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**MARCH 2006**



# Paragon Steel Launches New Web Site

*By Jim Stavis*

With great fanfare, Paragon Steel is proud to launch our new Web site for 2006. We have given the Web site, located at [www.paragonsteel.com](http://www.paragonsteel.com), a whole new look, with updated products, services and project information. We will be updating the newsletter and project sections on a monthly basis to keep the site fresh and informative. The site will be launched officially the middle of March and features a new company mascot, sumo wrestlers. We will get to them later in this newsletter.

As a measure of thanks for sending us an inquiry and filling out our credit application off the Web site, we will send you a nice gift. We are always looking for feedback, so if you have any comments regarding the new site, we welcome your input.

### **Why Sumo Wrestlers?**

You will find in our new site the use of sumo wrestlers – one that stands for quality and one for service

*(Continued Inside)*

## Paragon Steel's New Web Site *(Continued from Front)*

that are squaring off against one another. The tag line is "Why can't quality and service get along?" We thought the sumo wrestler would be an innovative way to prove our point that they can and do at Paragon Steel.

Sumo is a form of wrestling that goes back to the earliest historical records in Japanese history. In the early periods it was used as a method of resolving political disputes with the might of two wrestlers squaring off against one another. In later periods, sumo wrestling emerged as a sport with rules and ceremonies that hold true today. Into today's modern times, sumo has become a professional sport which is extremely popular like baseball or football is in this country.

Sumo wrestlers, weighing up to 580 pounds each, are set in a ring that is only 15 feet in diameter and the winner is the wrestler who can stay in the ring the longest without falling down. Given the simplicity of defeat and the small size of the wrestling ring, it is no surprise that the matches are quite short. A long match is only 1 or 2 minutes long and the average duration is



under 30 seconds. The sport has benefited greatly from slow motion television which can repeat the furious action slow enough for viewers to comprehend the results.

There are four levels or grades of competition. The Grand Champions are the most highly skilled who compete in 15 bouts a year. Then there are the Junior Champions, Champions and Champions Second Class that fight seven bouts a year.

What is so intriguing about the sumo wrestlers is first of all their immense size, but also their attire (or lack of) which is a thick belt which can be grasped by their opponent and used to lever the wearer out of the ring.

As of now we have not named our sumo wrestlers (other than Quality and Service). We hope you can appreciate our new theme to kick off our Web presence.

# The Internet and Steel

*By Jim Stavis*

Back in 1990 we wrote about the Internet and its impact on the steel industry. Back then it was more like the Inter-Not, than the Internet, as buyers were reluctant to embrace the new technology to serve their steel needs. As the Internet has revolutionized the purchasing of travel, music, books—and through eBay just about everything—it has slowly evolved as a mechanism to buy commodities, particularly steel.

Back in 1990, there were sites such as MetalSite, e-Steel and a host of others that

were building IPOs to deliver steel cheaper and more efficiently than traditional distribution channels. The problem was that the glut of new companies forgot one thing—how to actually turn a profit.

When the tech bubble finally burst, most of the Internet-based companies disappeared from the landscape. But not all of them. I spoke with Scott Shapiro of Steel Salvor, an auction-based Web site that specializes in mill surplus and insurance-claimed materials. Scott's business has doubled in the past year with sales of 50,000 tons last year and reports having posted his best



month ever just last month. Scott claims they are not in the auction business, but are in the marketing business. They list their products to 6,300 companies across the country and try to match buyers with sellers (similar to eBay). Their ultimate goal is to change the way steel is distributed, using the Internet as the tool to make it happen.

In my opinion, Steel Salvor is more a company that appeals to steel distributors than to end users. An end user might be more reluctant to take a chance on a surplus or secondary lot of steel with the fear that it might be misrepresented or not suitable for their operation. A distributor, on the other hand, might have other customers

that the steel might be more suitable for. So will end users ever embrace the Internet as a place to buy their steel? That is a tough question to answer.

Many distributors have set up E-commerce pages on their sites with the intent of taking orders. We have found that customers still need a customer service component to be sure that they are getting exactly what they want, in the form and quantity that suits them best. The Internet can be a great tool for acquiring information or for communicating, but there will always be the need for some level of customer service. We at Paragon Steel hope this is always the case.

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## Quote *of the* Month

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*"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap,  
But by the seeds you plant."*

*—Robert Louis Stevenson, Author*