

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

(Mark One)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Annual report pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934
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For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2023, or

<input type="checkbox"/>	Transition report pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934
	For the transition period from _____ to _____

Commission file number 0-16125

FASTENAL COMPANY
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Minnesota	41-0948415
(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization)	(I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

2001 Theurer Boulevard, Winona, Minnesota	55987-1500
(Address of principal executive offices)	(Zip Code)

(507) 454-5374
(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Title of each class	Trading Symbol(s)	Name of each exchange on which registered
Common stock, par value \$.01 per share	FAST	The Nasdaq Stock Market LLC

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act:
None

Yes ☒ No ☐

Yes ☐ No ☒

reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes ☒ No ☐

the registrant was required to submit such files). Yes ☒ No ☐

reporting company", and "emerging growth company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large Accelerated Filer	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>	Accelerated Filer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-accelerated Filer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Smaller Reporting Company	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Emerging Growth Company	<input type="checkbox"/>

complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 13(a) of the Exchange Act. ☐

the registered public accounting firm that prepared or issued its audit report. ☒

registrant included in the filing reflect the correction of an error to previously issued financial statements. ☐

compensation received by any of the registrant's executive officers during the relevant recovery period pursuant to § 240.10D-1(b).

Yes ☐ No ☒

10-K and does not represent an admission by either the registrant or any such person as to the status of such person.

As of January 19, 2024, the registrant had 572,232,755 shares of Common Stock issued and outstanding.

FASTENAL COMPANY
ANNUAL REPORT ON FORM 10-K
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DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Portions of our Proxy Statement relating to our 2024 annual meeting of shareholders (Proxy Statement) are incorporated by reference into Part III of this Annual Report on Form 10-K where indicated. Our Proxy Statement will be filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission within 120 days after the end of the fiscal year to which this report relates.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

Certain statements contained in this Annual Report on Form 10-K, or in other reports of the company and other written and oral statements made from time to time by the company, do not relate strictly to historical or current facts. As such, they are considered 'forward-looking statements' that provide current expectations or forecasts of future events. These forward-looking statements are made pursuant to the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such statements can be identified by the use of terminology such as anticipate, believe, should, estimate, expect, intend, may, will, plan, goal, project, hope, trend, target, opportunity, and similar words or expressions, or by references to typical outcomes. Any statement that is not a purely historical fact, including estimates, projections, trends, and the outcome of events that have not yet occurred, is a forward-looking statement. Our forward-looking statements generally relate to our expectations regarding the business environment in which we operate, our projections of future performance and opportunities for growth based on potential market opportunities, our perceived marketplace opportunities, our strategies, goals, mission and vision, and our expectations about matters including capital expenditures, tax rates, inventory levels, liquidity, liabilities from tax positions, the performance of our fastener business in comparison to our non-fastener business, openings and closing of in-market locations and signings of Onsite locations and new machine equivalent units for Fastenal Managed Inventory (FMI) (including bin stock and industrial vending) and the competitive advantages they offer, our digital solutions and other product offerings (including new product lines), national accounts as a percentage of overall sales, the advantages of our integrated physical and virtual model, growth in safety products as a percentage of product sales, the amount of FMI revenue that we may be able to service through local inventory fulfillment terminals, and the ability of our competitors to replicate our distribution capabilities. You should understand that forward-looking statements involve a variety of risks and uncertainties, known and unknown, and may be affected by inaccurate assumptions. Consequently, no forward-looking statement can be guaranteed and actual results may vary materially. Factors that could cause our actual results to differ from those discussed in the forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, economic downturns (including economic downturns as a result of global pandemics, including the COVID-19 pandemic), weakness in the manufacturing or commercial construction industries, competitive pressure on selling prices, changes in trade policies or tariffs, changes in our current mix of products, customers, or geographic locations, changes in our average branch size, changes in our purchasing patterns, changes in customer needs, changes in fuel or commodity prices, product and transportation inflation, inclement weather, changes in foreign currency exchange rates, difficulty in adapting our business model to different foreign business environments, failure to accurately predict the market potential of our business strategies, the introduction or expansion of new business strategies, increased competition (including with respect to our FMI or Onsite operations), difficulty in maintaining installation quality as our industrial vending business expands, the failure to meet our goals and expectations regarding expansion of our FMI or Onsite operations or any changes in branch locations, changes in the implementation objectives of our business strategies, difficulty in hiring, relocating, training, or retaining qualified personnel, difficulty in controlling operating expenses, difficulty in collecting receivables or accurately predicting future inventory needs, changes in sales trends, changes in supplier production lead times, changes in our cash position or our need to make capital expenditures, credit market volatility and increases in interest rates, changes in tax law or the impact of discrete items on future tax rates, changes in the availability or price of commercial real estate, changes in the nature, price, or availability of distribution, supply chain, or other technology (including software licensed from third parties) and services related to that technology, difficulty in obtaining continued business from new safety product customers and the acceptance by customers of any new product lines, cyber security incidents, potential liability and reputational damage that can arise if our products are defective, and other risks and uncertainties detailed in this Form 10-K under the heading 'Item 1A. Risk Factors'. Each forward-looking statement speaks only as of the date on which such statement is made, and we undertake no obligation to update any such statement to reflect events or circumstances arising after such date.

PRESENTATION OF DOLLAR AMOUNTS

All dollar amounts in this Annual Report on Form 10-K are presented in millions, except for share and per share amounts or where otherwise noted. Throughout this document, percentage and dollar change calculations, which are based on non-rounded dollar values, may not be able to be recalculated using the dollar values in this document due to the rounding of those dollar values. References to daily sales rate (DSR) change may reflect either growth (positive) or contraction (negative) for the applicable period.

PART I

ITEM 1. BUSINESS

Note – Information in this section is as of year end unless otherwise noted. The year end is December 31, 2023 unless additional years are included or noted.

Overview

Fastenal Company (together with our subsidiaries, hereinafter referred to as 'Fastenal' or the company or by terms such as we, our, or us) began as a partnership in 1967, and was incorporated under the laws of Minnesota in 1968. We opened our first branch in 1967 in Winona, Minnesota, a city with a population today of approximately 26,000. We began with a marketing strategy of supplying threaded fasteners to customers through a branch network in small, medium, and, in subsequent years, large cities. Over time, how and where we engage our customers has expanded and evolved. Today we sell a broader range of industrial and construction supplies spanning more than nine major product lines through a global network of in-market locations utilizing diverse technologies such as vending devices, bin stock devices, and eCommerce. The large majority of our transactions are business-to-business. We provide additional descriptions of our product lines and market channels later in this document. At the end of 2023, we had 3,419 in-market locations (defined in the table below) in 25 countries supported by 15 distribution centers in North America (12 in the United States, two in Canada, and one in Mexico), and two in Europe, and we employed 23,201 people. We believe our success can be attributed to the high quality of our employees and their convenient proximity to our customers, and our ability to offer customers a full range of products and services to reduce their total cost of procurement.

Our Channels to Market

We engage our customers primarily through branch and Onsite locations. Branches and Onsites exist very close to our customers, usually within miles in the case of the former and most often within or immediately proximate to our customers' physical locations in the case of the latter, and together constitute our 'in-market' network. Many of our customers engage with us through eCommerce, but in most cases these customers are utilizing eCommerce to supplement our service through our other channels.

The following table shows, as of the end of each of the last 10 fiscal years, our consolidated net sales; the number of branch, Onsite, and total in-market locations; their respective sales, as well as the average monthly sales per location that were generated from our branch and Onsite locations; and our revenue generated from non-traditional sources:

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Net sales	\$ 7,346.7	6,980.6	6,010.9	5,647.3	5,333.7	4,965.1	4,390.5	3,962.0	3,869.2	3,733.5
Branch locations	1,597	1,683	1,793	2,003	2,114	2,227	2,383	2,503	2,622	2,637
Branch revenue ⁽¹⁾	\$ 4,073.6	4,161.6	3,726.2	3,587.1	3,660.1	3,625.8	3,399.6	3,198.1	3,281.8	3,225.3
Average monthly sales per branch location ⁽²⁾	\$ 207.0	199.5	163.6	145.2	140.5	131.1	116.0	104.0	104.0	101.0
Onsite locations	1,822	1,623	1,416	1,265	1,114	894	605	401	264	214
Onsite revenue ⁽¹⁾	\$ 2,926.7	2,465.5	1,898.0	1,485.6	1,391.7	1,081.7	770.2	569.2	454.3	387.7
Average monthly sales per Onsite location ⁽²⁾	\$ 141.6	135.2	118.0	104.1	115.5	120.3	127.6	142.7	158.4	157.6
Other revenue ⁽³⁾	\$ 346.4	353.5	386.7	574.6	281.9	257.6	220.7	194.7	133.1	120.5
Total in-market locations ⁽⁴⁾	3,419	3,306	3,209	3,268	3,228	3,121	2,988	2,904	2,886	2,851

(1)	Revenues attributable to our traditional and international branch locations (both of which are defined below), and our Onsite locations, respectively.
(2)	Average sales per month considers the average active base of branches and Onsites, respectively, in the given year, factoring in the beginning and ending location count, divided by total revenues attributable to our branch and Onsite locations, respectively, further divided by 12 months. This information is presented in thousands.
(3)	This portion of revenue is generated outside our traditional in-market locations, examples of which include revenues arising from our custom in-house manufacturing, industrial services, and other non-traditional sources of revenue. In 2020, this included the effects of COVID-19, one response to which was substantial sales of pandemic-related products that were direct-shipped (versus sold through in-market locations) as a means of delivering critical supplies more quickly.
(4)	'In-market locations' is defined as the sum of the total number of branch locations and the total number of Onsite locations.

This structure has evolved over time as a result of one of Fastenal's guiding principles since inception: that we can improve our service by getting closer to the customer. This has been achieved by opening branch locations and, more recently, Onsite locations. Today, we believe there are few companies that offer our North American in-market location coverage. In 2023, roughly 52% of our sales and 51% of our in-market locations were in major Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) (populations in the United States and Canada greater than 500,000 people), while 21% of our sales and 19% of our in-market locations were in small MSAs (populations under 500,000 people), and 27% of our sales and 30% of our in-market locations were not in an MSA. In our view, this has proven to be an efficient means of providing customers with a broad range of products and services on a timely basis. Maintaining operations that are physically proximate to our customers' operations have represented, and continue to represent, the foundation of our service approach.

We have two primary versions of our **branch locations**:

1) A 'traditional branch' typically services a wide variety of customers, ranging from the local operations of large, national account customers to smaller local businesses. Based on the unique characteristics of certain markets, some traditional branches will be structured and stocked to service retail customers. Locations are selected primarily based on their proximity to our distribution network and employment and production data for manufacturing and non-residential construction companies. We stock all branches with inventory drawn from all of our product lines and tailored by our district and branch personnel to the needs of the local customer base. Since Fastenal's founding and through 2013, traditional branch openings were a primary growth driver for the company, and we experienced net openings each year over that time span. However, new growth drivers, business models, and business tools have emerged and diminished the direct role of traditional branch openings in our growth. Traditional branches were entirely U.S.-based until 1994, when we opened our first location in Canada. At the end of 2023, we had 1,441 traditional branches in the United States and Canada, and they represented 51.0% of net sales.

Traditional branches are also differentiated by their operating styles. Certain locations are Customer Service Branches (CSBs), which tend to feature a showroom and our standard stocking model of products designed for contractors. CSBs often conduct some business with non-account or retail-like customers. However, this customer set typically represents less than 10% of sales at this type of location. Other locations operate as Customer Fulfillment Centers (CFCs), which tend to feature a limited showroom and stock customer-specific inventory. These tend to appear and function more like an industrial supply house and stocking location and often have fewer transactions with non-account or retail-like customers than in a CSB branch. The choice of operating style is made by local leadership and is based on local market considerations. At the end of 2023, 15% of our traditional branches operated as a CSB and 85% operated as a CFC.

2) An 'international branch' is the format we typically deploy outside the United States and Canada. We first expanded outside of the United States and Canada when we opened a branch in Mexico in 2001. Since then, we have continued to expand our global footprint, and at the end of 2023, we operated in 23 countries outside of the United States and Canada. Mexico is the largest of these, and we also operate in Europe, Asia, and Central and South America. Our go-to-market strategy in countries outside of the United States and Canada focuses primarily on servicing large, national account customers disproportionately concentrated in manufacturing and heavily oriented toward planned fastener and non-fastener product spend. We are not as well recognized in many of our non-North American locations as we are in the U.S. and Canada. However, our ability to provide a consistent service model, including vending, bin stocks, and Onsites, on a global basis is attractive to our customer base, much of which are the foreign operations of North American-based companies. At the end of 2023, we had 156 international branches operating outside the U.S. and Canada, and they represented 4.5% of net sales.

Traditional and international branches sell to multiple customers. In each year since 2013, we have experienced a net decline in our total branch count, primarily due to consolidations in our U.S. market, including net declines of 86 branches in 2023. Our total decline since 2013 is 1,090 branches. We will continue to open traditional and international branches in accordance with our overall strategy. We believe the strategic rationalization that has produced a significant decline in our traditional branch network in the United States and Canada since 2013 is largely completed, and expect reduced closing activity beginning in 2024.

Onsite locations may influence the trend in our traditional branch count over time, but have not been the primary reason for our traditional branch closings. The Onsite concept is not new, in that we entered into the first such arrangement in 1992. However, it was largely a local option that grew slowly before we identified it as a growth driver in 2014. We have made substantial investments toward accelerating its traction in the marketplace since 2015. In this model, we provide dedicated sales and service to a single customer from a location that is physically within, or strategically proximate to, the customers' facility, with inventory that is specific to the customers' needs. In many cases, we are shifting revenue with the customer from an existing branch location, though we also see new customer opportunities arise as a result of our Onsite capabilities. The model is best suited for larger companies, though we believe we can provide a higher degree of service at a lower level of revenue than most of our competitors. It has been our experience that the sales mix at our Onsite locations typically produces a lower gross profit percentage than at our branch locations, but we gain revenue with the customer and our cost to serve is lower. We have identified over 12,000

manufacturing and construction customer locations in North America with potential to implement the Onsite service model. These include customers with which we have an existing national account relationship today, and

potential customers we are aware of due to our local market presence with which we do not have a meaningful relationship today. However, as awareness of our capabilities has grown, we have identified additional Onsite potential with certain agencies of state, provincial, and local government customers, and academia. We also believe as we follow our existing national account customers outside the United States, our market potential for Onsite solutions will continue to expand. The international opportunity is substantial, but our speed is limited by our relatively underdeveloped infrastructure in comparison to the United States. We expect revenues from Onsite arrangements to increase meaningfully over time. We had 1,822 Onsite locations as of December 31, 2023, which represented 39.8% of net sales, and signed 326, 356, and 274 new Onsite locations (referred to herein as signings) in 2023, 2022, and 2021, respectively.

The following table provides a summary of the branches and Onsite locations we operated at the end of each year, as well as the openings, closings, and conversions during each year:

	North America				Outside North America				
	United States ⁽¹⁾	Canada	Mexico	Subtotal	Central & South America ⁽²⁾	Asia ⁽³⁾	Europe ⁽⁴⁾	Subtotal	Total
In-Market Locations - 12/31/21 ⁽⁵⁾	2,668	262	152	3,082	20	37	70	127	3,209
Starting Branches	1,484	173	63	1,720	5	20	48	73	1,793
Opened Branches	—	1	4	5	—	2	5	7	12
Closed/Converted Branches ⁽⁶⁾	(115)	(5)	(1)	(121)	—	—	(1)	(1)	(122)
Ending Branches	1,369	169	66	1,604	5	22	52	79	1,683
Starting Onsites	1,184	89	89	1,362	15	17	22	54	1,416
Opened Onsites	248	21	23	292	1	6	7	14	306
Closed/Converted Onsites ⁽⁶⁾	(94)	(3)	(1)	(98)	—	—	(1)	(1)	(99)
Ending Onsites	1,338	107	111	1,556	16	23	28	67	1,623
In-Market Locations - 12/31/22	2,707	276	177	3,160	21	45	80	146	3,306
Starting Branches	1,369	169	66	1,604	5	22	52	79	1,683
Opened Branches	—	—	3	3	—	3	4	7	10
Closed/Converted Branches ⁽⁶⁾	(92)	(5)	—	(97)	—	—	1	1	(96)
Ending Branches	1,277	164	69	1,510	5	25	57	87	1,597
Starting Onsites	1,338	107	111	1,556	16	23	28	67	1,623
Opened Onsites	283	18	20	321	—	1	7	8	329
Closed/Converted Onsites ⁽⁶⁾	(115)	(6)	(3)	(124)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(6)	(130)
Ending Onsites	1,506	119	128	1,753	15	22	32	69	1,822
In-Market Locations - 12/31/23	2,783	283	197	3,263	20	47	89	156	3,419

branch base. There are many reasons why local or regional management might decide to close a location. Key customers may have migrated to a different part of the market, factories may have closed, our own supply chain capabilities in a market may have evolved to allow us to service some areas with fewer traditional branches, and/or our customers may have transitioned to our Onsite model. An Onsite location may also close because local or regional management determines that the business at the location is unlikely to scale sufficiently to justify our being on premise, in which case the relationship often reverts to being managed in a local traditional branch. The paths to higher operating profit margins are slightly different in a traditional branch versus an Onsite location, as the former will tend to have more fixed costs to leverage, while the latter will tend to have a smaller fixed cost burden but have greater leverage of its employee-related expenses. In the short term, the Onsite program can hurt the profitability of our existing branch network as it can pull established revenue away from an existing branch even as its fixed expenses are largely unchanged.

We utilize additional types of selling locations within our network, but these tend to be more specialized in nature and relatively few in number, comprising less than five percent of our total selling locations. We remain committed to a large, robust service network, including traditional branches, international branches, and Onsites; it remains the indispensable foundation of our business. With the growth we anticipate in Onsite locations, we believe our total in-market locations will increase further over time.

Our Business Tools

Fastenal Managed Inventory (FMI®)

Over time, we have invested in and developed various technologies that allow us to put physical product closer to the point of use in a customer location, increase the visibility of a customer's supply chain (to the customer as well as our personnel), and/or improve the ability to monitor or control usage. While there are isolated exceptions, these technologies are not themselves channels to the market but rather are utilized by our branch and Onsite channels to enhance service to our customers. Collectively, these tools comprise our Fastenal Managed Inventory (FMI) Technology suite. We believe our fully integrated distribution network allows us to manage the supply chain for all sizes of customers. FMI programs tend to generate a higher frequency of business transactions and, coupled with our fully integrated distribution network, foster a strong relationship with customers.

Bin stock (FASTStockSM and FASTBin®) programs, where product is held in bins in a customer facility, are similar to our vending business in that it involves moving product closer to the point of customer use within their facilities. Such programs have existed in the industrial supply industry for a considerable time, with open bins being clustered in a racking system, each of which holds original equipment manufacturing (OEM) fasteners, maintenance, repair, and operations (MRO) fasteners, and/or non-fastener products that are consumed in the customers' operations. Historically, these bins were simply plastic and metal containers that held product and were visually inspected by our customers or Fastenal personnel to determine replenishment need. These bins in some cases are organized and labeled into customized digital plan-o-grams, which we call FASTStock and allow for the scanning of product when it is at a minimum desired level. However, in 2019 we introduced our FASTBin technology. FASTBin is the evolution of FASTStock into a set of electronic inventory management solutions that automate process controls by providing 24/7 continuous inventory monitoring, real-time inventory visibility, and more efficient replenishment of bin stock parts. These technologies come in three forms: (1) scales that utilize a high-precision weight sensor system to measure the exact quantity on hand in real time, notifying Fastenal to replenish when inventory hits an established minimum; (2) infrared (IR) that uses infrared sensors lining individual bins to provide real-time visibility of approximate quantity and inventory values, notifying Fastenal to replenish when inventory hits an established minimum threshold; and (3) RFID, which is a Kanban system that utilizes RFID tags so that when an empty bin is removed from the rack and placed in a replenishment zone (also part of the same racking system), a notification is sent to Fastenal to refill the order. These technologies provide superior monitoring capabilities and immediate visibility to consumption changes, allowing for a lean supply chain, reducing risk of stock-outs, and providing a more efficient labor model for both the customer and the supplier.

Industrial vending (FASTVend®) was introduced in 2008 to provide our customers with improved product monitoring and control. Benefits include reduced consumption, reduced purchase orders, reduced product handling, and 24-hour product availability. We believe our company has a market advantage by virtue of our extensive in-market network of inventory and local personnel. For these reasons, the initiative began to gain significant traction in 2011, and we finished 2023 with approximately 111,800 FASTVend non-weighted devices in the field. We believe industrial vending has proven its effectiveness in strengthening our relationships with customers and helped to streamline the supply chain where it has been utilized. We also believe there remains considerable room to grow our current installed base of devices before it begins to approach the number of units we believe the market can support. We estimate the market could support as many as 1.7 million vending units and, as a result, we anticipate continued growth in installed devices over time.

Our industrial vending portfolio consists of 20 different vending devices, with 16 of these being in either a helix or locker format. Our most utilized models include the helix-based FAST 5000 and our 12- and 18-door lockers; combined, these comprise approximately 66% of our installed base of devices. These are either configurable or are available in multiple configurations to accommodate the various sizes and forms of products that will be dispensed to match the unique needs of our customers. Target monthly revenues per device typically range from under \$1,000 to in excess of \$3,000, with our flagship FAST 5000 device having a targeted monthly throughput of \$2,000.

Beginning in the first quarter of 2021, we began to report a **weighted FMI measure** which combines the signings and installations of FASTBin and FASTVend in a standardized machine equivalent unit (MEU) based on the expected output of each type of device. We do not include FASTStock in this measurement because scanned stocking locations can take many forms, such as bins, shelves, cabinets, pallets, etc., that cannot be converted into a standardized MEU. This conversion takes the targeted monthly throughput of each FMI device signed or installed and compares it to the \$2,000 target monthly throughput of our FAST 5000 vending device. For example, an RFID enclosure, with target monthly revenue of \$2,000 would be counted as '1.00' machine equivalent ($\$2,000/\$2,000 = 1.00$). An infrared bin, with target monthly revenue of \$40, would be counted as '0.02' machine equivalent ($\$40/\$2,000 = 0.02$).

The table below summarizes the signings and installations of, and sales through, our FMI devices.

	Twelve-month Period				
	2023		2022		Change
Weighted FASTBin/FASTVend signings (MEUs)	24,126		20,735		16.4 %
<i>Signings per day</i>	95		82		
Weighted FASTBin/FASTVend installations (MEUs; end of period)	113,138		102,151		10.8 %
FASTStock sales	\$ 927.6		832.0		11.5 %
<i>% of sales</i>	12.5 %		11.8 %		
FASTBin/FASTVend sales	\$ 2,070.2		1,755.3		17.9 %
<i>% of sales</i>	27.8 %		24.9 %		
FMI sales	\$ 2,997.8		2,587.3		15.9 %
<i>FMI daily sales</i>	\$ 11.8		10.2		16.3 %
<i>% of sales</i>	40.3 %		36.7 %		

Digital Solutions

We also invest in digital solutions that aim to deliver strategic value for our customers, leverage local inventory for same-day solutions, and provide efficient service. While there is a transactional element to our digital services, many of the solutions we invest in are intended to add value to customers by illuminating various elements of their supply chain. These solutions take many forms:

1) Transactional. Our transactional, or eCommerce, platforms (web verticals or integrated catalogs) provide a means for our customers to effectively and efficiently procure MRO and unplanned spend. While there is a retail component to our transactional digital services, most of the revenue attributable to this is with our traditional customer base, nearly all of which purchase digitally as a supplement to other channels and tools that it utilizes with Fastenal. We attribute the revenue generated from a customer location through our transactional platforms to the in-market location that traditionally services that customer location.

2) Digital Visibility. Certain of our digital capabilities are intended to produce operational efficiencies for our customers and ourselves and/or to deliver strategic value by illuminating customer supply chain operations. For instance, we have developed, and continue to develop, 'Mobility' applications, one example of which is our Vending App, which provides a number of benefits. It provides easy, real-time information pertaining to a customer's local inventory position within their point-of-use devices. It incorporates customer usage data to recommend optimized parts and quantity for specific devices, which improves customer inventories while reducing the risk of stock-outs. Moving our fulfillment process from a vending device-based keypad function to a tablet or scanning interaction improves the restock process (reduced risk of product outages), reducing time consumed (greater efficiency) while improving accuracy (improved quality assurance). We will continue to build out our suite of Mobility applications. Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), is the connectivity between our system and our customers' procurement systems –

whether a direct integration into their Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system or through a third-party procurement network or marketplace. These solutions provide a system-to-system exchange of electronic procurement documents (such as purchase orders, advanced shipping notices, and invoices for direct and indirect spend). Our eProcurement Solutions provide a bridge between our FMI replenishment activity and our customers' procurement systems – creating an efficient, accurate and streamlined procure-to-pay (P2P) process. FAST360° acts as the bridge between our FMI footprint and a

customer's view into our managed service model. FAST360° surfaces data around these managed services as one central source of information as we manage our customers' OEM and MRO product lines. This is achieved through our FMI technologies providing locational data around our FASTStock, FASTBin, and FASTVend footprint, and FAST360° being the means of surfacing that data and activities to our customers.

3) Analytics. We provide solutions-based digital platforms (e.g., web verticals or integrated catalogs) which leverage our existing strategic environment by creating a means of migrating online spend offline, which illuminates our supply chain capabilities. This is marketed under the FAST360° Analytics label, as it is an enterprise-centric extension of the digital visibility capabilities of FAST360°. We bring value to our customers, as well as ourselves, by using these digital platforms and analytics to shift product from a 'non-sticky' transactional environment (which is online) to a 'sticky' strategic environment (which is our FMI programs). We create customer cost savings opportunities through this directive by lowering the total cost of ownership (TCO) as the objective is to shrink the unplanned (and traditionally high cost), purely transactional spend bucket.

Digital Footprint

Our digital products and services are comprised of sales through FMI (FASTStock, FASTBin, and FASTVend) plus that proportion of our eCommerce sales that do not represent billings of FMI services (collectively, our Digital Footprint). We believe the data that is created through our digital capabilities enhances product visibility, traceability, and control that reduces risk in operations and creates ordering and fulfillment efficiencies for both ourselves and our customers. As a result, we believe our opportunity to grow our business will be enhanced through the continued development and expansion of our digital capabilities. Our Digital Footprint represented 56.1% of sales in 2023.

