

## Risk Factors Comparison 2024-10-24 to 2023-10-26 Form: 10-K

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An investment in our common stock involves risks and uncertainties. You should carefully consider the following risk factors, in addition to the other information contained in this annual report on Form 10-K, before deciding whether an investment in our common stock is suitable for you. The risk factors described below are not the only ones we face. There may be other risks and uncertainties that are currently unknown to us or that we currently consider to be immaterial that could adversely affect our business, results of operations, financial condition and cash flows.

**Industry Specific Risks** Our business is cyclical and can be negatively impacted by prolonged economic downturns, rising interest rates or tightening in the financial markets that reduce the level of construction activity and demand for our products. Demand for our products is cyclical in nature and sensitive to changes in the economy and in the financial markets. Our products are sold primarily to manufacturers of concrete products that are used for a broad range of nonresidential and residential construction applications. Demand for our products is driven by the level of construction activity, which tends to be correlated with conditions in the overall economy as well as other factors beyond our control. Rising interest rates or tightening in the financial markets could adversely impact demand for our products by increasing the cost of financing or reducing the availability of financing to our customers and the construction industry as a whole. Future prolonged periods of economic weakness, high interest rates or reduced availability of financing could have a material adverse impact on our business, results of operations, financial condition and cash flows. Our business can be negatively impacted by reductions in the amount and duration of government funding for infrastructure projects that reduce the level of construction activity and demand for our products. Certain of our products are used in the construction of highways, bridges and other infrastructure projects that are funded by federal, state and local governments. Reductions in the amount of funding for such projects or the period for which it is provided, including as a result of budget uncertainty, the potential for U. S. ~~Government~~ **government** shutdowns, the use of continuing resolutions and the federal debt ceiling, could have a material adverse impact on our business, results of operations, financial condition and cash flows. Foreign competition could adversely impact our financial results. Certain of our PC strand and SWWR markets are subject to foreign import competition on an ongoing basis. If we are unable to purchase raw materials and achieve manufacturing costs that are competitive with those of foreign producers, or if the margin and return requirements of foreign producers are substantially lower, our market share and profit margins could be negatively impacted. In response to illegally traded import competition from offshore PC strand and SWWR suppliers, we have pursued trade cases ~~, when necessary, as a means of ensuring that foreign producers were complying with the applicable trade laws and regulations~~ **objective of addressing illegal activities in our markets**. Such actions may be costly and may not be successful. Trade law enforcement is critical to our ability to maintain our competitive position against foreign PC strand and SWWR producers that engage in unlawful trade practices. Our financial results can be negatively impacted by the volatility in the cost and availability of our primary raw material, hot- rolled carbon steel wire rod. The primary raw material used to manufacture our products is hot- rolled carbon steel wire rod, which we purchase from both domestic and foreign suppliers **. If any key supplier that we rely on for hot- rolled carbon steel wire rod ceases or limits production, we may incur significant additional costs in order to find alternative, reliable raw material suppliers. We may also experience significant production delays while locating new supply sources, which could result in our failure to timely deliver products to our customers**. We do not use derivative commodity instruments to hedge our exposure to changes in the price of wire rod as such instruments are currently unavailable in the financial markets. Prices for wire rod have become increasingly volatile in recent years driven by the higher degree of variability in raw material costs for rod producers, changes in trade policy and the fluctuation of domestic supply. In response, wire rod producers have resorted to increasing the frequency of price adjustments, typically on a monthly basis, as well as unilaterally changing the terms of prior commitments. Although changes in our wire rod costs and selling prices tend to be correlated, we may be unable to fully recover increased rod costs during weaker market environments, which would reduce our earnings and cash flows. Additionally, when raw material costs decline, our financial results would be negatively impacted if the selling prices for our products decrease to an even greater extent and if we are consuming higher cost material from inventory. Our financial results can also be significantly impacted if raw material supplies are inadequate to satisfy our purchasing requirements. For example, U. S. government trade policies and trade actions by domestic wire rod producers against other countries can significantly impact the availability and cost of imported wire rod. The imposition of tariffs, quotas or anti- dumping or countervailing duty margins by the U. S. government **, including those implemented following the change in administration after the 2024 U. S. presidential election,** against exporting countries can have the effect of reducing or eliminating their competitiveness and participation in the domestic market. If we were unable to obtain adequate and timely delivery of our raw material requirements, we may be unable to manufacture sufficient quantities of our products or operate our manufacturing facilities in an efficient manner, which could result in lost sales and higher operating costs. Because tight market conditions typically affect the entire industry, during past periods of short raw material supply, margins and profitability have been favorably impacted due to curtailed availability of PC strand and WWR that supported higher average selling prices. ~~However, There there~~ **is no assurance that future short supply conditions in raw material markets would result in similar outcomes, however**. Demand for our products is highly variable and difficult to forecast due to our minimal backlog and unanticipated changes that can occur in customer order patterns or inventory levels. Demand for our products is highly variable. The short lead times for customer orders and minimal backlog that characterize our business make it difficult to forecast the future level of demand for our products. In some cases, unanticipated softening in demand can be exacerbated by inventory rebalancing measures pursued by our customers, which may cause

