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## Top 100 Metal Builders of 2009: MCN's 20th Annual Top 100 Metal Builders showcases 2009's most prolific metal builders

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Metal Construction News has been the No. 1 resource for need-to-know information about the metal construction industry for 30 years, and for each of the past 20 years, we've presented our rankings of the Top 100 Metal Builders based on tonnage and square footage.

Searching for the top metal builders from across North America, MCN asked for entries via e-newsletters, e-mail blasts, our websites and old-fashioned phone calls. Ask and you shall receive, right? We received many more than the minimum 100 entries in each category, as builders from the United States, Canada and beyond submitted entry forms in hopes they would make the final cut.

In the end, the leader in tonnage was Keller Inc., based in Kaukana, Wisc., with more than 7,000 tons of metal building work in 2009. In the square footage category, Ocala, Fla.-based Florida Metal Building Services led the way, covering more than 2,600,000 square feet of buildings with metal. But as with most lists, sometimes the statistics don't tell the whole story.



### Beyond the Rankings

#### Tonnage Leaders:

##### #1 in Tonnage and #3 in Square Feet: Keller Inc. President/CEO Wayne Stellmacher:

**What is the secret to your success?** Our success can be attributed to our employee ownership. We became employee owned in 1986. Many of our employees have been with us 25 to 35 years. When you keep a team together that long, you become pretty good at what you do.

##### How did you make 2009 a successful year?

We made the necessary changes to sustain the downturn. This included marketing efforts, personnel changes, procedure changes, team work and new innovations.

**Did 2009 live up to or outpace your expectations?** We actually outpaced our expectations in both volume and market share. We live by a mission that we should build every project as if it were our own, and when you apply that logic to each project a lot of good things happen.

**In which market segment did you see the best/most business?** Professional offices, medical, dental and daycare facilities were all very active in 2009. Manufacturing, warehousing and industrial were somewhat slower.

**How can you build off your 2009 momentum and continue into 2010?** 2010 is already off to a great start. We plan to add people at a slower pace than we did in the late '90s and beyond. We are looking to add another Wisconsin office and potentially new Midwest offices.

##### #2 in Tonnage: Sure Steel Inc.

###### Co-owner, Mark Carter:

**What is the secret to your success?** A lot of long hours. Building key relationships and being able to utilize those relationships even when the economy got tough. We like to meet everyone's expectations and live up to the general contractor's needs and I think that's continued to allow us to have work.

**Did 2009 live up to or outpace your expectations?** It met our expectations. 2008 was a better year, but 2009 wasn't as bad as it was for other people. A lot of our projects are design-build, so we got in early with the general contractor and the owner, and had them on the books for a year or more ... landed in 2008 and completed in 2009.

**In which market segment did you see the best/most business?** In 2009, we continued to do work in the industrial area and also on some military projects. Between those two segments, that's where we had our most success.

**How can you build off your 2009 momentum and continue into 2010?** 2010 is going to continue to be a challenging year for everyone with a little less work and stiff competition... so far we're staying busy with all our crews and have a decent backlog. We're thinking somewhat optimistically given the market conditions for 2010.

##### #3 in Tonnage & #1 in Square Feet:

###### Florida Metal Building Services, Co-owner, Robert Tillander:

**What is the secret to your success?** We're a faith-based company and that's how we conduct our business. We honestly believe that Christ has given us everything that we've done. We're huge believers.

**How did you make 2009 a successful year?** Everybody was real nervous, but we didn't really give it much thought. We kept going right along, everybody kept moving. It slowed down compared to the rest of the economy, but I think it lived up to our expectations.

**In which market segment did you see the best/most business?** Right now 80 percent of our business is church work. We do a lot of retail also.

**How can you build off your 2009 momentum and continue into 2010?** 2010 has been incredible for us already this year. We're really aggressive on our advertising, we build a lot of churches and we're recommended. We're currently building more than 15 churches and they're all metal buildings.

##### #4 in Tonnage: Keefe Construction Services, Co-owner, Ray Keefe:

**What is the secret to your success?** We landed a pretty good contract with a company that builds windmills. It was repeat business for a windmill manufacturing plant. What got us that was our customer service with them. 90 percent of our work was repeat business.

**Did 2009 live up to or outpace your expectations?** We outpaced them. We probably went about 20 percent over what I was expecting.

