

RV News

The Voice of the RV Industry

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2025



Atlas' Strong Future



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685 S. Arthur Ave., Unit 6
Louisville, Colorado 80027
(720) 353-4003
rvnews.com

PUBLISHER

Dana Nelsen
dana@rvnews.com
(720) 353-4003 Ext. 7889

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Chris Freeman
chris@rvnews.com
(720) 353-4003 Ext. 1064

ONLINE NEWS EDITOR

Tim Mosier
tim@rvnews.com
(720) 353-4003 Ext. 1066

EDITOR

Kyle Partain
kyle@rvnews.com
(720) 353-4003 Ext. 1065

ART DIRECTOR

Jaclyn Threadgill
adproduction@rvnews.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Alison Berg, Val Byrd,
Brenda Cline-Kereakas, Tara McMeekin,
Don Miller, Jered Sobel.

Subscription requests, address changes should be sent to dana@rvnews.com.

Send letters to the editor and feedback on the publication or website to chris@rvnews.com.

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54 OE SUPPLIER

54 Built to Last

UFP Factory Built is rolling out new construction materials. The materials are branded as Brawn. Brawn materials include value-added features and benefits.

74 The Best Of: New Products for 2026

A thorough collection of the best new aftermarket products for 2026.

UPCOMING TBO CATEGORIES:

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ON THE COVER

[L to R] Atlas Trailer Coach Products' Brayden and Justin Bewernick have taken over leadership of the aftermarket parts distributor.

Built to Last

UFP Factory Built brings Brawn brand products to the RV industry, starting with its Brawn Wall System.

By Tara McMeekin | Photos by Stillson Studio

UFP Industries has been in business for 70 years, notched \$6.7 billion in 2024 sales and employs approximately 15,000 workers. The company's UFP Factory Built division, which makes products for RVs and other markets, is not as well-known as its parent company.

UFP Industries executives said they hoped the launch of UFP Factory Built's RV-centric Brawn product line would change awareness of the division.

The Brawn brand consists of numerous construction material products, highlighted by its wall system. The Brawn Wall System made its first appearance in Forest River's 2026 Shasta travel trailer models.

UFP Factory Built leaders said they are focused on enhancing efficiency, quality and customer experience. They said expanding the Brawn RV product line reflects its commitment

to solving industry challenges through innovation and exceptional service.

DeWayne Creighton III, vice president of RV Operations for UFP Factory Built, said the brand rollout is about offering quality structural components and other essential solutions to help RV OEMs build more structurally sound and durable products.

The Brawn Wall System Difference

UFP Factory Built manufactures the entire Brawn Wall System as an integrated system. Traditionally, RV sidewalls are wood-framed walls connected with staples, glue and jigs. The Brawn Wall System uses the same nail plates and jigs used in UFP Industries' residential construction builds. As a result, the plates' placement and application are standardized to increase manufacturing precision, accuracy and efficiency.

