

Made in America — It Matters to All of Us

As a manufacturer of fasteners for the construction industry, ALTENLOH, BRINCK & CO. U.S., INC. (ABC U.S.) is dedicated to a 100-percent American-made model for its TRUFAST® brand commercial roofing products and accessories. Their American-made commitment also applies to the roofing products they distribute.

The ABC U.S. manufacturing facility in Bryan, Ohio, will soon be producing one billion fasteners annually. In the current economic environment, growing a manufacturing business is challenging enough. In the world of global sourcing for commodity items such as fasteners, it is virtually unheard of.

Brian Roth, president and CEO of ABC U.S., said, “Made in America’ is much more than a slogan on a label. Domestic manufacturing of our products allows us to fulfill our strategic direction and the principals that guide our daily activities.” Part of that vision is the vertical integration of all processes that go into the manufacturing of TRUFAST products. “We want to control all aspects of the production process in order to meet the product specification related to forming, heat treating and coatings of our products. I can’t do that from 8,000 miles away — nor can anyone else,” he continued.

The resurgence of American manufacturing is gaining traction with several large, multi-national companies already repatriating some of their production. Eventually, the United States must balance its trade deficit in manufactured goods or risk losing its leadership position as a world power. Direct manufacturing employment is estimated at 12 million workers in the United States, which is a third less than 10 years ago. Twelve million jobs do not sound like a lot but are critical when you consider that each manufacturing job supports five other U.S. jobs.

With total employment of around two hundred, ABC U.S. has seen the benefit their growth has had in their community and within their supplier base. “Our total payroll has doubled in the last five years and, as a result, we’ve seen



unemployment rates fall from 15 percent to 7 percent in our county. Meanwhile, several of our strategic suppliers have expanded on our commitment to domestic growth which will result in more jobs,” Roth said.

Product quality is critical in the construction industry, and we have seen how inferior imported products have had disastrous results. In addition, increasing transportation and foreign labor costs are improving U.S. competitiveness. Finally, the growing U.S. energy independence will benefit domestic users of natural gas, which is used in the heat treatment of fasteners.

Ironically, as consumers, we can change the course of our economy by buying products made in America. If every consumer and every company committed to American-made products, unemployment would fall to historic norms and wages would rise. That isn’t to imply that consumers should pay a premium or subsidize domestic manufacturing. U.S. manufacturers have made productivity improvements that have reduced the domestic cost burden from 31.7 percent to 17.6 percent of total production costs. Roth said, “We price out the costs of foreign-made products each year, so we know where we need to be in order to compete with those who import their products. We believe we can compete with anyone in the world when comparing the total costs of offshore products.”

What manufacturers like ABC U.S. would like to see is a requirement for a more detailed country-of-origin label, giving consumers more accurate, accessible information. Public projects requiring domestic-made products do not necessarily have the information available to monitor

the origin of their products. Products made offshore, but assembled or package here, are not “Made in America.”

Buying products “Made in America” is about restoring our economy and providing a secure future for all Americans. The reasoning is clear — the rest is up to you and your purchasing decisions.

For more information, visit www.trufast.com.