

## For Immediate Release

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## Alton Steel is Now an Employee Owned Company

*J & J Ventures, LLC Sells Company to Salaried Employees in ESOP Transaction*

**Tuesday, August 27, 2019, Alton, Illinois** – Effective today, ownership of Alton Steel, Inc. (ASI) has been transferred to the company’s approximately 50 full-time salaried employees through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP), which is an employee ownership retirement plan.

This morning, during an ASI salaried employees meeting, ASI Chief Executive Jim Hrusovsky announced that ASI had been sold. Hrusovsky described the new owners as local, hardworking, knowledgeable, committed to the community, dedicated to quality and customer service and people who love the company. After that news sunk in, Hrusovsky said they found the very best owners possible – none other than the ASI employees sitting before him. J & J Ventures, LLC, a company inside Jayne and John Simmons’ family of businesses, has been the primary owner of ASI since 2005.

“John and Jayne Simmons have a deep commitment to ASI and to the Alton community,” said Hrusovsky. “We believe the ESOP ownership structure is best for our customers, employees, the community and for the future strength of the company.” The current leadership team at ASI will remain in place under the new ownership structure.

“Jayne and I love Alton Steel,” said John Simmons, “My father and uncle worked at the former Laclede Steel many years ago. After Laclede went bankrupt in 2001, it was resurrected in 2003 as ASI by former Laclede employees, some of whom still work at ASI today. We invested in ASI from the beginning with the aspiration of creating jobs, honoring history, and bringing back the steelmaking craft to this city, which was essential to everyone who lived in Alton. When the time was right to sell the company, we wanted it to remain locally-owned and operated. The solution was to sell the company to the people who are responsible for both its past and future: the employees.”

Hrusovsky says there are many advantages to transitioning the company to an ESOP. “ASI can maintain its independence, which is important to the employees and people of Alton. It allows eligible employees to share in both the responsibility and the success of the company. It’s a great tool to help us attract and retain top talent at various levels of the organization. It allows us to maintain the culture of the company that we have fostered throughout the last 16 years for which we all take great pride.” This financial arrangement does not require any investment by eligible employees, as ownership, in the form of company stock, is attributable to eligible employees annually.

ASI management has appointed GreatBanc Trust Company as the ESOP Trustee to represent the employee-owner interests. BDO USA, LLP’s ESOP Advisory Practice serves as the exclusive financial advisor to the company and selling shareholder.

ASI has a strong and diverse customer base. Many of its over 100 customers are also privately-owned, so they appreciate working with a company like ASI. ASI’s track-record for on-time and efficient deliveries has been an important factor in the growth of the company. ASI has historically ranked highly for customer service and total value by the Jacobson & Associates Steel Customer Satisfaction Report.

*ASI is a Special Bar Quality (SBQ) steel mill producing rounds, round-cornered squares, and bar-in-coil in the heartland of America. ASI was established in 2003 in Alton, Illinois, and is located 25 miles north of St. Louis. The company has a proud history of manufacturing with more than 250 employees. Through continued investment for a promising future, ASI offers products at a competitive price with a dedicated focus on great customer service. ASI’s current production includes a full range of carbon and alloy grades. Flexible and frequent rolling offers quick response and better inventory control to our customers. [www.altonsteel.com](http://www.altonsteel.com) and on Facebook @AltonSteelInc*

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