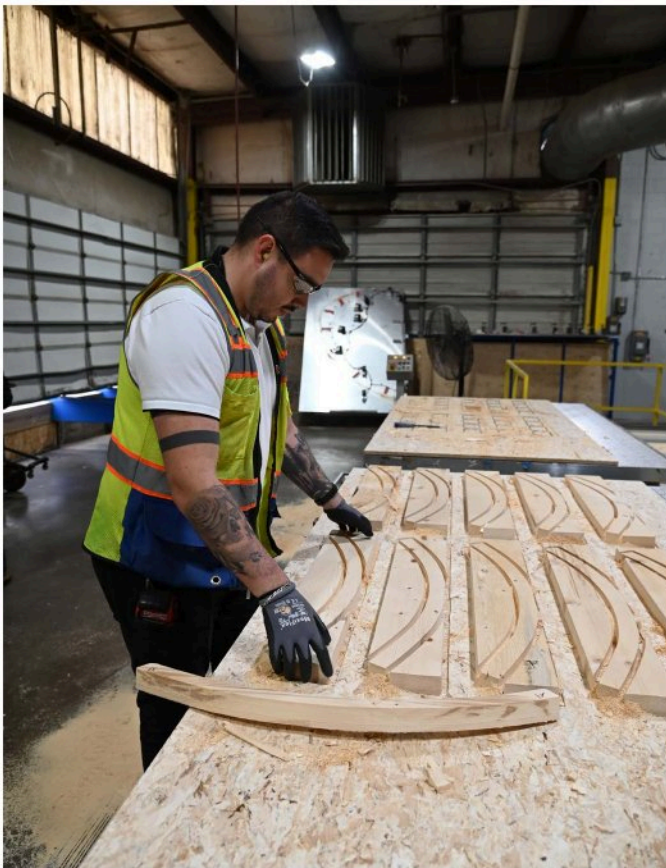


(L to R) UFP Factory Built Brand Director Mitul Chandrani and Vice President of RV Operations DeWayne Creighton III are leading the company's Brawn brand rollout.





[L to R] Assemblers Christian Galind and Gaston Morales display a completed roof truss.



Josh Holman, factory built specialist, separates roof truss pieces after they have been cut by a CNC machine.



Quality Control Coordinator Michael Hershberger ensures lumber cuts are the correct length.

UFP Factory Built executives touted the plated connections for their ability to retain rigidity better than staples, resulting in a stronger wall, built more consistently. The wall's factory construction enables UFP Factory Built employees to use fixture jigs to ensure the walls are plumb and square. Manually fitting wall segments on a manufacturing line can lead to inconsistencies or connections that are not plumb or square.

Creighton III said the result is additional rigidity, which reduces the potential for flex during travel and better roof supports.

Creighton III said the process requires fewer adjustments and fewer fitting issues compared with standard construction.

UFP executives said the construction approach more evenly distributes the wall's load, so the load-bearing is not concentrated at seams or joints. The weight distribution enables

the wall to better resist deflection under side loads or twisting forces.

“By eliminating the changes that can happen down the assembly line, the walls are more consistent and rigid. Less flex going down the road translates to a stronger roof.”

- DeWayne Creighton III

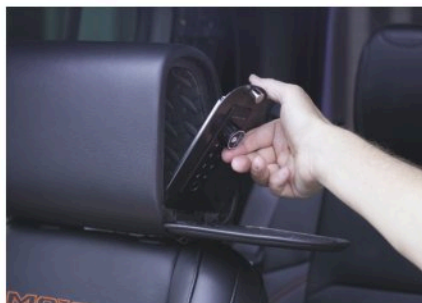
Without giving specifics, Creighton III said that testing performed in conjunction with Forest River found the walls were “measurably stronger” than those constructed conventionally. Since the

wall sections are jigged, the squareness/plumbness of openings is improved. The result is fewer audit failures for doors and windows, and better seals to reduce the risk of water intrusion.

“By eliminating the changes that can happen down the assembly line, the walls are more consistent and rigid,” Creighton III said. “Less flex going down the road translates to a stronger roof.”

The RV's length determines the number of wall sections, which can range from three to five per side. Sections are delivered in units. The sections are tied together, with a top and bottom plate creating a single cohesive wall on each side. Each wall component is labeled to ease identification during assembly. Once assembled, the entire wall is lifted onto the RV chassis.

Creighton III said the process saves OEMs' time compared with stick building each wall piece by piece.



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Associate Marcos Sabillion stacks lumber to be packaged together.



Director of Operations John Schneider examines lumber pieces before they are shipped.

Creighton III said Shasta representatives said they saw less adjustment and shimming with the new wall than with traditional wall construction.

He said the weight increase with the Brawn Wall System is marginal, and mainly resulted from increased wall heights with the new RV model.

He said the weight difference was difficult to quantify because 2026 Shasta model walls are built taller than they were in previous model years.

The Brawn Wall System is, in large part, the result of a 2024 innovation session between UFP Factory Built and Forest River's Coachmen division. Creighton III said representatives from the two companies identified the top challenges of building an RV, and then brainstormed solutions.