significant fluctuations in our sales, profitability and cash flows. Operational Risks Our manufacturing facilities are subject to unexpected equipment failures, operational interruptions and casualty losses. Our manufacturing facilities are subject to risks that may limit our ability to manufacture and sell our products, including unexpected equipment failures, operational interruptions and catastrophic losses due to other unanticipated events such as fires, explosions, accidents, **pandemics, epidemics**, adverse weather conditions and transportation interruptions. Any such equipment failures or events can subject us to plant shutdowns and periods of reduced production or unexpected downtime. Furthermore, the resolution of certain operational interruptions may require significant capital expenditures. Although our insurance coverage could offset the losses or expenditures relating to some of these events, our results of operations and cash flows would be negatively impacted to the extent that such claims were not covered or only partially covered by our insurance. Our financial results could be adversely impacted by the escalation of our operating costs. Consistent with the experience of other employers, our labor, medical and workers' compensation costs have increased substantially in recent years and are expected to continue to rise. If this trend continues, the cost of labor and to provide healthcare and other benefits to our employees could increase, adversely impacting profitability. ~~As the labor market continues to impact recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, availability of qualified employees and competition for qualified workers them has escalated,~~ **Labor market shortages continue to impact** availability of qualified employees and competition for **qualified workers**, which has increased costs associated with attracting and retaining employees. We cannot be certain that we will be able to maintain an adequately skilled labor force necessary to operate efficiently or that our labor costs will not increase as a result of a shortage in the availability of skilled employees. Additionally, employee turnover could result in lost time due to inefficiencies and the need for additional training, which could impact our operating results. Changes to healthcare regulations may also increase the cost of providing such benefits to our employees. We cannot predict the ultimate content, timing, or effect of any healthcare reform legislation or the impact of potential legislation or related proposals and policies on our results. Any significant increases in the costs attributable to our self-insured health and workers' compensation plans could adversely impact our business, results of operations, financial condition and cash flows. In addition, increasing transaction prices, **as a result of general inflation or otherwise**, for freight, natural gas, electricity, fuel and consumables would adversely affect our manufacturing and distribution costs. For most of our business, we incur the transportation costs associated with the delivery of products to our customers. Although we have previously implemented numerous measures to offset the impact of increases in these costs, there can be no assurance that such actions will be effective. If we are unable to pass these additional costs through by raising our selling prices, our financial results could be adversely impacted. Our business, financial condition and results of operations may be adversely impacted by the effects of inflation. **Rising** ~~The recent rise in~~ inflation has increased, **and may continue to increase**, the costs of labor, energy, operating supplies and raw materials. If we are unable to pass these increases in costs to our customers it could adversely affect our business, financial condition and results of operations by increasing our overall cost structure. **Additionally, our ability to recover the cost increases through price increases may lag our cost increases, which could negatively impact our margins.