

BILCO Celebrates 100th Year in Business

Access Solutions Leader is Poised for Substantial Growth under Quanex

NEW HAVEN, CT, UNITED STATES, January 13, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- From its inception as a small iron shop to manufacturing the first metal basement door to worldwide expansion as the industry leader in specialty access products, [BILCO](#)'s first 100 years have demonstrated innovation and engineering excellence.



BILCO 100th anniversary logo

As it enters its second century in business, the long-term horizon for BILCO, based in New Haven, Conn., promises more of the same along with renewed emphasis on growth, modernization and expanded market presence. [Quanex](#), which acquired BILCO in 2024, is committed to solidifying BILCO's role as a high-performing, innovative leader that sets the access solutions standard for quality, reliability and responsiveness.

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Peter Santo, President of Quanex Access Solutions

“Our ability to provide safe, engineered access solutions in a wide range of sizes, for roof and underground applications, has allowed us to diversify our product portfolio,” says Mike Toohey, BILCO's General Manager since 2017. “Our commitment to adapt to market needs and supply products that no one else offered has been the driving force behind the success of our business.”

George W. Lyons founded the company in 1926, crafting custom wrought-iron pieces, which led to the production of

the first metal basement door a decade later. The patented design became BILCO's signature product and laid the foundation for decades of growth.

BILCO expanded into roof hatches and other commercial access products following the end of World War II and continued its commitment to innovation which led to new products such as

acoustically sound rated smoke vents, thermally broken roof hatches and flood tight floor access doors. On the residential side, BILCO started mass production of basement doors and diversified its residential portfolio by introducing window wells to its product line, along with other products associated with basement doors.

“The evolution of various lifting mechanisms that we’ve designed over the years to provide smooth, easy operation has defined BILCO’s business success,” Toohey says. “This development allows personnel to open and close products safely and securely. That’s the biggest thing that differentiates us from other manufacturers.”

After gaining experience in the architectural iron business, Lyons started a metalworking shop and managed to keep the business afloat at the heights of the Great Depression. Four sons joined the business after World War II, and family members retained ownership of the company for 90 years.

As it expanded its product offerings, BILCO added manufacturing sites in Trumann, Ark; Zanesville, Ohio and Juarez, Mexico. It now employs nearly 300 workers.

BILCO’s acquisition by Quanex, a publicly traded manufacturing company serving OEMs in construction and other industries, paints a bright future for the century-old Connecticut manufacturer.

“We are building the infrastructure and culture that will allow innovation to accelerate, not in bursts, but as a consistent rhythm of business,” according to Peter Santo, President of Quanex Access Solutions. “With stronger engineering processes and a clearer path for new product development, we’re creating an environment where good ideas convert into real customer value faster than ever before. We’re already seeing we can expand our market presence, strengthen customer partnerships and build a more resilient, efficient operation that supports long-term, profitable expansion.”

After a century in business, BILCO continues to set the industry benchmark for innovation, safety and engineering excellence. Now “part of something bigger” as a major part of the Quanex Access Solutions Division, the business is poised to move forward with aggression while remaining rooted and steadfast to its core principles.

“I envision BILCO entering a period of sustained, confident growth, powered by the strong foundation now being built across our commercial, operations and engineering functions,” Santo says. “Over the next decade, BILCO has the opportunity to become not only a larger business, but a more agile, modern and customer-centric one.”

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BILCO, celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2026, is a trusted leader among building professionals

and provides specialty access solutions to support residential and commercial construction projects. Over the years, the company has continued to develop new products while staying true to its core values of innovation, quality and customer satisfaction. As part of Quanex Corporation, a global manufacturer of a variety of building products, BILCO continues to lean into its widely recognized engineering and technical capabilities. Learn more at www.bilco.com.

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