“*We are trying to drive home to the consumer that when they see that Brawn logo on the side of the RV that they know that they are getting a product they can believe in and trust.***”**

– Chad Eastin

“We are positioning ourselves as a company that works with its OEM partners to innovate their processes to build a better product tomorrow, next month and next year,” Creighton III said, “and this is part of that.”

The Brawn Wall System will be exclusive to Shasta through the first quarter of 2026 and will be available in other Forest River RVs after that time.

Expanding the Brand

In addition to the Brawn Wall System, UFP Factory Built is extending the Brawn brand to other products the company supplies.



(L) Executive Vice President Chad Eastin reviews lumber at the company's plant. Eastin has been with UFP Industries for nearly three decades.

Creighton III said new preassembled radius front panels have been designed to eliminate a major bottleneck pain point for RV manufacturers. Creighton III said the connection between a radius front panel and the rest of the RV is a major pain point in OEM construction.

To address the issue, UFP Factory Built's new panels are pre-assembled with the radius front and the first two to four feet of the RV, including the first studs.

"You can put that in place," Creighton III said of manufacturing line employees, "and then build the rest of your wall."

Subfloor products will feature Brawn Engineered Structural Panels (ESP), supported by StableDeck. The ESP panels are built with 100% MDI resin and provide greater resistance to water, twisting, warping and delamination.

The ESP panels are available in standard 4-foot-by-8-foot sheets and in custom sizes up to 102 inches long. The panels include options for 3/4-inch-square-edge and 5/8-inch-tongue-and-groove flooring.

Brawn's Superstratum vinyl overlay panels are used in traditional interior wall construction. They have their own value-added benefits.

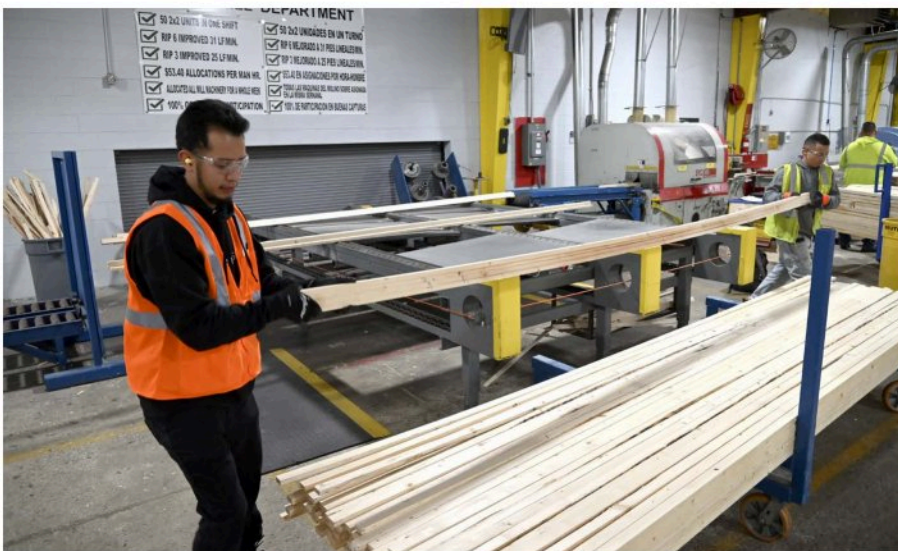
The Brawn Superstratum vinyl overlay panels feature overlays applied to available moisture-resistant substrates and feature premium screw retention properties.

UFP's "Brawn Plus Lumber" is a proprietary wood coating designed to combat wood rot, mold and decay on framing and roof trusses.

When it comes to its roof trusses, Creighton III said the biggest difference between Brawn and others is that it is value-engineered, so manufacturers can pay for what they want and nothing more. The company supplies Brawn-brand



(L to R) Myra Terrones and Guadalupe Hernandez finish packaging a pallet of lumber.



Associates stack wood after the pieces have been cut to size.



(L to R) Creighton III and Rolf Nelson, vice president of manufacturing and engineering, oversee plant operations in Indiana.

custom bow rafters, tailored to specific applications.

