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METALCON 2022 Takes a Victory Lap in Indy

(Newton, Mass., – Nov. 2, 2022) — For its first time in Indianapolis, the racing capital of the world, [METALCON](#) roared across the finish line for both attendees and exhibitors. From intensive workshops to 40 free educational sessions to inspiring keynotes, attendees learned from top industry experts and earned nearly a year’s worth of continuing education credits at the industry’s only event dedicated exclusively to the application of metal in design and construction.

“You truly can’t get this type of experience anywhere else,” said show attendee Ryan Anderson of Elevated Metal Solutions in Big Sky, Montana. “There are so many tools and resources here, whether you are trying to grow your marketing, your installation knowledge or your sales. There are so many great minds coming together, so much knowledge to be shared—all in this one centralized location. It’s a fantastic way to expose yourself to the industry and learn about what it takes to grow your company efficiently. This is my first METALCON; needless to say, we will definitely be back.”

Kicking off day one of the show was keynote speaker, Dr. Melissa Furman of Career Potential, a consulting, training and coaching organization, who shared her thoughts on preparing for “the new era of uncertainty and constant flux” and strategies for navigating ongoing challenges.

“We have experienced more change in the last 18 months than we experienced during the entire industrial revolution, and the change is only getting faster,” said Furman. She spoke about the difficulty her clients are facing with finding new hires. She said, “If you just continue to tweak old systems, old ways of doing things to try to remain relevant, your organization may not survive. You have to rethink your organization. Nothing is off the table. You have put yourself outside of your comfort zone and be thinking about how you can build your organization—one that is relevant for today. Are your systems, protocols and infrastructures based on old rules? I ask you, are your organizations relevant? Because these younger generations whether they are your customers, consumers or employees, they want to know why.”

“We will never go back to a new normal—the way things used to be,” continued Furman. “As a leader you need to start thinking in this mindset of how you can manage constant change. Any time I hear the words best practice, it is like nails on a chalkboard to me because what are best practices based on? What has worked in the past. We are in a different landscape today, and most of those things that worked in the past are not going to work today or in the future.”

Back by popular demand, The Architect’s Experience returned to METALCON this year. Architects, specifiers and designers learned from industry experts. Show attendee and registered architect, Judy Kleine said, “In just three days, I can get three quarters of my CEUs for a year, and that’s important because it is hard for me to take time off. You not only have the education, which has been very good, you also get to see new products, how systems go together and how they work.”

Architect’s Experience speaker, Dan Brueggert, AIA LEED AP, Principal of CSO Inc., concurs. “For me, it’s hard to stay abreast of what’s innovative in the industry. Clients are always choosing their architect based on how innovative that architect is. We’re trying to stay at the forefront of technology. We don’t have time to keep up with what manufacturers are doing and what’s now available that didn’t used to be, so coming to a place like this and learning about what new things are coming out is invaluable to us to stay ahead of that innovation.”

On day two of the show, American IndyCar Series car driver, Josef Newgarden shared stories on the inner workings of his race team and highlighted lessons learned regarding communication and teamwork on his path to the top tier of American Motorsports. He spoke about how important it is to have people in your life who support you. For him, that is his father, encouraging him every step of the way. He also spoke about the role of each individual on his team and how

together, they contribute to the overall success of the team.

Also on day two, Paul Deffenbaugh, editorial director of *Metal Construction News* moderated a state of the industry panel with Tony Bouquot, general manager of the Metal Builders Manufacturers Association; Jennifer Heimbürger, president of the Metal Builders Contractors & Erectors Association; Chuck Howard, long-time industry veteran and president of Metal Roof Consultants; and Alan Scott, FAIA, registered architect and sustainability practitioner with Intertek. They discussed supply chain issues, rising costs, the labor shortage and workforce development.

Bouquot said, “Manufacturers are able to find materials but are having to deal with some substitutions like components of paint supplies or specific gauges; they are turning to conventional steel as it is more readily available.” On the same topic Heimbürger said, “Companies are able to find alternate suppliers; wait times have varied; and businesses are turning to conventional steel.” Howard contributed, “It has been difficult to get jobs done, and costs have gone up, but the demand is still there. The supply chain is constant now; things have leveled off; and they are in a more comfortable position.” He also stated, “Now is a good time to step back, think long-term and make lemons out of lemonade.”

Deffenbaugh asked about pricing increases and what the panel is seeing. “Nobody was talking about inflation when steel prices increased 400%,” said Heimbürger. “Concrete is affecting projects, fuel surcharges and fuel. The market will bear some increases.” Howard said, “Over the last two years, budget planning has been difficult because of price increases, but they are leveling off, and we are catching our breath.” Bouquot contributed, “The value of coming to METALCON is we can have those face-to-face conversations. We are all trying to stay ahead of the downstream prices we are seeing.”

On the topic of sustainability, Scott said, “Low cost, long-term financing ITCs (international tax credits) have been extended, and building performance standards are coming into place, affecting existing building performance approval.” Heimbürger contributed, “The retrofit market is growing; it is cheaper to buy an older building and retrofit it vs. building new.” Howard stated, “There is more demand than capacity to take care of the demand in retrofit. You never have to worry about feeding your family if you get into the retrofit business.”

The panel also discussed the environmental benefits of using metal in construction, reducing carbon emissions by using 100% recyclable steel and changing the perception of the trades by providing tools to schools (i.e., curriculums and programs) to promote the trades as an option.

This year’s show included nearly 250 leading companies exhibiting the latest metal construction industry products and technology.

“Most people at METALCON know that a lot of things happen behind the scenes, so for us it’s really networking, meeting the people in our industry and planning out the future by securing purchases, materials, metals,” said Jay Lara, Vice President of Sales, Carport Central.

Long time exhibitor, Bob Repovs, president and CEO of Samco Machinery, said, “We’ve been having a lot of great conversations with builders and engineering companies looking for what’s out there with steel, whether it is roof trusses, wall panels or steel structural systems. A lot of our clients from all around the world come to METALCON. It’s exploratory of information. We have our experts here, our engineers, our sales engineers—all the experts are here.

METALCON 2023 takes place in Las Vegas from October 18-20 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. For more information, visit www.metalcon.com.

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