** Our business and operations are subject to risks related to climate change. The long-term effects of global climate change could present both physical risks and transition risks (such as regulatory or technology changes), which are expected to be widespread and unpredictable. These changes could over time affect, for example, the availability and cost of raw materials, commodities and energy (including utilities), which in turn may impact our ability to procure goods or services required for the operation of our business at the quantities and levels we require. Additionally, we have facilities located in areas that may be impacted by the physical risks of climate change, and we face the risk of losses incurred as a result of physical damage to our facilities and inventory as well as business interruption caused by such events. Furthermore, **production and shipment levels for our business correlate with construction activity, most of which occurs outdoors and, as a result, is affected by erratic weather patterns, seasonal changes, and other unusual or unexpected weather-related conditions, all of which may be impacted by weather patterns.** ~~Periods of extended inclement weather or associated flooding may inhibit construction activity utilizing our products and delay shipments of our products to customers, which can significantly affect~~ **periods** ~~We believe that adaptation strategies to accommodate rising sea levels and other climate-related phenomena could stimulate demand for our business, financial condition and results of operations products to the extent that reinforced concrete products are essential to managing surface waters.~~ **Periods** of extended inclement weather or associated flooding may inhibit construction activity utilizing our products and delay shipments of our products to customers, **which can significantly affect** ~~We believe that adaptation strategies to accommodate rising sea levels and other climate-related phenomena could stimulate demand for our business, financial condition and results of operations products to the extent that reinforced concrete products are essential to managing surface waters.~~ We also use natural gas, diesel fuel, gasoline and electricity in our operations, all of which could face increased regulation as a result of climate change or other environmental concerns. Additionally, we may face increased costs to respond to future water laws and regulations, and operations in areas with limited water availability may be impacted if droughts become more frequent or severe. Any such events could have a material adverse effect on our costs or results of operations. Financing Risks Our operations are subject to seasonal fluctuations that may impact our cash flows. Our shipments are typically lower in the first and second fiscal quarters due to the unfavorable impact of winter weather on construction activity during these periods and customer plant shutdowns associated with holidays. As a result, our cash flows **have fluctuated and may continue to** fluctuate from quarter to quarter due to these seasonal factors, **which could have a negative impact on our financial condition and results of operations.** Our capital resources may not be adequate to provide for our capital investment and maintenance expenditures if we were to experience a substantial downturn in our financial performance. Our operations are capital intensive and require substantial recurring expenditures for the routine maintenance of our equipment and facilities. Although we expect to finance our business requirements through internally generated funds or from borrowings under our \$ 100 million revolving credit facility, we cannot provide any assurances these resources will be sufficient to support our business. A material adverse change in our operations or financial condition could limit our ability to borrow funds under our credit facility, which could further adversely impact our liquidity and financial condition. Any significant future acquisitions could require additional financing from external sources that may not be available on favorable terms, which could adversely impact our growth, operations, financial condition and results of operations. Legal and Regulatory Risks Changes in environmental compliance and remediation requirements could result in substantial increases in our capital investments and operating costs. Our business is subject to numerous federal, state

