

May 1993

# Metal Construction News

The Voice Of The Industry

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## MBCI Committed To Quality, Education

By Shawn Zuver  
Editor

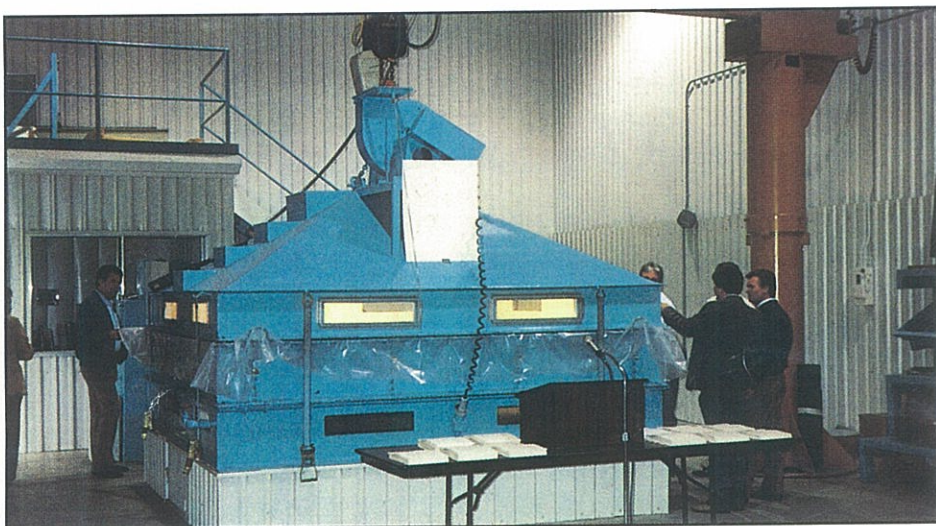
The story of MBCI's rise to become one of the largest and most successful metal components companies is based on solid marketing concepts and a thorough commitment to the industry. Founded in 1976, the Houston, TX-based company—with 14 (soon to be 16) plants nationwide—has also established a reputation for manufacturing quality products, educating its customers, and supporting industry associations and events.



A.R. Ginn

Since its inception, MBCI has stressed the need for quality to the entire construction community, with an emphasis on expanding the use of metal by architects and building designers. The company is involved in promoting metal through the

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MBCI's test apparatus is believed to be the only in-house UL-approved test chamber owned by a roofing manufacturer.

## Next Month In Metal Construction News...

■ **Special Emphasis:**  
Pre-Insulated Panel Projects

■ **Product Report:**  
Standing Seam Roof Systems

■ **Feature Articles:**  
Heating Options For Metal Buildings

■ **Job Applications:**  
Metal Buildings & Roofs For Hotels & Resorts

## Span, MBCI Honored As Top Contractor And Top Marketer

For the third consecutive year, Span Construction & Engineering of Madera, CA, has earned its place as the leader of the Top 100 Metal Construction Contractors based on 1992 steel purchases.

In conjunction with the presentation of the Top 100 Metal Construction Contractors, MBCI of Houston, TX, has been named Metal Construction News' Top Industry Marketer. A national manufacturer of metal building components, MBCI was selected as the first recipient of this annual recognition for its on-going educational efforts on behalf of, and contributions to, the metal construction industry.

### 1992 Top 100 Metal Construction Contractors Comparison Of Steel Purchases 1991 & 1992

| 1992  |   |
|---|---|
| 145,253 tons                                      |   |
| 129,018 tons<br>Metal Buildings<br>(95% involved) | 16,235 tons<br>Metal Components<br>(58% involved) |
| 1991  |   |
| 111,743* tons                                     |   |
| 101,894 tons<br>Metal Buildings<br>(95% involved) | 9,849 tons<br>Metal Components<br>(49% involved)  |

\*1991 total tonnage figures were not reported by one company. This company accounted for 1,237 tons of the 1992 total.

Separate profiles on MBCI and Span Construction & Engineering begin on the front page of this issue. Extensive information on the Top 100, who accounted for over 145,000 tons of steel purchases in 1992, appears in a special center section.

## Span Retains Top Contractor Crown

By Shawn Zuver  
Editor

Since it was founded in 1980, Span Construction & Engineering has been forging a place for itself as a leader in the metal construction contracting field. Another chapter is added to the Span legacy with this issue of Metal Construction News as the Madera, CA, company is named the Top Metal Construction Contractor for the third straight year.