We believe our integrated physical and virtual model, when paired with our national (and increasingly international) scope, represents a unique capability in industrial distribution when compared to eCommerce as an independent sales channel. We expect to continue to build out and develop our digital solutions over time. Our greatest opportunity lies with the deployment of efficient and effective supply chain programs. We are focused on addressing the four key components of people, products, processes, and technology to support this model.

We believe our global channels to market and business tools, including those that we consider to be growth drivers (Onsites, international expansion, FMI, and digital solutions), represent alternative means to address the requirements of certain customer groups. These means get us closer to the customer and to where the product is actually consumed. This is consistent with our strategy and offers significant value by providing differentiated and 'sticky' service. Combined with ongoing strategic investments in end market initiatives as well as selling (in-market and otherwise) and non-selling (engineering, product specialists, manufacturing, etc.) employees, we offer a range of capabilities that are difficult for large and small competitors to replicate.

Distribution Network

We operate 15 regional distribution centers in North America: 12 in the United States, two in Canada, and one in Mexico. We also operate two distribution centers in Europe. These distribution centers give us approximately 5.0 million square feet of distribution capacity. Additional details on these locations can be found within the 'Item 2. Properties' section of this Form 10-K. These distribution centers are located so as to permit deliveries of two to five times per week to our in-market locations using our trucks and overnight delivery by surface common carrier, with approximately 74% of our North American in-market locations receiving service four to five times per week. The distribution centers in Indiana and Kansas also serve as 'master' hubs, with those in California and North Carolina serving as 'secondary' hubs to support the needs of the in-market locations in their geographic regions as well as to provide a broader selection of products for the in-market locations serviced by the other distribution centers.

We currently operate 11 of our North American distribution centers with automated storage and retrieval systems (ASRS). These distribution centers operate with greater speed and efficiency, and currently handle approximately 94% of our picking activity. We expect to invest in additional automation technologies, expand existing distribution facilities, and/or add new distribution centers over time as our scale and the number of our in-market locations increases.

We also utilize a network of Local Inventory Fulfillment Terminals (LIFTs) which reside within our existing distribution centers and are intended to support areas that have a dense population of FMI devices. Traditionally, branch personnel were solely responsible for stocking and packaging inventory, delivering to a customer's location, and refilling the customer's devices. As our sales through FMI devices have grown, this approach has resulted in redundant inventory in a territory and a greater proportion of our sales personnel's time being spent on non-sales activities. We primarily utilize a 'drop-and-deliver' model wherein a LIFT is responsible for stocking and packaging FMI supplies, producing inventory and accuracy benefits, and delivering them to the business unit, where delivery and replenishment is then performed by local district or branch personnel. In a minority of cases we deploy a 'drop-and-scatter' model, wherein delivery and replenishment is also performed by LIFT personnel. In 2023, approximately 8% of our FMI revenue was serviced through a LIFT, but over time we believe this figure can approximate 40% of our FMI revenue.

Transportation

The ability to move product, globally and domestically, from our sources of supply to our customers is critical to the competitiveness of our business model. We utilize multiple modes of transportation to support our business model.

We transport product from our global manufacturing and supplier partners to our distribution centers. Related costs range from port fees, duties, costs related to container and shipper services, and inland trucking and intermodal charges. We consider these expenses to be a part of our landed product cost, and significant fluctuations are typically addressed through product pricing.

We transport product between our distribution centers and from our distribution centers to our in-market locations. We typically transport approximately 90% of our products on our own fleet of Class 6, 7, and 8 trucks, with the remainder being on third party shippers. Costs range from lease charges, driver pay, fuel costs to support our captive fleet, and fees paid to third-party shippers. These expenses are included in cost of goods sold but are not considered a part of our landed product cost, with fluctuations typically addressed by applying freight charges to customer purchases and by securing commercial back-hauls. We primarily lease our trucks, and at December 31, 2023, we operated approximately 520 units.

We transport product from our in-market locations to our customers on a fleet of pick-up, box, and other trucks. Expenses to maintain this fleet are considered selling-related transportation costs, which include lease charges, depreciation, and fuel, and are typically reflected in all other operating and administrative expenses. We have a mix of leased and owned vehicles, and at December 31, 2023, we operated approximately 10,200 units.

Information Systems

Our Information Systems teams develop, implement, secure, and maintain the computer-based technology used to support business functions within Fastenal. Corporate, digital, distribution center, and vending systems are primarily supported from central locations, while each selling location uses a locally installed Point-Of-Sale (POS) system. The systems consist of custom in-house developed, purchased, and subscription licensed software. A dedicated Wide Area Network (WAN) is used to provide connectivity between systems and authorized users.

Trademarks and Service Marks

We conduct business under various trademarks and service marks, and we utilize a variety of designs and taglines in connection with each of these marks, including *Where Industry Meets Innovation*[™]. Although we do not believe our operations are substantially dependent upon any of our trademarks or service marks, we consider the 'Fastenal' name and our other trademarks and service marks to be valuable to our business. We have registered, or applied for the registration of, various trademarks and service marks. Our registered trademarks and service marks are presumed valid in the United States as long as they are in use, their registrations are properly maintained, and they have not been found to have become generic. Registrations of trademarks and service marks can also generally be renewed indefinitely as long as the trademarks and service marks are in use.

Products

Fastenal was founded as a distributor of fasteners and related industrial and construction supplies. This includes threaded fasteners, bolts, nuts, screws, studs, and related washers, as well as miscellaneous supplies and hardware, such as pins, machinery keys, concrete anchors, metal framing systems, wire rope, strut, rivets, and related accessories. Our fastener product line, which is primarily sold under the Fastenal product name, represented 32.4% of our consolidated sales in 2023.

Fastener distribution is complex. In most cases, the product has low per unit value but high per unit weight. This presents challenges in moving product from suppliers, most of whom are outside of North America, to our distribution centers, as well as from our distribution centers to our branch, Onsite, and customer locations. At the same time, fasteners are ubiquitous in manufactured products, construction projects, and maintenance and repair while also exhibiting great geometric variability based on use and application. In many cases, a fastener is a critical part in machine uptime and/or effective use. These features have

greatly influenced our logistical development, training and educational programs, support capabilities, and inventory decisions, which we believe would be difficult for competitors to replicate.

In 1993, we began to aggressively add additional product lines, and these represented 67.6% of our consolidated sales in 2023. These products, which we refer to as non-fastener product lines, tend to move through the same distribution channel, get used by the same customers, and utilize the same logistical capabilities as the original fastener product line. This logic is as true today as it was when we first began to diversify our product offering. However, over time, the supply chain for these product lines has evolved in ways independent of the fastener line. For instance, non-fastener product lines benefit disproportionately from our development of industrial vending.

The most significant category of non-fastener products is our safety supplies product line, which accounted for 21.2% of our consolidated sales in 2023. This product line has enjoyed dramatic sales growth in the last 10 years, which we believe is directly attributable to our success cross-selling safety supplies to customers that utilize us for non-safety products as well as our ability to market, deploy, and service industrial vending over that period. We expect these variables to remain the primary drivers of performance for our safety supplies product line.

We plan to continue to add other product lines in the future.

In the last several decades, we have added 'private label' brands (often referred to as 'Exclusive Brands', or brands sold exclusively through Fastenal) to our non-fastener offering. Prior to 2023, each of our product categories tended to have its own private label. In 2023, we consolidated these into two labels: Body Guard®, which is our long-standing brand for North American safety supplies, and ORMADUS®, which is our global brand encompassing the remainder of our product offerings. These private label brands represented approximately 13% of our consolidated sales in 2023. We believe it is also appropriate to think about our private label sales as a percentage of our non-fastener sales for two reasons: (1) there is not a well-defined branded versus private label dynamic in fasteners as there is in non-fasteners; and (2) non-fastener data is more comparable to information reported by our peers, who do not generally have our significant mix of fastener business. Private label brand sales represented approximately 19% of our total non-fastener sales in 2023. Over time we expect our private label sales as a percentage of our total non-fastener sales to increase, although oftentimes, these increases through specific channels are masked by the relative sales growth we experience with Onsite locations, which typically have a lower percentage of total sales of private label than in branches or sales through vending devices.

Detailed information about our sales by product line is provided in Note 2 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements included later in this Form 10-K. Each product line may contain multiple product categories.

Inventory Control

Our inventory stocking levels are determined using our computer systems, by our sales personnel at in-market locations, by our district and regional leadership, and by our product development team. The data used for this determination is derived from sales activity from all of our selling locations, from individual selling locations, and from different geographic areas. It is also derived from supplier information and from customer demographic information. Our computer system monitors the inventory level for all stock items and triggers replenishment, or prompts a buyer to purchase, as necessary, based on an established minimum-maximum stocking level. In the past we have utilized a base inventory model for all of our branches, and such a model still exists in a smaller subset of our locations. Increasingly, however, branches primarily stock inventory that is deemed to be appropriate by the district and branch personnel to service the customers within their selling territory. Similarly, non-branch selling locations (primarily Onsites) stock inventory exclusively based on customer-specific arrangements. Inventories in distribution centers are established from computerized data for the selling locations served by the respective distribution center. Inventory quantities are continuously re-balanced utilizing an automated transfer mechanism we call 'inventory re-distribution'.

Inventory held at our selling locations, close to customers and available on a same-day basis, accounted for approximately 64% of our total inventory at the end of 2023. Inventory held at our distribution centers and manufacturing locations accounted for approximately 36% of our total inventory at the end of 2023. The distribution center and manufacturing location inventory, when combined with our trucking network, allows for fast, next-day service at a very competitive cost.

Manufacturing and Support Services Operations

In 2023, approximately 96% of our consolidated net sales were attributable to products manufactured by other companies to industry standards or to customer specific requirements. The remaining 4% related to products manufactured, modified, or repaired by our manufacturing businesses or our support services. The manufactured products consist primarily of non-standard sizes of threaded fasteners and hardware made to customers' specifications at one of our nine manufacturing locations, or standard sizes manufactured under our Holo-Krome®, Cardinal Fasteners®, and Spensall® product lines. The services provided by the support services group include, but are not limited to, tool and hoist repair, chain sling and hose fabrication, band saw blade welding, packaging, and other light manufacturing and fabrication. We may add additional services in the future. We engage in these activities primarily as a service to our customers and expect the services to continue to contribute in the range of 4% to 6% of our consolidated net sales in the future.

Sources of Supply

We use a large number of suppliers for the standard stock items we distribute. Most items distributed by our network can be purchased from several sources, although preferred sourcing is used for some stock items to facilitate quality control. During 2023, we had a single supplier that accounted for more than 5% of our inventory purchases, whereas all remaining suppliers fell below that threshold.

In the case of fasteners and our private label non-fastener products, we have a large number of suppliers but these suppliers are heavily concentrated in a single geographic area, Asia. Within Asia, suppliers in China and Taiwan represent a significant source of product. Further, in many cases where we source directly from a North American supplier, the original country of origin of the acquired parts is the supplier's Asian facilities. As a result, the cost and effectiveness of our supply chain is dependent on relatively unfettered trade across geographic regions.

Beyond inventory, we have some concentration of purchasing activity. For example, we utilize a limited number of suppliers for our distribution equipment and our vehicle fleet, and primarily one supplier for our industrial vending equipment. However, we believe there are viable alternatives to each of these, if necessary.

Customers and Marketing

We believe our success can be attributed to our ability to offer customers a full line of quality products, our convenient locations and diverse methods of providing those products, and the superior service orientation and expertise of our employees. Approximately 70% to 75% of our customers are in manufacturing end markets, which encompasses fabricated products, heavy machinery, petrochemical, mining and aerospace and includes both OEM and MRO customers. The remaining 25% to 30% of our customers fall primarily into non-residential construction (general and commercial contractors), reseller (retail and wholesale trades, dealers, and rental businesses), transportation (transportation services, such as air, train, maritime or truck transport, as well as fulfillment centers) and state and local government entities, including schools, school districts and universities.

Based on our customer profile being oriented toward manufacturing, our business has historically been cyclical. However, we believe our model has certain features that moderate the volatility of our results around cyclical changes. First, we have a large number of customers that serve a wide range of segments within the broader manufacturing market. While slumps in one industry served by us can rapidly spread to other, interrelated industries, locally or globally, we still believe this customer and market segment diversity provides some insulation from economic changes that are not across multiple industries and geographic regions. Second, while a meaningful part of our revenue is derived from products that are incorporated into final products, we also have a significant portion of revenue that is derived from products used to maintain facilities. This latter source of revenue tends to be impacted by cyclical changes, but its rate of change tends to be less dramatic.

Our **national accounts** program is aimed at creating contractual agreements with single or multi-location customers. These contractual programs are intended to help improve our customers' supply chains by identifying productivity and efficiency gains throughout their organization. The scale and scope of the OEM and MRO products that these companies need to manage is very complex and costly. We believe that our broad product offering coupled with our ability to execute and curate a dedicated service model for each of their sites provides us with a unique advantage and allows us to provide them with a total cost of ownership benefit.

Additionally, our local presence as part of a national, and increasingly international, footprint, our ability to provide a consistent level of high-touch service, and our ancillary capabilities around manufacturing, quality control, and product knowledge, are attractive to these multi-site customers. We believe our advantage with these customers has only been strengthened as we have added other channels, such as Onsite, FMI, digital solutions, and resources to serve these customers' unique demands. As a result, in 2023, national accounts represented 60.3% of our consolidated sales, compared to 57.8% and 56.6% in 2022 and 2021, respectively. We believe sales to national accounts customers will continue to increase as a percentage of our total sales over time.

In an in-market location, we track our customers' business activity through 'active accounts', which is defined as any customer account with purchase activity of at least \$100 per month. Customers often have more than one active account at a single in-market location, reflecting their utilization of different Fastenal services, and frequently have active accounts at many in-market locations across our global network. In 2023, we averaged 105,448 active accounts per month and approximately 99.4% of the sales in our in-market locations are derived from our active accounts (the remainder was from walk-in or infrequent, non-account, and small account customers). Traditionally, our in-market locations, particularly our traditional and international branches, prioritized acquiring additional active accounts and expanding the products and services sold to new and existing active accounts as a means of growing sales. Over time it became clear that the pursuit of smaller accounts consumed significant organizational energy and the large majority of new active accounts did not meaningfully increase in size. Further, the development of our web capabilities provided us with an alternative means of more efficiently servicing these smaller customers. Since 2020, our in-market locations have sought to shift our smallest customers to our web channel while shifting

their selling focus to 'key accounts', which is defined as any customer account with purchase activity of at least \$2,000 per month. Key account customers have typically been able to utilize a wider range of our products and services, and as a result have exhibited greater potential to increase in size while being more efficient to pursue and support. In 2023, we averaged 39,266 key accounts per month and approximately 92.4% of the sales in our in-market locations were derived from our key accounts.

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Active Accounts	105,448	119,583	130,020	137,380	152,491	156,069	156,464
Key Accounts	39,266	39,151	36,190	33,794	34,621	32,895	30,040

During 2023, no single customer represented 5% or more of our consolidated net sales.

Direct marketing continues to be the backbone of our business through our local in-market selling personnel, as well as our non-branch selling personnel. We support our sales team with multi-channel marketing including direct mail and digital marketing, print and radio advertising, targeted campaigns, promotional flyers, and events. In recent years, our national advertising has been focused on a NASCAR® sponsorship through our partnership with Roush Fenway Keselowski Racing® as the primary sponsor of the No. 17 car in the NASCAR® Cup Series, driven by Chris Buescher. In 2020, our sports marketing efforts were extended when the National Hockey League (NHL®) awarded us as the preferred MRO supplier of the sport.

Seasonality

Seasonality has some impact on our sales. The first and fourth quarters of each year are typically our lowest volume periods, given their overlap with winter months in North America during which our direct and indirect sales to customers in the non-residential construction market typically slow due to inclement weather. The fourth quarter also tends to be more greatly affected by the Thanksgiving (October in Canada and November in the United States), Christmas, and New Year holiday periods, due to plant shut downs. In contrast, the second and third quarters of each year typically have higher revenues due to stronger non-residential construction activity and relatively fewer holidays (although Good Friday will sometimes fall in the second quarter and the 4th of July will always fall in the third quarter).

Competition

Our business is highly competitive and includes large national distributors whose strongest presence tends to be in more densely populated areas, and smaller regional or local distributors, which compete in many of the smaller markets in which we have branches. We believe the principal competitive factors affecting the markets for our products, in no particular order, are customer service, price, convenience, product availability, and cost saving solutions.

Market strategies in industrial distribution are varied. With respect to products, many of the larger distributors have trended toward a broad-line offering over time; however, they are often still closely associated with a specific product that can influence their ability to capture market share. This association with a specific product line is often even more pronounced among smaller competitors, though many smaller competitors do deploy a broad-line model. Means of serving the customer are even more diverse. For instance, many competitors maintain a local, branch-based presence in their markets, while others use vans to sell products in markets away from their main warehouses, while still others rely on catalogs or telemarketing sales. Recent years have seen the emergence of eCommerce solutions, such as websites, and while this channel has been embraced by many traditional distributors, it also has introduced non-traditional web-based competitors into the marketplace. The diversity of product and service models supported in the marketplace is a reflection of the equally diverse product and service needs of the customer base. The large majority of our customers utilize multiple channels, from a single distributor or a range of distributors, to procure the products they need in their operations.

We believe that better service, and a competitive selling advantage, can be provided by maintaining a physical selling and stocking presence closer to the customers' location(s). As a result, we maintain in-market locations in small, medium, and large markets, each offering a wide variety of products. The convenience of a large number of in-market locations in a given area, combined with our ability to provide them with frequent deliveries to such branches from centrally located distribution centers, facilitates the prompt and efficient distribution of products. We also believe our FMI solutions, supported by an in-market location, provide a unique way to provide our customers convenient access to products and cost saving solutions using a business model not easily replicated by our competitors. Having trained personnel at each in-market location also enhances our ability to compete (see 'Employees' below).

Our Onsite service model provides us with a strategic advantage with our larger customers. Building on our core business strategy of the local branch, the Onsite model provides value to our customers through customized service while giving us a competitive

advantage through stronger relationships with those customers, all with a relatively low incremental investment given the existing branch and distribution structure.

Human Capital Resources

Employees

At the end of 2023, we employed 23,201 full- and part-time employees. Of these, approximately 71% held a selling role. We characterize these personnel as follows:

	2023	% of Total	2022	% of Total
Selling personnel ⁽¹⁾	16,512	71.2 %	15,898	71.0 %
Distribution/Transportation personnel	4,042	17.4 %	3,974	17.8 %
Manufacturing personnel	733	3.2 %	733	3.3 %
Organizational support personnel ⁽²⁾	1,914	8.2 %	1,781	8.0 %
Total personnel	23,201	100.0 %	22,386	100.0 %

(1)	Of our Selling Personnel, 80%-85% are attached to a specific in-market location.
(2)	Organizational support personnel consists of: (1) Sales & Growth Driver Support personnel (approximately 35% of category), which includes sourcing, purchasing, supply chain, product development, etc.; (2) Information Technology personnel (35% to 40% of category); and (3) Administrative Support personnel (25% to 30% of category), which includes human resources, Fastenal School of Business, accounting and finance, senior management, etc.

Employee Profile

As of December 31, 2023, we had 23,201 employees worldwide, with 18,539 of those employees located in the United States (U.S.), 3,038 employees located in Canada and Mexico, and 1,624 employees located overseas in 24 other countries throughout the world.

Based on our EEO-1 data for 2023, in the U.S., females and minorities constitute 24.0% and 23.6% of our workforce, respectively. We believe these absolute figures gain further context when viewed against two additional data sets. First, over the past ten years there is a clear trend toward greater diversity in our business. Since 2013, our female and minority workforces have grown 2.2x and 3.8x faster, respectively, than our overall U.S. workforce. This trend reflects multiple dynamics in our business evolution, including the natural progression of our geographic expansion, the cycle of our promote-from-within philosophy, and efforts to improve hiring processes over time. Second, based on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, we believe Fastenal's mix of female and minority employees is generally consistent with the proportion of females and minorities working in manufacturing and construction, which is representative of the pool of employees from which we might draw candidates. For instance, relative to the 24.0% of our U.S. workforce that is female, the proportion of females in the U.S. manufacturing and construction workforces are 29.5% and 10.8%, respectively. Similarly, relative to the 23.6% of our U.S. workforce that are minorities, the proportion of non-white (a definition utilized by the U.S. Census Bureau) individuals in the U.S. manufacturing and construction workforces are 21.6% and 12.5%, respectively.

Health and Safety

Employee health and safety continues to be a priority in every aspect of our business. We have taken a multi-faceted approach to safety that helps us understand and reduce hazards in our business. Today, our health and safety programs span all operations including manufacturing, distribution centers, fleet and auto, and our branch and Onsite network. These key business units play a dynamic role in defining how we engage with our employees on health and safety. Trainings, audits, inspections, risk assessments, safety coaching, and employee engagement are all programs that help us consistently manage our facility safety and employee safety. In 2023, there were over 214,000 completed health and safety engagements, which is an increase of 7% compared to 2022. Our internal scorecard system and safety management system ensures we maintain focus on a variety of risks while we sustain an inclusive safety environment that contributes to innovation and improved performance. We continue to expand and evolve our safety programs to better meet our employee needs and workplace conditions as our business grows.

This commitment to, and continuous improvement toward, a safer work environment for our employees has generated excellent results. A widely accepted measure of organizational health and safety is the Experience Modification Rate (EMR). An organization's EMR is established through the comparison of a company's past and expected losses incurred through workplace

injury against industry averages, which are compiled by the National Council on Compensation Insurance and consider unique variables such as the size and characteristics of an organization. Industry averages are benchmarked at a 1.00 EMR, with a reduction in the rate being reflective of an organization's ability to implement superior safety procedures and protocols, resulting in a safer environment and reducing both personnel and financial risk. In 2023, Fastenal had an EMR of 0.49, which is 51% better than the average performance rate for our industry.

In 2023, we achieved third-party re-certification for the ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety Management System. This certification illustrates the strength of our health and safety programs, as well as our commitment to continual improvement to better support our growing workforce. As our business model continues to grow through our branch and Onsite network, our customer critical programs have evolved to mitigate risk and incidents, while meeting customer specific needs. This partnership with our customers allows us to collaborate and expand our health and safety programs to enhance our customers' workplace safety performance.

Employment and Compensation Philosophy

Fastenal's success is defined by our people. Our cultural values – *Ambition, Integrity, Innovation, and Teamwork* – are woven into the fabric of our human resources processes and protocols, and inform our employment and compensation philosophies.

Several principles underpin our employment philosophy. One principle is decentralization: placing employees close to our customers' operations and trusting these employees to independently make local decisions to provide differentiated local service. A second principle is that we are a passionately promote-from-within company, guided by a belief that if you work hard, make great decisions, learn from mistakes, and exemplify our cultural values, you should receive greater opportunity and responsibility. We believe these principles cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset and foster an environment of trust and empowerment.

As it relates to our compensation philosophy, we believe our combination and mix of base and bonus pay motivates our people to high levels of individual and company success, as the goals and objectives have been repeatedly demonstrated to be achievable with superior effort. We are guided by simple principles. First, compensation programs should be easy to understand, with goals and objectives that are clearly communicated and resources for success that are provided. They should be calculable by the employee and numbers-driven (e.g., not subjective). Second, total compensation should have a significant component that is based on how well the employee has grown their piece of the business and served our customers. Third, employees should receive incentives as soon as practical upon attainment of the goal.

Approximately 71% of our employees interface directly with customers on a daily or frequent basis, with the remainder supporting the selling efforts of our customer-facing employees. Typical pay arrangements provide a base amount paid periodically during the month, along with a major opportunity to earn bonus amounts, paid monthly, based on growth in sales, gross or pre-tax profit achieved, and prudent management of working capital. In certain roles, there may also be a portion of compensation based on contribution to attaining predetermined departmental or project and cost containment goals, most of which are focused on either customer service or better execution of company-wide activities.

Because we believe the growth in the company's stock value should be the reward for achieving long-term success consistent with being an owner, we have a stock option plan. In the case of certain foreign employees, we have a stock appreciation rights plan. All of our employees are eligible to receive stock option grants or stock appreciation rights.

We believe our combination of short- and long-term rewards and incentives has proven successful as reflected in our historic performance and levels of employee retention and turnover.

Our employees are not subject to any collective bargaining agreements, and we have experienced no work stoppages. We believe our employee relations are good.

Talent Acquisition and Development

Fastenal's values are integral to our employment process and serve as guideposts for leadership. The ultimate goal is straightforward: find great people, ask them to join, and give them a reason to stay. Reasons to stay include training, opportunity, and a welcoming environment. From a practical standpoint, this means that we attract a broad group of candidates and then hire the candidate who is the best match for the position based on their skills and abilities. In accordance with our decentralized leadership structure, we believe the person best suited to make this decision is the local leader trying to fill the opening. In light of our promote-from-within philosophy, we know we are hiring a potential future leader with every new hire.

Our Human Resources department develops efficient processes to expand our reach and pool of diverse talent while balancing the needs and requirements of data collection and storage. We have created a standardized framework for posting jobs and interviewing for positions, supplemented with training through the Fastenal School of Business (FSB). We have a Diversity and Compliance team that is heavily involved in developing this standardized framework, which ensures its integrity. Not only is this process followed for all new hires, we replicate the same procedures for any internal transfers and promotions.

The FSB (our internal corporate university program) develops and delivers a comprehensive array of industry and company-specific training and development programs that are offered to our employees. The programs are offered through a combination of classroom instructor-led training, virtual instructor-led training, and online learning. FSB provides core curricula focused on key competencies determined to be critical to the success of our employees' performance. In addition, we provide specialized educational tracks within various institutes of learning, as well as training plans based on roles within the company. These institutes of learning are advanced levels that provide specific concentrations of education and development and have been designed to focus on critical aspects of our business, such as leadership, effective best practices, sales and marketing, products, supply chain, and distribution.

