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- ***Leveling Capability Expands Service Center Footprint***
- ***Affordable Health Care and Taxes***
- ***Metal Service Center Directory***



# COVER STORY



A computer-controlled digital positioning system ensures reduced set-up time and precision control of combined leveler operations.

## ***Unique Leveling Capability Expands Service Center's Footprint***

A \$10 million investment in state-of-the-art leveling equipment is paying off for a regionally focused service center, attracting new customers and creating opportunities for new business.

The company is High Steel Service Center LLC, which operates a 200,000 sq. ft. facility in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Established in 1978 as a local carbon-steel service center, High Steel Service Center's reach now extends beyond Pennsylvania to New Jersey, New York, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia.

High Steel Service Center's plant has 150,000 tons of capacity. Targeting the sheet and plate markets, the company supplies carbon flat roll, general line products, stainless steel, aluminum, as well as pre-painted metal products.

### **Unique Competitive Advantage**

Complete inventory, right-the-first time quality, on-time delivery, competitive pricing and value-added processing are the key elements of High Steel Service Center's trademarked "Dependability Difference." The company is committed to investing in cost-driven solutions and innovations to support their customers' profitable growth.

Our customer research uncovered the issues, problems, and challenges they face every day," recalls James Cunningham, High Steel Service Center's vice president of sales and marketing. "We learned that our customers' number one problem was obtaining products that remain flat after processing. Flatness was a key issue for customers that use laser-processing equipment including OEMs, laser processors,





After roller leveling, material moves through an accumulation pit into the Red Bud stretcher leveler.

sheet metal fabricators, and anyone who assigns a high value to the elimination of internal stress and flatness problems,” Cunningham says.

Over the past several years the demand for flatter products has increased from customers with laser processing equipment, plasma burning equipment, high-definition plasma equipment, high-speed turrets, and flexible manufacturing systems. “All of these customers demand a flatter product that remains flat during processing,” says Rick Bennett, president of the firm.

**\$10 Million Investment Supports Customers’ Profitable Growth**

To satisfy laser processors, as well as OEMs, sheet-metal fabricators, and others concerned about flatness, High Steel decided to invest \$10 million in a state-of-the-art production line. The new equipment includes a stretcher leveler from Red Bud Industries and two Bradbury in-line roller levelers, one of which has Bradbury’s proprietary e-Drive technology. High Steel Service Center is the only service center in its geographic footprint with this combination of leveling technology.

The line stretches 100% of the material beyond its yield point by pulling it in one direction. The new Bradbury e-Drive technology assists the stretcher leveler in complete removal of the coil set and crossbow.

The result? “We’re able to offer our new branded product referred to as “HIGHSL – Panel-Flat that Stays Flat,” Cunningham says. “HIGHSL branding differentiates us from competitors that do not have this unique processing capability in their geographic footprint.”

High Steel Service Center can handle heavier metals than before, increasing the company’s product offerings. The stretcher leveler can process materials from 16-gauge through ½” thick x 72” wide, in lengths up to 480”.

More importantly, Cunningham notes, the company can process carbon floor plate and other high-strength products that it couldn’t process before. The firm’s new stretcher leveler can handle high-strength steels from grades 50 through 80. More manufacturers of truck trailers, heavy agricultural equipment, and other products are turning to these higher-strength materials in order to reduce the weight of their offerings, according to Cunningham.







Processing begins with uncoiling and feeding material through a straightener into the Bradbury roller levels.



Automatic specialty packaging for customer-specific needs.

### One-of-a-Kind Combo

High Steel Service Center claims to be the only service center in the U.S. offering this combination of stretcher leveling and e-Drive roller leveling technologies. Working together, the stretcher leveler and in-line roller leveler do a better job of flattening and removing stresses from materials than temper mills, the firm maintains. In addition, the materials coming off the line are flatter than tension leveled-products, as well as those produced by stretcher levelers with flatteners or straighteners, according to Bennett.

In addition to the stretcher leveler line, High Steel Service Center operates a slitter and a multi-cut blanking line. Capable of handling thicknesses from .015" to .135", the blanking line can produce blank sizes ranging from 3" wide x 72" long to 10" wide x 144" long. Besides bringing in more customers from its existing territories, the company's new capabilities have drawn interest from other places. They recently expanded service to include Virginia and New York. In addition, plans call for further expansion into New England, Cunningham reports.

Both existing customers and new customers have much to gain from High Steel Service Center's unique competitive advantage, according to Bennett. "We were willing to make a \$10 million investment to help support our customers' profitable growth," he says. "And we're very excited about the benefits that investment offers them. We will eliminate their number one headache, which are internal stresses and flatness problems. We will improve the flatness quality of their finished products while increasing their manufacturing throughput and productivity, and reduce their operating costs by eliminating internal stresses and flatness problems." ●

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