Span earned this most recent



King Husein

award by purchasing almost 7,900 tons of steel for metal building projects in 1992, while also recording sales which neared \$28 million. The company completed in excess of 2.5 million sq. ft. of

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## Robertson-Ceco Signs Credit Agreement

Boston-based Robertson-Ceco Corp. (NYSE: RHH) announced at presstime that it has signed a new five-year credit agreement with Foothill Capital Corp. of Los Angeles, CA, to provide up to \$35 million to replace the company's existing credit facility.

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## Building Supplier Emphasizes Energy Efficiency

*Editor's Note: A new pre-engineered building supplier has entered the market with a focus on providing complete building packages that are specially engineered for energy efficiency. The following in-depth article, describes EnergyCraft Building Systems.*

By Eugene Romsos, President  
EnergyCraft Building Systems Inc.



Gene Romsos

EnergyCraft Building Systems Inc. is a new company specializing in value-engineered, energy efficient building systems. Unlike traditional pre-engineered buildings which are more of a package of steel structural components and panel systems, EnergyCraft Buildings will incorporate value-added engineering and state-of-the-art technologies and

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Two of Span's larger projects are the massive Sears Distribution Center in Delano, CA (above) and the Payless Distribution Center in Ogden, UT (right).

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⇨ From Front Page, Span

projects last year, following 1.7 million to 1.8 million sq. ft. of construction in each of the two previous years.

Moreover, for those of us who are impressed by figures, Span has purchased in excess of \$50 million of steel components from Varco-Pruden Buildings since Firoz "King" Husein, P.E., founded the company just over 13 years ago.

"The first year in business our goal was to do \$1 million in total construction and we finished with \$2.5 million volume. This gave us a good foundation to build on," remembers King, whose company has also been profiled in the August 1991 and August 1992 editions of Metal Construction News. "We kept the momentum going by increasing our volume steadily every year, highlighted by accelerated growth at frequent intervals when we would build a large project or two during a particular year."

Large projects have become a forte' of Span through the years, as illustrated by the mammoth 1,000,500 sq. ft. Sears Distribution Center in Delano, CA, which was completed in 1992. The \$40 million facility serves 146 Sears stores from Alaska to Hawaii. Meanwhile, another huge project—the 675,000 sq. ft. Payless Distribution Center in Ogden, UT—was started last year and is now 95% complete.

Sincere letters of appreciation from a wide range of customers demonstrate Span's ability to satisfy its clients' construction needs; often times, as the correspondences indicate, beyond the client's expectations.

King explained that one key to a satisfied customer is following a fundamental principle. "We pay a lot of attention to detail," he said. "It is always easy to take care of the big

To Page 30, Span ⇨



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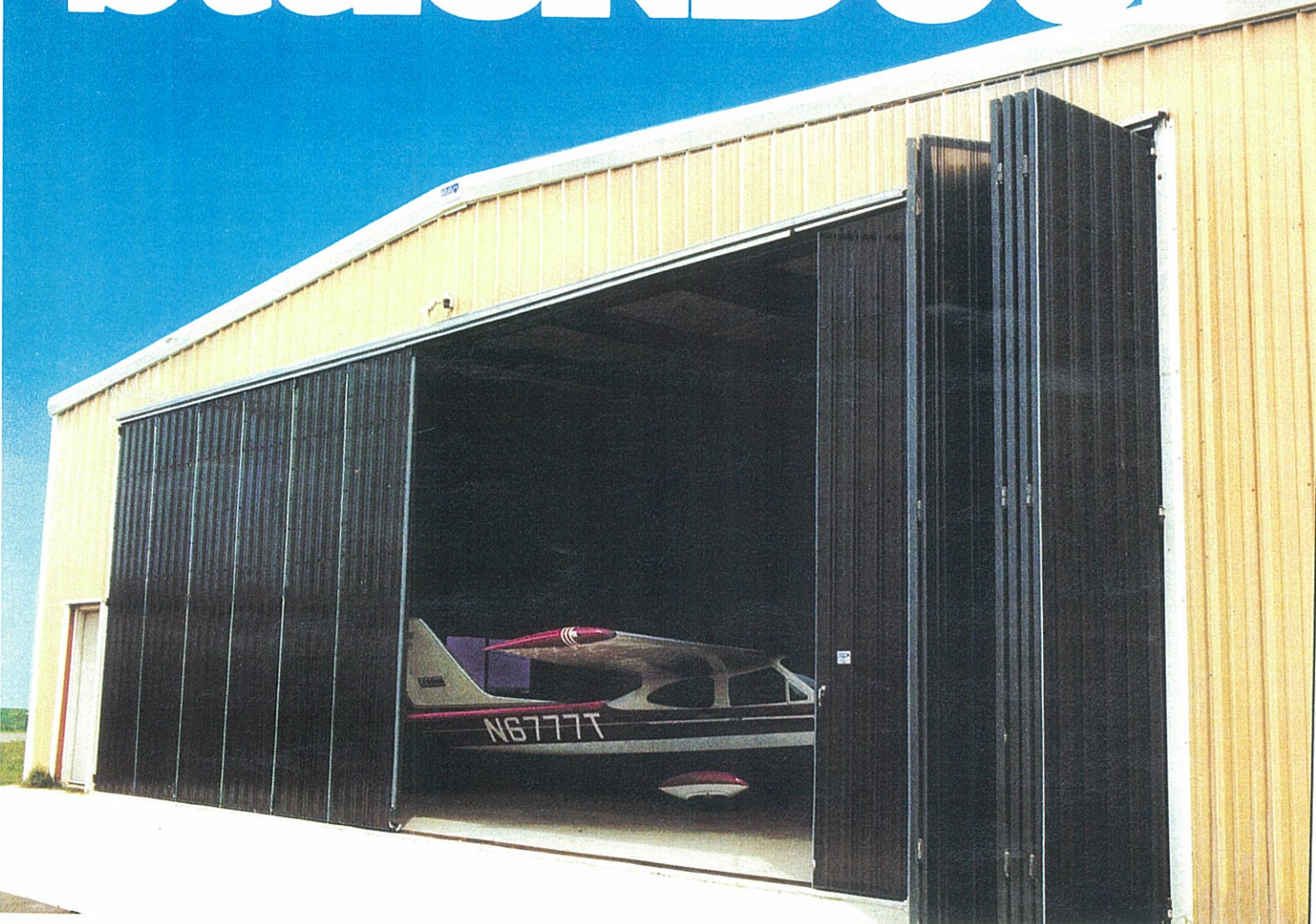




