



William Sullivan (left) with Richard Charland of Sullivan Metals, cutting pipe to order for a customer. Inset: Sullivan Metals' facility in Holyoke

## The best service, bar none

**W**hen it comes to construction and maintenance jobs for which the need for specific materials changes every day on the job, Sullivan Metals is the welder's friend.

Sullivan Metals sells steel — but its larger specialty is custom service. Its core customers are metal fabricators, general contractors, welders and masons. When a construction job yields surprises, or when equipment breaks down, these specialists can't afford the downtime and delay of placing minimum orders with a mill, which often requires a 40,000-lb minimum order. Customers can repair a machine, build a rack, or get diamond-plate steel for their factory floors. Masons don't have to wait days for a rebar delivery, and mills can be up and running without business interruption.

Sullivan Metals also targets machine shops, HVAC installers, paper mills, machine maintenance departments, maintenance crews, and do-it-yourselfers. Businesses requiring larger orders with longer lead times, can get warehousing and next-day delivery of the stock they need.

A local welder in the middle of the job can contact Sullivan, order the metal stock needed to get that day's work done, and be in their truck and on their way in 10 minutes. A contractor with a fabricating job can call ahead and place an order for angles, send a truck over, "and by the time the truck gets here, we have it cut," says William Sullivan, president.

If Sullivan doesn't have the exact diameter of pipe or beam a customer needs, the company will special-order it, and can usually get it within days. Orders can be custom cut to specifications, and there is no minimum charge.

Sullivan Metals is headquartered in Holyoke, where it has two divisions: the new metal division and the

scrap division. Its Worcester office, opened early this year, provides cut-to-order rebars, channels, strips, tubing and pipes. It also stocks angles, beams, plate, flats, sheet and rounds. Sullivan says he sees the Central Massachusetts market for steel as robust enough to make it worthwhile to open an office here. The Worcester office has 25,000 square feet of space and loading docks.

The company's industrial scrap metal division in Holyoke buys all grades of ferrous (iron and steel) and nonferrous (aluminum, brass and copper) metals. It offers container service, and its large hydraulic shear and bailer can process large items.

Longtime customer Jeffrey Weeks, owner of Amherst Welding, has done business with Sullivan's Holyoke metal sales facility since 1984. His multi-faceted business does welding, fabrication, lawn mower repair and hydraulic work. "I used to drive [to Holyoke] every week and pick up a few pieces of steel," Weeks says. "Over the years, we have bought a lot of stuff from them." At the start, Weeks would drive to Holyoke from Amherst — a distance of about 10 miles — and would pay cash. Sullivan set up an account for Weeks and offered to make deliveries, saving him hours of travel time. As Weeks' business focus changed from manufacturing to service, Sullivan Metals stuck with him, tracking down unusual metal configurations and keeping costs under control. "They offer a fantastic service," he says.

Weeks adds that he has fielded calls from various Sullivan suppliers over the years, but he says dealing with William Sullivan is more valuable to his business than buying direct — a telling testimony to the value of what Sullivan Metals has to offer.

At Sullivan Metals, customers won't feel like a number. Each customer is treated on a one-to-one basis

because the company relies on its service to keep that customer coming back. No matter how frequently or infrequently a customer visits -- every week or once a year -- that business is always welcome at Sullivan. Sullivan Metals' experienced management knows what to keep in stock and how to get it to customers fast. The company understands that a masonry job can't wait days for a rebar delivery, and a mill run can't be held up waiting for plating to repair the line. Sullivan always has what customers need when they need it most.

**SULLIVAN METALS**

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**Number of employees:** Worcester, 4; Holyoke, 35

**Product or service:** Steel and aluminum products for the building trades

**Year founded:** 1953