Product Sourcing Endeavors

Sourcing from suppliers with good standing is the foundation of an ethical supply chain. We expect our suppliers to comply with all relevant regulations and applicable standards. Our teams conduct risk analysis for suppliers who want to do business with us and require them to provide additional supporting documentation affirming their ethics, quality, and reliability. This ensures they meet our standards in these areas and are complying with Fastenal's Global Supplier Purchase Order Terms & Conditions and Supplier Code of Conduct. Utilizing third-party tools and global databases, Fastenal actively monitors government sanctions, denied party listings, withhold release orders, export restriction updates, financial status, adverse media, and multiple other official exclusion lists that provide information on any known risk of any entities and locations with which Fastenal engages, and screens all business partners against those lists. Additionally, we monitor key areas of trade-related risk, including dual-use goods, trade cases, anti-dumping and counter-vailing cases, and other protectionist trade measures for all countries that products are traded in. As part of our comprehensive Supply Chain Security program, we also evaluate our suppliers' approach to labor to ensure that they are using appropriate, and appropriately compensated, employees and ensure upstream supply chain visibility on globally sourced products.

With a local and global supplier base, continuous monitoring and local representation is a necessity to ensure protocols are triggered when risk may be evident, ensuring a safeguard against poor and/or impaired quality and regulatory violations that may otherwise impact our reputation or ability to effectively operate in the marketplace. This is performed not only at the time of supplier vetting and onboarding, but for the life of the relationship with the supplier. This process promotes a supply chain that is supportive of Fastenal's Global Supplier Purchase Order Terms & Conditions and Supplier Code of Conduct. In the event of non-compliance or potential risk, we work with the supplier to correct the situation. If remediation efforts are not undertaken to ensure the supplier remains in compliance with Fastenal's standards and code of conduct, alternative sources of supply may be considered to ensure the integrity of our supply chain. Supply chain compliance representatives are placed in international corporate offices to ensure global coverage and governance, ensuring that no matter where a customers' operations may take them, Fastenal has the infrastructure, resources, and internal processes established to perform its supply chain governance obligations.

In 2023, approximately 29% of our total company-wide inventory spend was with small and/or diverse businesses. This flows from our Supplier Diversity program, as part of which we are committed to building supply chain relationships with small businesses and businesses with diverse ownership including women, minorities, veterans, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) owned Certified LGBT Business Enterprise[®] Suppliers.

Available Information

Our Internet address for corporate and investor information is www.fastenal.com. The information contained on our website or connected to our website is not incorporated by reference into this annual report on Form 10-K and should not be considered part of this report.

Our annual reports on Form 10-K, quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, current reports on Form 8-K, and amendments to those reports filed or furnished pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act are available free of charge on or through our website at www.fastenal.com as soon as reasonably practicable after such reports have been filed with or furnished to the SEC.

ITEM 1A. RISK FACTORS

In addition to the other information in this Form 10-K, the following factors should be considered in evaluating our business. Our operating results depend upon many factors and are subject to various risks and uncertainties. The material risks and uncertainties known to us which may cause our operating results to vary from anticipated results or which may negatively affect our operating results and profitability are as follows:

Company-Specific Risks

Operational Risks

Products that we sell may expose us to potential material liability for property damage, environmental damage, personal injury, or death linked to the use of those products by our customers. Some of our customers operate in challenging industries in which there is a material risk of catastrophic events. We are actively seeking to expand our sales to certain categories of customers, some of whose businesses may entail heightened levels of such risk. If any of these events are linked to the use of any of our products by our customers, claims could be brought against us by those customers, by governmental authorities, and by third parties who are injured or damaged as a result of such events. In addition, our reputation could be adversely affected by negative publicity surrounding such events regardless of whether or not claims against us are successful. While we maintain insurance coverage to mitigate a portion of this risk and may have recourse against our suppliers for losses arising out of defects in products procured from them, we could experience significant losses as a result of claims made against us to the extent adequate insurance is not in place, the products are manufactured by us or legal recourse against our suppliers is otherwise not available, or our insurers or suppliers are unwilling or unable to satisfy their obligations to us.

Interruptions in the proper functioning of information systems or the inability to maintain or upgrade our information systems, or convert to alternate systems in a timely and efficient manner, could disrupt operations, cause unanticipated increases in costs and/or decreases in revenues, and result in less efficient operations. The proper functioning of our information systems is critical to many aspects of our business and we could be adversely affected if we experience a disruption or data loss relating to our information systems and are unable to recover in a timely manner. Our information systems are protected with robust backup systems and processes, including physical and software safeguards and remote processing capabilities. Still, information systems are vulnerable to natural disasters, power losses, unauthorized access, cybersecurity incidents, telecommunication failures, and other problems. In addition, certain software used by us is licensed from, and certain services related to our information systems are provided by, third parties who could choose to discontinue their products or services or their relationship with us. It is also possible that we are unable to improve, upgrade, maintain, and expand our information systems. Our ability to process orders, maintain proper levels of inventories, collect accounts receivable, pay expenses, and maintain the security of company and customer data, as well as the success of our growth drivers, is dependent in varying degrees on the effective and timely operation and support of our information technology systems. If critical information systems fail or these systems or related software or services are otherwise unavailable, if we experience extended delays or unexpected expenses in securing, developing, and otherwise implementing technology solutions to support our growth and operations, or if certain insurance coverages are limited in their capabilities or affordability, it could adversely affect our profitability and/or ability to grow.

The ability to adequately protect our intellectual property or successfully defend against infringement claims by others may have an adverse impact on operations. Additionally, our business relies on the use, validity, and continued protection of certain proprietary information and intellectual property, which include current and future patents, trade secrets, trademarks, service marks, copyrights, and confidentiality agreements, as well as license and sublicense agreements to use intellectual property owned by affiliated entities or third parties. Unauthorized use of our intellectual property by others could result in harm to various aspects of the business and may result in costly and protracted litigation in order to protect our rights. In addition, we may be subject to claims that we have infringed on the intellectual property rights of others, which could subject us to liability, require us to obtain licenses to use those rights at significant cost, or otherwise cause us to modify our operations.

Cyber security incidents, or violations of data privacy laws and regulations, could cause us to experience certain operational interruptions, incur substantial additional costs, become subject to legal or regulatory proceedings, or suffer damage to our reputation in the marketplace. The nature of our business requires us to receive, retain, and transmit certain personally identifying information that our customers provide to purchase products or services, register on our websites, or otherwise communicate and interact with us. While we have taken and continue to undertake significant steps to protect our customer and confidential information, a compromise of our data security systems or those of businesses with which we interact with could result in information related to our customers or business being obtained by unauthorized persons. We develop and update processes and maintain systems in an effort to try to prevent such unauthorized access, and have established and maintained disclosure controls and procedures that would permit us to make accurate and timely disclosures of any material event, including any cyber security event. The development and maintenance of these processes and systems are costly and require ongoing monitoring and updating

as technologies change and efforts to overcome security measures become more sophisticated. Consequently, despite our efforts, the possibility of cyber security incidents cannot be eliminated entirely. There

can be no assurance that we will not experience a cyber security incident that may materially impact our business. While we also seek to obtain assurances that third parties we interact with will protect confidential information, there is a risk the confidentiality of data held or accessed by third parties may be compromised. If a compromise of our data security were to occur, it could interrupt our operations, subject us to additional legal, regulatory, and operating costs, and damage our reputation in the marketplace. In addition, regulatory authorities have increased their focus on how companies collect, process, use, store, share, and transmit personal data. New privacy security laws and regulations, including the European Union General Data Protection Regulation 2016, the California Consumer Protection Act, and other similar privacy laws, pose increasingly complex compliance challenges, which may increase compliance costs, and any failure to comply with data privacy laws and regulations could result in significant penalties.

Our ability to successfully attract, develop, and retain qualified personnel to staff our selling locations could impact labor costs, sales at existing selling locations, and the successful execution of our growth drivers. Our success depends in part on our ability to attract, motivate, and retain a sufficient number of qualified employees, including inside and outside branch associates, Onsite managers, national account sales representatives, and logistical and administrative support personnel, who understand and appreciate our culture and are able to adequately represent this culture to our customers. Qualified individuals of the requisite caliber and number needed to fill these positions may be in short supply in some areas, and the turnover rate in the industry is high, particularly for less tenured employees. If we are unable to hire and retain personnel capable of consistently providing a high level of customer service, as demonstrated by their enthusiasm for our culture and product knowledge, our sales could be materially and adversely affected. Additionally, competition for qualified employees could require us to pay higher wages to attract a sufficient number of employees. An inability to recruit and retain a sufficient number of qualified individuals in the future may also delay the planned expansion of our various selling channels.

Changes in customer or product mix, downward pressure on sales prices, and changes in volume or timing of orders have caused and could continue to cause our gross profit percentage to fluctuate or decline in the future. Changes in our customer and product mix have caused our gross profit percentage to decline and could cause our gross profit percentage to further fluctuate or decline. For example, we have experienced a sustained increase in the proportion of our sales attributable to both non-fastener products and national accounts and Onsite customers. Non-fastener products typically have a lower gross profit percentage than fasteners because in many cases non-fastener products are less technical, have shorter supply chains, and are easier to transport. Similarly, national accounts and Onsite customers typically have a lower gross profit percentage than smaller customers by virtue of their scale, available business, and broader offering of products which typically have lower gross profit percentages. Whether and to what extent this adverse mix impact will result in a decline of our gross profit percentage in any given year will depend on the extent to which they are offset by positive impacts to gross profit percentage during such year. Setting aside the circumstances of any given year or period, however, customer and product mix have contributed to the decline of our gross profit percentage over time and, based on the anticipated sources of our future growth, will likely continue to reduce our gross profit percentage into the foreseeable future. There are other variables that could cause our gross profit percentage to decline, including downward pressure on sales prices due to deflation, increases in overseas freight charges, the inability of freight revenue to leverage the expenses associated with our captive trucking fleet, pressure from customers to reduce costs, or increased competition. We could experience reductions in the volume of purchases we make from our suppliers, which could reduce supplier volume allowances. We may not be able to pass higher product costs along to customers if those customers have ready product or supplier alternatives in the marketplace. We experienced a number of these variables in 2023. A softer manufacturing economy caused relative weakness in our more cyclical and higher gross margin fastener product line versus our non-fastener product lines. Similarly, we continued to execute initiatives aimed at accelerating key account penetration, which resulted in relative growth in our lower gross margin national account and Onsite customers. The combination of these two events produced pressure on our product gross profit percentage in 2023 from product and customer mix.

Our operating and administrative expenses could grow more rapidly than net sales which could result in failure to achieve our goals related to leveraging revenue growth into higher net earnings. Over time, we have generally experienced an increase in our operating and administrative expenses, including costs related to payroll, occupancy, freight, and information technology, among others, as our net sales have grown. However, historically, a portion of these expenses has not increased at the same rates as net sales, allowing us to leverage our growth and sustain or expand our operating profit margins. There are various scenarios where we may not be able to continue to achieve this leverage as we have been able to do in the past. For instance, it is typical that when demand declines, most commonly from cyclical or general market factors (though it could be due to customer losses or some other company-specific event), our operating and administrative expenses do not fall as quickly as net sales. It is also possible that in the future we will elect to make investments in operating and administrative expenses that would result in costs growing faster than net sales. In addition, market variables, which include but are not exclusive of labor rates, energy costs, legal costs, and health care costs, could move in such a way as to cause us to not be able to manage our operating and administrative expenses so as to leverage our revenue growth into higher net earnings. Should any of these scenarios, or a combination of them, occur in the future, it is possible that our operating and pre-tax profit margins could decline even if we are able to grow revenue.

Failure to maintain an effective system of internal controls over business processes and/or financial reporting could materially impact our business and results. Company management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives relating to operations, reporting, and compliance. Any system of internal controls, no matter how well designed and operated, can only provide reasonable, not absolute, assurance that the objectives of the control system are met. Further, the design of a system of controls must reflect the fact that there are resource constraints, and the benefits of controls must be considered relative to their costs. Because of the inherent limitations in all systems of internal controls, internal controls over business processes and financial reporting may not prevent or detect fraud or misstatements. Any failure to maintain an effective system of internal controls over business processes and financial reporting could limit our ability to report our financial results accurately and timely or to detect and prevent fraud, and could expose us to litigation, economic loss, or adversely affect the market price of our common stock.

Our competitive advantage in FMI solutions, which includes industrial vending (FASTVend) and bin stock (FASTStock and FASTBin) tools could be eliminated and, in the case of FASTVend and FASTBin, the loss of key suppliers of equipment and services could be impactful and result in failure to deploy devices. Certain circumstances could lead to a short-term inability to promote and/or install our FMI solutions. We believe we have a competitive advantage in industrial vending and bin stock due to our hardware and software, our local presence (allowing us to service devices and bins more rapidly and with less burden on our customers), our depth of products that lend themselves to being dispensed through industrial vending devices or bin stocks, and, particularly in North America, our distribution strength. These advantages have developed over time; however, other competitors could respond to our expanding industrial vending and bin stock position with highly competitive platforms of their own. Such competition could negatively impact our ability to expand our industrial vending and bin stock tools or negatively impact the economics of that business. In addition, we currently rely on a limited number of suppliers for our vending devices, RFID technology, and IR technology used in our FASTVend and FASTBin platforms. While devices, software, and services can be obtained from other sources, loss of our current suppliers could be disruptive and could result in our failure to meet short- or long-term goals related to the numbers of FASTVend and FASTBin devices we are able to deploy. Certain circumstances may reduce short-term customer receptivity to adopting our FMI services. For instance, during periods of dramatic change in economic activity, some customers may prioritize managing existing operations over adopting new technologies until business circumstances change.

Our inability to attract or transition key executive officers may divert the attention of other members of our senior leadership and adversely impact our existing operations. Our success depends on the efforts and abilities of our key executive officers and senior leadership. In the event of voluntary or involuntary vacancies in our executive team in the future, the extent to which there is disruption in the oversight and/or leadership of our business will depend on our ability to either transition internal, talented individuals or recruit suitable replacements to serve in these roles. In addition, difficulties in smoothly implementing any transition to new members of our executive team, or recruiting suitable replacements, could divert the attention of other members of our senior leadership team from our existing operations.

Failure to implement an effective Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy could result in financial losses or impair our corporate reputation. Customers, suppliers, employees, community partners, shareholders, and regulatory agencies are increasingly scrutinizing our ESG disclosures and practices and factoring the social impact of our policies and practices into whether and how they engage with us. Our ability to achieve any ESG objective is subject to numerous risks, many of which are outside of our control. Examples of such risks include:

- the availability and cost of low- or non-carbon-based energy sources;
- the evolving regulatory requirements affecting ESG standards or disclosures;
- increases in reporting and operating regulations around ESG may result in higher operating expenses and/or capital expenditures that could reduce our profitability and/or cash flow;
- the availability of suppliers that can meet sustainability, diversity, and other ESG standards that we may set;
- the availability of effective and acceptable emission offset technologies or strategies in the event such tools will be necessary to achieve overall emission reduction and mitigation goals; and
- our ability to recruit, develop, and retain diverse talent in our labor markets.

An actual or perceived inability to satisfactorily address the concerns and disclosure expectations of our stakeholders could adversely affect our corporate reputation, image, identity, brand equity, and status, which could hurt our ability to retain and acquire customers and employees, lead to penalties for non-compliance, and/or negatively impact the price performance of our common stock.

We may be unable to meet our goals regarding the growth drivers of our business. Our sales growth is dependent primarily on our ability to attract new customers and increase our activity with existing customers within North America and abroad. In recent years, we have increased the resources devoted to developing a multi-dimensional, differentiated service offering, including our Digital Footprint (which incorporates our FMI and e-procurement capabilities), Onsites, national accounts, international capabilities, and process and consumption analytics. While we have taken steps to build momentum in the growth drivers of our business, we cannot assure you those steps will lead to sales growth. Failure to achieve any of our goals regarding our Digital Footprint, Onsites, national accounts, international capabilities, analytics, or other growth drivers could negatively impact our long-term sales and profit growth. In addition, failure to identify appropriate targets for the growth drivers of our business or failure to persuade the appropriate targets to adopt these offerings once identified may adversely impact our internally developed and/or externally communicated deployment objectives.

The ability to identify new products and product lines, and integrate them into our selling efforts and distribution network, may impact our ability to compete, our ability to generate additional sales, and our profit margins. Our success depends in part on our ability to develop product expertise at our selling locations and through our specialist roles and identify future products and product lines that complement existing products and product lines and that respond to our customers' needs. We may not be able to compete effectively unless our product selection keeps up with trends in the markets in which we compete or trends in new products. In addition, our ability to integrate new products and product lines into our selling locations and distribution network could impact sales and profit margins.

The ability to adequately protect our reputation may have an adverse impact on operations and profitability. The Fastenal name is valuable to our business, as well as to the implementation of our strategies for expanding our business. Maintaining, promoting, and positioning our brand will depend largely on our ability to provide high quality products, deliver consistent services, and improve our customer's business operations. Further, information on our company, including our products and services, can be more easily accessed and more quickly disseminated through traditional and social media and digital channels. Should we fail to deliver a positive customer experience or should our public image be tarnished by negative publicity, whether or not based in fact, it could jeopardize our reputation and discourage customers from purchasing our products and services, which in turn could adversely affect our ability to grow our revenues and profitability.

We may not be able to compete effectively against traditional or non-traditional competitors, which could cause us to lose market share or erode our gross and/or operating income profit and/or percentage. The industrial, construction, and maintenance supply industry, although slowly consolidating, still remains a large, fragmented, and highly competitive industry. Our current or future competitors may include companies with similar or greater market presence, name recognition, and financial, marketing, technological, and other resources, and we believe they will continue to challenge us with their product selection, financial resources, technological advancements, and services. Increased competition from brick-and-mortar retailers could cause us to lose market share, reduce our prices, or increase our spending. Similarly, the emergence of online retailers, whether as extensions of our traditional competition or in the form of major, non-traditional competitors, could result in easier and quicker price discovery and the adoption of aggressive pricing strategies and sales methods. These pressures could have the effect of eroding our gross and/or operating income profit and/or percentage over time.

We may not be successful in integrating acquisitions and achieving intended benefits and synergies. Historically, the vast majority of our growth has been organic. However, we have completed several acquisitions over the last decade and expect to continue to pursue strategic acquisitions that we believe will either expand or complement our business in new or existing markets or further enhance the value and offerings we are able to provide to our existing or future potential customers. Acquisitions involve numerous risks and challenges, including, among others, a risk of potential loss of key employees of an acquired business, inability to achieve identified operating and financial synergies anticipated to result from an acquisition, diversion of our capital and our management's attention from other business issues, and risks related to the integration of the acquired business including unanticipated changes in our business, our industry, or general economic conditions that affect the assumptions underlying the acquisition. Any one or more of these factors could cause us to not realize the benefits anticipated to result from the acquisitions.

Equity Risks

Our stock price will fluctuate, and at times these fluctuations may be volatile. The prices of markets and individual equities tend to fluctuate. These fluctuations commonly reflect events, many of which may be fully or partially outside of our control, that may change investor's perception of our future earnings growth prospects, including changes in economic conditions, ability to execute business strategy, the impacts of public policy, investor sentiment, competitive dynamics, and many other factors. While the sources of stock price fluctuation can be common across companies, the magnitude of these fluctuations can vary for different companies. This is commonly measured by beta, which is an individual stock's volatility in relation to the overall market. Our stock price has traditionally had a high beta value, which means fluctuations in the price of our shares will often be sharper than

what is experienced by broader market indices. We can provide no assurance that the above-average historical volatility of our stock versus the broader market will moderate. Volatility in our stock price could also result in the

filing of securities class action litigation, which could result in substantial costs and the diversion of our management's time, attention, and resources.

There can be no assurance that our stock price will continue to reflect the current multiple of earnings over time. Stock prices, including ours, are commonly thought to be a function of earnings compounded by a multiple. This is often referred to as a price-to-earnings (P/E) ratio, although other forms of multiples are often utilized by investors to value our company's shares. Historically, investors have given our earnings a higher multiple, or premium, than is typical of the broader industrial sector with which we are typically associated. We believe we have earned this premium by virtue of a long history of superior growth, profitability, and returns. However, to the extent that we fail to successfully execute our growth strategies and/or poorly navigate the risks that surround our business, including those described throughout this section, or to the extent our industry (industrial distribution, or industrial stocks in general) loses favor in the marketplace, there can be no assurance that investors will continue to afford a premium multiple to our earnings which could adversely affect our stock price.

We cannot provide any guaranty of future dividend payments or that we will continue to purchase shares of our common stock pursuant to our share purchase program. Although our board of directors has historically authorized the payment of quarterly cash dividends on our common stock and indicated an intention to do so in the future, there are no assurances that we will continue to pay dividends in the future or continue to increase dividends at historic rates. In addition, although our board of directors has authorized share purchase programs and we purchased shares in 2022, 2020, and prior years through these programs, we may discontinue doing so at any time. Any decision to continue to pay quarterly dividends on our common stock, to increase those dividends, or to purchase our common stock in the future will be based upon our financial condition and results of operations, the price of our common stock, credit conditions, and such other factors as are deemed relevant by our board of directors.

General Economic and Operating Risks

Operational Risks

A downturn in the economy or in the principal markets served by us and other factors may affect customer spending, which could harm our operating results. In general, our sales are the result of planned and unplanned customer spending on products used in production of final goods, infrastructure construction, and/or the maintenance of facilities. This spending is affected by many factors, including, among others:

- general business conditions;
- business conditions in our principal markets;
- changes in the value of local currencies relative to our functional currency, the United States dollar,
- interest rates;
- increases (inflation) or decreases (deflation) in the cost of products from our vendors, transportation services, energy and fuel prices, and electrical power rates;
- liquidity in credit markets;
- taxation;
- government regulations and actions;
- the impact on customer demand or availability of goods and services based on labor shortages or work stoppages;
- unemployment trends;
- terrorist attacks and acts of war;
- impact of higher sustained global temperatures (global warming);
- acts of God, which may include, but are not limited to, weather events, earthquakes, pandemics, etc.; and
- other matters that influence customer confidence and spending.

A downturn in either the national or local economies where we operate, or in the principal markets served by us, or changes in any of the other factors described above, could negatively impact sales at our in-market locations, sales through our other selling channels, and the level of profitability of those in-market locations and other selling channels. The primary variable affecting our results in 2023 was a softening in manufacturing sector business conditions.

Products manufactured in foreign countries may cease to be available, which could adversely affect our inventory levels and operating results. We obtain certain of our products, and our suppliers obtain certain of their products, from China, Taiwan, South Korea, and other foreign countries. Our suppliers could discontinue or experience disruption in selling products manufactured in foreign countries at any time for reasons that may or may not be in our control or our suppliers' control, including foreign government regulations, domestic government regulations, disruption in trade relationships and agreements, political unrest, war, disease, labor availability, or changes in local economic conditions. Additionally, the shipment of goods from foreign countries

could be delayed by container shipping companies encountering financial, capacity, or other difficulties. Our operating results and inventory levels could suffer if we are unable to promptly replace a supplier or shipper who is

unwilling or unable to satisfy our requirements with another supplier or shipper providing products and services of comparable quality and utility.

Trade policies could make sourcing product from overseas more difficult and/or more costly, and could adversely impact our gross and/or operating profit percentage. We source a significant amount of the products we sell from outside of North America, primarily Asia. We have made significant structural investments over time to be able to source both directly from Asia through our wholly-owned, Asia-based subsidiary, FASTCO Trading Co., Ltd. and indirectly from suppliers that procure product from international sources. This was initially necessary due to the absence of significant domestic fastener production, but over time we have expanded our non-fastener sourcing as well, and at this time it may be difficult to adjust our sourcing in the short term. In light of this, changes in trade policies could affect our sourcing operations, our ability to secure sufficient product to serve our customers and/or impact the cost or price of our products, with potentially adverse impacts on our gross and operating profit percentages and financial results. China represents a significant source of product for North America. In addition, we move and source products within North America. Any trading disruption (tariffs, product restrictions, etc.) between Canada, the United States, and Mexico, or disruption in their respective trading relationships with other nations can adversely impact our business. There can be no assurances that these disruptions will not continue or increase in the future, with the previously mentioned countries or additional countries with which we do business. The degree to which these changes in the global marketplace affect our financial results will be influenced by the specific details of the changes in trade policies, their timing and duration, and our effectiveness in deploying tools to address these issues.

Changes in energy costs and the cost of raw materials used in our products could impact our net sales, cost of sales, gross profit percentage, distribution expenses, and occupancy expenses, which may result in lower operating income. Our suppliers can experience significant fluctuation over time in the cost of raw materials (e.g., steel, plastic, etc.) used to produce their products. They can also experience significant fluctuation in the cost of energy consumed in their production processes and in the cost of fuel consumed to transport their products. These suppliers typically look to pass their increased costs along to us through price increases. We also consume energy and fuel in our own operations, and can experience direct and significant fluctuation in our own costs. Increases in the cost of fuel or raw materials could be damaging to us, decreases in those costs, particularly if severe, could also adversely impact us by creating deflation in selling prices, which could cause our gross profit to decline, or by negatively impacting customers in certain industries, which could cause our sales to those customers to decline. Failure to fully pass any such increased prices and costs through to our customers or to modify our activities to mitigate the impact would have an adverse effect on our operating income.

We are exposed to foreign currency exchange rate risk, and changes in foreign exchange rates could increase the cost of purchasing products and impact our foreign sales. Given that we were founded and remain based in the United States and that we are publicly traded in the United States, we report our results based on the United States dollar. Because the functional currency related to most of our non-United States operations is the applicable local currency, we are exposed to foreign currency exchange rate risk arising from transactions in the normal course of business. Fluctuations in the relative strength of foreign economies and their related currencies could adversely impact our ability to procure products at competitive prices and our foreign sales. Historically, our primary exchange rate exposure has been with the Canadian dollar as our Mexican activities are primarily conducted in United States dollars and our non-North American operations are relatively small in scale. There can be no assurance that currency exchange rate fluctuations with the Canadian dollar and other foreign currencies will not adversely affect our results of operations, financial condition, and cash flows. While the use of currency hedging instruments may provide us with protection from adverse fluctuations in currency exchange rates, we are not currently using these instruments and we have not historically hedged this exposure. If we decide to do so in the future, we could potentially forego the benefits that might result from favorable fluctuations in currency exchange rates.