The Tilt-Plus System was used on this 22,500 sq. ft. facility in the Span Industrial Park in Madera (above), while Gerawan Packing (right) is located in Reedley, CA.

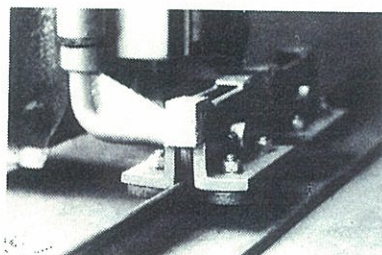


# StackDoor

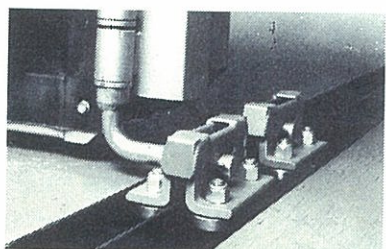


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items on a project, but taking care of the small details can often make the difference between an average project or a successful project."

#### Background On King Husein

King decided to focus on engineering during his high school years in India, mainly due to the influence of his friends who were interested in engineering. By the time he had graduated from high school, he had made up his mind to come to the U.S. to pursue a higher education. After receiving his Bachelors Degree from the University of Bombay in India, King arrived in the U.S. and attended Brigham Young University where he received his Masters Degree.

Upon graduating from BYU, King had planned on gaining practical experience in the U.S. for a few years before returning to India. At this point, he was not certain of his long range plans nor did he even have a hint that metal buildings would play such an important role in his future.

Growing up in India, King never imagined that he would someday be a nationwide leader in a segment of the construction industry. He explained that he didn't even know what a pre-engineered steel building was until he was offered a job in 1971 as a design engineer with Priggen Steel Building Co. in Holbrook, MA (which was later acquired by Varco-Pruden). During his interview, King thought that the meeting was over when he indicated to Priggen Steel's engineering manager, Maury Golovin, that he was not familiar with pre-engineered steel buildings. Instead, Golovin handed him a hard hat and gave King a tour of the fabricating plant to familiarize him with the operation. Thus began

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Two projects for Costco Wholesale that were finished by Span within the past year are a Novato, CA, facility (above) and a warehouse depot in Tracy, CA.



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King's career in the metal construction industry.

#### A Quick Assessment Of Span

Span Construction & Engineering operates from a 5,000 sq. ft. office and 20,000 sq. ft. shop in Madera. The company currently has 90 employees, including five project managers, seven construction superintendents, four draftsmen, two engineers, four salesman/estimators, numerous construction workers and a director of safety.

"Safety and training are important elements in our business," King said of the recently-created position. "We have a full-time director of safety on our staff who implements our safety program; orientation of new employees; drug, alcohol and physical fitness testing; and jobsite inspections. This is now a continuous process."

Due to local economic conditions Span's geographic reach has extended to projects in Connecticut, Wisconsin, New York, Kansas, Texas, Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Utah. Work is also being done in Canada and Span assisted in completing a glass plant in India last year, although that project had nothing to do with King being from India.

