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ings—two manufacturing plants, a warehouse, and a corporate headquarters—covering 170,000 square feet in Hugo, five miles north of White Bear Lake, Minnesota.

JL Schwieters and its team of skilled carpenters can provide either panel and component framing systems or on-site framing. The company owns its own lumberyard, and as a proactive measure, stores all building materials indoors to eliminate mold and mildew issues. The company's wall panel shop can supply builders with 100 percent of their framing needs. "With our wall panel shop, we can take 20 percent of the building process out of the field while self managing the entire process," says John.

Schwieters Companies' team of highly skilled finish carpenters—some have been with the company for nearly three decades—install both custom and prefinished materials, including cabinetry, millwork, doors, windows and countertops, all supplied by Schwieters Companies. The company is one of the largest installed sales firms in the Twin City metro area.

When both companies are hired for the same project, JL Schwieters provides CAD drawings to Schwieters Companies to ensure a flawless fit. "We work out the correct openings for doors and windows, which eliminates a lot of headaches down the road," says Joel. "By addressing issues in-house, we provide a seamless transition from framing the structure to completing the inside finishes."

Both companies also shoulder the difficulties that can be associated with hiring and managing labor. Carpentry services are becoming harder to find for a number of reasons. Those in the field are aging, shrinking the ranks through natural attrition. "There are not as many young people getting into the business," says Joel. And many displaced carpenters have since retrained to obtain jobs in other industries. "When the market comes back, there will not be as many carpenters available as some people might think," he adds.



Photography by Michael J. Zaccardi

A John and Joel Schwieters RELIABLE TEAM

From framing to finishing, hiring these brothers can save time and money

As the housing market recovers, homebuilders will need to rely on a team of highly skilled professionals and suppliers. Brothers John and Joel Schwieters and their respective companies offer a unique approach by providing prefab framing and interior finish materials installed by their own carpenters. This benefits both residential and commercial builders by cutting costs, reducing scheduling problems, and speeding up a project's timeline.

Raised on a farm in Greenwald, Min-

nesota, the brothers and their 10 siblings grew up knowing the value of hard work and planning workloads. When it came time to strike out on their own, John started a framing company, JL Schwieters, and Joel opened Schwieters Companies, a firm offering custom interior finish carpentry to area builders. Despite developing different skill sets, the brothers have always worked side by side. In 1999 their companies occupied 7,300 square feet of shared space. Today they own four build-



The industry is changing in other ways as well. Ten years ago, about 35 percent of builders utilized pre-finished materials. Joel estimates that today 90 percent of builders are taking advantage of the practice. Another big change the company has experienced is the sheer number of custom stain colors used today. In the past, Schwieters Companies offered three colors: clear, medium, and dark. “Today we offer a million and one colors,” says Joel. “In other words, our Prefinish Department will match any color.” As the economy comes back, Joel believes more builders will forgo field finished for prefinished because

preparation, sanding, and prefinish all take place in a controlled environment, free from on-site construction dust. As part of the green movement, Schwieters Companies also offers millwork made from sustainably grown and harvested wood products certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

Hiring these brothers not only ensures a smooth transition between framing and finishing, but it also helps reduce builder overhead. “In a market that values quick turnaround, we save builders time in the schedule and field supervision because we self-manage our installed sales from start



to finish,” says Joel. “Because buyers of new homes often need to sell their existing home first, those two weeks could make the difference in the builder closing the sale.”

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Schwieters Companies, Joel Schwieters, President
www.finishcarpenters.com • www.schwietersmillwork.com

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651.762.1110

13925 Fenway Boulevard North, Hugo, Minnesota 55038