Our current estimates of total market potential as well as the market potential of our business strategies could be incorrect. We believe we have a significant opportunity for growth based on our belief that North American market demand for the products we sell is estimated to exceed \$140 billion. This figure is not derived from an independent organization or data source that aggregates and publishes widely agreed-upon demand and market share statistics. Instead, we have identified this figure based on our own experience in the marketplace for our products and by evaluating estimates from other sources. If we have overestimated the size of our market, and in doing so, underestimated our current share of it, the size of our opportunity for growth may not be as significant as we currently believe. Similarly, we have provided estimates of the opportunities we have with some of our specific growth strategies, such as FMI solutions and Onsite locations. Within North America, we believe the potential market opportunity for industrial vending is approximately 1.7 million devices and we have identified over 12,000 customer locations with the potential to implement our Onsite service model within our traditional manufacturing and construction customer base. We have identified additional markets, such as government, healthcare, and academia, and geographies into which we can sell our FMI solutions, which would increase the number of identified potential FMI solutions or Onsite locations. However, our presence in emerging markets and geographies is not as established as is the case in our traditional markets and geographies, which could

extend the sales cycle. As is the case for total market size, we use our own experience and data to arrive at the size of these potential opportunities and not independent sources. These estimates are based on our business model today, and the introduction or expansion of other business strategies could cause them to change. In

addition, the market potential of a particular business strategy may vary from expectations due to a change in the marketplace (such as changes in customer concentration or needs), a change in the nature of that business strategy, or weaker than anticipated acceptance by customers of that business strategy. We cannot guarantee that our market potential estimates are accurate or that we will ultimately decide to expand our industrial vending or Onsite service models as we anticipate to reach the full market opportunity.

The industrial, construction, and maintenance supply industry is consolidating, which could cause it to become more competitive and could negatively impact our market share, gross profit, and operating income. The industrial, construction, and maintenance supply industry in North America is consolidating, reflecting two factors. First, our customer's needs are evolving to reflect a greater awareness of the total cost and risk of fulfillment and their need to have consistent sources of supply at multiple locations, including outside of North America. Second, providing these capabilities to our customers requires increasing investment in hardware, software, and analytic capabilities that require a certain degree of scale to support. While we believe that in a fragmented market such as exists for industrial supplies these emerging trends favor large distributors such as Fastenal, as the industry consolidates into fewer and larger competitors it may become more difficult to differentiate our product and service offering from that of our competitors. We also continue to see consolidation among our suppliers. This trend could result in fewer and larger suppliers, with greater channel power and negotiating leverage. There can be no assurance we will be able in the future to take effective advantage of the trend toward consolidation within our industry or among our suppliers. In either or both cases, the trend toward consolidation could make it more difficult for us to maintain our growth and/or gross and operating profit. Furthermore, as our industrial customers face increased foreign competition, and potentially lose business to foreign competitors, or shift their operations overseas in an effort to reduce expenses, we may face increased difficulty in growing and maintaining our market share.

The occurrence of a widespread public health crisis could have a material adverse effect on our business, results of operations, and financial condition. A public health crisis, if sufficiently widespread as to affect economic activity, could negatively impact our business. Mitigation efforts and prescriptions may be facilitated by regulatory authorities, which could limit our flexibility to pursue alternative, potentially more favorable, means of limiting these negative impacts. The effects on our business efforts to mitigate the effects of the crisis may include a reduction in demand, inefficiencies due to workplace accommodations, reduced availability of personnel, supply chain disruption, or constraints on product availability, among other difficulties. In any such event, the severity, duration, and extent of the crisis can be difficult to predict, which can make it difficult to anticipate the magnitude and length of the impact on our sales, profits, and/or cash flow. It can also be difficult to anticipate what the effect on business conditions will be as the impacts of any public health crisis fades and mitigating policies are reversed.

Inclement weather and other disruptions to the transportation network could adversely impact our distribution system and demand for our products. Our ability to provide efficient distribution of core business products to our branch network is an integral component of our overall business strategy. Disruptions at distribution centers or shipping ports may affect our ability to both maintain core products in inventory and deliver products to our customers on a timely basis, which may in turn adversely affect our results of operations. In addition, severe weather conditions could adversely affect demand for our products in particularly hard hit regions.

Legal, Regulatory, and Compliance Risks

Our business is subject to a wide array of operating laws and regulations in every jurisdiction where we operate. Compliance with these laws and regulations increases the cost of doing business and failure to comply could result in the imposition of fines or penalties, damage to our reputation, or the termination of contracts. We are subject to a variety of laws and regulations including without limitation import and export requirements, anti-bribery and corruption laws, product compliance laws, environmental laws, foreign exchange controls and cash repatriation restrictions, advertising regulations, data privacy (including in the U.S., the California Consumer Privacy Act, and in the European Union, the General Data Protection Regulation 2016, with interpretations varying from state to state and country to country) and cyber security requirements (including protection of information and incident responses), regulations on suppliers regarding the sources of supplies or products, labor and employment laws, and anti-competition regulations. In addition, as a supplier to federal, state, and local government agencies, we must comply with certain laws and regulations relating specifically to the formation, administration, and performance of our governmental contracts. We are also subject to governmental audits and inquiries in the normal course of business. Ongoing audit activity and changes to the legal and regulatory environments could increase the cost of doing business, and such costs may increase in the future as a result of changes in these laws and regulations or in their interpretation. While we have implemented policies and procedures designed to facilitate compliance with these laws and regulations, there can be no assurance that our employees, contractors, or agents will not violate such laws and regulations, or our policies. Any such violations could result in the imposition of fines and penalties, damage to our reputation, and, in the case of laws and regulations relating specifically to governmental contracts, the loss of those contracts.

Tax laws and regulations require compliance efforts that can increase our cost of doing business and changes to these laws and regulations could impact financial results. We are subject to a variety of tax laws and regulation in the jurisdictions in which we operate. Maintaining compliance with these laws can increase our cost of doing business and failure to comply could result in audits or the imposition of fines or penalties. Further, our future effective tax rates in any of these jurisdictions could be affected, positively or negatively, by changing tax priorities, changes in statutory rates, and/or changes in tax laws or the interpretation thereof. In 2022, the Inflation Reduction Act was passed which contained tax-related provisions. We did not experience, and do not anticipate experiencing in the near future, any meaningful impact to our tax rates from the legislation.

Changes in accounting standards and subjective assumptions, estimates, and judgments by management related to complex accounting matters could significantly affect our financial results or financial condition. U.S. generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and related accounting pronouncements, implementation guidelines and interpretations with regard to a wide range of matters that are relevant to our business, such as asset impairment, inventories, lease obligations, self-insurance, vendor allowances, tax matters, business combinations, and legal matters, are complex and involve many subjective assumptions, estimates, and judgments. Changes in accounting standards or their interpretation or changes in underlying assumptions, estimates or judgments, could significantly change our reported or expected financial performance or financial condition. The implementation of new accounting standards could also require certain systems, internal process, internal control, and other changes that could increase our operating costs.

We are subject to litigation risk due to the nature of our business, which may have a material adverse effect on our business. From time to time, we are involved in lawsuits or other legal proceedings that arise from business transactions or the operation of our business. Due to the nature of our business, these proceedings may, for example, relate to product liability claims, commercial disputes, suits arising from our trucking operations, or employment matters. In addition, we could face claims over other matters, such as claims arising from our status as a government contractor, intellectual property matters, or corporate or securities law matters. The defense and ultimate outcome of lawsuits or other legal proceedings may result in higher operating expenses, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition or results of operations.

Credit and Liquidity Risks

Tight credit markets could impact our ability to obtain financing on reasonable terms or increase the cost of existing or future financing and interest rate fluctuations could adversely impact our results. As of December 31, 2023, we had \$260.0 of outstanding debt obligations, all in the form of senior unsecured promissory notes issued under our master note agreement (the Master Note Agreement). The notes issued under our Master Note Agreement carry a fixed interest rate and consist of five series and are described in further detail in Note 9 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements in this Form 10-K. We also have borrowing capacity under our revolving credit facility (the Credit Facility) of \$835.0, but no loans were outstanding as of December 31, 2023. Loans under the Credit Facility generally bear interest at a rate per annum equal to Daily Simple Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR), the rate on which may vary daily, and mature on September 28, 2027.

We currently have the capacity under our Credit Facility and Master Note Agreement to increase borrowings in the future to finance stock purchases, dividends, capital expenditures, working capital additions, acquisitions, or other investments. Should we seek to increase our borrowings during periods of volatility and disruption in the United States credit markets, financing may become more costly and more difficult to obtain. This was not a material consideration in 2023. The cost of servicing any existing balances on our Credit Facility could increase if interest rates increase due to the SOFR-based interest rate provided for under our Credit Facility.

ITEM 1B. UNRESOLVED STAFF COMMENTS

None.

ITEM 1C. CYBERSECURITY

Cybersecurity Risk Management and Strategy

We have established processes and procedures for ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data. These processes are in place to assess, identify, and manage material risks from cybersecurity threats. Annual risk assessments are performed and incorporated as part of our Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) organizational process, which is overseen by our Board of Directors (the Board) and the Audit Committee, along with Executive Leadership. Our information security management system (ISMS) program is aligned to ISO 27001, which is an international standard to manage information security. ISO 27001 is published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the world's largest developer of voluntary standards, and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

Our information technology (IT) security department, led by our Senior Vice President (SVP) IT Infrastructure & Security, is tasked with monitoring cybersecurity and operational risks related to information security and system disruption. The team employs measures designed to protect against, detect, and respond to cybersecurity threats, and has implemented processes and procedures aligned with our information security management system to support and promote resilient programs. This includes:

- Enterprise security framework and cyber security standards;
- Cyber security awareness and training plans;
- Security assessments and monitoring;
- Restricted physical access to critical areas, servers, and network equipment;
- Incident response, crisis management, business continuity, and disaster recovery plans; and
- Third-party IT vendor risk management process to identify, assess, and manage risks presented by our IT vendors and business partners.

Our IT security department maintains a playbook to respond to potential cybersecurity threats. We conduct tabletop exercises for tactical response readiness, perform regular security scans of our environment both from an external and internal perspective, as well as work with a qualified third-party vendor to perform penetration tests of our environment. Any identified risks are included in our overall risk management program, and internal and external auditors validate our IT controls on a regular basis.

We conduct organization-wide cybersecurity training and compliance exercises in connection with our information security program. This training consists of educational material and compliance testing administered to all of our employees, which is tracked and recorded throughout the year. Results and progress are shared with Executive Leadership, the Audit Committee, and the Board. Employee phishing tests are conducted on a regular basis. Employees who do not follow protocol are redirected for additional training.

We have implemented an IT vendor risk management policy that provides guidance in managing risks associated with IT vendors and business partners. We have also established a third-party risk management program and conduct pre-onboarding security assessments and annual re-assessments of our service providers to collect, track, and manage third-party security controls based upon the risk presented to the business. Any issues identified during assessment are tracked through to remediation.

Governance

Our Board of Directors and Audit Committee are actively engaged in the oversight of our risk management, including cybersecurity risk. The Audit Committee receives quarterly reports on information security from our SVP IT Infrastructure & Security. Additionally, Executive Leadership is briefed on information security at least quarterly by members of our IT security, compliance, governance, and audit teams. The Audit Committee of the Board is responsible for overseeing our risk exposure to information security, cybersecurity, and data protection, as well as the steps management has taken to monitor and control such exposures.

Our IT security department, which assesses and manages our risks from cybersecurity threats, is led by our SVP IT Infrastructure & Security, who reports to our Senior EVP IT. Additional oversight for assessing and managing cybersecurity risk include Executive sponsors, Information Technology, Human Resources, IT Governance Risk and Compliance, Internal Audit, and Legal, as well as members of our Information Security Risk Council, IT Risk Committee, and Enterprise Risk Management teams.

We have in place an incident response plan to identify, protect, detect, respond to, and recover from cybersecurity threats and incidents. The Information Security Risk Council, Executive Leadership, the Audit Committee, and the Board are notified of any material cybersecurity incidents through an established escalation process. Additionally, we maintain a qualified third-party vendor relationship which is available to the team for on-demand incident response and investigation, as needed.

The IT security department team members have degrees applicable to cybersecurity, including Bachelors in Information Systems, Computer Science, Management Information Systems and/or Masters in Cybersecurity, and hold professional certifications, including Certified Information Systems Security Professional, Offensive Security Certified Professional, Global Information Assurance Certification (GIAC) Defensible Security Architecture, GIAC Forensic Examiner, GIAC Incident Handling, and GIAC Open Source Intelligence. Our SVP IT Infrastructure & Security holds a Cybersecurity and Privacy Law Certificate from Mitchell Hamline School of Law, and has 28 years of experience in systems, network, and database administration. Additionally, our Senior IT security department manager is an Offensive Security Certified Professional, and holds GIAC Security Leadership (GSLC), with over 25 years of experience in network performance, availability, and protection.

Impact of Cybersecurity Threats

There have been no previous cybersecurity incidents which have materially affected us to date, including our business strategy, results of operations or financial condition. However, any future potential risks from cybersecurity threats, including but not limited to exploitation of vulnerabilities, ransomware, denial of service, supply chain attacks, or other similar threats may materially affect us, including our execution of business strategy, reputation, results of operations and/or financial condition.

ITEM 2. PROPERTIES

Note – Information in this section is as of December 31, 2023, unless otherwise noted.

We own, and in some cases, lease, the following facilities, excluding selling locations:

Location	Purpose	Leased	Tote Locations (ASRS) ⁽¹⁾	Approximate Square Feet
Winona, Minnesota	Distribution center and home office		246,000	331,000
Indianapolis, Indiana	Distribution center		547,000	(2) 1,078,000
Akron, Ohio	Distribution center		103,000	188,000
Scranton, Pennsylvania	Distribution center		104,000	187,000
Denton, Texas	Distribution center ⁽³⁾		41,000	(4) 263,000
Atlanta, Georgia	Distribution center		77,000	252,000
Seattle, Washington	Distribution center		140,000	238,000
Modesto, California	Distribution center and manufacturing facility		69,000	328,000
Salt Lake City, Utah	Distribution center and packaging facility (three buildings) ⁽⁵⁾	X	—	153,000
High Point, North Carolina	Distribution center (two buildings) ⁽⁶⁾		132,000	829,000
Kansas City, Kansas	Distribution center		170,000	462,000
Jackson, Mississippi	Distribution center		—	271,000
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada	Distribution center		128,000	242,000
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	Distribution center	X	—	38,000
Apodaca, Nuevo Leon, Mexico	Distribution center	X	—	46,000
Dordrecht, Netherlands	Distribution center	X	—	39,000
Saint Helens, United Kingdom	Distribution center	X	—	14,000
Shanghai, China	Local re-distribution center	X	—	12,000

(1)	Total number of tote locations for small parts storage included in facilities with an ASRS.
(2)	This property contains an ASRS with capacity of 52,000 pallet locations, in addition to the 547,000 tote locations for small parts.
(3)	As of May 2023, we no longer lease space for distribution-related activities. In 2024, an additional ASRS will go live at this property.
(4)	This facility contains an ASRS with capacity of 14,000 pallet locations, in addition to the 41,000 tote locations for small parts.
(5)	During 2021, we acquired land for future expansion of our distribution center in Magna, Utah, and, as of November 2023, earthwork is underway. This building is expected to be complete in June of 2025 and will be approximately 290,000 square feet.
(6)	In December 2018, we purchased an additional distribution center in High Point, North Carolina with approximately 750,000 total square feet. Approximately 395,000 square feet will be leased by the building's previous owner until December 2024. We currently utilize approximately 355,000 square feet for distribution activities.

We also own, and in some cases, lease, the following support facilities, excluding selling locations:

Location	Purpose	Leased	Approximate Square Feet
Winona, Minnesota	Manufacturing facility		121,000
Indianapolis, Indiana	Manufacturing facility		198,000
Houston, Texas	Manufacturing facility		122,000
Wallingford, Connecticut	Manufacturing facility		177,000
Rockford, Illinois	Manufacturing facility		101,000
Johor, Malaysia	Manufacturing facility		30,000
Brno-Lisen, Czech Republic	Manufacturing facility	X	20,000
Leeds, United Kingdom	Manufacturing facility	X	28,000
Winona, Minnesota	Multiple facilities for office space, storage, and packaging operations		421,000
Bangalore, India	International information technology office	X	45,000

In addition, we own 154 buildings that house our in-market locations in various cities throughout North America.

All other buildings we occupy are leased. Leased branches range from approximately 3,000 to 20,000 square feet, with lease terms of up to 120 months (most initial lease terms are for 36 to 60 months).

We currently own land for future distribution center expansion and development. If economic conditions are suitable in the future, we will consider purchasing branch locations to house our older branches. It is anticipated the majority of new branch locations will continue to be leased. It is our policy to negotiate relatively short lease terms to facilitate relocation of particular branch operations, when desirable. Our experience has been that there is sufficient space suitable for our needs and available for leasing.

ITEM 3. LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

A description of our legal proceedings, if any, is contained in Note 10 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements.

ITEM 4. MINE SAFETY DISCLOSURES

Not applicable.

PART II

ITEM

5. MARKET FOR REGISTRANT'S COMMON EQUITY, RELATED STOCKHOLDER MATTERS, AND ISSUER PURCHASES OF EQUITY SECURITIES

Common Stock Data

Dollar amounts in this section are stated in whole numbers.

Our shares are traded on The Nasdaq Stock Market under the symbol 'FAST'. As of January 19, 2024, there were approximately 900 record holders of our common stock, which include nominees or broker dealers holding stock on behalf of an estimated 662,000 beneficial owners.

Issuer Purchases of Equity Securities

The table below sets forth information regarding purchases of our common stock during each of the last three months of 2023:

Period	(a) Total Number of Shares Purchased	(b) Average Price Paid per Share	(c) Total Number of Shares Purchased as Part of Publicly Announced Plans or Programs ⁽¹⁾	(d) Maximum Number (or Approximate Dollar Value) of Shares that May Yet Be Purchased Under the Plans or Programs ⁽¹⁾
October 1-31, 2023	0	\$0.00	0	6,200,000
November 1-30, 2023	0	\$0.00	0	6,200,000
December 1-31, 2023	0	\$0.00	0	6,200,000
Total	0	\$0.00	0	6,200,000

(1)	As of December 31, 2023, we had remaining authority to repurchase 6,200,000 shares under the July 12, 2022 authorization. This authorization does not have an expiration date.
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Purchases of shares of our common stock, if applicable, are described later in this Form 10-K under the heading 'Item 7. Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations' under 'Liquidity and Capital Resources' - 'Stock Purchases'.

Fastenal Company Common Stock Comparative Performance Graph

Set forth below is a graph comparing, for the five years ended December 31, 2023, the yearly cumulative total shareholder return on our common stock with the yearly cumulative total shareholder return of the S&P 500 Index and the Dow Jones US Industrial Suppliers Index.

The comparison of total shareholder returns in the performance graph assumes that \$100 was invested on December 31, 2018 in Fastenal Company, the S&P 500 Index, and the Dow Jones US Industrial Suppliers Index, and that dividends were reinvested when and as paid.

Comparison of Five-Year Cumulative Total Return Among Fastenal Company, the S&P 500 Index, and the Dow Jones US Industrial Suppliers Index

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		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Fastenal Company	\$	100.00	145.04	198.08	265.50	200.88	283.77
S&P 500 Index		100.00	131.49	155.68	200.37	164.08	207.21
Dow Jones US Industrial Suppliers Index		100.00	132.23	167.18	223.37	193.89	287.68

Note - The graph and index table above were obtained from Zacks SEC Compliance Services Group.

ITEM 6. RESERVED

ITEM 7. MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL CONDITION AND RESULTS OF OPERATIONS

The following is management's discussion and analysis of certain significant factors which have affected our financial position and operating results during the periods included in the accompanying consolidated financial statements and should be read in conjunction with those consolidated financial statements. This section of this Form 10-K generally discusses 2023 and 2022 items and year-to-year comparisons for the current year and the prior year. Discussions of 2021 items can be found in 'Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations' in Part II, Item 7 of our annual report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2022.

Business and Operational Overview

Fastenal is a North American leader in the wholesale distribution of industrial and construction supplies. We distribute these supplies through a network of more than 3,400 in-market locations. Our largest end market is manufacturing. Sales to these customers includes products for both original equipment manufacturing (OEM), where our products are consumed in the final products of our customers, and manufacturing, repair and operations (MRO), where our products are consumed to support the facilities and ongoing operations of our customers. We also service general and commercial contractors in non-residential end markets as well as farmers, truckers, railroads, oil exploration companies, oil production and refinement companies, mining companies, federal, state, and local governmental entities, schools, and certain retail trades. Geographically, our branches, Onsite locations, and customers are primarily located in North America, though we continue to grow our non-North American presence as well.

It is helpful to appreciate several aspects of our marketplace: First, it is big. We estimate the North American marketplace for industrial supplies is in excess of \$140 billion per year (and we have expanded beyond North America) and no company has a significant portion of this market. Second, many of the products we sell are individually inexpensive, but the cost and time to manage, procure, and transport these products can be quite meaningful. Third, many customers prefer to reduce their number of MRO and OEM suppliers to simplify their business, while also utilizing various technologies and models (including our local branches when they need something quickly or unexpectedly) to improve availability and reduce waste. Lastly, we believe the markets are efficient. In our view, this means that companies who grow market share are those that develop differentiated capabilities that provide the greatest value to the customer.

Our approach to addressing these aspects of our marketplace is captured in our motto **Growth Through Customer Service®** and our tagline **Where Industry Meets Innovation™**. The concept of growth is simple: find more customers every day that value the services we provide and increase our activity with them. However, execution is hard work. First, we recruit service-minded individuals to support customers and empower them to operate in a decentralized fashion to maximize their flexibility to solve customer problems. We support these customer-facing resources with a supply chain capability that is speedy, efficient, and cost-effective. This has formed the foundation of our high-touch model since inception. Second, we invest in, develop, and deploy capabilities that allow us to illuminate and provide greater control over a customer's supply chain. These capabilities range from service models that take advantage of our local presence and/or our ability to more efficiently manage complex procurement needs, to hardware and software technologies that promote actionable data capture, improve operating efficiencies, and reduce supply chain risk. Third, we strive to generate strong profits, which produce the cash flow necessary to support our growth, our product and technology development, and the needs of our customers.

The ultimate aim of this 'high-touch, high-tech' approach to gaining market share is to allow us to get closer to our customers, going so far as to be right to the point of consumption within customers' facilities. Marrying our presence, capabilities and technologies deepens our relationships and our understanding of our customers' day-to-day opportunities and obstacles. This, in turn, enhances our ability to provide innovative and comprehensive solutions to our customers' challenges. By doing these things every day, Fastenal remains a growth-centric organization.

Executive Overview

The following table presents a performance summary of our results of operations for the periods ended December 31:

	2023	2022	YOY Change	2021	YOY Change
Net sales	\$ 7,346.7	6,980.6	5.2 %	\$ 6,010.9	16.1 %
Business days	253	254		253	
Daily sales	\$ 29.0	27.5	5.7 %	\$ 23.8	15.7 %
Gross profit	\$ 3,354.5	3,215.8	4.3 %	\$ 2,777.2	15.8 %
% of net sales	45.7 %	46.1 %		46.2 %	
Operating and administrative expenses	\$ 1,825.8	1,762.2	3.6 %	\$ 1,559.8	13.0 %
% of net sales	24.9 %	25.2 %		26.0 %	
Operating income	\$ 1,528.7	1,453.6	5.2 %	\$ 1,217.4	19.4 %
% of net sales	20.8 %	20.8 %		20.3 %	
Earnings before income taxes	\$ 1,522.0	1,440.0	5.7 %	\$ 1,207.8	19.2 %
% of net sales	20.7 %	20.6 %		20.1 %	
Net earnings	\$ 1,155.0	1,086.9	6.3 %	\$ 925.0	17.5 %
Diluted net earnings per share	\$ 2.02	1.89	6.7 %	\$ 1.60	17.8 %

Note – Daily sales are defined as the total net sales for the period divided by the number of business days (in the United States) in the period.

2023 was a year of modest economic contraction in our key markets. The Institute for Supply Management's Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) for the United States averaged 47.1 for the full year and remained below 50, the threshold demarcating manufacturing growth or contraction, every month. Industrial Production for the United States reflected moderating business activity, with markets that are most relevant to us, such as Fabricated Metals and Machinery, declining at an accelerating rate through the year. In addition, inflation in product costing flattened out, with some deflation emerging in fastener products. The combined effect of these dynamics was to produce daily sales growth in 2023 that slowed appreciably from 2022. We continued to migrate to a key accounts-focused model, expand our Onsite footprint, grow our installed base of FMI hardware, and lift the proportion of sales that run through our Digital Footprint. The efficiencies these investments provide and good organizational control of discretionary expenses allowed us to achieve a stable operating profit margin despite the challenges stemming from this slower and less inflationary environment. We also produced record operating cash flow which, combined with our confidence in the future cash generation capability of our business model, allowed us to pay a supplemental fifth dividend in the fourth quarter of 2023.

The table below summarizes our absolute and full-time equivalent (FTE; based on 40 hours per week) employee headcount, our investments related to in-market locations (defined as the sum of the total number of branch locations and the total number of active Onsite locations), and weighted FMI devices at the end of the periods presented and the percentage change compared to the end of the prior period.

During the last twelve months, we increased our total FTE employee headcount by 867. This reflects an increase in our total FTE selling personnel of 594 to support growth in the marketplace and sales initiatives targeting customer acquisition. We had an increase in our distribution and transportation FTE personnel of 124 to support increased product throughput at our facilities and to expand our local inventory fulfillment terminals (LIFTs). We had an increase in our remaining FTE personnel of 149 that relates primarily to personnel investments in information technology, manufacturing, and operational support, such as purchasing and product development.

The table below summarizes the number of branches opened and closed, net of conversions, as well as the number of Onsites activated and closed, net of conversions during the periods presented.

	Twelve-month Period			
	2023		2022	
Branch openings	10		12	
Branch closures, net of conversions	(96)		(122)	
Onsite activations	329		306	
Onsite closures, net of conversions	(130)		(99)	

Our in-market network forms the foundation of our business strategy. In recent years, we have seen a gradual increase in our in-market locations because of significant growth in Onsites and, to a lesser degree international branches, which has more than overcome a meaningful decline in our traditional branch network. In any period, the number of locations closed tends to reflect normal churn in our business, whether due to redefining or exiting customer relationships, the shutting or relocation of customer facilities that host our locations, or a customer decision, as well as our ongoing review of underperforming locations. We will continue to open or close locations to sustain and improve our network, support our growth drivers, and manage our operating expenses. However, we believe the strategic rationalization that has produced the meaningful decline in our traditional branch network in the United States and Canada since 2013 is largely completed, and we expect reduced closing activity beginning in 2024.