Span limits travel outside of its immediate geographical area of Central California to negotiated projects involving companies with whom Span has a good relationship.

In assessing a company like Span, one is often tempted to try to enumerate the reasons for the company's success. One of the biggest reasons is that King, himself, is not obsessed with traditional notions of success. He says that he has never worried about being the biggest, being "number one", building the most projects or even making the

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Four buildings comprise the J.R. Papazian project (above) in Fresno, CA, while the Spain Air addition in Dos Palos, CA, houses a crop dusting airplane.



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most money. King simply sees Span's successes as benefits derived from a set of values that the company follows.

King said his motivations are: "reaching our highest potential by taking advantage of the opportunities; enjoying the work; caring for employees and their families who depend on this company; giving employees the opportunity to develop in the company; and the challenge of stretching the boundaries of the systems approach by applying the system to bigger and more complex projects."

"By following those precepts, Span has elevated its business to a level which is not common in the industry. King explained, "We do not deviate from practicing the basic principles that guide us, which are: keeping our commitments, being honest in our dealings, providing the best quality, providing excellent service, and fair pricing which denotes value."

"Our emphasis on professionalism is very strong. We do not want to project the image of a typical contractor which is not high with the general public. We strive to do the best job on all projects. This means

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organizing the right team to plan and execute each project. We really practice this in our daily operations."

In addition to praising the contributions of all Span's employees, King is quick to credit the relationship that has developed with Varco-Pruden Buildings.

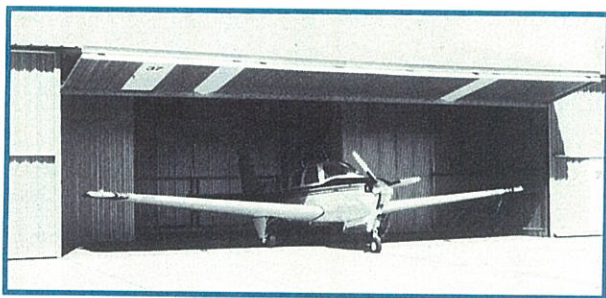
"Varco-Pruden is a key member of our team," he noted. "Our relationship with Varco-Pruden is not a typical manufacturer-builder relationship. We value our relationship with their district manager, division general manager, national accounts manager, president and other key personnel."

Span utilizes computers for all of its accounting functions, estimating and project scheduling. "VP Command (Varco-Pruden's state-of-the-art computer system for builders) is the latest powerful tool we use in our business," King continued. "This enables us to design and estimate steel building projects utilizing all the resources of Varco-Pruden. We will be integrating the VP Command system with other internal functions in the near future."

Span purchases all of its steel buildings from Varco-Pruden, as it has since King founded the company. Many industry people naturally assume that a company of Span's size might also rollform its own panels, however, King said that Span only fabricates miscellaneous items in its shop.

As was noted in the previous articles on Span and illustrated in the accompanying photos, tilt-up concrete wall systems are common on Span's projects. "Tilt-Plus construction continues to be an important segment of our business. We have been using this system very successfully on many projects." King added, "In addition to Tilt-Plus, all of our roof insulation is mechanically installed which improves the quality of the finished product. Even though this is a more expensive system, we feel that the improved quality is

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Other Span projects include the W.W. Grainger Warehouse (above) in Fresno, CA, and an 18,000 sq. ft. expansion of an existing 500,000 sq. ft. printing facility in Merced, CA, for Merced Color Press.

worth the additional cost."

To further its commitment to quality, Span conducts regular checks of the company's practices. "We conduct weekly coordination meetings," King said. "This format allows us to receive input from our management team on all the projects. In this meeting we discuss all the aspects of a project.

"Quality is not compromised at any cost. We continue to improve the application techniques in the field and once a technique is improved, we implement it on all projects. Often there is a cost associated with quality improvements, but this is what differentiates us from other companies."

#### A Bright Future

At presstime, Span had 14 projects under construction and another five that are under contract but not yet started. The company also has an exclusive agreement for the steel buildings on all Costco Wholesale projects, for whom Span has already completed several facilities.

"Span has stayed focused on the metal building business and we have resisted the invitations to venture into other areas of construction," King said. "We have not been good at setting long-term goals. Our basic philosophy is to get our share of the business and do the best job with it. If this requires traveling outside of California, we have managed to do it successfully.

Even though Span is currently operating at record-setting levels, future growth is not out of the question. "With our present organization we have the capacity to handle a larger volume of work than we currently are," King concluded. "We would like to increase our volume each year, only if we can maintain total control of our growth."

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