

Structural Materials Inc. (SMI)



Helping Customers Choose Drainage Systems for Long-Term Performance

DEALER PROFILE

For more than a decade, Tim Dekrey and the team at Structural Materials Inc. (SMI) have supplied construction materials and drainage solutions to contractors, agricultural operations, commercial facilities, and residential customers throughout the North Dakota. As a long-time U-drain stocking dealer, Tim has seen firsthand how customer priorities have evolved and why more contractors continue to choose slot drain systems over traditional trench drains.

While SMI offers multiple drainage solutions, U-drain has become Tim's preferred recommendation for many applications because of its durability, ease of installation, and long-term value.

THE CHALLENGE

When customers are selecting a drainage system, the decision often comes down to more than upfront cost. They want a solution that performs reliably for years while minimizing maintenance and replacement costs.

Tim regularly sees the long-term effects of traditional trench drain systems, particularly in agricultural and commercial environments where road salt, de-icing chemicals, and heavy traffic accelerate corrosion.

Beyond corrosion, contractors are also looking for products that install more efficiently and provide a cleaner finished appearance without exposed grates. As more customers experienced these benefits, demand for U-drain grew naturally through contractor recommendations and word of mouth.

"When it really comes down to it, I prefer U-drain for the longevity. You're not going to have to worry about it."

— Tim Dekrey, Estimator, Structural Materials Inc. (SMI)

THE U-DRAIN SOLUTION

For Tim, recommending U-drain isn't about offering another drainage product, it's about helping customers invest in a system designed for long-term performance.

The features that consistently set U-drain apart include:

- » Long-term durability, particularly in corrosive agricultural environments
- » Galvanized construction that provides greater corrosion resistance than traditional zinc-coated systems
- » Single-slot design that eliminates exposed grates while maintaining a clean appearance
- » Simplified installation, especially for contractors and owner-builders
- » Minimal maintenance throughout the life of the system

Rather than focusing on the lowest initial cost, Tim encourages customers to consider the long-term value of installing a drainage system once and not having to replace it years later. Ease of installation is another advantage customers consistently appreciate.



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RESULTS & IMPACT

Over the past several years, Tim has seen U-drain become one of the most requested drainage products in his business. Commercial applications account for the majority of sales, with contractors increasingly requesting custom configurations for specific projects. Residential customers also appreciate the product's clean appearance and straightforward installation.

For Tim, the strongest measure of success is simple: customers continue to come back asking for U-drain. "It just kind of took off," he said.

A TRUSTED PARTNERSHIP

As with any product, occasional production or shipping issues can occur. What has kept Tim confident in recommending U-drain is how quickly the company responds when issues come up. On the rare occasions a component required replacement, U-drain acted quickly to resolve the issue and keep projects moving. "It was solved pretty much immediately," he said.

That responsiveness has helped maintain confidence with both contractors and end users, reinforcing U-drain as a dependable product backed by dependable support.

SUMMARY

After years of supplying drainage systems to contractors, agricultural operations, and commercial facilities, Tim continues to recommend U-drain because it consistently delivers what customers value most: durability, straightforward installation, and long-term performance.

For Structural Materials Inc. (SMI), U-drain has become more than another product on the shelf. It is a solution Tim can confidently recommend because it solves real customer challenges and is backed by a team that stands behind its products. As demand has grown through repeat business and word of mouth, the partnership between SMI and U-drain continues to help customers invest in drainage systems designed to perform for years to come.

"A lot of people choose it because it's easier to install, especially if they're doing it themselves."

— Tim Dekrey, Estimator, Structural Materials Inc. (SMI)