CURRENT YEAR RESULTS ENDED 2023

Results of Operations

The following table sets forth consolidated statements of earnings information (as a percentage of net sales) for the periods ended December 31:

	2023		2022	
Net sales	100.0	%	100.0	%
Gross profit	45.7	%	46.1	%
Operating and administrative expenses	24.9	%	25.2	%
Operating income	20.8	%	20.8	%
Net interest expense	-0.1	%	-0.2	%
Earnings before income taxes	20.7	%	20.6	%
Note – Amounts may not foot due to rounding difference.				

Sales

The table below sets forth net sales and daily sales for the periods ended December 31, and changes in such sales from the prior period to the more recent period:

We believe higher unit sales in 2023 were primarily a result of our ability to gain market share, as most measures of industrial activity were flat to down throughout the period. Despite this challenging environment, in 2023 we produced net sales growth of 5.2% and, owing to one fewer selling day in the period, daily sales growth of 5.7%. Growth was led by our transportation customers, which includes sales to transportation services customers as the warehousing operations of retailer-oriented customers, and manufacturing end markets, which benefit disproportionately from our shift to a key account model. Our non-residential construction and reseller customers contracted during the period, which we believe is due to our shift to a key account model which tends to de-emphasize walk-in, over-the-counter, and infrequent transactions.

Price contributed 160 to 190 basis points to our net sales growth in 2023. This contribution to growth from price was primarily due to easier comparisons in the first six months of 2023. For instance, in the first six months of 2023 contribution to growth from price averaged 240 to 270 basis points, while in the third and fourth quarters of 2023 contribution to growth from price averaged 110 to 140 basis points and 50 to 80 basis points, respectively.

We increased total Onsite locations, the installed base of FMI devices, and our Digital Footprint in 2023, which enhanced the value we provide to our customers and supported our growth and efficiency. The rate of penetration we achieved with these growth drivers was uneven, however. We signed 326 Onsites in 2023, below our goal at the start of 2023 of 375 to 400 units and slightly below the prior year signings of 356 units. We signed 24,126 FMI MEUs, meeting our goal at the start of 2023 of 23,000 to 25,000 MEUs and meaningfully above the prior year signings of 20,735 MEUs. We expanded the proportion of our sales running through our Digital Footprint to 56.1%, below our goal at the start of 2023 of 65.0% but above the prior year level of 49.3%.

Sales by Product Line

From a product standpoint, we have three categories: fasteners, safety supplies, and other product lines, the latter of which includes eight smaller product categories, such as tools, janitorial supplies, and cutting tools. The percent of sales in the periods below were as follows:

	2023	2022
Fasteners	32.4 %	34.0 %
Safety supplies	21.2 %	20.8 %
Other product lines	46.4 %	45.2 %

The shifts in product mix in 2023 compared to 2022 are largely attributable to two factors. First, fasteners are more heavily oriented toward production of final goods than maintenance, which results in greater susceptibility to periods of weaker industrial production. Second, pricing for fasteners has decelerated at a faster pace than non-fastener products. These dynamics produced a meaningful divergence in the daily sales growth rates of our fastener versus our non-fastener product lines in 2023.

Annual Sales Changes, Sequential Trends, and End Market Performance

This section focuses on three distinct views of our business – annual sales changes by month, sequential trends, and end market performance. The first discussion regarding sales changes by month provides a good mechanical view of our business. The second discussion provides a framework for understanding the sequential trends (that is, comparing a month to the immediately preceding month, and also looking at the cumulative change from an earlier benchmark month) in our business. Finally, we believe the third discussion regarding end market performance provides insight into activities with our various types of customers.

Annual Sales Changes, by Month

During the months noted below, all of our selling locations, when combined, had a DSR change of (compared to the same month in the preceding year):

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July
2023	11.2 %	9.6 %	6.8 %	7.8 %	5.2 %	4.7 %	3.7 %
2022	14.9 %	21.3 %	19.1 %	20.3 %	17.6 %	16.0 %	18.1 %

Sequential Trends

We find it helpful to think about the monthly sequential changes in our business using the analogy of climbing a stairway –

This stairway has several predictable landings where there is a pause in the sequential gain (i.e. April, July, and October to December), but generally speaking, climbs from January to October. The October landing then establishes the benchmark for the start of the next year.

History has identified these landings in our business cycle. They generally relate to months where certain holidays impair business days and/or seasons impact certain end markets, particularly non-residential construction. The first landing centers on Easter and the Good Friday holiday that precedes it, which in any given year can fall in March or April, the second landing centers on July 4th, and the third landing centers on the approach of winter with its seasonal impact on primarily our non-residential construction business and with the Christmas/New Year holidays. The holidays we noted impact the trends because they either move from month-to-month or because they move around during the week.

The table below shows the pattern to the sequential change in our daily sales. The line labeled 'Benchmark' is a historical average of our sequential daily sales change for the trailing five year average that excludes 2020. We have excluded 2020 from the average as the effects of the pandemic created unusual sequential patterns that we do not consider representative of normal trends. We believe this time frame serves to show the historical pattern and could serve as a benchmark. The '2023' and '2022' lines represent our actual sequential daily sales changes. The '23Delta' and '22Delta' lines indicate the difference between the 'Benchmark' and the actual results in the respective year. Under normal circumstances, the sequential trends shown below are directly linked to fluctuations in our end markets. Further, in any given month it is possible to get significant deviation from the benchmark.

It is important to note that these benchmarks are historical averages. In a year where demand is strong, our daily sales growth rates will tend to have more months that exceed the benchmark than fall below it. In a year where demand is weak, we will tend to have more months that fall short of the benchmark than exceed it. In both cases, there is a random element that makes it difficult to know how any single month will perform.

	Jan. ⁽¹⁾	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July
Benchmark ⁽²⁾	0.2 %	1.5 %	3.8 %	-0.5 %	2.7 %	2.0 %	-3.1 %
2023	-0.4 %	1.7 %	1.0 %	-0.2 %	0.7 %	-0.2 %	-2.6 %
23Delta	-0.6 %	0.1 %	-2.9 %	0.2 %	-2.0 %	-2.1 %	0.5 %
2022	1.7 %	3.1 %	3.6 %	-1.2 %	3.2 %	0.2 %	-1.6 %
22Delta	1.5 %	1.6 %	-0.2 %	-0.7 %	0.6 %	-1.7 %	1.5 %

(1)	The January figures represent the percentage change from the previous October, whereas the remaining figures represent the percentage change from the previous month.
(2)	The benchmark for each month is the average of the previous five years for that month. As COVID-19-related surge sales made sequential averages in 2020 unrepresentative, the benchmark uses a preceding five-year average that <u>excludes</u> 2020. We also exclude the impact of the 2017 Mansco acquisition.

Note – Amounts may not foot due to rounding difference.

A graph of the sequential daily sales change patterns discussed above, starting with a base of '100' in the previous October and ending with the next October, would be as follows:

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End Market Performance

We estimate approximately 70% to 75% of our business is with customers engaged in some type of manufacturing, a significant subset of which finds its way into the heavy equipment market. The DSR change to our manufacturing customers, when compared to the same period in the prior year, was as follows:

DSR change - manufacturing customers	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2023	14.4 %	10.4 %	6.2 %	4.7 %	8.9 %
2022	23.9 %	23.1 %	22.6 %	16.0 %	21.3 %

We estimate approximately 25% to 30% of our business is with customers engaged in a wide range of activities, none of which individually constitute 10% of sales. This includes non-residential construction, reseller, transportation, and government customers. The DSR change to these remaining non-manufacturing customers, when compared to the same period in the prior year, was as follows:

DSR change - non-manufacturing customers	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2023	-3.7 %	-5.3 %	-1.3 %	0.9 %	-2.4 %
2022	6.9 %	6.9 %	1.0 %	-0.8 %	3.5 %

Product Performance

Our products fall into two functional subsets: (1) original equipment manufacturing (OEM) parts, which become part of a customer's finished good and (2) maintenance, repair, and operation (MRO), which maintain the facilities and equipment used by our customers.

While certain products in our other product categories have an OEM application, such as welding consumables or metal cutting carbides, the majority of our sales for OEM applications are of fasteners. As a result, the best way to understand the change in our production business is to examine the results in our fastener product line (which represents 30% to 35% of our business). From a company perspective, the DSR change of fasteners, when compared to the same period in the prior year, was as follows (note: this information includes all end markets):

DSR change - fasteners	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2023	7.0 %	0.0 %	-2.0 %	-2.3 %	0.7 %
2022	24.6 %	21.2 %	18.2 %	9.1 %	18.1 %

By contrast, while we do sell significant quantities of MRO fasteners, the best way to understand the change in our MRO business is to examine the results in our non-fastener product lines, which include safety, tools, janitorial, and other products. From a company perspective, the DSR change of non-fasteners, when compared to the same period in the prior year, was as follows (note: this information includes all end markets):

DSR change - non-fasteners	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2023	10.3 %	9.2 %	7.5 %	6.6 %	8.4 %
2022	15.0 %	16.0 %	14.4 %	11.6 %	14.2 %

Our non-fastener business is not immune to the impact of industrial cycles, but because it is more dependent on whether a facility is operating than how much product that facility is producing, it does tend to exhibit less volatility in its growth than our fastener business. We also expect growth of our non-fastener products to outperform growth of our fastener products over the course of a cycle. This reflects three things: the non-fastener market is larger than the fastener market, we are under penetrated in the non-fastener market relative to the fastener market, and industrial vending lends itself to sales of non-fastener products.

Gross Profit

The gross profit percentage during each period was as follows:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2023	45.7 %	45.5 %	45.9 %	45.5 %	45.7 %
2022	46.6 %	46.5 %	45.9 %	45.3 %	46.1 %

Our gross profit, as a percentage of net sales, was 45.7% in 2023 and 46.1% in 2022. This decrease was primarily related to two factors. First, in 2023 customer and product mix had a negative effect on our gross profit percentage. We continued to experience relatively strong growth from larger customers, including Onsites, and non-fastener products, each of which tend to have a lower gross profit percentage than our business as a whole. Second, we had higher organizational/overhead costs, including from higher inbound freight costs and working capital needs being relieved from inventory and generating higher period costs. These negative effects were partly offset by favorable freight costs, which reflects elevated domestic freight revenue leveraging what are relatively stable costs to support our captive fleet, lower expenses related to external freight providers, and lower fuel costs.

Operating and Administrative Expenses

Our operating and administrative expenses, as a percentage of net sales, improved to 24.9% in 2023 from 25.2% in 2022. This primarily reflected improvement, as a percentage of net sales, in employee-related expenses as bonuses and commissions were down as a result of slower sales and profit growth in 2023 versus the prior year.

The percentage change in employee-related, occupancy-related, and all other operating and administrative expenses compared to the same periods in the preceding year, is outlined in the table below.

[illegible]

Employee-related expenses include: (1) payroll (which includes cash compensation, stock option expense, and profit sharing), (2) health care, (3) personnel development, and (4) social taxes.

Our employee-related expenses increased in 2023 from 2022. This was related to higher base pay and employment taxes as a result of increased FTE during the period and moderate wage inflation. This was partly offset by a decline in bonuses reflecting slower sales and profit growth versus the prior year.

The table below summarizes the percentage change in our FTE headcount at the end of the periods presented compared to the end of the prior period:

	Twelve-month Period			
	2023		2022	
Selling personnel ⁽¹⁾	4.1	%	7.9	%
Distribution/Transportation personnel	4.2	%	8.4	%
Manufacturing personnel	0.1	%	12.4	%
Organizational support personnel ⁽²⁾	8.6	%	9.5	%
Total personnel	4.4	%	8.3	%

(1)	Of our Selling Personnel, 80%-85% are attached to a specific in-market location.
(2)	Organizational support personnel consists of: (1) Sales & Growth Driver Support personnel (approximately 35% of category), which includes sourcing, purchasing, supply chain, product development, etc.; (2) Information Technology personnel (35% to 40% of category); and (3) Administrative Support personnel (25% to 30% of category), which includes human resources, Fastenal School of Business, accounting and finance, senior management, etc.

Occupancy-related expenses include: (1) building rent and depreciation, (2) building utility costs, (3) equipment related to our branches and distribution locations, and (4) industrial vending equipment and bins utilized as part of FMI services (we consider this hardware to be a logical extension of our in-market operations and classify the depreciation and repair costs as occupancy expenses).

Our occupancy-related expenses increased in 2023 from 2022. This was related to: slightly higher depreciation and expenses related to a higher installed base of our FMI suite of technologies; moderately higher costs and depreciation for the maintenance, upgrade, and installation of equipment in hub and non-hub facilities; and a slight rise in branch rents related to higher inflation and branch size.

All other operating and administrative expenses include: (1) selling-related transportation, (2) information technology (IT) expenses, (3) general corporate expenses, which consists of legal expenses, general insurance expenses, travel and marketing expenses, etc., and (4) sales of property and equipment.

Combined, all other operating and administrative expenses increased in 2023 from 2022. This was related to: higher spending on information technology; higher general insurance costs; increased spending on travel and supplies; and higher bad debt expense. These elements were only partly offset by increased contributions from our supplier collaboration programs and increased income from asset sales related to our field truck fleet.

Net Interest

Our net interest expense was \$6.7 in 2023 compared to \$13.6 in 2022. We carried lower average debt balances in 2023 relative to the prior year, with cash generated from working capital reductions enabling us to reduce outstanding revolver debt under our Credit Facility. This was only partly offset by slightly higher average rates against borrowings under our Credit Facility due to changing interest rate levels in the marketplace. We also generated higher interest income in 2023 relative to the prior year.

Income Taxes

We recorded income tax expense of \$367.0 in 2023, or 24.1% of earnings before income taxes, compared to \$353.1 in 2022, or 24.5% of earnings before income taxes. The decrease in our tax rate in 2023 is due primarily to an increase in the tax benefit associated with the exercise of stock options.

Net Earnings

Net earnings, net earnings per share (EPS), the percentage change in net earnings, and the percentage change in EPS, were as follows:

[illegible]

During 2023, net earnings per share increased, primarily due to higher sales, lower net interest expense, a lower tax rate, and lower average fully diluted shares outstanding as a result of our buying back shares in 2022.

Liquidity and Capital Resources

Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities

Net cash provided by operating activities in dollars and as a percentage of net earnings were as follows:

[illegible]

In 2023, we experienced an increase in our operating cash flow as a percentage of net earnings. The improvement in operating cash flow in 2023, as a percent of net earnings, reflects the reduced demand for working capital as a result of an improved supply chain and, to a lesser degree, slower business activity relative to the prior year.

Trade Working Capital Assets

The following table sets forth the dollar and percentage change in accounts receivable, net, inventories, and accounts payable for the period ended December 31:

[illegible]

Note – Amounts may not foot due to rounding difference.

In 2023, the annual growth in net accounts receivable is primarily attributable to three factors. First, our receivables increased as a result of growth in sales to our customers. Second, we continue to experience a shift in our mix due to relatively stronger growth from national account customers, which tend to carry longer payment terms than our non-national account customers. Third, and to a lesser degree, customers have historically delayed payments at the end of years that are economically challenged, and we saw that effect in 2023.

Our inventory balances over time will respond to business activity, though various factors produce a looser relationship to our monthly sales patterns than we tend to experience in accounts receivable. One reason for this is because it is cyclical. We source significant quantities of product from overseas, and the lead time involved in procuring these products is typically longer than the visibility we have into future monthly sales patterns. As a result, trends in our inventory will often lag trends in economic conditions. A second reason relates to product cost and the length of our supply chain. A significant proportion of our products, particularly fasteners, are sourced from Asia and transported primarily by ship and rail to our North American network for sale. This requires us to purchase a meaningful quantity of our products months in advance of those products being available for sale in our North American facilities. Product that is in transit is in our inventory but is not available for sale, which can create a lag in our ability to adjust inventory levels or costs in response to rapid changes in economic or cost conditions. A third reason for increases in our inventory balances is our growth drivers, including our FMI offerings, Onsite channel, and international expansion, all of which tend to require significant investments in inventory.

In 2023, our inventories decreased, reflecting the absence of supply chain disruptions from the prior year. Our response at the time was to deepen our inventory as a means of maintaining high service to our customers, particularly for imported inventory. Dissipation of these disruptions has allowed us to shorten our product ordering cycle. It is also likely that slower business activity reduced the level of inventory our customers required us to maintain to meet their production needs.

In 2023, the annual growth in accounts payable was primarily attributable to our product purchases increasing to support the growth in our business. The growth in our accounts payable balance is below the growth in our sales, which reflects the dissipation of supply chain disruptions from the prior year. This allowed us to shorten our product ordering cycle in 2023 versus 2022.

The approximate percentage mix of inventory stocked at our selling locations versus our distribution center and manufacturing locations was as follows at year end:

	2023	2022
Selling locations	64 %	58 %
Distribution center and manufacturing locations	36 %	42 %
Total	100 %	100 %

Lease Obligations

We have facilities, equipment, and vehicles leased under operating leases. A discussion of our lease obligations is contained in Note 8 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements.

Net Cash Used in Investing Activities

Net cash used in investing activities in dollars and as a percentage of net earnings were as follows:

	2023	2022
Net cash used	\$ 161.2	163.0
% of net earnings	14.0 %	15.0 %

Our net cash used in investing activities in 2023 was comparable to 2022 and primarily related to investments for net capital expenditures.

Property and equipment expenditures typically consist primarily of: (1) purchases related to industrial vending, (2) purchases of property and equipment related to expansion of and enhancements to distribution centers, (3) spending on software and hardware for our information processing systems, (4) the addition of fleet vehicles, (5) expansion, improvement or investment in certain owned or leased branch properties, and (6) the addition of manufacturing and warehouse equipment. Proceeds from the sales of property and equipment, typically for the planned disposition of pick-up trucks as well as distribution vehicles and trailers in the normal course of business, are netted against these purchases and additions.

Set forth below is a recap of our 2023 and 2022 net capital expenditures in dollars and as a percentage of net sales and net earnings:

	2023	2022
Manufacturing, warehouse and packaging equipment, industrial vending equipment, and facilities	\$ 83.9	97.8
Shelving and related supplies for in-market location openings and for product expansion at existing in-market locations	24.0	21.5
Data processing software and equipment	33.4	30.6
Real estate and improvements to branch locations	7.0	12.4
Vehicles	24.5	11.5
Purchases of property and equipment	172.8	173.8
Proceeds from sale of property and equipment	(12.2)	(11.4)
Net capital expenditures	160.6	162.4
<i>% of net sales</i>	2.2 %	2.3 %
<i>% of net earnings</i>	13.9 %	14.9 %

Our net capital expenditures in 2023 were comparable to 2022, though they were below our original expectations for net capital investment during the year. The slower business environment in 2023 reduced the need to purchase certain equipment at the pace originally anticipated. We also saw the timing of certain outlays pushed out and, to a lesser extent, longer lead times on certain materials. It does not reflect the cancellation of any significant initiatives, and much of the spending is expected to occur in 2024 when we see our investment in property and equipment, net of proceeds from sales, being in a range of \$225.0 to \$245.0. This increase reflects spending to complete our Utah distribution center, investments in picking technology and equipment in our hubs and branches, higher outlays for FMI hardware reflecting our higher targeted signings and a slight build in device inventory, and an increase in spending on information technology.

Net Cash Used in Financing Activities

The increase in net cash used in financing activities reflects higher dividend payments, including a supplemental payment in December of 2023, and a reduction in our outstanding debt obligations. These uses of cash were only partly offset by the absence of common stock purchases that we made in the prior year and, to a lesser degree, the exercise of stock options. Net cash used in financing activities in dollars and as a percentage of earnings were as follows:

	2023	2022
Cash dividends paid	\$ 1,016.8	711.3
<i>% of net earnings</i>	88.0 %	65.4 %
Purchases of common stock	—	237.8
<i>% of net earnings</i>	— %	21.9 %
Total returned to shareholders	\$ 1,016.8	949.1
<i>% of net earnings</i>	88.0 %	87.3 %
Proceeds from the exercise of stock options	\$ (30.1)	(9.2)
<i>% of net earnings</i>	-2.6 %	-0.8 %
Debt obligations payments (proceeds), net	\$ 295.0	(165.0)
<i>% of net earnings</i>	25.5 %	-15.2 %
Net cash used	\$ 1,281.7	774.9
<i>% of net earnings</i>	111.0 %	71.3 %

Stock Purchases

In 2023, we did not purchase any of our common stock. In 2022, we purchased 5,000,000 shares of our common stock at an average price of approximately \$47.58 per share.

We have authority to purchase up to 6,200,000 additional shares of our common stock under the July 12, 2022 authorization. This authorization does not have an expiration date.

Dividends

We declared a quarterly dividend of \$0.39 per share on January 17, 2024. In 2023, we paid aggregate annual dividends per share of \$1.78. This included \$1.40 per share in regular quarterly dividends and a \$0.38 per share special dividend paid in December 2023 reflecting what was at the time our high cash balances, as well as our favorable outlook for future cash generation. In 2022, we paid aggregate annual dividends per share of \$1.24.

Debt

In order to fund the considerable cash needed to expand our industrial vending business, expand capacity and increase the use of automation in our distribution centers, pay dividends, we have borrowed under our Credit Facility and our Master Note Agreement in recent periods.

Our borrowings under the Credit Facility and Master Note Agreement peaked during each quarter of 2023 as follows:

Peak borrowings		2023
First quarter	\$	565.0
Second quarter		470.0
Third quarter		350.0
Fourth quarter		330.0

As of December 31, 2023, we had \$0.0 outstanding under the Credit Facility and had contingent obligations from letters of credit outstanding under the Credit Facility in an aggregate face amount of \$32.7. As of December 31, 2023, we had loans outstanding under the Master Note Agreement of \$260.0. Descriptions of our Credit Facility and Master Note Agreement are contained in Note 9 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements.

Material Cash Requirements

Our material cash requirements for known contractual obligations include capital expenditures, debt, and lease obligations, each of which are discussed in more detail earlier in this section. We believe that net cash provided by operating activities will be adequate to meet our liquidity and capital needs for these items in the short-term over the next 12 months and also in the long-term beyond the next 12 months. We also have cash requirements for purchase orders and contracts for the purchase of inventory and other goods and services, which are based on current distribution needs and are fulfilled by our suppliers within short time horizons. We do not have significant agreements for the purchase of inventory or other goods or services specifying minimum order quantities. In addition, we may have liabilities for uncertain tax positions but we do not believe any of these liabilities will be material. A discussion of income taxes is contained in Note 7 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements.

Unremitted Foreign Earnings

Approximately \$213.2 of cash and cash equivalents were held by non-U.S. subsidiaries on December 31, 2023. These funds may create foreign currency translation gains or losses depending on the functional currency of the entity holding the cash. We have considered the financial requirements of each foreign subsidiary and our parent company and will continue to reinvest these funds to support our expansion activities outside the U.S., even after taking into consideration the deemed repatriation and transition tax under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. The income tax impact of repatriating cash associated with investments in foreign subsidiaries is discussed in Note 7 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements.

Effects of Inflation

In 2023, we observed easing in inflationary pressures for metals (especially steel), energy, and transportation services (especially overseas containers and shipping) resulting in stable costs for most of our product offering. As a result, we did not institute any broad pricing actions through 2023 and we saw our contribution to growth in daily sales due to price moderate throughout the year. The exception to this stability was cost deflation for imported goods, which resulted in modest price deflation specifically in our fastener product line over the course of the year. The net effect on our gross profit percentage of these trends in cost and price inflation was immaterial in 2023.

PRIOR YEAR RESULTS ENDED 2022

Results of Operations

The following table sets forth consolidated statements of earnings information (as a percentage of net sales) for the periods ended December 31:

	2022		2021
Net sales	100.0 %		100.0 %
Gross profit	46.1 %		46.2 %
Operating and administrative expenses	25.2 %		26.0 %
Operating income	20.8 %		20.3 %
Net interest expense	-0.2 %		-0.2 %
Earnings before income taxes	20.6 %		20.1 %
Note – Amounts may not foot due to rounding difference.			

Sales

The table below sets forth net sales and daily sales for the periods ended December 31, and changes in such sales from the prior period to the more recent period:

	2022		2021
Net sales	\$ 6,980.6		6,010.9
Percentage change	16.1 %		6.4 %
Business days	254		253
Daily sales	\$ 27.5		23.8
Percentage change	15.7 %		7.3 %
Daily sales impact of currency fluctuations	-0.5 %		0.6 %

The increase in net sales noted above for 2022 was due to higher unit sales of MRO and OEM supplies to traditional manufacturing and construction customers and higher pricing as further set forth below.

Higher unit sales in 2022 were a result of healthy economic activity throughout the period, though we did observe some moderation in demand as the year progressed. This moderation in demand, combined with more difficult year-over-year comparisons as the year progressed, produced daily sales growth of 18.1% in the first half of 2022, daily sales growth of 13.3% in the second half of 2022, and daily sales growth of 8.0% in December 2022. Growth was led by our manufacturing customers, with particular strength in markets involved with commodity and capital goods production. Our non-residential construction customers grew on an annual basis, but turned slightly negative in the fourth quarter. We believe the relative underperformance of this customer category reflects deliberate shifts in our branch strategy that de-emphasized walk-in and over-the-counter transactions.

We also experienced a normalization in other aspects of the operating environment in 2022, specifically the dissipation or moderation over the course of the year of product and transportation inflation, supply chain disruption, and labor market constraints. This affected two aspects of our growth during the period.

First, price contributed 540 to 570 basis points to our net sales growth in 2022. However, as inflationary pressures eased and product availability improved, the need for aggressive pricing actions declined. The absence of such actions combined with more difficult year-over-year comparisons as the year progressed resulted in the contribution from price to net sales growth moderating, from averaging 620 to 650 basis points in the first half of 2022, to averaging 450 to 480 basis points in the second half of 2022 and to averaging 350 to 380 basis points in the fourth quarter of 2022.

Second, as inflationary pressures and supply chain constraints became more predictable and manageable and then largely dissipated, it allowed our customers to shift from short-term business management to long-term strategic planning. This, in turn,

provided us more opportunities to engage with customers over our key growth drivers, including Onsite and FMI. As a result, while we did not reach the signings goals we had set out at the start of the year, we saw a meaningful increase in signings in 2022 over the prior year, and a return to near pre-pandemic levels. We signed 356 Onsites in 2022, below our goal of 375 to 400 units but above the prior year (274 signings). Similarly, we signed 20,735 FMI MEUs, below our goal of 23,000 to 25,000 MEUs but above the prior year (19,311 MEUs).

