

PNC'S METALS INDUSTRY UPDATE

Issue 41

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Welcome to Issue #41 of PNC's *Metals Industry Update*.

Our cover story provides a look at the near-term economic outlook. PNC economist Abbey Omodunbi continues to see a mild recession as one of the potential scenarios for the 12-month outlook. Nevertheless, it is PNC's opinion that the Fed orchestrating a soft landing appears to be more likely. During the second quarter, metals prices played a role in tempering the effects of inflation, as almost all the prices we follow declined. Finally, the two important debt markets we follow, the bond market and the syndicated loan market, showed notable improvement in the second quarter over the first quarter results.

Thank you for continuing to read our quarterly *Update*. We aspire to provide you with information you can use and deliver it in a quick and easy way. As always, we appreciate any comments or questions that may help us better meet your needs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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SLOW CHINESE ECONOMIC RECOVERY TO WEIGH ON METAL PRICES IN SECOND HALF OF 2023

Summary

- A faltering Chinese economic recovery will weigh on base metals demand.
- The World Bank forecasts global GDP growth of 2.1% in 2023, down from 3.1% in 2022.
- U.S. infrastructure investment will provide some support to metals demand in 2023 and 2024.

The U.S. metals industry enters the second half of 2023 under pressure as a weak Chinese economic recovery, tighter financial conditions in many developed economies, and a more slowly growing global economy weigh on metal prices. PNC's baseline forecast calls for a mild U.S. recession starting in late 2023 or early 2024, with a small contraction in GDP of less than 1%, lasting into mid-2024. PNC expects the U.S. economy to grow 1.5% on a year-over-year basis in 2023 followed by a small 0.3% decline in 2024. China's reopening in late 2022 was a boost for the global economic outlook, but declining factory activity and softening demand for Chinese exports will weigh on the Chinese economy. The Bank of England (BoE) and the European Central Bank (ECB) are set to continue raising interest rates through 2023 to fight persistent inflationary pressures. The World Bank forecasts global GDP growth to slow to 2.1% in 2023 (on a year-over-year basis) from 3.1% in 2022.¹

SLOW CHINESE ECONOMIC RECOVERY TO WEIGH ON METAL PRICES IN SECOND HALF OF 2023 *(Continued)*

U.S. manufacturing output is set to decline (**Chart 1**) as consumers spend more on services and experiences while tighter financial conditions weigh on the demand for interest-sensitive and metal-intensive durable goods such as cars, refrigerators and dryers. A shortage of semiconductors upended the U.S. auto industry in the first couple of years following the pandemic, leading to widespread production cuts. Auto production should improve in the second half of the year, although rising interest rates will likely weigh on sales (**Chart 2**).

Factory activity in China has lost steam in recent months due to weaker domestic demand, a cooling real estate market (**Chart 3**), and declining external demand. According to China's National Bureau of Statistics, China's industrial output of crude steel was up 13% in May from one year earlier, but a weak Chinese economic outlook will weigh on production through 2023. Bloomberg forecasts flat Chinese steel demand in 2023 and growth of 1.1% in 2023.²

The U.S. housing market is weak entering into the second half of 2023 although homebuilding sentiment has improved in recent months (**Chart 4**), according to the National Association of Home Builders' Housing Market Index.

The index rose five points to 55 in June and has increased in every month of this year; a reading above 50 indicates expansion. With elevated mortgage rates and the Federal Reserve signaling additional interest rate hikes in 2023, housing starts and permits will remain depressed (**Chart 5**), weighing on demand for metals with heavy use in construction such as steel, iron, aluminum and lead.

While PNC expects housing starts and permits to decline in the second half of 2023, completions should improve as inflation moderates. The number of units under construction in June was near the highest level since 1974, and this should support construction spending in the near term.³ Public construction spending is likely to get some support over the next decade from major bills passed in recent years such as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, the CHIPs and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

Risks to the outlook are tilted to the upside. Better growth prospects in China coupled with a soft or bumpy landing in the U.S. would support base metals demand. PNC's expectation for a weaker dollar (**Chart 6**) in the next year will make dollar-priced metals cheaper for foreigners and provide some upside to demand.

