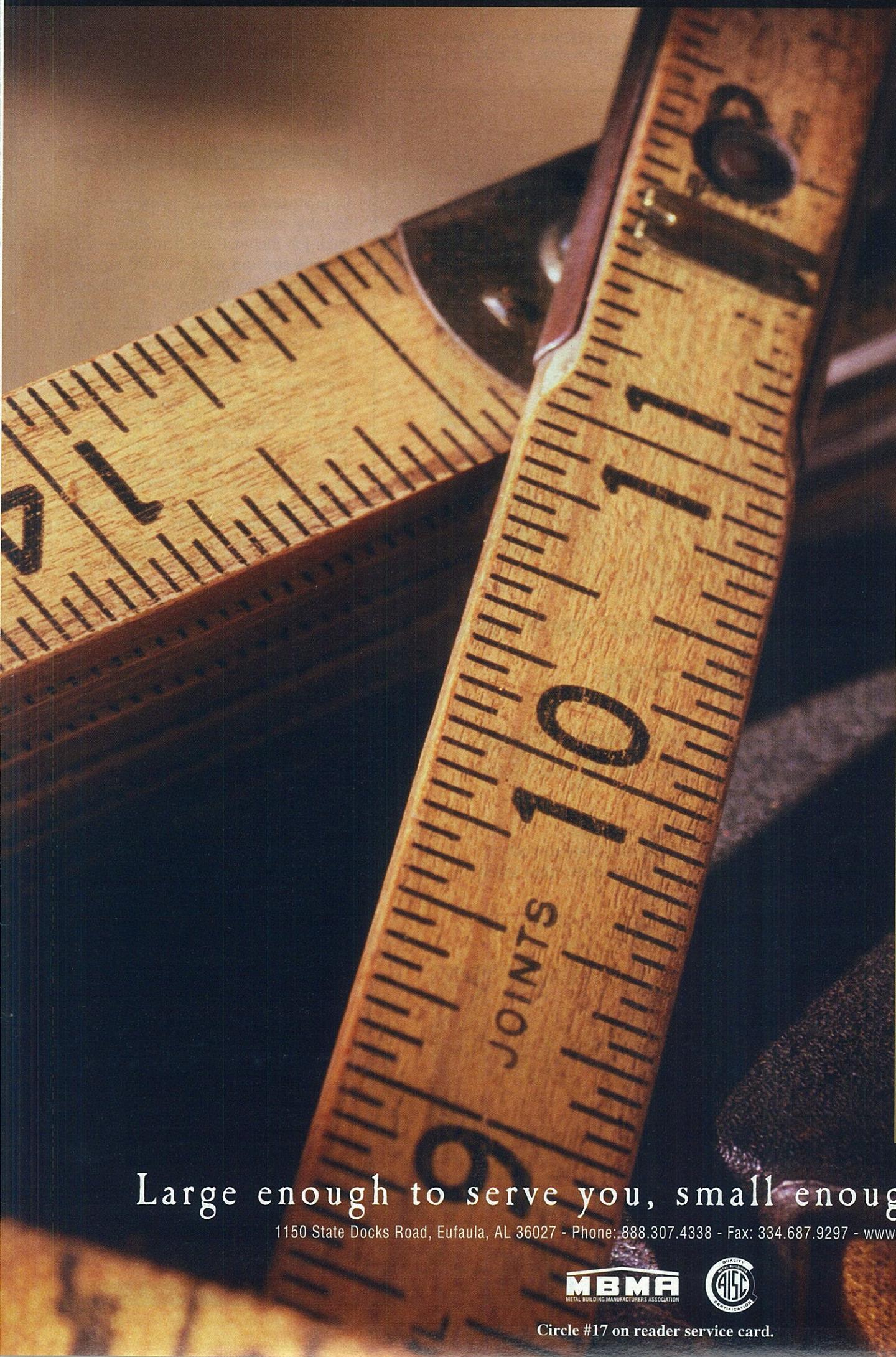
As all of these projects were completed on time and within budget, Escalon Premier Brands knew exactly who should build its new warehouses and offices. Leland McPherrin, manager, engineering and maintenance for Escalon, said, "In my experience working with Span, they have not missed any critical deadline despite being handed some very aggressive schedules."

This particular job consisted of a 90,000 sq. ft. warehouse, a 105,000 sq. ft. warehouse, a 1,000 sq. ft. human resource department office and a 7,520 sq. ft. corporate office. Escalon provided the basic floor plan for this design/build project. To determine the size of the warehouses, the company took into account the palletized product sizes combined with aisle widths, which determined the interior column spacing. Span finalized the plans, incorporating the necessary building codes. It then generated a set of construction documents.

