



BIG TOP TOPICS



Newsletter from Big Top Manufacturing

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Dear Big Top Friends,

According to recent news, our challenged economy seems to send us several signs of revivals even though they say there is a long way to recover. It would be beneficial to check and adjust your business plans and goals again with a cautious optimism when the thick fog of uncertainty starts to disappear from your sight.

This issue introduces various door options for Big Top fabric building systems. You will be happy to know how wide your options are. Celebrating our 30th anniversary in the business, a brief corporate history with a personal touch is introduced in this issue. Do you know why our company is called *Big Top*? Check it in our history article.

This issue also displays some of our recent projects featuring sport event tent structures for the Washington Redskins and temporary classroom projects in California. Last but not least, we would like to share news from Big Top Manufacturing with you.

Looking back our 30 years, the Big Top team would like to thank our loyal customers and dedicated employees, two big wheels of our success. We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter! See you next issue...

Sincerely,

Big Top team

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Customer Testimonial:

"...the shelter has been performing great. We have had numerous storms come through with wind gusts to 70 mph and our test structure inside has remained dry."

Jim Andrews, Bell Helicopter

1. Featured Article: What kind of Fabric Building Doors are Available?

Door Options for Big Top Fabric Buildings.

Unlike conventional or mass-produced building systems, clients of Big Top fabric building system can choose virtually every aspect of building components within a wide range of building options. Among these options, this issue introduces door types available for Big Top fabric buildings.

There are door options for equipment access and for personnel access. In general, the first type of doors are relatively large in order to accommodate traffic of the items that cannot be fit through the personnel door type. It may be for a huge [C-130 cargo aircraft](#) or for [construction equipment storage](#). We call this category of doors “equipment (access) door”. In this category, there are four popular choices (See the example photos of fabric door options):

Equipment Access Doors for Big Top Fabric Building Systems



Disappearing door



End panel (fabric or mesh)



Eye Lid End Panel (fabric or mesh)



Metal roll up door

Equipment Access Door options

- 1) **Disappearing doors:** This type of fabric doors seem to disappear when they are opened for traffic. Sometimes, they are also called “accordion doors” because of the way the fabric door is opened. This type of fabric doors are seamlessly integrated into the building design and you can save building space. In addition, disappearing doors include reinforcing cables with PVC pipes as a standard feature. With a winch, the disappearing door can be operated manually or automatically. Check our [video for high-speed winch operated aircraft hangar door](#).
- 2) **End panels:** If you do not need to close your fabric building or shelter often, you may consider detachable fabric end panels. You can choose either PVC fabric or mesh for the end panel used to cover the entrance of your structure. The end panel is reinforced with cables inside it. The popular use of the end panels as fabric doors are easily found in the marine industry.
- 3) **Eye lid end panels:** This unique type of end panels are used when constant ventilation is needed while some level of weather protection is also required. The construction industry uses this type of door style for accessing the fabric building system.
- 4) **Metal roll up doors:** As another door option for the fabric building system, metal doors can be installed. These doors are operated with a manual or a motorized winch.

In addition to these popular fabric door options, Big Top can customize doors to meet your unique needs. For example, another option is the *strip door*, similar to a freezer style door. It consists of vertical vinyl strips. This door allows easy access (entry) and egress (exit) without having to open and close it each time. This is a good option for [storage buildings where equipment is frequently moving cargo in and out](#).



Customized Strip Door



Personnel Door with Panic Door Bar

Personnel Access Door options

Personnel doors are used to provide either frontal or side access to a fabric building system. Customers have several options for personnel doors attached to fabric buildings. Depending on the material style, we can provide our clients with aluminum, glass, or metal doors. These personnel doors can be also equipped with panic door bar options.

2. Looking Back Big Top's 30 years

Looking back Big Top's 30 years: The Brief Memoir*

*[editor note: The following article was written by one of Big Top's co-founders to commemorate Big Top's 30th corporate anniversary. The editor did the minimum editing of the original article to keep a personal perspective of the corporate history shared by one of the co-founders.]

“We are going to make it big and to the top.”

In 1978, Frank and I purchased the acreage/ one building in Perry, Florida. It took one year for us to fix the building into a small office and the remaining portion of building for manufacturing the one product, trampolines. On August 9, 1979, we began by naming the Corporation Big Top because we said, “we are going to make it big and to the top.”

