



## Hats Off to the Metal Roofing Contractor

by Dr. Jim Hoff

This month's focus on metal in *Roofing Contractor* gives me a great opportunity to take a look at the sustainability of one of our oldest roofing systems. Well before anyone started talking about green construction, metal roofing was delivering sustainable benefits to buildings across the globe. Few construction materials are as recyclable as metal, and the total recycled content of metal roof panels is among the highest available. In terms of durability and service life, perhaps only slate and tile are in the same league. Today's metal roof finishes offer cool roof options in a wide variety of colors, and the standing ribs of many metal roof systems offer an easy and simple means of attaching PV and solar thermal modules. Add in the ability to direct and store rain water and resist fire threats, and you pretty much check all the boxes for sustainable roofing.


But I think there's one more sustainable feature of metal that deserves attention, and that is the contribution made by the roofing contractor in delivering sustainable metal roofing to the market. Although many factory-produced panels are available, the majority of metal roofs installed on commercial buildings and residences throughout North America feature field-formed panels made under the supervision of a local roofing contractor. And from my jobsite observations, today's roofing contractors deliver real value in achieving sustainability — both in the roofs they construct and the industry they support.

If you think about the logistic problems associated with setting up a brand new metal roofing "factory" at every jobsite, your head may start to swim. Before beginning a metal roofing project, you need to prepare extensive shop drawing to assure all the necessary materials and components can be identified and ordered. Flashings and trims need to be produced in the metal shop, the metal coils other components must be ordered, and all of this material must be delivered to the site in pristine condition. Then, at the jobsite, an expensive and delicate roll-forming machine must be set up and maintained to operate flawlessly. And as you form the roof panels, you have to be sure that the panel finishes are not damaged and any sheet irregularities are minimized.

But the really difficult part comes after



you've successfully manufactured and assembled the necessary components. Next, you need roofing applicators with the highest skills to install these materials in a secure, safe and sustainable manner, and that's where the metal roofing contractor adds a unique dimension to roof sustainability. High-performance metal roofing systems that will last for many decades can only be installed by a field crew that embodies the best of human capabilities for hard work, experience and a passion for excellence — qualities that we usually sum up with one word: craftsmanship. And that craftsmanship is the unique sustainable dimension that today's metal roofing offers. Yes, it's great that we have so many outstanding metal roofing materials today to meet environmental goals, but it is especially gratifying to see that we can add old-fashioned craftsmanship to those materials — and in doing that make not only our built environment but also our industry the better for it.

So, hats off this month to the metal roofing contractors who demonstrate great sustainability and great skill on a daily basis. Thank you on behalf of an industry that has benefited from your dedication. 

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