Ground was broken on the Escalon project in June 2000. Before erecting the VP Continuous Beam metal building systems, 10 acres of site work were developed and concrete pads were poured. All of this was done without disturbing the existing 42"-diameter irrigation piping that

To Page 24, Span

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**TOP METAL BUILDER**

From Page 22, Span

bisected a portion of the site. The piping had to remain in use until the end of the irrigation season on October 31, 2000. At that time it could be removed and replaced at a greater depth. Also, access had to remain open for 100 trucks loaded with tomatoes per day throughout the construction cycle.

The first building was completed in September 2000. It was the 294'8" x 305'4", 90,000 sq. ft. warehouse. Here, empty and full cans of the processed tomato products—labeled and palletized for the end user—are stored. VP's Panel Rib wall panels and 24-gauge standing seam roof panels clad the exterior of the building.

The next building, the 344' x 305'4", 105,000 sq. ft. warehouse, was completed in November of the same year. It was clad with the same panels as the other warehouse. The small free-standing human resources office is located outside of this building.

**A State-Of-The-Art Office**

Attached to the second warehouse is the company's 7,520 sq. ft. corporate office. It was built using a 40' x 188' lean-to frame from VP. To create

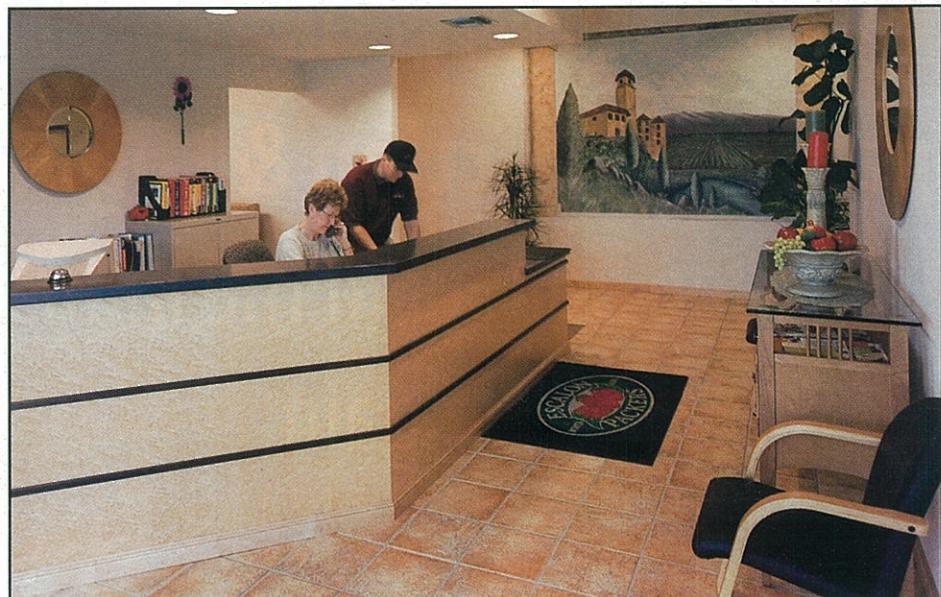
a subtle contrast from the warehouse portion of the structure, 26-gauge Vee Rib wall panels with an Egyptian White finish were used. Span added a free-standing aluminum and fiber-glass canopy at the entrance.

The office portion contains offices, a conference room, two restrooms, employee break room, reception area, a full kitchen—which is used to prepare clients' menus with Escalon Premier Brand products—and a customer dining area. The rooms are situated on either side of a 188' central hall spanning the length of the building. Management and accounting departments are located in this building.

While the owners wanted an understated appearance for the office's exterior, they wanted the interior to be elegant and upscale. This is evidenced by the products utilized to finish the interior.

The reception area, hallway and customer dining room feature 12" x 12" ceramic tile. A granite and maple dining bar and curved ceiling soffits were also used in the dining room to portray a restaurant environment. In the kitchen, state-of-the-art stainless steel equipment can be found.

The color schemes, from the flooring products to the paint, were influenced by Escalon Premier Brands' product labeling designs. Painted landscape panoramas in the reception and dining areas portray an old-time



*Escalon Premier Brands wanted the interior of its corporate office to be elegant and upscale.*

Italian theme.

**Another Successful Project**

The office portion was finished in April 2001 to the complete satisfaction of Escalon Premier Brands. According to McPherrin, "We have been extremely satisfied with the efforts of Span Construction at our facility. They have completed numerous successful projects for us over the past several years and our expectation is that they will come through with anything we give them."

This project was also successful

from the subcontractors' point of view. Following are some comments from the various subcontractors.

Greg Nelson, vice president of Mike Nelson Co. Inc. in Fresno, CA, a drywall, steel framing, acoustical ceiling, insulation and Marlite subcontractor, said, "Span's willingness to involve the subcontractors in scheduling and organization of the projects is a necessity for a successful project. We look forward to our continued success with Span for many years to come."

