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United Steel Inc. acquires Black Rock Fireproof Column company

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Shown is a 45-ton
project that used
22 Fire Proof Columns

East Hartford, CT Today's architectural designs often include structural columns that are visible and prominently positioned. These columns – while being utilitarian – are also worked into the design as a featured element that is part of the overall visual effect. One such column manufacturer, Black Rock Fireproof Column, has been in business since 1974 to fulfill this need and to provide aesthetically appealing columns that arrive to each project fully finished and ready to be erected, saving owners time and money.

Black Rock is the country's leading manufacturer of fireproof structural columns, sometimes referred to as Bridgeport columns. Recently, the company was acquired by United Steel, Inc., New England's largest fabricator and erector of structural steel and miscellaneous metals. Today, these two leading manufacturers work together to serve the growing construction industry to provide a full range of structural steel and miscellaneous metals.

United Steel acquired the Black Rock Fireproof Column company in late 2016 and has relocated the Bridgeport-based manufacturer to USI's East Hartford facility. Black Rock will retain its name and operate as its own division under the management of David Aldo, former owner of the company.

The AISC-certified Black Rock columns are in use every day at construction projects throughout the country. Owners and architects often prefer these columns because of their iron-clad durability, high quality, and lower long-term costs. Aesthetically designed and expertly fabricated in a AISC-certified facility, Black Rock Fireproof Column's outer shells provide a clean, smooth round, square and rectangular shapes (along with customized shapes and sizes). These columns are ideal for window wall construction in hospitals, schools, dormitories, cafeterias, shopping centers, and other areas where exposed columns are used.

Shown is a 24-ton
project that used 7
Fire Proof Columns
at the Shikellamy
Middle School in
Shikellamy, PA.

"Black Rock Column has a long history and strong reputation as a great-looking, solid, reliable product that is used on construction projects across the country," said Ken Corneau, president of

United Steel. “We are glad to be able to continue serving the architects and engineers who use these columns in an impressive range of architectural designs. They really make a statement and add a level of strength along with beauty to each project.”

In addition to incorporating Black Rock’s manufacturing into United Steel’s 175,000 s/f facility, USI also welcomed the Black Rock’s employees to its team of tradesmen. USI considers their expertise as an asset to its core business and helps position the company for future growth.

“By acquiring Black Rock, we have expanded our capabilities and ways that will better serve the construction industry,” Corneau said. “This move, along with the opening of our 7,000 s/f clean room last year for carbon-free manufacturing, allows USI to best meet the demands of our industry and allow us to continue to grow and improve.”

Black Rock will continue its presence at national trade shows including the American Institute of Architects in Orlando April 27-29 where it will display some of its most advanced features, distinct sizes, and distinctive applications.

Black Rock has its own dedicated website (www.blackrockfireproof.com) that now reflects United Steel’s logo and branding, and that highlights some recent projects in its portfolio. It also has adopted United Steel’s sales and service processes along with its safety procedures.

shown is a 65-ton project
that required 18 Fire
Proof Columns at PS
49 in Queens, NY.

United Steel, Inc., (www.unitedsteel.com) is the largest fabricator and erector of structural steel and miscellaneous metals in New England. The company’s divisions include United Metal Solutions (www.unitedmetalsolutions.com), which specializes in the processing and fabrication of simple parts, component parts, sub-assemblies and completed OEM products made from aluminum, stainless steel and carbon steel; United Building Solution (www.unitedbuildingsolution.com), which offers design/build and general contracting services for metal structures; and now Black Rock Fireproof Columns. United Steel has more than 200 employees working in its 175,000 s/f automated manufacturing facility in East Hartford to build structural parts and various components for construction companies, manufacturers, and private and public organizations throughout the country.