UFP Factory Built's in-house engineers design cost-effective bows that meet specified weight requirements. Each bow undergoes inspection by at least three different personnel before packaging.

In January, the company will introduce a second tier of bow rafters that provide enhanced performance. The Brawn Plus Bow Rafters will feature the wood coating and include a warranty against mold, rot and decay.

All Brawn products are available in standard sizes, with custom-cut options also available.

Creighton III said the company's product branding was intentional. Brawn's brand carries the tagline "Better bones, better built."

"Components you cannot see or feel are very important or even more important in the context of structural integrity and durability of RVs," Creighton III said. "Brawn was conceived with that in mind—to enable OEMs to build better products and also educate and create awareness around the significance of quality foundational materials with end-consumers."

UFP Factory Built walls, flooring panels and roof trusses have been sold to RV manufacturers for years. By putting the various RV products under a single, dedicated brand, UFP Factory Built executives said the Brawn brand denotes the highest quality products the company builds.

Additional UFP Factory Built products include a full range of plywood, oriented strand board (OSB), medium-density fiberboard (MDF) and lumber. The additional products will not be included in the Brawn brand.

Chad Eastin, executive vice president of UFP Factory Built, said, "We are trying to drive home to the consumer that, when they see that Brawn logo on the side of the RV, they know that they are getting a product they can believe in and trust. Brawn-branded products will

be value-added components that we control the QC of and/or offer superior performance compared to standard commodity items.”

To build brand awareness, every RV with Brawn brand products will feature a sticker with a company QR code. The code links to a website where consumers and manufacturers can see how the products are built. The website also includes additional details about the products’ foundational elements.

Ultimately, Creighton III said the Brawn brand’s premise is to create industry awareness of every structural element that comprises Brawn’s “better bones, better built” tagline.

“We are positioning ourselves as a company that works with its OEM partners to innovate their processes to build a better product tomorrow, next month and next year, and this is part of that.”

– DeWayne Creighton III

Distribution Approach

Eastin said UFP Factory Built prides itself on its distribution prowess. The company has 26 distribution warehouses nationally. The company can ship its products to customers across the U.S., with distribution sites in Elkhart, Indiana; Arizona, California, Georgia, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Texas.

Eastin said, “UFP has the ability to effectively service all of our customers nationwide.”

According to Eastin, the company can supply any of the thousands of products used in RV construction.

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Creighton III is managing the Brawn brand rollout, which includes the Brawn Wall System, radius front panels, Engineered Structural Panels (ESP) and more.



Paige Martin, inside sales coordinator, enters a new order into the computer system.



Creighton III and Holman display a completed roof truss component.



UFP Factory Built's leadership team of (L to R) Dylan Pressler, account manager; Schneider; Creighton III; Chandrani; Nelson; Eric Brumbaugh, vice president of distribution; and Gary Hershberger, plant manager, gathers for an operations meeting.

Included in the mix are tapes and adhesives, radiant barriers, electrical products, sinks/faucets, propane tanks and pipes.

Eastin said, "Our distribution network is built on strong, reputable brands that help us to be a leader in this field."

Eric Brumbaugh, vice president of UFP Distribution (UFPD), said the company's just-in-time component and material delivery is the cornerstone of RV OEMs' effective assembly-line operations. He said UFPD's diverse geographical reach translates into faster and more frequent deliveries to service OEM needs, providing an additional value-add to Brawn brand products.

UFPD uses a captive transportation company, with drivers handling the same accounts each week. He said the experience means faster turnaround times because UFPD drivers are on a first-name basis with many of the receivers they see weekly.

He said, "Being in tune with the procedures at each plant saves everyone time."

Brumbaugh said UFPD goes beyond traditional distributor operations. The division provides third-party logistics services to companies without UFPD's warehouse network. A supplier that typically delivers directly to customers would instead consign its products to UFPD for storage at UFPD's warehouse. The products are delivered to the customer by UFPD on behalf of the supplier.

"Working that last-mile logistic piece works for everyone," Brumbaugh said, "and keeps those logistic costs to a minimum to benefit all involved in the chain." **RVN**