SLOW CHINESE ECONOMIC RECOVERY TO WEIGH ON METAL PRICES IN SECOND HALF OF 2023 *(Continued)*

CHART 1: GLOBAL MANUFACTURING ACTIVITY SET TO DECLINE FURTHER

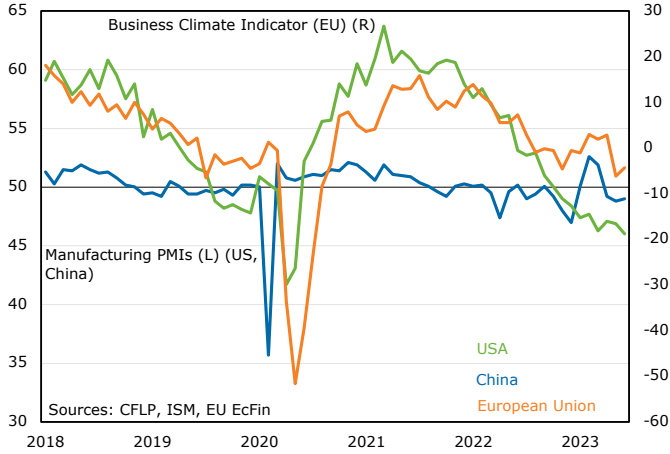


CHART 2: U.S. AUTO SALES EXPECTED TO DECLINE IN 2023

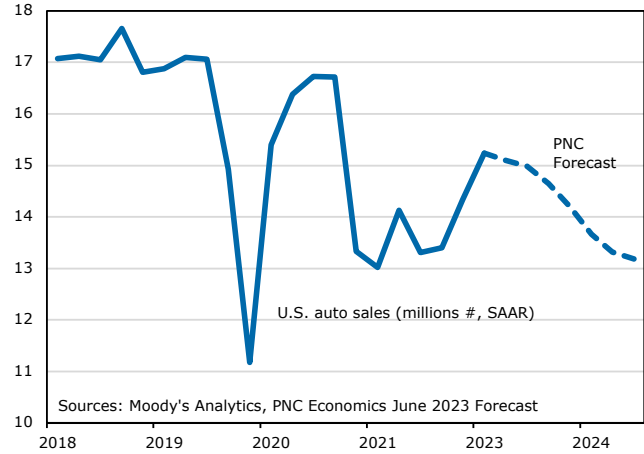


CHART 3: CHINA'S REAL ESTATE SECTOR IS STILL IN TROUBLE

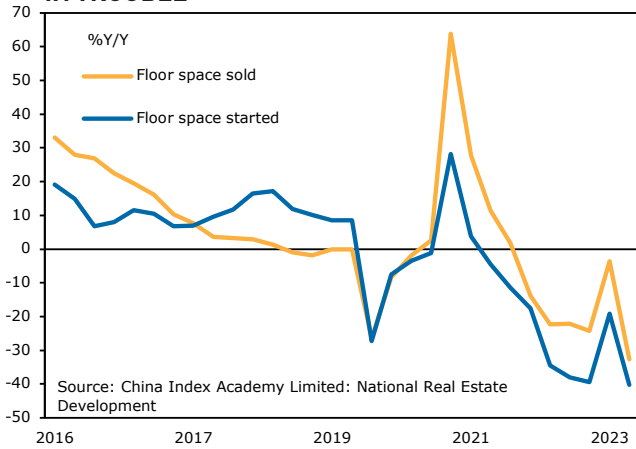


CHART 4: HOMEBUILDER SENTIMENT IS NOW IN POSITIVE TERRITORY

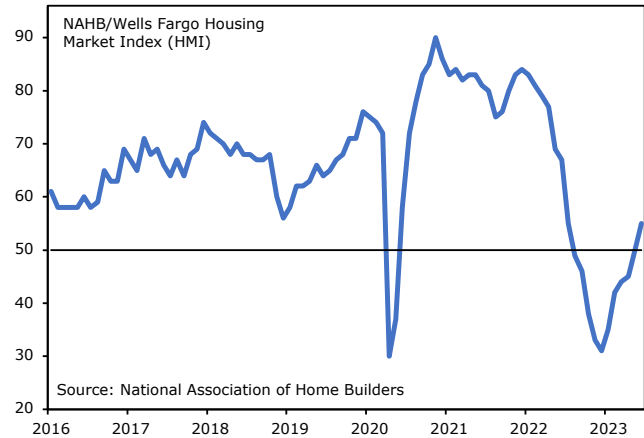


CHART 5: STARTS AND PERMITS ARE DOWN FROM 2022 BUT COMPLETIONS ARE SET TO INCREASE

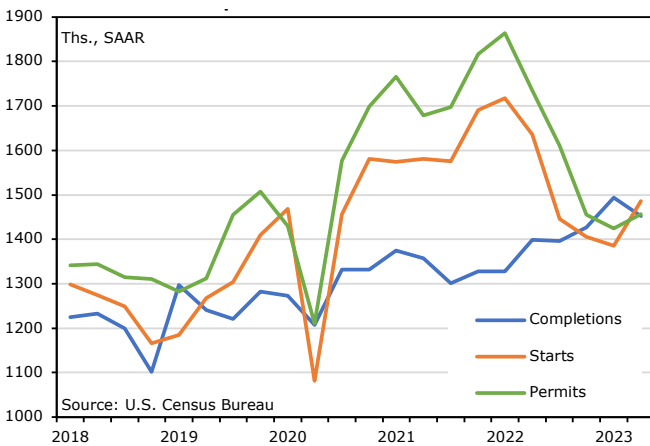
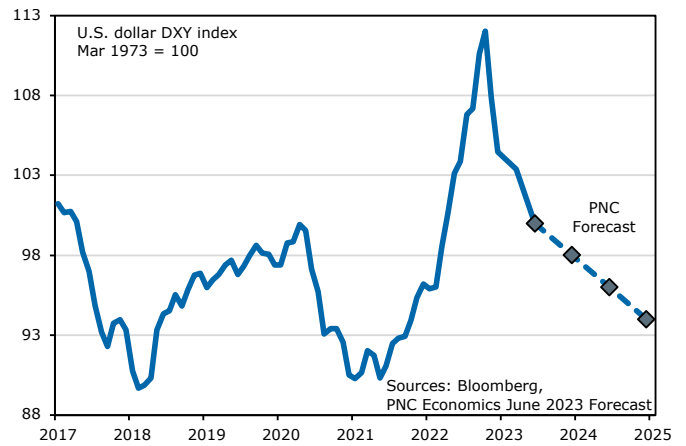


CHART 6: WEAKER DOLLAR WILL PROVIDE SUPPORT TO METAL PRICES



Visit <http://www.pnc.com/economicreports> to view the full listing of economic reports published by PNC's economists.

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METALS PRICING

The pricing roller coaster continues. Metals prices were broadly down in fourth quarter 2022, broadly up in first quarter 2023, and back down again in second quarter 2023. Metals pricing is doing its fair share to help battle inflation. Out of the 25 prices we track during the quarter, 18 were down, four were up, and one remained flat. Carbon sheet once again captured most of the headlines with substantial declines across all three major product areas despite efforts by the major mills to raise prices during the first quarter. Not sure whether it is the chicken or the egg, but all four carbon steel raw material prices we track moved in tandem with sheet, helping to preserve very solid metal spreads for the mills.

Second Quarter 2023: Interesting Observations:

- HRC prices fell by 28% but remain higher than January levels.
- Spreads for CRC and GALV tightened by \$60 per ton.
- Plate demand has kept pricing solid with a 3% price increase.
- Carbon long products have held up much better than sheet, declining in the low single digits.
- OCTG pricing continues to fall, down 8%.
- Base metals continue to decline with prices falling for AL, CU and NI.
- Carbon steel raw materials were down across the board; pellets down 16%, low vol met coal down 25%, HMS down 19% and shred down 20%.

Below is the price detail for all the products we follow.