Sales by Product Line

From a product standpoint, we have three categories: fasteners, safety supplies, and other product lines, the latter of which includes eight smaller product categories, such as tools, janitorial supplies, and cutting tools. The percent of sales in the periods below were as follows:

	2022	2021
Fasteners	34.0 %	33.3 %
Safety supplies	20.8 %	21.2 %
Other product lines	45.2 %	45.5 %

The shifts in product mix in 2022 compared to 2021 largely reflect the reversal of pandemic-related activity combined with the relative growth of our more cyclical fastener line as growth in manufacturing and construction end markets accelerated as the post-pandemic North American economy recovered.

Annual Sales Changes, Sequential Trends, and End Market Performance

This section focuses on three distinct views of our business – annual sales changes by month, sequential trends, and end market performance. The first discussion regarding sales changes by month provides a good mechanical view of our business. The second discussion provides a framework for understanding the sequential trends (that is, comparing a month to the immediately preceding month, and also looking at the cumulative change from an earlier benchmark month) in our business. Finally, we believe the third discussion regarding end market performance provides insight into activities with our various types of customers.

Annual Sales Changes, by Month

During the months noted below, all of our selling locations, when combined, had a DSR change of (compared to the same month in the preceding year):

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July
2022	14.9 %	21.3 %	19.1 %	20.3 %	17.6 %	16.0 %	18.1 %
2021	6.5 %	1.5 %	7.5 %	1.2 %	-3.2 %	1.7 %	9.7 %

Sequential Trends

The table below shows the pattern to the sequential change in our daily sales. The line labeled 'Benchmark' is a historical average of our sequential daily sales change for the trailing five year average that excludes 2020. We have excluded 2020 from the average as the effects of the pandemic created unusual sequential patterns that we do not consider representative of normal trends. We believe this time frame serves to show the historical pattern and could serve as a benchmark. The '2022' and '2021' lines represent our actual sequential daily sales changes. The '22Delta' and '21Delta' lines indicate the difference between the 'Benchmark' and the actual results in the respective year. Under normal circumstances, the sequential trends shown below are directly linked to fluctuations in our end markets. Further, in any given month it is possible to get significant deviation from the benchmark.

It is important to note that these benchmarks are historical averages. In a year where demand is strong, our daily sales growth rates will tend to have more months that exceed the benchmark than fall below it. In a year where demand is weak, we will tend to have more months that fall short of the benchmark than exceed it. In both cases, there is a random element that makes it difficult to know how any single month will perform.

	Jan. ⁽¹⁾	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July
Benchmark ⁽²⁾	-0.1 %	0.8 %	3.4 %	0.1 %	2.2 %	1.9 %	-3.3 %
2022	1.7 %	3.1 %	3.6 %	-1.2 %	3.2 %	0.2 %	-1.6 %
22Delta	1.7 %	2.4 %	0.2 %	-1.3 %	1.1 %	-1.7 %	1.6 %
2021	0.9 %	-2.3 %	5.6 %	-2.2 %	5.6 %	1.6 %	-3.4 %
21Delta	1.0 %	-3.0 %	2.2 %	-2.3 %	3.4 %	-0.3 %	-0.2 %

⁽¹⁾	The January figures represent the percentage change from the previous October, whereas the remaining figures represent the percentage change from the previous month.
⁽²⁾	The benchmark for each month is the average of the previous five years for that month. As COVID-19-related surge sales made sequential averages in 2020 unrepresentative, the benchmark uses a preceding five-year average that <u>excludes</u> 2020. We also exclude the impact of the 2017 Mansco acquisition.

Note – Amounts may not foot due to rounding difference.

A graph of the sequential daily sales change patterns discussed above, starting with a base of '100' in the previous October and ending with the next October, would be as follows:

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End Market Performance

The DSR change to our manufacturing customers, when compared to the same period in the prior year, was as follows:

DSR change - manufacturing customers	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2022	23.9 %	23.1 %	22.6 %	16.0 %	21.3 %
2021	5.6 %	24.5 %	20.8 %	23.8 %	18.4 %

The DSR change to these remaining non-manufacturing customers, when compared to the same period in the prior year, was as follows:

DSR change - non-manufacturing customers	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2022	6.9 %	6.9 %	1.0 %	-0.8 %	3.5 %
2021	4.9 %	-30.7 %	-8.2 %	-2.3 %	-11.3 %

Product Performance

From a company perspective, the DSR change of fasteners, when compared to the same period in the prior year, was as follows (note: this information includes all end markets):

DSR change - fasteners	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2022	24.6 %	21.2 %	18.2 %	9.1 %	18.1 %
2021	4.0 %	28.4 %	20.2 %	24.2 %	18.8 %

From a company perspective, the DSR change of non-fasteners, when compared to the same period in the prior year, was as follows (note: this information includes all end markets):

DSR change - non-fasteners	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2022	15.0 %	16.0 %	14.4 %	11.6 %	14.2 %
2021	6.1 %	-10.8 %	5.1 %	9.6 %	1.9 %

Two product lines, safety and janitorial, accounted for approximately 44% of total non-fastener sales in 2022. The pattern in 2021, and particularly the second quarter of 2021, was affected by difficult comparisons versus the prior year, when the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a surge of safety and janitorial supplies that was not repeated to the same degree in 2022. Setting aside the unique circumstances surrounding the pandemic, our non-fastener business is not immune to the impact of industrial cycles. However, we would typically expect it to outperform our fastener business over the course of a cycle. This reflects three things: the non-fastener market is larger than the fastener market, we are under penetrated in the non-fastener market relative to the fastener market, and industrial vending lends itself to sales of non-fastener products.

Gross Profit

The gross profit percentage during each period was as follows:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2022	46.6 %	46.5 %	45.9 %	45.3 %	46.1 %
2021	45.4 %	46.5 %	46.3 %	46.5 %	46.2 %

Our gross profit, as a percentage of net sales, was 46.1% in 2022 and 46.2% in 2021, a decrease of 10 basis points. This decrease was primarily related to three factors. First, in 2022 we experienced relatively higher growth from our large and Onsite customers, which tend to have a lower gross margin percentage than the business as a whole. This was only partly offset by favorable product mix resulting from relatively higher growth from our fasteners products during the year, which tend to have a higher gross margin percentage than the business as a whole. Second, in the second half of 2022, we did not pass through pricing sufficient to offset higher costs, which resulted in an adverse impact on our gross margin percentage. Third, in the second half of 2022, we experienced lower product margins for certain categories of our other products. We believe slower demand and greater product availability in the marketplace due to supply chain normalization has put some pressure on products that tend to be sold less frequently by our business units. These factors were mostly offset by a reduction in the amount of pandemic-related write-downs and narrower losses to operate our truck fleet related to our strong freight revenue growth leveraging relatively stable fleet costs.

Operating and Administrative Expenses

Our operating and administrative expenses, as a percentage of net sales, decreased to 25.2% in 2022 from 26.0% in 2021. This reflected a decline, as a percentage of net sales, in employee- and occupancy-related expenses.

The percentage change in employee-related, occupancy-related, and all other operating and administrative expenses compared to the same periods in the preceding year, is outlined in the table below.

	Approximate Percentage of Total Operating and Administrative Expenses	Twelve-month Period			
		2022		2021	
Employee-related expenses	70% to 75%	14.7	%	11.6	%
Occupancy-related expenses	15% to 20%	2.6	%	3.9	%
All other operating and administrative expenses	10% to 15%	18.5	%	4.9	%

Our employee-related expenses increased in 2022 from 2021. This was related to: higher base pay and employment taxes from higher FTE during the period and moderate wage inflation; an increase in bonuses and commissions resulting from improved sales and profitability; and an increase in our profit sharing contribution. This was partly offset by a decline in health insurance costs, as the use of medical services by employees normalized following the post-pandemic catch-up activity in 2021.

The table below summarizes the percentage change in our FTE headcount at the end of the periods presented compared to the end of the prior period:

	Twelve-month Period			
	2022		2021	
Selling personnel ⁽¹⁾	7.9	%	1.7	%
Distribution/Transportation personnel	8.4	%	5.8	%
Manufacturing personnel	12.4	%	2.0	%
Organizational support personnel ⁽²⁾	9.5	%	7.4	%
Total personnel	8.3	%	2.8	%

(1)	Of our Selling Personnel, 80%-85% are attached to a specific in-market location.
(2)	Organizational support personnel consists of: (1) Sales & Growth Driver Support personnel (approximately 35% of category), which includes sourcing, purchasing, supply chain, product development, etc.; (2) Information Technology personnel (35% to 40% of category); and (3) Administrative Support personnel (25% to 30% of category), which includes human resources, Fastenal School of Business, accounting and finance, senior management, etc.

Our occupancy-related expenses increased in 2022 from 2021. This was related to: higher costs and depreciation for the maintenance, upgrade and installation of equipment in hub and non-hub facilities; slightly higher depreciation related to a higher installed base of our FMI suite of technologies; and slightly higher facility costs, with higher utility costs being only partly offset by lower rents stemming from branch consolidations.

Combined, all other operating and administrative expenses increased in 2022 from 2021. This was related to: higher costs related to selling-related transportation, including higher fuel costs; higher spending on information technology; higher spending on travel, meals, and supplies; and higher general insurance expense. These elements were only partly offset by lower bad debt expense.

Net Interest Expense

Our net interest expense was \$13.6 in 2022 compared to \$9.6 in 2021. We carried higher average debt balances in 2022 relative to the prior year, and specifically higher balances of variable rate credit facility debt, as a result of high sustained working capital

needs and an increase in share buybacks. We also incurred higher average interest rates during the year due to changes in interest levels in the marketplace.

Income Taxes

We recorded income tax expense of \$353.1 in 2022, or 24.5% of earnings before income taxes, compared to \$282.8 in 2021, or 23.4% of earnings before income taxes. The increase in our tax rate in 2022 is due primarily to reduced benefits associated with the exercise of stock options, an increase in state income tax expense, and an absence of certain favorable reserve adjustments that benefited 2021.

Net Earnings

Net earnings, net earnings per share (EPS), the percentage change in net earnings, and the percentage change in EPS, were as follows:

[illegible]

During 2022, net earnings increased, primarily due to higher sales and our ability in the period to grow costs more slowly than we grew sales. This was only slightly offset by a higher income tax rate.

Liquidity and Capital Resources

Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities

Net cash provided by operating activities in dollars and as a percentage of net earnings were as follows:

[illegible]

In 2022, we experienced a slight increase in our operating cash flow as a percentage of net earnings, though this reflects a significant increase in our conversion percentage in the second half of 2022 which more than offset a significant decline in our conversion percentage in the first half of 2022. Taken as a whole, while our working capital needs remained elevated through 2022, they declined slightly on a year-over-year basis whereas our earnings increased on a year-over-year basis.

Trade Working Capital Assets

The following table sets forth the dollar and percentage change in accounts receivable, net, inventories, and accounts payable for the period ended December 31:

[illegible]

Note – Amounts may not foot due to rounding difference.

In 2022, the annual growth in net accounts receivable reflected several factors. First, our receivables are expanding due to improved business activity and resulting growth in our customers' sales. Second, we continue to experience a shift in our customer mix due to relatively stronger sales growth from national account customers, which tend to be larger and carry longer payment terms than our non-national account customers.

In 2022, our inventories increased, reflecting significant inflation in the value of stocked parts, the addition of inventory to support the growth of our manufacturing and construction customers as they expand production to meet improved business activity, deeper inventory stocking due to disruption in supply chains, and our efforts to sustain higher internal fulfillment rates.

In 2022, the annual growth in accounts payable reflected product purchases increasing to support the improvement in business activity at our manufacturing and construction customers.

The approximate percentage mix of inventory stocked at our selling locations versus our distribution center and manufacturing locations was as follows at year end:

	2022	2021
Selling locations	58 %	57 %
Distribution center and manufacturing locations	42 %	43 %
Total	100 %	100 %

Net Cash Used in Investing Activities

Net cash used in investing activities in dollars and as a percentage of net earnings were as follows:

	2022	2021
Net cash used	\$ 163.0	148.5
<i>% of net earnings</i>	15.0 %	16.1 %

The changes in net cash used in investing activities in 2022 was primarily related to higher net capital expenditures.

Set forth below is a recap of our 2022 and 2021 net capital expenditures in dollars and as a percentage of net sales and net earnings:

	2022	2021
Manufacturing, warehouse and packaging equipment, industrial vending equipment, and facilities	\$ 97.8	70.3
Shelving and related supplies for in-market location openings and for product expansion at existing in-market locations	21.5	11.0
Data processing software and equipment	30.6	28.0
Real estate and improvements to branch locations	12.4	37.9
Vehicles	11.5	9.4
Purchases of property and equipment	173.8	156.6
Proceeds from sale of property and equipment	(11.4)	(8.4)
Net capital expenditures	162.4	148.2
<i>% of net sales</i>	2.3 %	2.5 %
<i>% of net earnings</i>	14.9 %	16.0 %

Our net capital expenditures increased in 2022, when compared to 2021. The most significant area driving this increase was higher spending on FMI equipment. We had slightly higher property spending, which reflected significant investments in automation and upgrades at our hubs mostly offset by lower spending on a new building in downtown Winona, which was completed in 2021. We had only modest increases related to our vehicle fleet, manufacturing operations, and information technology. Net capital expenditures in 2022 were below our anticipated range of \$170.0 to \$190.0 due to certain equipment and project delays related to hub projects.

Net Cash Used in Financing Activities

The fluctuations in net cash used in financing activities were due to changes in the level of our dividend payments and in the level of common stock purchases. These amounts were partially offset by the exercise of stock options and net payments (proceeds) from debt obligations. Net cash used in financing activities in dollars and as a percentage of earnings were as follows:

		2022		2021
Cash dividends paid	\$	711.3		643.7
% of net earnings		65.4 %		69.6 %
Purchases of common stock		237.8		—
% of net earnings		21.9 %		— %
Total returned to shareholders	\$	949.1		643.7
% of net earnings		87.3 %		69.6 %
Proceeds from the exercise of stock options	\$	(9.2)		(31.6)
% of net earnings		-0.8 %		-3.4 %
Debt obligations (proceeds) payments, net	\$	(165.0)		15.0
% of net earnings		-15.2 %		1.6 %
Net cash used	\$	774.9		627.1
% of net earnings		71.3 %		67.8 %

Stock Purchases

In 2022, we purchased 5,000,000 shares of our common stock at an average price of approximately \$47.58 per share. In 2021, we did not purchase any shares of our common stock.

We had authority to purchase up to 6,200,000 additional shares of our common stock under the July 12, 2022 authorization. This authorization did not have an expiration date.

Dividends

We declared a quarterly dividend of \$0.35 per share on January 18, 2023. In 2022, we paid aggregate annual dividends per share of \$1.24. In 2021, we paid aggregate annual dividends per share of \$1.12.

Debt

Our borrowings under the Credit Facility and Master Note Agreement peaked during each quarter of 2022 as follows:

		2022
Peak borrowings		
First quarter	\$	525.0
Second quarter		595.0
Third quarter		650.0
Fourth quarter		710.0

Effects of Inflation

In 2022, we began to observe easing in inflationary pressures for metals (especially steel), energy, and transportation services (especially overseas containers and shipping). However, this did not translate into a reduction in inflationary pressures on our financial results for two reasons. First, inflationary pressures accelerated through 2021, and many periods in 2022 were comparing to lower cost levels in the preceding year. Second, we have a long supply chain for many products, and it can take several quarters from when inflationary pressures begin to recede for the effect to impact our earnings results. In 2022, we increased prices, sought alternative sources for products and services, and consolidated spend for products and services as a means of mitigating inflation. However, higher product and transportation costs did have a slightly negative effect on our gross margin percentage for the full year.

Critical Accounting Estimates

In preparing our consolidated financial statements in conformity with U.S. GAAP, we must make decisions that impact the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses, and the related disclosures. Such decisions include the selection of the appropriate accounting principles to be applied and the assumptions on which to base accounting estimates. In reaching such decisions, we apply judgments based on our understanding and analysis of relevant circumstances, historical experience, and actuarial valuations. Actual amounts could differ from those estimated at the time the consolidated financial statements are prepared.

Our most significant accounting policies, including Revenue Recognition and Inventories, are described in Note 1 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements. Some of those significant accounting policies require us to make difficult, subjective, or complex judgments, or estimates. An accounting estimate is considered to be critical if it meets both of the following criteria: (i) the estimate requires assumptions about matters that are highly uncertain at the time the accounting estimate is made, and (ii) different estimates reasonably could have been used, or changes in the estimate that are reasonably likely to occur from period to period may have a material impact on the presentation of our financial condition, changes in financial condition, or results of operations. Our most critical accounting estimates include the following:

Allowance for Credit Losses – This reserve is for accounts receivable balances that are potentially uncollectible. The allowance for credit losses is based on an income statement approach which adjusts the ending balance sheet to take into consideration expected losses over the contractual lives of the receivables, considering factors such as historical data as a basis for future expected losses. If business or economic conditions change, our estimates and assumptions may be adjusted as deemed appropriate. Historically, actual required reserves have not varied materially from estimated amounts.

Inventory valuation – Adjustments to the valuation of inventory are based on an analysis of inventory trends including reviews of inventory levels, sales information, and the on-hand quantities relative to the sales history for the product. Our methodology for estimating whether adjustments are necessary is continually evaluated for factors including significant changes in product demand, market conditions, condition of the inventory, or liquidation value. If business or economic conditions change, our estimates and assumptions may be adjusted as deemed appropriate. Historically, actual required adjustments have not varied materially from estimated amounts.

General insurance reserves – These reserves are for general claims related to workers' compensation, property and casualty losses, and other general liability self-insured losses. The reserves are based on an analysis of reported claims and claims incurred but not yet reported related to our historical claim trends. We perform ongoing reviews of our insured and uninsured risks and use this information to establish appropriate reserve levels. We analyze historical trends, claims experience, and loss development patterns to ensure the appropriate loss development factors are applied to the incurred costs associated with the claims made. Historically, actual required reserves have not varied materially from estimated amounts.

Recently Issued and Adopted Accounting Pronouncements

A description of recently issued and adopted accounting pronouncements, if any, is contained in Note 1 of the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements.

ITEM 7A. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DISCLOSURES ABOUT MARKET RISK

We are exposed to certain market risks from changes in foreign currency exchange rates, commodity steel pricing, commodity energy prices, and interest rates. Changes in these factors cause fluctuations in our earnings and cash flows. We evaluate and manage exposure to these market risks as follows:

Import shipping costs – We import a significant quantity of our products, particularly fasteners and private label products, from foreign suppliers, primarily in Asia. As a result, we incur costs related to shipping charges, duties, harbor fees, and sundry other expenses involved in the movement of product for sale in North America and our other global locations. These costs are embedded in our product values, and significant fluctuations can affect our product gross profit depending on what mitigating actions might be taken. The most significant contributor to these fluctuations is the cost of overseas shipping containers. During 2023, the cost of overseas shipping containers was below the prior year. We estimate the effect on our net earnings related to import shipping costs was \$23.0 to \$28.0 in 2023.

Commodity steel prices – We buy and sell various types of steel products; these products consist primarily of different types of fasteners and related hardware. We are exposed to the impacts of commodity steel pricing and our related ability to pass through the impacts to our end customers. During 2023, the price of steel as reflected in many market indexes has been below prior year levels, though in most cases price levels have stabilized in recent periods and the rate of decline is moderating. Due to our long supply chain, changes in the cost of steel can take a number of quarters to be reflected in our financial results. Further, the cost of the raw material is generally a small part of the total value of the steel products that we sell, which can also diminish the impact of cost changes for the raw material. We estimate the effect on our net earnings related to commodity steel prices was immaterial in 2023.

Commodity energy prices – We have market risk for changes in prices of oil, gasoline, diesel fuel, natural gas, and electricity. As reflected in many market indexes, energy prices during 2023 were generally below prior year levels, which contributed to lower costs for fuel consumed in our vehicles and lower utility costs at our facilities. Total direct fuel consumption is a relatively minor cost to the company and, as a result, we estimate the effect on our net earnings related to commodity energy prices was immaterial in 2023.

Fossil fuels are also often a key feedstock for chemicals and plastics that comprise a key raw material for many products that we sell. During 2023, prices for fossil fuels were generally below prior year levels. The cost of the raw material is generally a small part of the total value of the products that we sell, which can diminish the impact of cost changes for the raw material. As a result, we estimate the effect on our net earnings related to materials for which fossil fuels are a feedstock was immaterial in 2023.

Foreign currency exchange rates – Foreign currency fluctuations can affect our net investments, our operations in countries other than the U.S., and earnings denominated in foreign currencies. Historically, our primary exchange rate exposure has been with the Canadian dollar against the United States dollar. Our estimated net earnings exposure for foreign currency exchange rates was not material at year end. We have not historically hedged our foreign currency risk given that exposure to date has not been material. We estimate the effect on our sales and net earnings related to changes in foreign exchange rates was \$18.7 and immaterial, respectively, in 2023.

Interest rates - Loans under our Credit Facility bear interest at floating rates. As a result, changes in such rates can affect our operating results and liquidity to the extent we do not have effective interest rate swap arrangements in place. We have not historically used interest rate swap arrangements to hedge the variable interest rates under our Credit Facility. A one percentage point increase to our floating rate debt in 2023 would have resulted in approximately \$0.6 of additional interest expense. A description of our Credit Facility is contained in Note 9 of the Notes to Condensed Consolidated Financial Statements.

ITEM 8. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTARY DATA

REPORT OF INDEPENDENT REGISTERED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM

To the Stockholders and Board of Directors

Fastenal Company:

Opinions on the Consolidated Financial Statements and Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

We have audited the accompanying consolidated balance sheets of Fastenal Company and subsidiaries (the Company) as of December 31, 2023 and 2022, the related consolidated statements of earnings, comprehensive income, stockholders' equity, and cash flows for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2023, and the related notes and financial statement schedule II — valuation and qualifying accounts (collectively, the consolidated financial statements). We also have audited the Company's internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2023, based on criteria established in *Internal Control – Integrated Framework (2013)* issued by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission.

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Company as of December 31, 2023 and 2022, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2023, in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles. Also in our opinion, the Company maintained, in all material respects, effective internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2023 based on criteria established in *Internal Control – Integrated Framework (2013)* issued by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission.

Basis for Opinions

The Company's management is responsible for these consolidated financial statements, for maintaining effective internal control over financial reporting, and for its assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting, included in the accompanying Management's Annual Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the Company's consolidated financial statements and an opinion on the Company's internal control over financial reporting based on our audits. We are a public accounting firm registered with the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (United States) (PCAOB) and are required to be independent with respect to the Company in accordance with the U.S. federal securities laws and the applicable rules and regulations of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the PCAOB.

We conducted our audits in accordance with the standards of the PCAOB. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audits to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the consolidated financial statements are free of material misstatement, whether due to error or fraud, and whether effective internal control over financial reporting was maintained in all material respects.

Our audits of the consolidated financial statements included performing procedures to assess the risks of material misstatement of the consolidated financial statements, whether due to error or fraud, and performing procedures that respond to those risks. Such procedures included examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the consolidated financial statements. Our audits also included evaluating the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the consolidated financial statements. Our audit of internal control over financial reporting included obtaining an understanding of internal control over financial reporting, assessing the risk that a material weakness exists, and testing and evaluating the design and operating effectiveness of internal control based on the assessed risk. Our audits also included performing such other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinions.

Definition and Limitations of Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

A company's internal control over financial reporting is a process designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding the reliability of financial reporting and the preparation of financial statements for external purposes in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. A company's internal control over financial reporting includes those policies and procedures that (1) pertain to the maintenance of records that, in reasonable detail, accurately and fairly reflect the transactions and dispositions of the assets of the company; (2) provide reasonable assurance that transactions are recorded as necessary to permit preparation of financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and that receipts and expenditures of the company are being made only in accordance with authorizations of management and directors of the company; and (3) provide reasonable assurance regarding prevention or timely detection of unauthorized acquisition, use, or disposition of the company's assets that could have a material effect on the financial statements.

Because of its inherent limitations, internal control over financial reporting may not prevent or detect misstatements. Also, projections of any evaluation of effectiveness to future periods are subject to the risk that controls may become inadequate because of changes in conditions, or that the degree of compliance with the policies or procedures may deteriorate.

Critical Audit Matter

The critical audit matter communicated below is a matter arising from the current period audit of the consolidated financial statements that was communicated or required to be communicated to the audit committee and that: (1) relates to accounts or disclosures that are material to the consolidated financial statements and (2) involved our especially challenging, subjective, or complex judgments. The communication of a critical audit matter does not alter in any way our opinion on the consolidated financial statements, taken as a whole, and we are not, by communicating the critical audit matter below, providing a separate opinion on the critical audit matter or on the accounts or disclosures to which it relates.

Sufficiency of audit evidence over inventory quantities at in-market locations

As disclosed in the consolidated balance sheet, the Company held \$1,522.7 million of inventory, the majority of which was held at 3,419 in-market locations, as of December 31, 2023. The Company's processes to track and determine consolidated inventory relies on a perpetual inventory system which involves the interaction of information technology (IT) systems.

We identified the evaluation of the sufficiency of audit evidence obtained related to the quantities of inventory at in-market locations as a critical audit matter. Evaluating the sufficiency of audit evidence over quantities of inventory at in-market locations required challenging auditor judgment to assess the number of in-market locations visited and included the involvement of IT professionals with specialized skills and knowledge due to the interaction of IT systems that track physical inventory quantities by location.

The following are the primary procedures we performed to address this critical audit matter. We evaluated the design and tested the operating effectiveness of certain internal controls related to the critical audit matter. This included IT application controls, as well as certain controls related to access to programs and data, program changes, and computer operations. It also included certain controls related to the Company's physical inventory cycle counts. We involved IT professionals with specialized skills and knowledge, who assisted in testing certain IT controls, inclusive of the interface of IT systems, which support the Company's perpetual inventory system. We applied auditor judgment in the determination of the locations to test the Company's inventory quantities by evaluating:

- Homogeneity of the locations;
- Historical inventory locations we have visited and results of prior physical counts;
- Inventory dollars by location; and
- The Company's inventory cycle count results, including the results of monitoring and compliance with cycle count program by in-market location.

We tested the existence and completeness of inventory by counting inventory quantities on a sample basis through in-market location visits during the year to evaluate the Company's perpetual inventory records. In addition, we evaluated the overall sufficiency of audit evidence obtained over the quantities of inventory at in-market locations.

