



# Beyond metal

Expanding on more than 90 years of experience, **O'Neal Industries** strengthens its expertise in flat-rolled products

BY LAUREN DUENSING

**E**stablished in 1921, O'Neal Steel, Birmingham, Ala., was the Southeast's first full-line metal service center. Today, 91 years later, the company has more than 90 locations with a diverse lineup of customers. Growing from one location to an entire organization of service centers made it necessary to redefine roles within the company, including establishing a parent company, O'Neal Industries Inc.

Before 2009, when "we set up O'Neal Industries, O'Neal Steel was both an operating

company and was the holding company for all the acquisitions that we made and continued to operate as stand-alone companies," says Bill Jones, vice chairman of O'Neal Industries. "That was very confusing to everybody, so we cleaned it up with a corporate structural change. We set up O'Neal Industries as the holding company and O'Neal Steel as the largest operating company within O'Neal Industries."

As a result of the restructuring, the family tree now includes O'Neal Industries, the Industrial Metals Group and the High Performance Metals Group. The High Performance Metals Group includes Aero-

dyne Alloys, TW Metals, United Performance Metals, Supply Dynamics, Stainless Tubular Products, Plus 10 Stainless and Philip Comes. The Industrial Metals Group encompasses O'Neal Steel, CHRG Metals, O'Neal Manufacturing Services, Iowa Laser, Leeco Steel and the newly formed O'Neal Flat Rolled Metals.

## The flat-rolled specialists

O'Neal acquired Metalwest in 1997 and TAD Metals in 2008, and these two companies officially began operating as the combined entity of O'Neal Flat Rolled Metals on Jan. 1, 2012. The creation of



## O'NEAL INDUSTRIES

### Industrial Metals Group

O'Neal Steel • O'Neal Manufacturing Services • Leeco Steel  
O'Neal Flat Rolled Metals • Iowa Laser • CHRG Metals

### High Performance Metals Group

Aerodyne Alloys • TW Metals • United Performance Metals  
Supply Dynamics • Stainless Tubular Products  
Plus 10 Stainless • Philip Cornes

O'Neal Flat Rolled Metals consolidates flat-rolled operations to provide customers with expert product knowledge and efficient distribution.

“Until this year, we had several companies involved in flat rolled,” says Jones. “We had Metalwest, which was primarily a western region carbon, aluminum and stainless flat-rolled business; we had TAD Metals, which was primarily a northeast and Texas-area stainless flat-rolled supplier; and O'Neal Steel had at least one operation devoted to flat rolled. We combined coil processing at O'Neal Steel with all the resources of Metalwest and TAD. O'Neal Steel will continue to sell sheet products and in most cases will source that product from O'Neal Flat Rolled Metals.”

It made perfect sense to bring the two companies together, says Craig Pickett, vice president, O'Neal Flat Rolled Metals. “Both companies have a proud history of processing and distributing flat-rolled products, both companies were specific in their product lines and both companies needed to expand

and cover a bigger geographic territory.”

“It will broaden the footprint of our flat-rolled business,” Jones adds. “I think more importantly, it will enrich the mix of product. You have Metalwest very heavily carbon dominated, even though they were growing their aluminum and stainless. TAD was very heavily stainless and introduced some aluminum but hardly any carbon. By combining this, we enrich the product mix throughout OFR.”

Combining the two companies' flat-rolled capacity gave them the opportunity to leverage off each other's best practices, driving growth and efficiency. To begin with, Pickett says TAD Metals and Metalwest had similar cultures that focus on operational excellence and customer service.

“All the employees are still here, it's just that they're all under one umbrella now,” says Shirley Fagan, strategic communications manager at O'Neal Industries, pointing out there's a wealth of knowledge from both the former TAD and the former Metalwest that now is shared.

“Each company has demonstrated its ability to successfully grow and develop its flat-rolled expertise,” says Ron Sardaro, president and CEO of O'Neal Flat Rolled Metals. “We have a unique culture of operational excellence, so I believe with the expertise in carbon steel and nonferrous metals, we've created a synergy that provides customers with quality flat-rolled products and expert processing capabilities at the level of service each customer demands.”

Jones adds there is both product and operating expertise. “Metalwest is a very efficient, very effective coil processor. Their operating costs are very low per ton. TAD does a great job of polishing—it's their niche. We intend to maintain their strengths. But we also want to change a good bit of what they're doing in that we're going to introduce a richer product mix and a lot more volume and geography.”

### A wide distribution network

O'Neal Flat Rolled Metals' goal is to provide customers with service on all levels.



**O'Neal Flat Rolled Metals will be able to provide customers with expert processing.**

The new flat-rolled entity will have locations across North America, giving both existing customers and new prospects “greater access to the nonferrous and the carbon products as we spread the product line across the U.S. We’ll also have strategic locations throughout the North American footprint,” Pickett says. “There were often challenges serving some customers that had multiple locations. Now, with a little broader distribution network and continuing to grow that distribution network, we should be able to help those customers succeed.”

“Our focus is the success of our customers,” adds Sardaro. “We charge ourselves first with selling the value as defined by the customers. We’re aligning our sales force with the value proposition we see in our various markets. So we’re trying to match the skill sets of our people with the products, services and value that our customers need.”

“Different customers value different things,” notes Pickett. “We’ve been working hard to become more flexible and pinpoint and accurately deliver the service levels that customers value. We’re trying to provide them with exactly what they need.”

Providing top-notch customer service is ingrained into employees at all O’Neal locations. Although the O’Neal family of

**“[WE’RE TRYING TO] UNDERSTAND THEIR BUSINESSES AND GO BEYOND JUST DROPPING OFF METAL AT THEIR DOOR AND ACTUALLY PROVIDING SOLUTIONS TO THEIR BUSINESS PROBLEMS.”**

**RON SARDARO, O’NEAL FLAT ROLLED METALS**

companies has grown substantially during the past nine decades, “being family owned permeates through the culture of the whole company and the employees. I think that is translated to how our employees take care of customers,” Fagan says.

Having several family members integrally involved in the business allows O’Neal Industries to “take a lot of unique or entrepreneurial action that may have longer-term payoff as opposed to some of the publicly traded companies,” Jones says. “The flip side is we also try to manage the business and act with a sense of urgency that is the same as the publicly traded companies. We have to perform quarter to quarter. We certainly don’t want to become lethargic, but we do have the ability to think and act longer term.”

Long-term goals at O’Neal Flat Rolled Metals include “becoming a North American footprint of distribution and processing of flat-rolled products, including stainless and aluminum and carbon steels. That’s

certainly the major goal—to build this network out and provide the product and further our reputation of being experts in flat rolled,” Pickett says.

The company’s tagline is “beyond metal,” and Sardaro says these words reflect the ability to partner with customers, “working cooperatively in a mutually beneficial manner to eliminate any waste throughout the supply chain, including the manufacturing process. What we’re trying to accomplish is to eliminate pain points for our customers. [We’re trying to] understand their businesses and go beyond just dropping metal off at their door and actually providing solutions to their business problems.” ■

**O’Neal Flat Rolled Metals**, Brighton, Colo., 800/336-3365, fax: 303/655-4553 [www.ofrmetals.com](http://www.ofrmetals.com).

**O’Neal Industries**, Birmingham, Ala., 205/599-8000, fax: 205/599-8469, [www.onealind.com](http://www.onealind.com).