



Last Post Standing? Toledo Firm Launches Made-in-America Steel Products Campaign

American Posts, LLC is becoming the poster child for the new Buy American campaign. The last domestic manufacturer of steel fence posts, American Posts produces the ubiquitous green u-channel posts used by nearly every homeowner, landscaper, contractor, and city government from coast to coast. Yet only ten percent of these familiar green stakes are still made in America, having nearly lost the competition with Chinese imports. David Feniger, president of American Posts, LLC of Toledo, Ohio is determined to change all that.

The story of the humble steel fence post is symbolic of the battle against the flood of cheap foreign steel, the loss of U.S. jobs, and disappearing products stamped "Made in America." When David Feniger and his father Bill founded American Posts in March of 2005, there were still three other U.S. companies stamping out the posts most commonly used by residential and agricultural markets. Today, American Posts stands alone. "We designed and built a fully automated mill, producing about a half million units that first year," says David Feniger. "Today, our productivity exceeds 3 million posts a year and we are priced competitively, even when compared to the foreign-made product."

So, what is the problem? According to Feniger, too few distributors and consumers understand the consequences of fewer and fewer American manufacturers, having become insensitive to quality issues and point of origin. "The fact is there is no advantage in buying a foreign made product. Products like ours are of high quality and buying items produced in America has a ripple effect that benefits manufacturers, employees, and local communities alike. Buying American is *the* practical economic stimulus program," says Feniger.

David believes that if consumers were made better aware of the importance and high quality of American-made products and craftsmanship, they would take a second look when making a purchase. To drive home the point, American Posts is launching its *Buy a Stake in America* campaign that focuses on small manufacturers like themselves that are the backbone of the U.S. economy. They have urged both big box retailers and resellers of their steel fence posts to consider the advantages of stocking American Post products. The company also hopes to carry the message to commercial consumers of their product through trade journals and to residential and agricultural markets through media attention.

American Posts is making headway. "We are convincing our major outlets like Home Depot, Lowe's, Menards, Tractor Supply Company, and True Value of the importance of carrying our products which are made here by Americans, using American steel," says Feniger. "When they order posts from China, they often have to buy in huge quantities, months in advance. At American Posts, we can supply high quality and in almost any quantity to multiple sites within a matter of days." The just-in-time delivery aspect at a competitive cost is particularly popular in a cash-flow-conscious economy where distributors are averse to carrying huge inventories. Ace

Hardware is a major convert, and now buys the steel fence posts exclusively from American Posts. Todd Reffett, buyer for Ace Hardware Corporation says that "we are constantly looking for quality products from quality partners, and have found that in American Posts."

David, who has more than a decade of experience in the steel and service industry, is a third-generation Feniger in the steel industry. Graduating from the University of Denver with a business management degree, he cut his steel teeth by working for his father, Bill Feniger, who is president of Universal Metals, a coil sheet steel distributor also located in Toledo.

The younger Feniger is the driving force in the company, encouraging employees to make the best u-posts in the industry. The firm produces both light and heavy-duty u-channel posts in 14 and 13 gage steel and range from 3 to 7 feet in length. The post blades are riveted in place and the entire unit is then coated in green polyester supplied by Sherwin-Williams. "The Sherwin-Williams Company, with more than 140 years of experience in products finishing technology, is proud to serve American Posts through their Toledo facility," says Robert Clegg, SW's Senior Director of General Finishes.

The result is good old-fashioned workmanship, a sturdy product at an affordable price, and a great deal of pride. American Posts is determined to grow... and take all of America with it.

For more information on American Posts, LLC, visit AmericanPosts.com