We worked 7 days a week remodeling the building, doing research, and developing our product. We purchased a tube bender from Atlanta driving our small car with home built trailer. We were not sure the trailer would hold the heavy bender as we drove home. Our two children, Julie and Jeff, sat in the back seat watching the trailer to make sure it was o.k. Steel pipes, springs, and fabric were delivered to our home which in turn were transported by us to the Big Top.

“We kept forging forward, never giving up.”

Our son’s room was also used as a sewing room. I never knew how to sew except from home economics in high school. I learned the craft real soon. In fact, we learned to do a lot of things from tube bending, sewing, deliveries, advertising, sales, and all aspects of a business.

Frank designed the first trampoline, bent the tube to his design and we attached the jumping mat to the frame. We were set. Now, we needed to test it. Frank’s first ever jump on a trampoline. The family stood around the frame watching as he jumped up in the air. All went well for the first jump. Second jump, he hit the floor. New design! We kept forging forward, never giving up.

Frank kept his engineering job at Proctor & Gamble until 1982 and the kids went to school while I kept the business open. It took us four years of putting money into the business before we started to see numbers in the black. This is when Frank quit his job at Proctor & Gamble and we worked the business as our way of life.

“Our customers are top priority and we strive to give them the best service possible.”

Over the years, we have had four expansions and purchased better equipment while hiring more employees, initially training them in all aspects of the business. Today, we have a great team of people who really care about the Big Top shelters we manufacture for our customers. Our customers are top priority and we strive to give them the best service possible.

Our product began with trampolines, diversified into chain link fencing, utility sheds,

greenhouses, trailers, small shelters, and now Big Top shelters. We currently have the manufacturing capacity to diversify into other products. However, shelters are our main product.

We believe Big Top Manufacturing is a great company. We are very proud of the Big Top team, which includes accounting, aviation, CAD, computer tech, engineering, field tech, general manager, maintenance, marketing, production, purchasing, sales, sales assistants, shipping, and warehousing. It is one of the best teams we have and we wish the team the best success for the next 30 years to come.

Thank you.

Co-founder.

3. Big Top Projects



Sports Event Tent Structures: The Washington Redskins, a major NFL team, contacted Big Top Manufacturing for their customer event tent projects. Aligned with the Washington Redskins' team color, a burgundy fabric top was selected for this project.

Side walls of this tent structure were custom designed to make the accessibility of service vehicles easy and fast without interrupting traffic of customers. The size of the sports tent shown here is 40' wide x 180' long x 18' high. Another sports event tent structure (32' wide x 120' long x 18' high) was also custom designed to meet the needs of their customer service. The account manager of this project was Bobby Edwards at Big Top Manufacturing.

Temporary Classroom Structures: Temporary instruction space needed to be built in a hot California area. Optional HVAC system and forced air distribution socks were utilized for cooling the classroom.

To maximize the cooling effectiveness, fabric insulation liners were used inside temporary classroom (60' wide x 80' long x 24' high). G.W. Pridgeon at Big Top Manufacturing was the account manager of this project.



4. News around Big Top

Big Top helps keep client's jobsite safe: Big Top tech team's consistent safety practices paid off. Straub Construction company, one of our loyal clients, recognized Greg Kearce from Big Top for safety practices on their job site.

Straub Construction presented Mr. Kearce a Certificate of Safe practices in Fall Protection. Mr. Matt Amdur from Straub Construction praised Big Top team's safety efforts: "They made an excellent effort to meet all requirements of EM385 and our safety manager."

Big Top supports Florida Forest Festival: As a community member in Taylor County, FL, Big Top manufacturing provided a financial donation to the [54th annual Florida Forest Festival](#), one of the main community events in Talyor county. A variety of festival activities including cross cut saw, chain saw and loader competitions will be held in Perry, FL during the month of October.

Big Top Team walks for a good cause: Big Top won the Overall Team Average Winner award at the 2009 Taylor County Walk. The average steps per Big Top employee were 135,760. The Big Top team includes Darin Anderson, Walt Sessions, Alisha Simpson, John "JT" Touchton, and Nikki Viola as a team leader. A \$250.00 check was awarded to our team and was made out to Taylor County Special Olmpics, Big Top's choice of charity.

Contact the Editor

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