/s/ KPMG LLP

We have served as the Company's auditor since 1987.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

February 6, 2024

FASTENAL COMPANY AND SUBSIDIARIES

Consolidated Balance Sheets
(Amounts in millions except share information)

[illegible]

See accompanying Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements.

FASTENAL COMPANY AND SUBSIDIARIES

Consolidated Statements of Earnings
(Amounts in millions except earnings per share)
For the year ended December 31

[illegible]

See accompanying Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements.

FASTENAL COMPANY AND SUBSIDIARIES
Consolidated Statements of Comprehensive Income
(Amounts in millions)
For the year ended December 31

		2023		2022		2021
Net earnings	\$	1,155.0		1,086.9		925.0
Other comprehensive income (loss), net of tax:						
Foreign currency translation adjustments (net of tax of \$0.0 in 2023, 2022, and 2021)		10.0		(34.1)		(9.5)
Comprehensive income	\$	1,165.0		1,052.8		915.5

See accompanying Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements.

FASTENAL COMPANY AND SUBSIDIARIES

Consolidated Statements of Stockholders' Equity
(Amounts in millions except per share information)

[illegible]

See accompanying Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements.

FASTENAL COMPANY AND SUBSIDIARIES

Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows
(Amounts in millions)
For the year ended December 31

[illegible]

Fastenal Company and Subsidiaries
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements

Note 1. Business Overview and Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Business Overview

Fastenal is a leader in the wholesale distribution of industrial and construction supplies. We distribute these supplies through a network of branches and Onsite locations. Collectively, we refer to our branches and Onsite locations as in-market locations. We have more than 3,400 in-market locations located primarily in North America.

Principles of Consolidation

The consolidated financial statements include the accounts of Fastenal Company and its subsidiaries (collectively, referred to as Fastenal or by terms such as we, our, or us). All material intercompany balances and transactions have been eliminated in consolidation.

Revenue Recognition

Net sales include products and shipping and handling charges, net of estimates for product returns and any related sales incentives. Revenue is measured as the amount of consideration we expect to receive in exchange for transferring products. All revenue is recognized when or as we satisfy our performance obligations under the contract. We recognize revenue by transferring control of the promised products to the customer, with the majority of revenue recognized at the point in time the customer obtains control of the products. We recognize revenue for shipping and handling charges at the time the products are delivered to or picked up by the customer. We estimate product returns based on historical return rates. Using probability assessments, which are based on known inputs at year-end, we estimate sales incentives expected to be paid over the term of the contract. The majority of our contracts have a single performance obligation and are short term in nature. Sales taxes and value added taxes in foreign jurisdictions that are collected from customers and remitted to governmental authorities are accounted for on a net basis and therefore are excluded from net sales.

Accounts Receivable

Credit is extended based upon an evaluation of the customer's financial condition. Accounts receivable are stated at their estimated net realizable value. The allowance for credit losses is based on an income statement approach which adjusts the ending balance sheet to take into consideration expected losses over the contractual lives of the receivables, considering factors such as historical data as a basis for future expected losses.

Foreign Currency Translation and Transactions

The functional currency of our foreign operations is typically the applicable local currency. The functional currency is translated into United States dollars for balance sheet accounts, except retained earnings, using current exchange rates as of the balance sheet date, for retained earnings at historical exchange rates, and for revenue and expense accounts using a weighted average exchange rate during the applicable period. The translation adjustments are deferred as a separate component of stockholders' equity captioned accumulated other comprehensive income (loss). Gains or losses resulting from transactions denominated in foreign currencies are included in cost of sales or operating and administrative expenses.

Cash and Cash Equivalents

We consider all highly liquid investments purchased with original maturities of three months or less to be cash equivalents.

Inventories

Inventories, consisting of finished goods merchandise held for resale, are stated at the lower of cost (first in, first out method) or net realizable value. We record valuation adjustments for excess, slow-moving, and obsolete inventory that are equal to the difference between the cost and estimated net realizable value for that inventory. These estimates are based on a review and comparison of the current inventory levels to projected and historical sales of inventory.

Property and Equipment

Property and equipment are stated at cost. Depreciation on property and equipment is provided for using the straight-line method over the anticipated economic useful lives of the related property.

Leases

We determine if an arrangement contains a lease at inception. Operating leases are included in our operating lease right-of-use (ROU) assets, the current portion of operating lease liabilities, and the operating lease liabilities in our Consolidated Balance Sheets.

Fastenal Company and Subsidiaries
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)

The ROU assets represent our right to control the use of an underlying asset for the lease term, and lease liabilities represent our obligation to make lease payments arising from the lease. Operating lease ROU assets and lease liabilities are recognized at the commencement date based on the present value of lease payments over the lease term. The operating lease ROU assets also include any prepaid lease payments made and exclude lease incentives. Lease expense is recognized on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Many of our leases include both lease (e.g., fixed payments including rent, taxes, and insurance costs) and non-lease components (e.g., common-area or other maintenance costs) which are accounted for as a single lease component as we have elected the practical expedient to group lease and non-lease components for all leases. Our pick-up truck leases typically have a non-cancelable lease term of less than one year and therefore, we have elected the practical expedient to exclude these short-term leases from our ROU assets and lease liabilities.

Most leases include one or more options to renew. The exercise of lease renewal options is typically at our sole discretion; therefore, the majority of renewals to extend the lease terms are not included in our ROU assets and lease liabilities as they are not reasonably certain of exercise. We regularly evaluate the renewal options and when they are reasonably certain of exercise, we include the renewal period in our lease term.

As most of our leases do not provide an implicit rate, we use our incremental borrowing rate based on the information available at the lease commencement date in determining the present value of the lease payments. We have a centrally managed treasury function; therefore, based on the applicable lease terms and the current economic environment, we apply a portfolio approach for determining the incremental borrowing rate.

Long-Lived Assets

Long-lived assets consist of net property and equipment, operating lease right-of-use assets, prepaid deposits, goodwill, and definite-lived intangible assets, and are reviewed for impairment whenever an event or change in circumstance indicates that the carrying amount of the asset may not be recoverable. If circumstances require a long-lived asset or asset group be tested for possible impairment, we first compare undiscounted cash flows expected to be generated by the asset or asset group to its carrying value. If the carrying value of the long-lived asset or asset group is not recoverable on an undiscounted cash flow basis, an impairment is recognized to the extent the carrying value exceeds its fair value. Fair value is determined through various valuation techniques including discounted cash flow models, quoted market values, and third-party independent appraisals, as necessary. There were no impairments recorded during any of the three years reported in these consolidated financial statements.

Goodwill represents the excess of the purchase price over the fair value of net assets acquired. Goodwill is reviewed for impairment annually. The identifiable intangible assets are amortized on a straight-line basis over their estimated life.

Accounting Estimates

The preparation of the consolidated financial statements in conformity with U.S. GAAP requires us to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, revenues and expenses, and the disclosure of contingent liabilities. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Insurance Reserves

We are self-insured for certain losses relating to workers' compensation, automobile, health, and general liability costs. Specific stop-loss coverage is provided for catastrophic claims in order to limit exposure to significant claims. Self-insurance liabilities are based on our estimate of reported claims and claims incurred but not yet reported.

Product Warranties

We offer a basic limited warranty for certain of our products. The specific terms and conditions of those warranties vary depending upon the product sold. We typically recoup these costs through product warranties we hold with the original equipment manufacturers. Our warranty expense has historically been minimal.

Stock-Based Compensation

We estimate the fair value of stock options as of the date of the grant using a Black-Scholes valuation model. Stock-based compensation expense equal to the grant date fair value is recognized on a straight-line basis over the vesting period. Our stock-based compensation expense is recorded in operating and administrative expenses.

Fastenal Company and Subsidiaries
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)

Income Taxes

We account for income taxes under the asset and liability method. Under this method, deferred tax assets and liabilities are recognized for the future tax consequences attributable to differences between the financial statement carrying amounts of existing assets and liabilities and their respective tax bases. Deferred tax assets and liabilities are measured using enacted tax rates expected to apply to taxable income in the years in which those temporary differences are expected to be recovered or settled. The effect on deferred tax assets and liabilities of a change in tax rates is recognized in income in the period that includes the enactment date.

We recognize the effect of income tax positions only if those positions are more likely than not to be sustained. Recognized income tax positions are measured at the largest amount that is greater than 50% likely of being realized. Changes in recognition or measurement are reflected in the period in which the change in judgment occurs. We record interest and penalties related to unrecognized tax benefits in income tax expense.

Earnings Per Share

Basic net earnings per share is calculated using net earnings available to common stockholders divided by the weighted average number of shares of common stock outstanding during the year. Diluted net earnings per share is similar to basic net earnings per share except that the weighted average number of shares of common stock outstanding includes the incremental shares assumed to be issued upon the exercise of stock options considered to be 'in-the-money' (i.e., when the market price of our stock is greater than the exercise price of our outstanding stock options).

Segment Reporting

We have determined that for our North American regions we meet the aggregation criteria outlined in the accounting standards as these regions have similar: (1) economic characteristics, (2) products and services, (3) customers, (4) distribution channels, and (5) regulatory environments. Considering our operations outside of North America represent less than 10% of our net sales, net earnings, or assets, we report as a single business segment.

Recently Issued Accounting Pronouncements

In November 2023, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) issued Accounting Standards Update (ASU) 2023-07, *Segment Reporting (Topic 280): Improvements to Reportable Segment Disclosures*, which enhances reporting requirements under Topic 280. The enhanced disclosure requirements include: title and position of the Chief Operating Decision Maker (CODM), significant segment expenses provided to the CODM, extending certain annual disclosures to interim periods, clarifying single reportable segment entities must apply ASC 280 in its entirety, and permitting more than one measure of segment profit or loss to be reported under certain circumstances. This change is effective for fiscal years beginning after December 15, 2023 and interim periods beginning after December 15, 2024. This change will apply retrospectively to all periods presented.

In December 2023, the FASB issued ASU 2023-09, *Improvements to Income Tax Disclosures (Topic 740)*, which establishes new income tax disclosure requirements in addition to modifying and eliminating certain existing requirements. The new guidance requires consistent categorization and greater disaggregation of information in the rate reconciliation, as well as further disaggregation of income taxes paid. This change is effective for annual periods beginning after December 15, 2024. This change will apply on a prospective basis to annual financial statements for periods beginning after the effective date. However, retrospective application in all prior periods presented is permitted.

Fastenal Company and Subsidiaries
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)

Note 2. Revenue

Disaggregation of Revenue

The accounting policies of the operations in the various geographic areas are the same as those described in the summary of significant accounting policies. Revenues are attributed to countries based on the selling location from which the sale occurred. During 2023, 2022, and 2021, no single customer represented 5% or more of our consolidated net sales.

Our revenues related to the following geographic areas were as follows for the periods ended December 31:

	Twelve-month Period			
	2023	2022	2021	
United States	\$ 6,139.8	5,867.1	5,033.3	
% of revenues	83.6 %	84.0 %	83.7 %	
Canada and Mexico	981.9	884.4	749.0	
% of revenues	13.4 %	12.7 %	12.5 %	
North America	7,121.7	6,751.5	5,782.3	
% of revenues	97.0 %	96.7 %	96.2 %	
All other foreign countries	225.0	229.1	228.6	
% of revenues	3.0 %	3.3 %	3.8 %	
Total revenues	\$ 7,346.7	6,980.6	6,010.9	

The percentages of our sales by end market were as follows for the periods ended December 31:

	Twelve-month Period			
	2023	2022	2021	
Manufacturing	74.3 %	72.2 %	68.9 %	
Non-residential construction	9.1 %	10.3 %	11.1 %	
Other	16.6 %	17.5 %	20.0 %	
	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	

The percentages of our sales by product line were as follows for the periods ended December 31:

Fastenal Company and Subsidiaries
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)

Note 3. Long-Lived Assets

The accounting policies of the operations in the various geographic areas are the same as those described in the summary of significant accounting policies. Long-lived assets consist of net property and equipment, operating lease right-of-use assets, prepaid deposits, goodwill, and definite-lived intangible assets.

Property and equipment at year end consisted of the following:

	Depreciable Life in Years	2023	2022
Land	—	\$ 67.2	67.5
Buildings and improvements	15 to 40	525.1	509.2
Automated distribution and warehouse equipment	5 to 30	271.7	269.2
Shelving, industrial vending, and equipment	3 to 10	1,366.5	1,283.8
Transportation equipment	3 to 5	98.3	85.7
Construction in progress	—	107.8	96.0
		2,436.6	2,311.4
Less accumulated depreciation		(1,425.5)	(1,301.4)
Property and equipment, net		\$ 1,011.1	1,010.0

Our long-lived assets related to the following geographic areas at year end:

	2023	2022
United States	\$ 1,314.2	1,303.4
Canada and Mexico	87.2	80.4
North America	1,401.4	1,383.8
All other foreign countries	40.6	40.0
Total long-lived assets	\$ 1,442.0	1,423.8

Note 4. Accrued Expenses

Accrued expenses at year end consisted of the following:

	2023	2022
Employee payroll and related taxes	\$ 15.2	12.8
Employee bonuses and commissions	32.3	32.7
Profit sharing contribution	23.1	22.1
Insurance reserves	40.1	40.4
Indirect taxes	36.1	40.3
Customer promotions and marketing	63.3	60.6
Other	30.9	32.2
Accrued expenses	\$ 241.0	241.1

Fastenal Company and Subsidiaries
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)

Note 5. Stockholders' Equity

Dividends

On January 17, 2024, our board of directors declared a quarterly dividend of \$0.39 per share of common stock to be paid in cash on February 29, 2024 to shareholders of record at the close of business on February 1, 2024. In 2023, we paid aggregate annual cash dividends per share of \$1.78, which included a special, one-time dividend of \$0.38 per share. We paid aggregate annual cash dividends per share of \$1.24 and \$1.12 in 2022 and 2021, respectively.

Stock Options

Effective January 2, 2024, the compensation committee of our board of directors granted to our employees options to purchase a total of 764,195 shares of our common stock at an exercise price of \$64.00 per share. On the same date, certain of our non-employee directors received options to acquire a total of 50,717 shares of our common stock at an exercise price of \$64.00 per share. The closing stock price on the effective date of the grants was \$63.55 per share.

The following tables summarize the details of options granted under our stock option plans that were still outstanding as of December 31, 2023, and the assumptions used to value those grants. All such grants were effective at the close of business on the date of grant.

Date of Grant	Options Granted	Option Exercise Price	Closing Stock Price on Date of Grant	December 31, 2023	
				Options Outstanding	Options Exercisable
January 3, 2023	1,071,943	\$ 48.00	\$ 47.400	989,048	70,562
January 3, 2022	713,438	\$ 62.00	\$ 61.980	611,848	53,355
January 4, 2021	741,510	\$ 48.00	\$ 47.650	591,206	211,323
January 2, 2020	902,263	\$ 38.00	\$ 37.230	658,884	322,242
January 2, 2019	1,316,924	\$ 26.00	\$ 25.705	758,611	451,061
January 2, 2018	1,087,936	\$ 27.50	\$ 27.270	541,026	419,460
January 3, 2017	1,529,578	\$ 23.50	\$ 23.475	523,828	426,290
April 19, 2016	1,690,880	\$ 23.00	\$ 22.870	245,075	188,177
April 21, 2015	1,786,440	\$ 21.00	\$ 20.630	54,552	54,552
Total	10,840,912			4,974,078	2,197,022

Date of Grant	Risk-free Interest Rate	Expected Life of Option in Years	Expected Dividend Yield	Expected Stock Volatility	Estimated Fair Value of Stock Option
January 3, 2023	4.0%	5.00	2.6%	29.58 %	\$ 11.62
January 3, 2022	1.3%	5.00	1.7%	28.52 %	\$ 13.68
January 4, 2021	0.4%	5.00	2.0%	29.17 %	\$ 9.57
January 2, 2020	1.7%	5.00	2.4%	25.70 %	\$ 6.81
January 2, 2019	2.5%	5.00	2.9%	23.96 %	\$ 4.40
January 2, 2018	2.2%	5.00	2.3%	23.45 %	\$ 5.02
January 3, 2017	1.9%	5.00	2.6%	24.49 %	\$ 4.20
April 19, 2016	1.3%	5.00	2.6%	26.34 %	\$ 4.09
April 21, 2015	1.3%	5.00	2.7%	26.84 %	\$ 3.68

All of the options in the tables above vest and become exercisable over a period of up to eight years. Generally, each option will terminate approximately 10 years after the grant date.

The fair value of each share-based option is estimated on the date of grant using a Black-Scholes valuation method that uses the assumptions listed above. The risk-free interest rate is based on the U.S. Treasury rate over the expected life of the option at the time of grant. The expected life is the average length of time over which we expect the employee groups will exercise their options, net of forfeitures, which is based on historical experience with similar grants. The dividend yield is estimated over the expected life of the option based on our current dividend payout, historical dividends paid, and expected future cash dividends. Expected stock volatilities are based on the movement of our stock price over the most recent historical period equivalent to the expected life of the option.

Fastenal Company and Subsidiaries
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)

A summary of activities under our stock option plans consisted of the following:

	Options Outstanding	Exercise Price ⁽¹⁾	Remaining Life ⁽²⁾
Outstanding as of January 1, 2023	5,374,736	\$ 34.37	5.66
Granted	1,071,943	\$ 48.00	9.00
Exercised	(1,170,693)	\$ 25.69	
Cancelled/forfeited	(301,908)	\$ 45.00	
Outstanding as of December 31, 2023	4,974,078	\$ 38.70	5.99
Exercisable as of December 31, 2023	2,197,022	\$ 30.88	4.54

	Options Outstanding	Exercise Price ⁽¹⁾	Remaining Life ⁽²⁾
Outstanding as of January 1, 2022	5,173,270	\$ 30.23	6.08
Granted	713,438	\$ 62.00	9.00
Exercised	(346,992)	\$ 26.78	
Cancelled/forfeited	(164,980)	\$ 40.00	
Outstanding as of December 31, 2022	5,374,736	\$ 34.37	5.66
Exercisable as of December 31, 2022	2,437,636	\$ 27.14	4.30

⁽¹⁾ Weighted average exercise price.

⁽²⁾ Weighted average remaining contractual life in years.

The total intrinsic value of stock options exercised during the years ended December 31, 2023, 2022, and 2021 was \$38.1, \$10.2, and \$38.8, respectively. The intrinsic value represents the difference between the exercise price and fair value of the underlying shares at the date of exercise.

At December 31, 2023, there was \$16.6 of total unrecognized stock-based compensation expense related to outstanding unvested stock options granted under the employee stock option plan. This expense is expected to be recognized over a weighted average period of 4.18 years. Any future change in estimated forfeitures will impact this amount. The total grant date fair value of stock options vested under our employee stock option plan during 2023, 2022, and 2021 was \$5.3, \$5.2, and \$4.8, respectively.

Total stock-based compensation expense related to our employee stock option plan was \$7.3, \$7.2, and \$5.6 for 2023, 2022, and 2021, respectively.

Shares Outstanding

Shares of common stock outstanding were as follows:

Fastenal Company and Subsidiaries
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)

Earnings Per Share

The following tables present a reconciliation of the denominators used in the computation of basic and diluted earnings per share and a summary of the options to purchase shares of common stock which were excluded from the diluted earnings per share calculation because they were anti-dilutive:

Reconciliation	2023	2022	2021
Basic weighted average shares outstanding	571,271,846	573,777,790	574,808,030
Weighted shares assumed upon exercise of stock options	1,736,762	1,845,324	2,309,026
Diluted weighted average shares outstanding	573,008,608	575,623,114	577,117,056

Summary of Anti-dilutive Options Excluded	2023	2022	2021
Options to purchase shares of common stock	1,568,460	1,335,898	678,310
Weighted average exercise prices of options	\$ 53.80	55.25	48.00

Any dilutive impact summarized above related to periods when the average market price of our stock exceeded the exercise price of the potentially dilutive stock options then outstanding.

Note 6. Retirement Savings Plan

The Fastenal Company and Subsidiaries 401(k) and Employee Stock Ownership Plan covers all of our employees in the United States. Our employees in Canada may participate in a Registered Retirement Savings Plan. The general purpose of both of these plans is to provide additional financial security during retirement by providing employees with an incentive to make regular savings contributions. In addition to the participation of our employees, we make annual profit sharing contributions based on an established formula. The expense recorded under this profit sharing formula was approximately \$23.1, \$22.1, and \$17.4 for 2023, 2022, and 2021, respectively.

Note 7. Income Taxes

Earnings before income taxes were derived from the following sources:

	2023	2022	2021
Domestic	\$ 1,392.7	1,335.7	1,100.3
Foreign	129.3	104.3	107.5
Earnings before income taxes	\$ 1,522.0	1,440.0	1,207.8

Components of income tax expense (benefit) were as follows:

	2023							2022							
	Current		Deferred		Total			Current		Deferred		Total			Current
Federal	\$	273.3		(9.2)		264.1		267.6		(5.0)		262.6		214.3	
State		59.6		(1.3)		58.3		58.0		(1.1)		56.9		46.7	
Foreign		44.9		(0.3)		44.6		35.0		(1.4)		33.6		34.1	
Income tax expense	\$	377.8		(10.8)		367.0		360.6		(7.5)		353.1		295.1	

Income tax expense in the accompanying consolidated financial statements differed from the expected expense as follows:

	2023							2022							2021					
	Amount		Percent					Amount		Percent					Amount		Percent			
U.S. federal statutory income tax	\$	319.6		21.0 %			\$	302.4		21.0 %			\$	253.6		21.0 %				
State income taxes, net of federal benefit	\$	45.1		3.0 %			\$	45.6		3.2 %			\$	34.9		2.9 %				
Other, net	\$	2.3		0.1 %			\$	5.1		0.3 %			\$	(5.7)		-0.5 %				
Effective income tax rate	\$	367.0		24.1 %			\$	353.1		24.5 %			\$	282.8		23.4 %				

Fastenal Company and Subsidiaries
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)

The tax effects of temporary differences that give rise to deferred income tax assets and liabilities at year end consisted of the following:

	2023	2022
Deferred income tax assets:		
Inventory costing and valuation methods	\$ 5.6	6.7
Insurance reserves	8.3	8.6
Foreign net operating loss and credit carryforwards	3.0	2.6
Stock-based compensation	3.8	3.6
Operating lease liabilities	69.5	62.6
Section 174 capitalization	7.4	3.4
Other, deferred tax assets	9.4	9.6
Total deferred income tax assets	107.0	97.1
Less: Valuation allowances	(2.2)	(1.8)
Total net deferred income tax assets	104.8	95.3
Property and equipment	(95.4)	(102.6)
Operating lease ROU assets	(68.3)	(61.5)
Prepaid expenses	(3.5)	(3.5)
Other, deferred tax liabilities	(0.4)	(1.3)
Total deferred income tax liabilities	(167.6)	(168.9)
Net deferred income tax liabilities	\$ (62.8)	(73.6)

A reconciliation of the beginning and ending amount of total gross unrecognized tax benefits is as follows:

	2023	2022
Balance at beginning of year:	\$ 10.1	7.4
Increase related to prior year tax positions	5.6	3.5
Increase related to current year tax positions	0.6	0.6
Decrease related to statute of limitation lapses	(6.1)	(0.9)
Settlements	—	(0.5)
Balance at end of year:	\$ 10.2	10.1

Included in the liability for gross unrecognized tax benefits is \$3.8 as of December 31, 2023 and \$0.7 as of December 31, 2022 for interest and penalties, both of which we classify as a component of income tax expense. The amount of unrecognized tax benefits that would favorably impact the effective tax rate, if recognized, is \$9.2 as of December 31, 2023 and \$8.6 as of December 31, 2022. We believe it is reasonably possible that a decrease of up to \$1.4 in unrecognized tax benefits may be recognized by the end of 2024 as a result of the lapse of the statute of limitations. The 2023 and 2022 liability is included in deferred income taxes in the Consolidated Balance Sheets.

We file income tax returns in the United States federal jurisdiction, all states, and various local and foreign jurisdictions. We are no longer subject to income tax examinations by taxing authorities for taxable years before 2020 in the case of United States federal examinations, and with limited exception, before 2018 in the case of foreign, state, and local examinations.

In general, it is our practice and intention to permanently reinvest the earnings of our foreign subsidiaries and repatriate earnings only when the tax impact is zero or very minimal. Accordingly, no deferred taxes have been provided for withholding taxes or other taxes that would result upon repatriation of our approximately \$514.7 of undistributed earnings from foreign subsidiaries to the U.S. as those earnings continue to be permanently reinvested.

Fastenal Company and Subsidiaries
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)

Note 8. Operating Leases

We lease space under non-cancelable operating leases for several distribution centers, several manufacturing locations, and certain branch locations. These leases do not have significant rent escalation holidays, concessions, leasehold improvement incentives, or other build-out clauses. Further, the leases do not contain contingent rent provisions. We also lease certain semi-tractors, pick-up trucks, and computer equipment under operating leases.

Certain operating leases for pick-up trucks contain residual value guarantee provisions which would generally become due at the expiration of the operating lease agreement if the fair value of the leased vehicles is less than the guaranteed residual value. The aggregate residual value guarantee related to these leases was approximately \$118.4. We believe the likelihood of funding the guarantee obligation under any provision of the operating lease agreements is remote.

The cost components of our operating leases were as follows for the periods ended December 31:

	2023				2022				2021		
	Leased Facilities and Equipment	Leased Vehicles	Total		Leased Facilities and Equipment	Leased Vehicles	Total		Leased Facilities and Equipment	Leased Vehicles	Total
Operating lease cost	\$ 99.4	18.2	117.6		96.8	14.7	111.5		99.7	13.7	113.4
Variable lease cost	10.5	1.6	12.1		9.7	1.5	11.2		10.4	1.3	11.7
Short-term lease cost	—	23.7	23.7		—	26.6	26.6		—	19.2	19.2
Total	\$ 109.9	43.5	153.4		106.5	42.8	149.3		110.1	34.2	144.3

Variable lease costs are excluded from ROU assets and lease liabilities and consist primarily of taxes, insurance, and common area or other maintenance costs for our leased facilities and equipment which are paid based on actual costs incurred by the lessor as well as variable mileage costs related to our leased vehicles.

