



ASSOCIATION OF
STEEL DISTRIBUTORS

Tony Butera Is Named 2012 ASD Steel Man of the Year



The ASD Steel Man of the Year Award is the most distinguished honor in the steel distribution industry. Created in 1956 by the Association of Steel Distributors (ASD), the award recognizes individuals who have made lasting contributions to the industry throughout a significant period of time and have demonstrated the ability to be true leaders of the steel distribution industry. ASD provides the steel distribution industry a forum for ideas exchange and market information.

Tony Butera, president of VOSS Steel, division of VOSS Industries, has been awarded the 2012 ASD Steel Man of the Year Award. He will be recognized March 23 at the ASD 2013 Annual Convention held March 21-23, 2013 at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa in Palm Desert, Calif.

“To receive the Steel Man of the Year Award from ASD is very humbling,” Butera said. “I appreciate the fact that so many people know that I’ve been around for [such a] long time.”

Many of his friends and business associates consider him a true industry leader.

“Tony is a man of integrity and honor,” said Lisa Goldenberg, president of ASD and Delaware Steel. “His long standing commitment to VOSS and the steel industry is exemplary. VOSS Industries is a leader in our field, and I know they are grateful to have Tony as part of its team.”

Doug Everhart, president of Ohio Slitting and Storage, Inc., said: “For decades, Tony was the man for steel in Detroit. Whatever you needed, he either had it or knew where to find

it. When the chips were down, Tony came through. He treated everyone with respect and earned the respect of everyone he dealt with.”

Jim Barnett, president of Grand Steel Products, Inc., agreed, saying: “I first met Tony as a young man just entering the steel business in the late 60s. I can remember Tony then, as well as now, being kind, gracious and patient with me as I was learning the business and as our business with VOSS Steel grew. Tony was also instrumental in VOSS’s successful sales outreach to the steel mills, importers and distributors alike. This man has been on a first name basis with more steel industry titans than I can count, yet he remains the same man he always has been: friendly, kind, helpful and generous. These attributes have made Tony a successful representative of VOSS and an ambassador of goodwill for the entire steel industry. He is a most worthy recipient of ASD’s Steel Man of the Year Award!”

History of VOSS Industries

VOSS was founded in 1951. Paul Voss, Homer Davison and Butera started the company, and a short time later, Gabe Voss, Paul’s brother, joined them. The company experienced significant growth, and in 1967, built its first pickle line in Taylor, Mich. VOSS now has two locations: VOSS Taylor in Taylor, Mich., and a 500,000-square-foot facility, VOSS Clark, in Jeffersonville, Ind. VOSS Clark opened in 1992 and services Indiana, Kentucky and various southern regions.

Butera said: “Our goal is to continue to be the best hot roll steel processor in the country with an emphasis on ‘superior quality and superior service’ (SQSS). To accomplish that, we use the best technologies in our processes and treat our customers the way we want to be treated.”

Career in the Steel Industry

Butera got his start in the industry after his service in the U.S. Marine Corps. “Paul hired me to work at his first warehouse, Trevor Steel. The first six years were spent learning every facet of the business. I did it all — from shipping clerk, maintenance and foreman, to inventory control and sales.”

In 1957, Butera left the company and sought sales training through the GI Bill. His first sales job was at a small warehouse on Michigan Avenue in Detroit. While in Detroit, he stayed in touch with Gabe. “To make a long story short, the first time I went on the road, I opened 15 accounts in three months. Soon, VOSS Steel called, and Paul and Gabe made me an offer to return that I couldn’t refuse.”

Nearly six decades have passed since then, and Butera is still as active as he was when VOSS first opened its doors — yet the steel landscape is not as it once was. As a 61-year steel industry veteran, Butera is no stranger to the ups and downs that time can bring.

“I booked and processed steel for some great companies before they grew up, such as Heidtman, Worthington, Dennen, Bar Steel, Lafayette, Advance, Magic, Kerry, Mill Steel, Kenwal, Kasle, Steel Warehouse, in addition to all the automotive and the steel mills,” he said. “In the early days, Detroit was a great steel producer. We had Great

Lakes, Ford Steel Division, Detroit Steel and McLouth Steel. Unfortunately, none of them survived in their original form. All have either changed hands or closed.

“This country had the greatest steel industry in the world, and now only USS and AK are left. We turned our industry over to foreign ownership, except for a few mini-mills like SDI and Nucor. As I look back to 1977, VOSS had 223 active accounts. Today, only 55 are left — many under different ownership. In 1989, VOSS had 189 active accounts, with a total of 230 that we processed on-and-off throughout a three-year period. Today, there are only 64 active or under another name,” he said.

While the steel industry has changed substantially throughout the years, Butera has a positive outlook for the year ahead. “The industry should be good early in 2013 with a level market,” he explained. “But prices will begin to rise for hot bands. More steel will be consumed because of car sales and improving housing starts. I also see infrastructure repairs on bridges and railroads. I foresee a pretty good year in 2013 for steel.”

ASD Involvement

Butera has been a member of ASD for nearly 30 years and is still active in the organization.

“I’ve been lucky to meet and do business with some of the best people, though I’ll never remember them all,” he said. “I’ve attended meetings in Arizona, Las Vegas, New York, New Orleans, Atlantic City, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Cleveland and Detroit. ASD has led the way for many steel sales and purchases. It’s been a lot of fun and a great part of life so far.”