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37 YEARS

# SUMMER/FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER

By Jim Stavits



## THE L.A. FIRES — WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

It was a little over six months ago when Los Angeles had its worst disaster in modern times. The areas burned by the fire that went beyond out-of-control in the Pacific Palisades and Altadena areas may never be the same. It will take years, if not decades, to resurrect these communities, not to mention to recover from the devastating financial impact it had on our citizenry. There are so many elements of this devastation that are difficult to measure. The feeling of loss—30 deaths, thousands of homes gone, long-term plans derailed, battles with insurance companies, a multitude of lawsuits and just the mental anguish of it all. It's hard to comprehend.

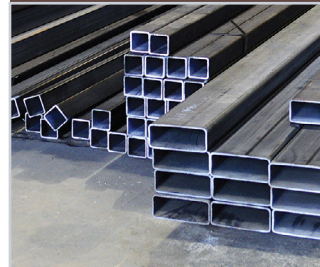
For all of the uncertainty, there have been some measurable changes since January. Thousands of lots have been cleared. Numerous lawsuits have been filed against insurance carriers, utility companies and any other source of possible responsibility for the fire. It was possible God himself would have been attributed to be the cause but that's a tough lawsuit to prove. There are multiple investigations underway and

dozens of new building permits have been issued. But it all takes time and for those who saw their homes and communities lost in the rubble, the rebuilding can't happen soon enough. For those in an age group up in years, they may not be alive long enough to see their dream homes rebuilt.

There is certainly plenty of blame to spread around. There was a reservoir that was empty awaiting repairs, fire trucks that were out of commission due to funding cuts in the fire department, a mayor who was out of the country when the fires originated, as well as poor forest management and a lack of building planning which allowed the situation to occur in the first place. In the end, it was a cluster of events that combined to create this horrible reality. And yet, we have had so many warnings of what could happen just by looking in the rear-view mirror. Each year in California with high winds and lack of precipitation, there has been the potential for this kind of event. We should have seen it coming and been better prepared. Clearly, the insurance companies knew the risks as many of the larger carriers stopped writing policies in the state of California. Unfortunately, our politicians really dropped the ball in preparation for

the dangers and literally kicked the can down the road while they kept their fingers crossed.

So, where are we today? What have we learned? How can this be prevented in the future? I believe that is the question we should be asking before we rebuild everything as it was before. Using better building materials will help as will designing neighborhoods with fire risks in mind. As a steel distributor, I believe we can help mitigate some of the building challenges with the architects and home builders who will be performing the actual reconstruction. We must be mindful of where it went wrong and be smart about the changes necessary for the future growth of these communities. I believe that in time, the communities will rebuild and some lives will return to a state of normalcy. But, for others, life will never be the same and they may move to new houses in other cities and states. For L.A. this was a huge black eye that will take much time to heal. I just hope we learn from it moving forward.



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## A CLEAN START FOR CALIFORNIA STEEL

**T**his past April there was a big change in the landscape of California's steel manufacturing. Pacific Steel Group broke ground in Mojave, just outside of Los Angeles, on a mill, the first of its kind in over fifty years. Called the Mojave Micro Mill, it will be the first zero process carbon emissions rebar mill. By using hybrid mill technology and a renewable energy

Image credit: State of California



portfolio, the micro mill is set to be one of the cleanest mills in the world.

Once operating at full capacity, the Mojave Micro Mill will be able to produce upwards of 450,000 tons of rebar steel, a process that will eliminate approximately 370,000 tons of greenhouse gases. The mill will create nearly 1,000 jobs in Kern county and will generate over \$100 million in annual benefits to the region. The one resource Mojave has an abundance of is heat and with the utilization of both solar and wind, the plant will be run with a net zero carbon footprint—first of it's kind.

According to the Pacific Steel Group, it will take a few years before rebar begins to ship from the newly constructed mill. We will keep you posted.

## PARAGON STEEL TURNS 37!!

Back in 1988 we thought getting past the first year was a reasonable goal. Yet, here we are. In July we turned 37. Thanks to our loyal following of customers, vendors and employees I'm very proud of this accomplishment. Onward to 38.