Carbon Flat-Rolled Steel \$/NT April-June 2023			
Product	April	May	June
Hot-Rolled	1,120	1,000	870
Cold-Rolled	1,360	1,180	1,050
Galvanized	1,450	1,260	1,140

Discrete Plate \$/NT April-June 2023			
Product	April	May	June
A36	1,480	1,530	1,570
A514	2,295	2,345	2,385
AR400	2,315	2,365	2,405

Wide Flange Beam \$/cwt. April-June 2023			
Size	April	May	June
24"x12¾"	69.00	69.00	68.00
18"x6"	67.00	67.00	66.00

MBQ \$/cwt. April-June 2023			
Shape	April	May	June
1" 1018 round	58.00	58.00	57.00

Rebar \$/cwt. - Grade 60 April-June 2023			
Size	April	May	June
16 mm - #5	48.50	48.00	46.00

SBQ \$/cwt. - 1" round April-June 2023			
Grade	April	May	June
HR 4140 Q&T	118.80	117.30	115.50

Pipe & Tube \$/NT April-June 2023			
Product	April	May	June
OCTG J55	2,000	1,950	1,850
Linepipe, ERW	1,400	1,400	1,400

Aluminum \$/lb April-June 2023			
Alloy	April	May	June
3003	2.17	2.17	2.12
LME	1.06	1.03	0.99
MWTP	1.31	1.28	1.23

Stainless \$/lb - Cold-Rolled Coil April-June 2023			
Grade	April	May	June
304	2.06	2.08	2.07

Copper \$/lb April-June 2023			
	April	May	June
Comex Avg.	4.00	3.74	3.78

Nickel \$/lb April-June 2023			
	April	May	June
LME Avg.	10.77	10.08	9.61

Ferrous Scrap \$/GT Midwest April-June 2023			
GRADE	April	May	June
No. 1 HMS	370	340	310
Shredded	510	475	425

Iron Ore \$/LT U.S. April-June 2023			
GRADE	April	May	June
Furnace Pellets	105	85	90

Met Coal \$/MT U.S. East Coast April-June 2023			
GRADE	April	May	June
Low-vol	254	248	204

PRICING FOR PUBLIC NOTES AND BONDS

METALS BOND UPDATE: ISSUERS FIND ATTRACTIVE WINDOWS IN SECOND QUARTER 2023 DESPITE “HIGHER FOR LONGER” NARRATIVE

Following the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank in March, the start of second quarter 2023 was marked by lingering concerns of contagion risk in the banking sector. While these fears eased throughout the quarter, persistent inflationary pressure forced the Fed to maintain a “higher for longer” rate path stance, which drove U.S. Treasury yields wider across the curve. A historically strong predictor of future recessions, the 2s/10s UST yield curve reached its most inverted point (-106 basis points) since the early 1980s on June 30. Despite Treasury rate volatility, issuers took advantage of periods of relative stability as the broader U.S. economy showed signs of resilience. Refinancing remained the dominant use of proceeds in second quarter 2023, as issuers in many cases elected to replace floating rate debt with fixed and to derisk upcoming (2024–2025) bond maturities in the face of mounting economic uncertainty in second half 2023.

Investment Grade volume in second quarter 2023 totaled \$316 billion, falling from the \$405 billion in first quarter 2023. Total supply is down only 2% year-over-year, an impressive measure given the risks faced by issuers (e.g., bank failures, debt ceiling, rate hikes). A-rated and BBB-rated yields rose 34 basis points and 30 basis points, respectively, while credit spreads tightened 12 basis points and 16 basis points, respectively. No IG metals issuers priced transactions in second quarter 2023. Looking specifically at the PNC IG Metals Bond Index, spreads tightened 9 basis points and yields widened 33 basis points.

High-yield volume of \$53 billion was up 29% in second quarter 2023 compared to \$41 billion in first quarter 2023. Amidst continued interest rate uncertainty and a tepid M&A landscape, 59% of high-yield offerings were for refinancing existing debt. BB-rated yields widened 32 basis points throughout the second quarter, while B-rated yields remained steady, rising only by 2 basis points. Spreads, fueled by a resilient labor market and lack of meaningful uptick in defaults, tightened across the ratings spectrum with the overall HY index moving 53 basis points tighter. Compared to the previous quarter, average yields of companies in the PNC HY Metals Bond Index widened by 24 basis points while spreads tightened by 17 basis points. Graftech Global Enterprise Inc. was the lone HY issuer, pricing \$450 million 5.5NC2.5 9.875% Senior Secured Notes shortly before the end of the quarter on June 21, 2023.