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# VP BUILDINGS CONGRATULATES

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Span  
Construction & Engineering, Inc.  
Madera, California

VP Buildings is honored to have Span as an authorized VP Builder for more than 20 years. Congratulations to the hard working employees of Span Construction and Engineering for exemplifying "The Ultimate Building Solution." And for being named *Metal Construction News' Top Builder...* again!

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VP Buildings  
Varco Pruden, Inc.  
Memphis, Tennessee

Inc., Stockton, CA, has worked with Span on several of the Escalon Premier Brands projects, including this one. "Span's ability to create and implement a construction schedule that flows from start to finish is critical to our success on a job," stated Gary Woody, president and CEO of Bockmon & Woody. "Allowing the contractors to begin, continue and complete their scope in one mobilization promotes an efficient project."

"As with any venture, quality personnel make the difference," said Greg Carpenter of Greg Carpenter Concrete Inc., Lodi, CA. "We have found the Span staff members associated with this project to be very knowledgeable and capable in their tasks, greatly contributing to the smooth flow and quality of the project."

Commented Mark Carmicheal, vice president, Clovis Madera Equipment Inc. of Fresno, "We have been working with Span since the early 1980s, and consider it a privilege to be part of the Span team. This is the second major project at the Escalon Premier Brands site that we have worked on for Span. Added to the usual problems in construction of weather and plan changes, the existing Escalon Premier Brands plant was open and in full operation. Span's team was able to execute the proper scheduling with the plant and all of the subcontractors to keep the

project running smoothly, and on time."

"I have enjoyed my working relationship with Span Construction because of their attention to detail and their scheduling," stated Bob Jones of Bob Jones Painting in Madera. "They have always adhered to their schedule as planned which, for myself as a contractor, allows me to plan other jobs around their work. Span enforces a very strict safety program which means a safer work environment for my employees. I have enjoyed many years working for Span Construction and hope to do so in the future."

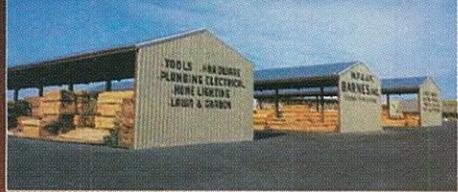
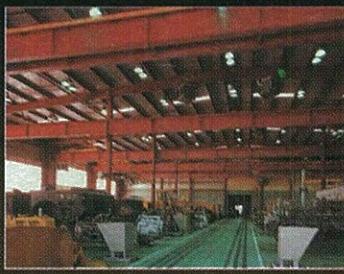
Sahargun Plumbing Inc. in Stockton has had a positive working relationship with Span since 1990. Debbie Chapman, CFO of Sahargun, said, "Span Construction & Engineering Inc. is the type of general contracting firm that we enjoy working with because of their professional business ethics."

With a ready supply of satisfied subcontractors, Span Construction will be able to produce successful projects for many years into the future.



*The 188' central hall features ceramic tile floors and painted landscape panoramas.*

# XPANSES IN YOUR REACH.



## SUPPLIER FEATURE

From Front Page, SFS intec

decided it was finally a good time to make a change and he didn't have to look far to find a suitable buyer.

SFS intec Inc., headquartered in Switzerland, had contacted Cohen several times over the last decade, testing the waters for an acquisition. The company, which started out in the hardware business in 1928, has established itself in cold-formed and powder metal components for the automotive industry, and the construction fasteners market. SFS has approximately 3,700 employees in 18



SFS intec's Wyomissing, PA, headquarters.

countries.

Although SFS has a start-up operation in Medina, OH, it was interested in more rapid growth in the U.S. metal building and commercial roofing markets. The company felt the best way to do this was to purchase a leading manufacturer involved in these industries. So, when SFS was contacted by Cohen through an investment banker, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to accomplish those goals.

A purchase agreement was signed in September 2001. The assets of Construction Fasteners changed hands on January 1, 2002, with the purchase being finalized on January 7.

To find out more about this acquisition, *Metal Construction News* spoke with Gary Martini, vice president of sales for SFS intec. Martini served as vice president of sales and marketing at Construction Fasteners for two years prior to the purchase. He has been involved in all aspects of the steel industry from import/export to mill manufacturing to product distribution.

**Metal Construction News:** Why is the acquisition of Construction Fasteners by SFS intec a good fit?

**Gary Martini, vice president of sales, SFS intec:** SFS and Construction Fasteners were two companies with very similar commercial philosophies. When SFS made the decision to expand its role in the United States, it was looking for a company that shared its business values and was compatible with its culture. Instead of just moving into a new geography and starting from scratch, SFS was searching for a partner that would embrace its culture. Construction Fasteners already had a culture that emphasized a strong commitment to its customers.