**How can you build off your 2009 momentum and continue into 2010?** We're looking to have a pretty good year, but it's going to be closer to our 2008 year. Most of our contracts we had we solidified in 2008, and I think the economy is just starting to catch us now even though it's starting to turn around again. We'll still have a really good year, but it just won't be like '09.

##### #5 in Tonnage: Blaine Construction Corp., Manager of Building Systems, Ray Duncan:

**What is the secret to your success?** We're like everybody else, we're competing for a lot of difficult projects. We have a niche as a hybrid construction company—having a niche and having experience in that niche is what works for us. We're able to approach projects that have both pre-engineered work and other forms of steel structures that are not in line with what a lot of builders can perform on—heavier buildings.

**Did 2009 live up to or outpace your expectations?** It lived up to our expectations for 2009. We had a planned volume and we were able to reach that goal.

**In which market segment did you see the best/most business?** We were scattered around a little bit last year. We were split between commercial and industrial.

**How can you build off your 2009 momentum and continue into 2010?** Thus far, 2010 has been a little bit slower than we'd have liked.

### Square Footage Leaders:

##### #2 in Square Feet: Fleming Building Co. Inc., Owner, Raymond A. Miller Jr.:

**What is the secret to your success?** I have a very competitive attitude to go with a very experienced team and the ability to travel well.

**Did 2009 live up to or outpace your expectations?** No, it didn't—I wanted to do more. 2009 was not nearly the year that we hoped for. Loan restrictions are killing the commercial and industrial market.

**In which market segment did you see the best/most business?** Power industries and military.

##### #4 in Square Feet: Gray & Becker Construction Co., VP & Operations Manager, Dereck Sayers:

**What is the secret to your success?** Being in the right place at the right time. It's feast or famine out there. What I like to think puts us over the top is our responsiveness and preparedness and No. 1, our experience.

**Did 2009 live up to or outpace your expectations?** It exceeded our expectations. We expected to do half that with the economy. We've seen the economy trending down, we didn't anticipate doing that kind of volume and that kind of square footage, but we landed a couple really nice projects that were design-build.

**In which market segment did you see the best/most business?** Mostly in warehouse, industrial-type facilities.

**How can you build off your 2009 momentum and continue into 2010?** This year seems to be turning more toward aviation and military contracts.

##### #5 in Square Feet: Pre-Fab Builders Inc., Owner, Archie T. Reyes:

**What is the secret to your success?** We have sold a lot of projects in 2008 and brought them to 2009. Most of those projects entailed more scrutiny. They were relatively pretty good size jobs, but sold in 2008.

**Did 2009 live up to or outpace your expectations?** Exceeded our expectations. First and second quarter was really slow in '09, and all these projects materialized in the third and fourth quarter.

**In which market segment did you see the best/most business?** We are a subcontractor, and never do any general contracting. Most of our jobs our governmental jobs.

**How can you build off your 2009 momentum and continue into 2010?** It's hard to tell. 2010 is starting slow, the same as 2009. We would be very lucky if we hit the same volume we had in 2009.

##### #6 in Square Feet: Crossland Construction Co. Inc., Owner, Christopher Crossland:

**What is the secret to your success?** It's our people. You go out and you recruit the best people you can and we just end up with a lot of great, educated, motivated people that have a lot of drive behind them.

**Did 2009 live up to or outpace your expectations?** I think it's tough out there for everybody. For us, we pulled together and took the time to bring all our upper management in, and we've been working on a new five-year plan with those people, which I think was great timing. Even in the tough times, our people know what we're expecting. 2009 was a good year for us, despite everything going on, we were really pleased to be blessed with a good year.

**In which market segment did you see the best/most business?** We're pretty diversified; we had some pretty good industrial and some educational buildings as well.

**How can you build off your 2009 momentum and continue into 2010?** That's the plan, that's what we'd like to do. We've gathered up some good backlog. Every deal you're working on is a little tougher. It requires a lot more to get a project these days.

**Note:** to convert tons to metric tons, multiply by 0.9, and to convert square feet to square meters, multiply by 0.0929. All statistical information is provided by the building company, and Metal Construction News cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of such information.

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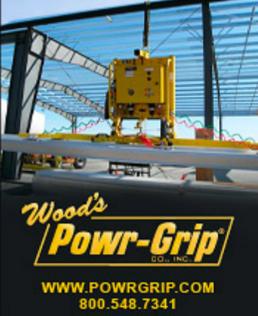
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