Maturities of our lease liabilities for all operating leases were as follows as of December 31, 2023:

	Leased Facilities and Equipment	Leased Vehicles	Total
2024	\$ 86.1	14.2	100.3
2025	65.1	12.1	77.2
2026	43.3	8.9	52.2
2027	26.5	5.1	31.6
2028	14.7	3.1	17.8
2029 and thereafter	13.0	1.5	14.5
Total lease payments	\$ 248.7	44.9	293.6
Less: Imputed interest	(15.2)	(3.4)	(18.6)
Present value of lease liabilities	\$ 233.5	41.5	275.0

The weighted average remaining lease terms and discount rates for all of our operating leases were as follows for the periods ended December 31:

[illegible]

Fastenal Company and Subsidiaries
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)

Supplemental cash flow information related to our operating leases was as follows for the periods ended December 31:

	2023	2022	2021
Cash paid for amounts included in the measurement of lease liabilities:			
Operating cash outflow from operating leases	\$ 115.7	110.9	112.4
Leased assets obtained in exchange for new operating lease liabilities	116.2	89.4	103.6

Note 9. Debt Commitments

Credit Facility, Notes Payable, and Commitments

Debt obligations and letters of credit outstanding at year end consisted of the following:

	Average Interest Rate at December 31, 2023	Maturity Date	Debt Outstanding	
			2023	2022
Unsecured revolving credit facility	6.36 %	September 28, 2027	\$ —	225.0
Senior unsecured promissory notes payable, Series C	3.22 %	March 1, 2024	60.0	60.0
Senior unsecured promissory notes payable, Series D	2.66 %	May 15, 2025	75.0	75.0
Senior unsecured promissory notes payable, Series E	2.72 %	May 15, 2027	50.0	50.0
Senior unsecured promissory notes payable, Series F	1.69 %	June 24, 2023	—	70.0
Senior unsecured promissory notes payable, Series G	2.13 %	June 24, 2026	25.0	25.0
Senior unsecured promissory notes payable, Series H	2.50 %	June 24, 2030	50.0	50.0
Total			260.0	555.0
Less: Current portion of debt			(60.0)	(201.8)
Long-term debt			\$ 200.0	353.2
Outstanding letters of credit under unsecured revolving credit facility - contingent obligation			\$ 32.7	36.3

Unsecured Revolving Credit Facility

We have an \$835.0 committed unsecured revolving credit facility (Credit Facility) with an uncommitted accordion option to increase the aggregate revolving commitment by an additional \$365.0 for a total amount of \$1,200.0. The Credit Facility includes a

committed letter of credit subfacility of \$55.0. Any borrowings outstanding under the Credit Facility for which we have the ability and intent to pay using cash within the next 12 months will be classified as a current liability. The Credit Facility contains certain financial and other covenants, and our right to borrow under the Credit Facility is conditioned upon, among other things, our compliance with these covenants. We are currently in compliance with these covenants.

Borrowings under the Credit Facility generally bear interest at a rate per annum equal to Daily Simple SOFR plus a 0.10% spread adjustment plus 0.95%. We pay a commitment fee for the unused portion of the Credit Facility. This fee is either 0.10% or 0.125% per annum based on our usage of the Credit Facility.

Senior Unsecured Promissory Notes Payable

We have issued senior unsecured promissory notes under our master note agreement (the Master Note Agreement) in the aggregate principal amount of \$260.0 as of December 31, 2023. Our aggregate borrowing capacity under the Master Note Agreement is \$900.0; however, none of the institutional investors party to that agreement are committed to purchase notes thereunder. There is no amortization of these notes prior to their maturity date and interest is payable quarterly. The notes currently issued under our Master Note Agreement, including the maturity date and fixed interest rate per annum of each series of note, are contained in the table above. The Master Note Agreement contains certain financial and other covenants and we are currently in compliance with these covenants.

Fastenal Company and Subsidiaries
Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements (Continued)

Principal payments required on our outstanding indebtedness, based on the maturity dates defined within our long-term debt arrangements, for the succeeding five years, are displayed in the table below, as of December 31, 2023:

		Principal Payments	
2024	\$	60.0	
2025		75.0	
2026		25.0	
2027		50.0	
2028		—	
2029 and thereafter		50.0	
Total	\$	260.0	

Note 10. Legal Contingencies

We are involved in certain legal actions, including those that are ordinary routine litigation incidental to our business. The outcomes of these legal actions are not within our complete control and may not be known for prolonged periods of time. In some actions, the claimants seek damages, as well as other relief, that could require significant expenditures or result in lost revenues. We record a liability for these legal actions when a loss is known or considered probable and the amount can be reasonably estimated. If the reasonable estimate of a known or probable loss is a range, and no amount within the range is a better estimate than any other, the minimum amount of the range is accrued. If a loss is reasonably possible but not known or probable, and can be reasonably estimated, the estimated loss or range of loss is disclosed. In most cases, significant judgment is required to estimate the amount and timing of a loss to be recorded. As of December 31, 2023, there were no litigation matters that we consider to be probable or reasonably possible to have a material adverse outcome.

Note 11. Subsequent Events

We evaluated all subsequent event activity and concluded that no subsequent events have occurred that would require recognition in the consolidated financial statements or disclosure in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements, with the exception of the dividend declaration and stock option activities disclosed in Note 5.

*****End of Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements*****

ITEM 9. CHANGES IN AND DISAGREEMENTS WITH ACCOUNTANTS ON ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

None.

ITEM 9A. CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES

Disclosure Controls and Procedures

As of the end of the period covered by this report, we conducted an evaluation, under the supervision and with the participation of our principal executive officer and principal financial officer, of our disclosure controls and procedures (as defined in Rules 13a-15(e) and 15d-15(e) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the Securities Exchange Act)). Based on this evaluation, the principal executive officer and principal financial officer concluded that our disclosure controls and procedures are effective to ensure that information required to be disclosed by us in reports that we file or submit under the Securities Exchange Act is recorded, processed, summarized, and reported within the time periods specified in SEC rules and forms, and is accumulated and communicated to our management, including the principal executive officer and principal financial officer, to allow for timely decisions regarding required disclosure.

Attestation Report of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm

The attestation report required under Item 9A is contained earlier in this Form 10-K under the heading 'Item 8, Financial Statements and Supplementary Data'.

Management's Annual Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

Our management is responsible for establishing and maintaining adequate internal control over financial reporting as defined in Rules 13a-15(f) and 15d-15(f) under the Securities Exchange Act. The company's internal control over financial reporting is designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding the reliability of financial reporting and the preparation of financial statements for external purposes in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles. The company's internal control over financial reporting includes those policies and procedures that:

- (i) pertain to the maintenance of records that, in reasonable detail, accurately and fairly reflect the transactions and dispositions of the assets of the company;
- (ii) provide reasonable assurance that the transactions are recorded as necessary to permit preparation of financial statements in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles, and that receipts and expenditures of the company are being made only in accordance with authorizations of management and directors of the company; and
- (iii) provide reasonable assurance regarding prevention or timely detection of unauthorized acquisition, use or disposition of the company's assets that could have a material effect on the financial statements.

Because of its inherent limitations, internal control over financial reporting may not prevent or detect misstatements. Also, projections of any evaluation of effectiveness to future periods are subject to the risk that controls may become inadequate because of changes in conditions, or that the degree of compliance with the policies or procedures may deteriorate.

Under the supervision of our principal executive officer and our principal financial officer, we conducted an evaluation of the effectiveness of our internal control over financial reporting based on the framework in *Internal Control – Integrated Framework (2013)* issued by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission. Based on our assessment and those criteria, management believes that the company maintained effective internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2023. There was no change in the company's internal control over financial reporting during the company's most recently completed fiscal quarter that has materially affected, or is reasonably likely to materially affect, the company's internal control over financial reporting.

/s/ Daniel L. Florness				/s/ Holden Lewis	
Daniel L. Florness				Holden Lewis	
President and Chief Executive Officer				Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer	
Winona, Minnesota					
February 6, 2024					

ITEM 9B. OTHER INFORMATION

None of our directors or officers (as defined in Rule 16a-1(f) of the Securities Exchange Act) adopted, modified, or terminated any contract, instruction, or written plan for the purchase or sale of our securities that was intended to satisfy the affirmative defense conditions of Rule 10b5-1(c) of the Securities Exchange Act or any non-Rule 10b5-1 trading arrangement (as defined in Item 408(c) of Regulation S-K) during the fiscal quarter ended December 31, 2023.

We are reporting the following information in lieu of reporting on a Current Report on Form 8-K under Item 5.03 "Amendments to Articles of Incorporation or By-laws; Change in Fiscal Year" and Item 9.01 "Financial Statements and Exhibits."

On February 2, 2024, our board of directors amended and restated our by-laws as a result of a periodic review of best practices and the SEC's adoption of the universal proxy rules.

The amendments:

- (i) Make certain limited updates to the procedural mechanics for meetings of shareholders and clarify that the chair of a shareholder meeting may adjourn a meeting for any reason;
- (ii) Include express authorization of electronic and telephonic proxies and add a requirement that a shareholder soliciting proxies must use a proxy card color other than white, in order to avoid shareholder confusion; and
- (iii) Make various other conforming, technical, and non-substantive changes.

The foregoing description of the amended and restated by-laws is not complete and is qualified by reference to the full text of the amended and restated by-laws, a copy of which is filed as Exhibit 3.2 hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

ITEM 9C. DISCLOSURE REGARDING FOREIGN JURISDICTIONS THAT PREVENT INSPECTIONS

None.

PART III

ITEM 10. DIRECTORS, EXECUTIVE OFFICERS, AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Incorporated herein by reference is the information appearing under the headings 'Proposal #1—Election of Directors', 'Corporate Governance and Director Compensation—Board Leadership Structure and Committee Membership', 'Corporate Governance and Director Compensation—Other Board and Corporate Governance Matters: *Securities Trading Policy*', 'Corporate Governance and Director Compensation—Audit Committee', and 'Corporate Governance and Director Compensation—Delinquent Section 16(a) Reports' in the Proxy Statement.

There have been no material changes to the procedures by which security holders may recommend nominees to the board of directors since our last report.

In January 2004, our board of directors adopted a supplement to our existing standards of conduct designed to qualify the standards of conduct as a code of ethics within the meaning of Item 406(b) of Regulation S-K promulgated by the SEC (Code of Ethics). The standards of conduct, as supplemented, apply to all of our directors, officers, and employees, including without limitation our chief executive officer, chief financial officer, principal accounting officer, and controller (if any), and persons performing similar functions (Senior Financial Officers). Those portions of the standards of conduct, as supplemented, that constitute a required element of a Code of Ethics are available without charge by submitting a request to us pursuant to the directions detailed under 'Does Fastenal have a Code of Conduct?' on the 'Investor FAQs' page of the 'Investor Relations' section of our website at www.fastenal.com. In the event we amend or waive any portion of the standards of conduct, as supplemented, that constitutes a required element of a Code of Ethics and such amendment or waiver applies to any of our Senior Financial Officers, we intend to post on our website at www.fastenal.com, within four business days after the date of such amendment or waiver, a brief description of such amendment or waiver, the name of each Senior Financial Officer to whom the amendment or waiver applies, and the date of the amendment or waiver.

Information about our Executive Officers

As of the date of filing this Form 10-K, the following individuals were executive officers of the Company:

Name	Employee of Fastenal Since	Age	Position
Daniel L. Florness	1996	60	President, Chief Executive Officer, and Director
Anthony P. Broersma	2003	44	Executive Vice President – Operations
William J. Drazkowski	1995	52	Executive Vice President – Sales
James C. Jansen	1992	53	Executive Vice President – Manufacturing
Holden Lewis	2016	54	Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer
Sheryl A. Lisowski	1994	56	Executive Vice President – Chief Accounting Officer and Treasurer
Charles S. Miller	1999	49	Senior Executive Vice President – Sales
Noelle J. Oas	2015	39	Executive Vice President – Human Resources
John L. Soderberg	1993	52	Senior Executive Vice President – Information Technology
Jeffery M. Watts	1996	52	Chief Sales Officer

Mr. Florness has been our president and chief executive officer since January 2016. From December 2002 to December 2015, Mr. Florness was our executive vice president and chief financial officer. From June 1996 to November 2002, Mr. Florness was our chief financial officer. During his time as chief financial officer, Mr. Florness' responsibilities expanded beyond finance, including leadership of a portion of our manufacturing division, our product development and procurement, and the company's national accounts business. Mr. Florness has served as one of our directors since January 2016.

Mr. Broersma has been our executive vice president – operations since October 2023. Mr. Broersma's responsibilities include oversight of our supply chain, compliance, supplier development, content, property management, eCommerce, supply to fulfillment distribution, and logistics operations of the company. From June 2022 to October 2023, Mr. Broersma served as our senior vice president – operations. From February 2021 to June 2022, Mr. Broersma was our vice president of procurement and supply chain. From February 2016 to February 2021, Mr. Broersma served as our vice president of international operations, leading all global operations. From December 2012 to February 2016, Mr. Broersma was the regional vice president for our continental Europe locations, while living in the Czech Republic. From February 2011 to December 2012, Mr. Broersma served as the director of Asian operations, while living in Shanghai, China. From December 2007 to February 2011, Mr. Broersma served as the regional operations manager of our distribution center located in Scranton, PA. Mr. Broersma joined Fastenal in 2003 and, prior to 2007, served in various roles of increasing responsibility within our branch locations.

Mr. Drazkowski has been our executive vice president - sales since October 2019. Mr. Drazkowski's responsibilities include oversight of national accounts, government and industry specific sales, support, and development teams. From October 2019 to October 2023, Mr. Drazkowski oversaw our Western United States business. From December 2016 to September 2019, Mr. Drazkowski was executive vice president – national accounts sales. From October 2014 to December 2016, Mr. Drazkowski was our vice president – national accounts sales, from September 2013 to September 2014, he served as regional vice president of our Minnesota based region, and from November 2007 to August 2013, he served as one of our district managers. Prior to November 2007, Mr. Drazkowski served in various sales leadership roles at our company.

Mr. Jansen has been our executive vice president – manufacturing since January 2016. Mr. Jansen's responsibilities include oversight of our industrial services, quality assurance, aerospace, manufacturing operations, and EHS management. From December 2010 to December 2015, Mr. Jansen was our executive vice president - operations. From November 2007 to December 2010, Mr. Jansen was our executive vice president – internal operations. From May 2005 to November 2007, Mr. Jansen served as our leader of systems development (this role encompassed both information systems and distribution systems development). From April 2000 to April 2005, Mr. Jansen served as regional vice president of our Texas based region.

Mr. Lewis has been a senior executive vice president and the chief financial officer of Fastenal since December 2022. As chief financial officer, Mr. Lewis manages the company's finance, accounting, audit, and general counsel functions, and plays a central

role in effectively executing and communicating company strategy, with a concentration on profitability, efficiency, and assets. He also oversees the company's M&A and Investor Relations efforts. From August 2016 to December 2022, Mr. Lewis served as our executive vice president and chief financial officer. He joined the company following a long career as a senior equity analyst covering industrials, including Fastenal, for full-service investment banks. Mr. Lewis held various senior roles with a variety of organizations in the investment banking industry from 1994 to July 2016.

Ms. Lisowski has been our executive vice president - chief accounting officer and treasurer since December 2020. From August 2016 to November 2020, Ms. Lisowski was our controller, chief accounting officer, and treasurer. Ms. Lisowski was our controller and chief accounting officer from October 2013 to August 2016, and also served as our interim chief financial officer from January 2016 to August 2016. From March 2007 to October 2013, Ms. Lisowski served as our controller – accounting operations. Ms. Lisowski joined Fastenal in 1994 and, prior to March 2007, served in various roles of increasing responsibility within our finance and accounting team.

Mr. Miller has been our senior executive vice president – sales since January 2020. Mr. Miller's responsibilities include sales and operational oversight of our United States business. From November 2015 to December 2019, Mr. Miller was one of our executive vice presidents – sales. From January 2009 to October 2015, Mr. Miller served as regional vice president of our southeast central region based primarily in Tennessee and Kentucky. Prior to January 2009, Mr. Miller served in various sales leadership roles at our company.

Ms. Oas has been our executive vice president – human resources since February 2023. As executive vice president – human resources, Ms. Oas manages the company's human resources department, which includes payroll, benefits, diversity and compliance, general insurance, and the Fastenal School of Business. From March 2015 to January 2023, she was our director of compliance – human resources. From 2010 to February 2015, Ms. Oas practiced employment law for a firm in Minneapolis, Minnesota and later acted as a solo practitioner in Winona, Minnesota.

Mr. Soderberg has been our senior executive vice president – information technology since December 2020. From May 2016 to November 2020, Mr. Soderberg was our executive vice president – information technology. From May 2014 to May 2016, Mr. Soderberg served as our executive vice president – sales operations and support. From April 2010 to May 2014, Mr. Soderberg was one of our vice presidents – sales. From April 2005 to April 2010, Mr. Soderberg served as regional vice president of our Seattle, Washington based region. Prior to April 2005, Mr. Soderberg served in various sales leadership roles in the mid-Atlantic area of our company.

Mr. Watts has been our chief sales officer since May 2023. Mr. Watts' responsibilities include providing oversight and guidance concerning the global sales activities of the company. From December 2016 to April 2023, Mr. Watts was our executive vice president – international sales. From March 2015 to December 2016, Mr. Watts was our vice president – international sales. From June 2005 to February 2015, he served as regional vice president of our Canadian region. Prior to June 2005, Mr. Watts served in various sales leadership roles at our company.

The executive officers are elected by our board of directors for a term of one year and serve until their successors are elected and qualified. None of our executive officers is related to any other such executive officer or to any of our directors.

ITEM 11. EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Incorporated herein by reference is the information appearing under the headings 'Corporate Governance and Director Compensation—Compensation Committee Interlocks and Insider Participation', 'Executive Compensation', and 'Corporate Governance and Director Compensation—Compensation of our Directors' in the Proxy Statement.

ITEM 12. SECURITY OWNERSHIP OF CERTAIN BENEFICIAL OWNERS AND MANAGEMENT AND RELATED STOCKHOLDER MATTERS

Incorporated herein by reference is the information appearing under the heading 'Security Ownership of Principal Shareholders and Management' in the Proxy Statement.

Equity Compensation Plan Information

Plan Category	Number of Securities to be Issued Upon Exercise of Outstanding Options, Warrants, and Rights	Weighted-Average Exercise Price of Outstanding Options, Warrants, and Rights	Number of Securities Remaining Available for Future Issuance Under Equity Compensation Plans (Excluding Securities Reflected in Column (a))
	(a)	(b)	(c)
Equity compensation plans approved by security holders ⁽¹⁾	4,974,078	\$ 38.70	10,877,707
Equity compensation plans not approved by security holders	—	—	—
Total	4,974,078		10,877,707

(1)	Reflects stock option awards issued and issuable in the future under our Fastenal Company Stock Option Plan and our Fastenal Company Non-Employee Director Stock Option Plan.
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ITEM 13. CERTAIN RELATIONSHIPS AND RELATED TRANSACTIONS, AND DIRECTOR INDEPENDENCE

Incorporated herein by reference is the information appearing under the headings 'Corporate Governance and Director Compensation—Director Independence', 'Corporate Governance and Director Compensation—Related Person Transaction Approval Policy', and 'Corporate Governance and Director Compensation—Transactions with Related Persons' in the Proxy Statement.

ITEM 14. PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTANT FEES AND SERVICES

Incorporated herein by reference is the information appearing under the heading 'Audit and Related Matters—Audit and Related Fees' and 'Audit and Related Matters—Pre-Approval of Services' in the Proxy Statement.

PART IV

ITEM 15. EXHIBITS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT SCHEDULES

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

INDEX TO EXHIBITS

Exhibit Number	Description of Document
3.1	Restated Articles of Incorporation of Fastenal Company, as amended (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.1 to Fastenal Company's Form 8-K dated as of April 22, 2019)
3.2	Restated By-Laws of Fastenal Company dated as of February 2, 2024 (filed herewith)
4.1	Form of Senior Notes due March 1, 2024 (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.1 to Fastenal Company's Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2017)
4.2	Description of Capital Stock (filed herewith)
4.3	Form of Senior Notes due May 15, 2025 (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.1 to Fastenal Company's Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2020)
4.4	Form of Senior Notes due May 15, 2027 (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.2 to Fastenal Company's Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2020)
4.5	Form of Senior Notes due June 24, 2026 (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.4 to Fastenal Company's Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2020)
4.6	Form of Senior Notes due June 24, 2030 (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.5 to Fastenal Company's Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2020)
10.1	Bonus Program for Executive Officers* (filed herewith)
10.2	Fastenal Company Stock Option Plan as amended and restated effective as of April 24, 2018.* (filed herewith)
10.3	Fastenal Company Incentive Plan (incorporated by reference to Appendix A to Fastenal Company's Proxy Statement dated February 23, 2012)*
10.4	Fastenal Company Non-Employee Director Stock Option Plan as amended and restated effective December 20, 2021 (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.4 to Fastenal Company's 10-K for fiscal year ended December 31, 2021).*
10.5	Amended and Restated Credit Agreement, dated as of September 28, 2022, by and among Fastenal Company, the Lenders party thereto, and Wells Fargo Bank, National Association, as Administrative Agent (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to Fastenal Company's Form 8-K dated as of September 30, 2022).
10.6	First Amendment to Amended and Restated Credit Agreement, dated as of January 20, 2023, by and among Fastenal Company, the Lenders party thereto, and Wells Fargo Bank, National Association, as Administrative Agent (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.6 to Fastenal Company's Form 10-K dated February 7, 2023).

Exhibit Number	Description of Document
10.7	Master Note Agreement dated as of July 20, 2016 by and among (i) Fastenal Company, (ii) Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, NYL Investors LLC and PGIM, Inc. (formerly known as Prudential Investment Management, Inc.), as investor group representatives (each, an 'Investor Group Representative'), and (iii) Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (in its capacity as a purchaser of notes under such Master Note Agreement) and/or affiliates of any Investor Group Representative who become purchasers of notes under such Master Note Agreement (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to Fastenal Company's Form 8-K dated as of July 20, 2016).
10.8	Omnibus First Amendment to Master Note Agreement and Subsidiary Guaranty Agreement dated as of November 30, 2018 by and among Fastenal Company, Fastenal Company Purchasing, and Fastenal IP Company, on one hand, and Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, NYL Investors LLC, PGIM, Inc., and each holder of Notes that are signatory thereto, on the other hand (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.2 to Fastenal Company's Form 8-K dated December 3, 2018).
10.9	Consent, Waiver and Agreement to Master Note Agreement dated as of June 10, 2020 by and among Fastenal Company, Fastenal Company Purchasing, and Fastenal IP Company, on the one hand, and Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, MetLife Investment Management, LLC, NYL Investors LLC, PGIM, Inc. and each holder of Notes that are signatory thereto, on the other hand (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.1 to Fastenal Company's Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2020).
10.10	Omnibus Second Amendment to Master Note Agreement and Subsidiary Guaranty Agreement dated as of September 28, 2022 by and among Fastenal Company, Fastenal Company Purchasing, and Fastenal IP Company, on one hand, and Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, MetLife Investment Management, LLC, NYL Investors LLC, PGIM, Inc., and each holder of Notes that is a signatory thereto, on the other hand (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 10.2 to Fastenal Company's Form 8-K dated as of September 30, 2022).
21	List of Subsidiaries (filed herewith)
23	Consent of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm (filed herewith)
31	Certifications under Section 302 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (filed herewith)
32	Certification under Section 906 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (filed herewith)
97	Compensation Forfeiture, Recovery, and True-up Policy of Fastenal Company dated as of October 11, 2023 (filed herewith)
101	The following financial statements from the Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2023, formatted in Inline XBRL: (i) Consolidated Balance Sheets, (ii) Consolidated Statements of Earnings, (iii) Consolidated Statements of Comprehensive Income, (iv) Consolidated Statements of Stockholders' Equity, (v) Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows, and (vi) Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements.
104	The cover page from the Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2023, formatted in Inline XBRL.

* Management contract or compensatory plan or arrangement required to be filed as an exhibit to this Form 10-K pursuant to Item 15(b).

FASTENAL COMPANY

Schedule II—Valuation and Qualifying Accounts

Years ended December 31, 2023, 2022, and 2021
(Amounts in millions)

Description	Balance at Beginning of Year	"Additions/ (Reductions)" to Costs and Expenses	"Other" Additions (Deductions)	"Less" Deductions	Balance at End of Year
Year ended December 31, 2023					
Allowance for credit losses	\$ 8.3	2.2	—	4.1	6.4
Insurance reserves	\$ 40.4	86.2 ⁽¹⁾	—	86.5 ⁽²⁾	40.1
Year ended December 31, 2022					
Allowance for credit losses	\$ 12.0	(1.8)	—	1.9	8.3
Insurance reserves	\$ 35.7	78.2 ⁽¹⁾	—	73.5 ⁽²⁾	40.4
Year ended December 31, 2021					
Allowance for credit losses	\$ 12.3	2.5	—	2.8	12.0
Insurance reserves	\$ 41.0	78.6 ⁽¹⁾	—	83.9 ⁽²⁾	35.7

⁽¹⁾ Includes costs and expenses incurred for premiums and claims related to health and general insurance.

⁽²⁾ Includes costs and expenses paid for premiums and claims related to health and general insurance.

See accompanying Report of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm incorporated herein by reference.

ITEM 16. FORM 10-K SUMMARY

Not applicable.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized.

Date:		February 6, 2024							
FASTENAL COMPANY									
By		/s/ Daniel L. Florness							
		Daniel L. Florness, President and Chief Executive Officer							

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, this report has been signed below by the following persons on behalf of the registrant and in the capacities and on the date indicated.

[illegible]

/s/ Daniel L. Florness	/s/ Holden Lewis
Daniel L. Florness, President and Chief Executive Officer (Principal Executive Officer), and Director	Holden Lewis, Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer (Principal Financial Officer)
/s/ Sheryl A. Lisowski	
Sheryl A. Lisowski, Executive Vice President - Chief Accounting Officer and Treasurer (Principal Accounting Officer)	
/s/ Scott A. Satterlee	/s/ Daniel L. Johnson
Scott A. Satterlee, Director (Chair)	Daniel L. Johnson, Director
/s/ Michael J. Ancius	/s/ Nicholas J. Lundquist
Michael J. Ancius, Director	Nicholas J. Lundquist, Director
/s/ Stephen L. Eastman	/s/ Sarah N. Nielsen
Stephen L. Eastman, Director	Sarah N. Nielsen, Director
/s/ Rita J. Heise	/s/ Irene A. Quarshie
Rita J. Heise, Director	Irene A. Quarshie, Director
/s/ Hsenghung Sam Hsu	/s/ Reyne K. Wisecup
Hsenghung Sam Hsu, Director	Reyne K. Wisecup, Director