and local laws and regulations pertaining to the protection of the environment that could require substantial increases in capital investments and operating costs. These laws and regulations, which are constantly evolving, are becoming increasingly stringent, and the ultimate impact of compliance is not always clearly known or determinable because regulations under some of these laws have not yet been promulgated or are undergoing revision. Legislation and increased regulation regarding climate change, including mandatory reductions in energy consumption or emissions of greenhouse gases, could impose significant costs on us, including costs related to energy requirements, capital equipment, environmental monitoring and reporting and other costs to comply with such regulations.

**General Risks** Our business, results of operations, financial condition, cash flows and stock price can be adversely affected by pandemics, epidemics or other public health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the global economy, disrupted supply chains and created significant volatility and disruption of financial markets. In the event of the renewed outbreak of COVID-19, the emergence of new variants or an outbreak of a different virus or disease, we could experience disruptions in our supply chain, operations, facilities and workforce which could negatively affect our results of operations, financial condition, cash flows and stock price. Our stock price can be volatile, often in connection with matters beyond our control. Equity markets in the U. S. have been increasingly volatile in recent years. During fiscal 2023-2024, our common stock traded as high as \$ 35-39, 80-38 and as low as \$ 24-26, 00 87. There are numerous factors that could cause the price of our common stock to fluctuate significantly, including: variations in our financial results; changes in our business outlook and expectations for the construction industry; changes in market valuations of companies in our industry; and announcements by us, our competitors or industry participants that may be perceived to impact our financial results. **Many of the factors listed above are beyond our control. These factors may cause the market price of our common stock to decline, regardless of our business, financial condition or results of operations.**

We are increasingly dependent on information technology systems that are susceptible to certain risks, including cybersecurity breaches and data leaks, which could adversely impact our business. Our increasing reliance on technology systems and infrastructure, **some of which are managed by third parties,** heightens our potential vulnerability to system failure and malfunction, breakdowns due to natural disasters, human error, unauthorized access, power loss and other unforeseen events. Data privacy breaches by employees and others with or without authorized access to our systems ~~poses~~ **pose** risks that sensitive data may be permanently lost or leaked to the public or other unauthorized persons. With the growing use and rapid evolution of technology, not limited to cloud-based computing and mobile devices, there are additional risks of unintentional data leaks. There is also the risk of theft of confidential information, intentional vandalism, industrial espionage and a variety of cyberattacks that could compromise our internal technology system and infrastructure or result in data leaks in-house or at our third-party providers and business partners. **We have invested and continue to invest in risk management and information security and data privacy measures in order to protect our systems and data, including employee training, organizational investments, incident response plans, tabletop exercises and technical defenses. The cost and operational consequences of implementing, maintaining, and enhancing further data or system safeguards could increase significantly to keep pace with increasingly frequent, complex, and sophisticated global cyber threats.** While we believe that we have taken reasonable steps to protect the Company from cybersecurity risks and security breaches, there can be no assurance that such events will not occur **or that our security protocols and procedures will be adequate to prevent significant damage, system failure or data loss. The same is true for our partners, suppliers, vendors and other third parties on whom we rely.** Failures of technology or related systems, cybersecurity incidents, or improper release of confidential information, could adversely impact our business or subject us to unexpected liabilities, expenditures and recovery time. **Additionally, an unauthorized disclosure or use of information could cause interruptions in our operations and might require us to spend significant management time and other resources investigating the event and dealing with local and federal law enforcement. Regardless of the merits and ultimate outcome of these matters, we may be required to devote time and expense to their resolution. In addition, the increase in the number and the scope of data privacy breaches has increased regulatory and industry focus on cybersecurity requirements and heightened data privacy industry practices. New regulation, evolving industry standards, and the interpretation of both, may cause us to incur additional expense in complying with any new data privacy requirements. We could also become the subject of regulatory action or litigation from our customers, employees, suppliers, service providers, and shareholders, which could damage our reputation, require significant expenditures of capital and other resources, and cause us to lose business. As a result, the failure to maintain the integrity of and protect customer or supplier data or our confidential internal data could have a material adverse effect on our business, operating results and financial condition.** Our financial results could be adversely impacted by the impairment of goodwill. Our balance sheet includes intangible assets, including goodwill and other separately identifiable assets related to prior acquisitions, and we may acquire additional intangible assets in connection with future acquisitions. We are required to review goodwill for impairment on an annual basis or more frequently if certain indicators of permanent impairment arise such as, among other things, a decline in our stock price and market capitalization or a reduction in our projected operating results and cash flows. If our review indicates that goodwill has been impaired, the impaired portion would have to be written-off during that period which could adversely impact our business and financial results.