So, it's a merger that involves two companies that are of one mind. SFS is the world leader in all of the major markets that it serves and had the desire to grow its Fastening Systems Division in the United States more rapidly. It's difficult to build a business from the ground up in the United States in a mature marketplace, so you increase market share through acquisition.

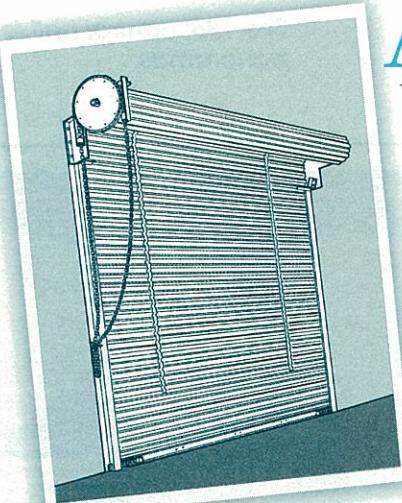
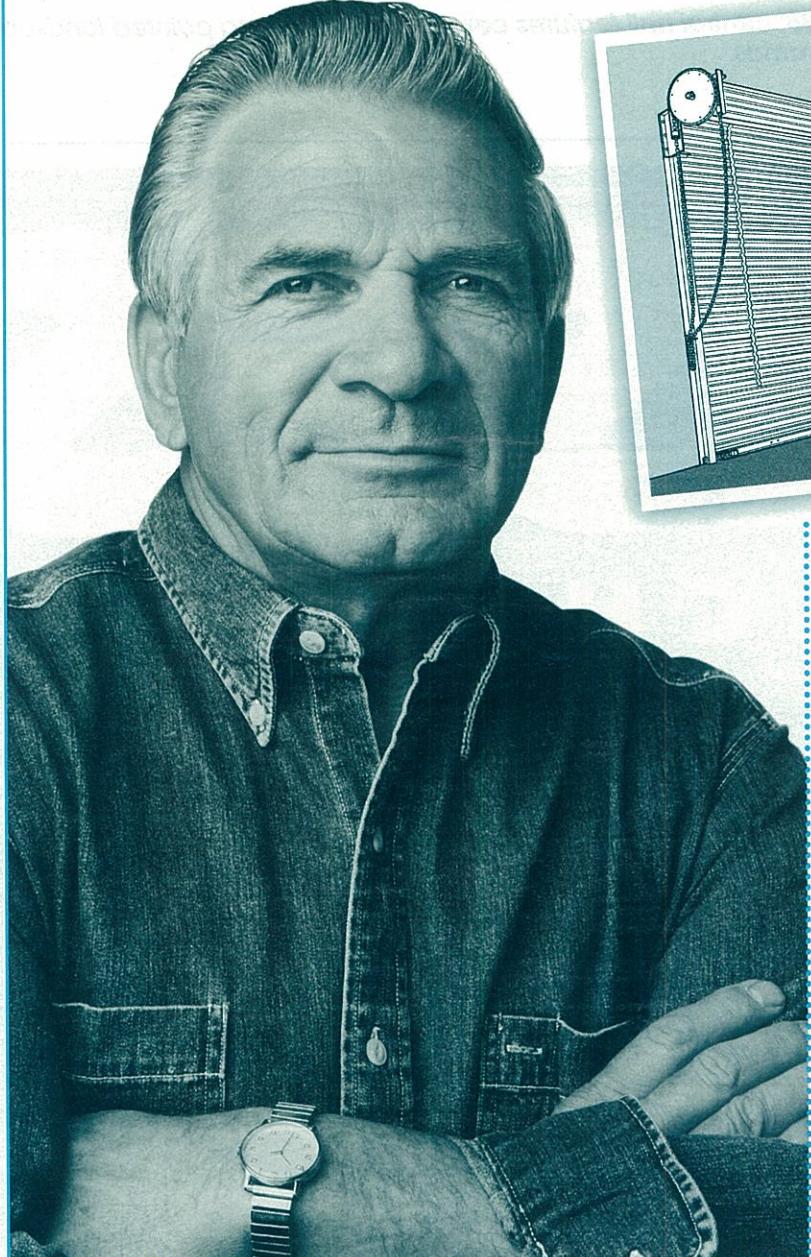
**MCN:** Why is this transaction good for the metal building industry?

**Martini:** This merger is a dream come true because as a person who represents the needs of the customer to our company and represented our company to our customers, there is nothing that I could want or desire more than the ability to rapidly bring solutions and save time and money for our customers so that they can compete and grow faster than their competitors. Now, SFS intec, through this merger, through the combination of our resources, is on a plane substantially higher than our competitors in our ability to give our customers what they want.

**MCN:** What strengths does each

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