METALS BOND INDEX

As of Date	PNC IG Metals Bond Index			PNC HY Metals Bond Index		
	7/14/2023	4/14/2023	Change	7/14/2023	4/14/2023	Change
Effective Maturity (Years)	9.21	9.34	-0.13	5.50	5.76	-0.26
Composite Rating	BBB+	BBB+	–	BB-	BB-	–
Weighted Average Coupon	4.15%	4.16%	-0.01%	5.55%	5.46%	0.08%
Yield to Worst	5.46%	5.13%	0.33%	6.51%	6.27%	0.24%
Option Adjusted Spread to Treasuries (bps)	126.0	135.1	-9.1	201.8	219.0	-17.2

Note: Excludes bonds of size < \$250 million.

Source: Bloomberg

SYNDICATED BANK LOAN MARKET

Following a very poor first quarter 2023, syndicated loan volume improved 470% sequentially with a total of seven deals for \$6.02 billion. Driving the second quarter's volume increase was the maturity extension for Cleveland-Cliffs' \$4.5 billion ABL revolver. Interest in the deal was strong enough to support an increase in the total facility to \$4.725 billion. Other notable deals in the quarter included a \$350 million revolver for Carpenter Technology, a \$300 million project financing for ACG Electric Metals, and a \$200 million ABL revolver for Haynes International. Financial headlines continue to question the availability of attractive financing choices in the bank market. Our experience continues to suggest good businesses can access financing in the syndicated bank loan market at very acceptable terms.

Below are the expanded details for some of the deals that were completed in the quarter.

(\$ in millions)	ACG Electric Metals Ltd	Haynes International Inc.	Cleveland-Cliffs Inc.
Date	June 2023	June 2023	June 2023
Deal Size (\$ in MM)	\$75.0 / \$225.0	\$200.0	\$4,750.0
Facility Type	CF Revolver / Term Loan	ABL Revolver	ABL Revolver
Tenor	<i>Not disclosed</i>	5 years	5 years
Purpose	Corporate Purposes / Acquisition	Corporate Purposes	Corporate Purposes
Ratings			
S&P	NR	NR	BB-
Moody's	NR	NR	Ba2
Amortization	<i>Not disclosed</i>	-	-
Pricing at close (bps)			
All-in Spread		235.0	185.0
SOFR Margin	<i>Not disclosed</i>	225.0	175.0
Facility Fee		-	-
Commitment Fee		37.5	30.0
Sustainability Adjustment	<i>Not disclosed</i>	-	-
Pricing Detail (bps)			
	<i>Not disclosed</i>	Avg. Quarterly Avail. SOFR Spread Comm. Fee	Avg. Daily Excess Avail. SOFR Spread Leverage < 4.00x SOFR Spread Leverage > 4.00x
		≥ 66.6% 200.0 37.5	≥ 66.6% 125.0 150.0
		≥ 33.3% 225.0 37.5	≥ 33.3% 150.0 175.0
		< 33.3% 250.0 37.5	< 33.3% 200.0 200.0
			Avg. Revolver Usage Comm. Fee
			≥ 50.0% 25.0
			≥ 20.0% 30.0
			< 20.0% 35.0
SOFR Adjustment (bps) (1-mo / 3-mo / 6-mo)	<i>Not disclosed</i>	10.0 / 10.0 / 10.0	10.0 / 10.0 / 10.0
Rate Floor	<i>Not disclosed</i>	0.00%	0.00%
Financial Covenants			
Interest Coverage Ratio		-	-
Net Leverage Ratio	<i>Not disclosed</i>	-	-
Debt to Capital Ratio		-	-
Fixed Charge Coverage		1.00x when Avail is < the greater of i) \$25.0 million and ii) 15% of Line Cap	1.00x when Avail is < the greater of i) \$25.0 million and ii) 15% of Line Cap
Secured	No	Yes	Yes

Sources: S&P Capital IQ, Moody's, Refinitiv Loan Connector

SYNDICATED BANK LOAN MARKET *(Continued)*

<i>(\$ in millions)</i>	Edw. C. Levy Co.	Carpenter Technology Corp																				
Date	Oct. 2022 (Amended April 2023)	April 2023																				
Deal Size (\$ in MM)	\$150.0	\$350.0																				
Facility Type	ABL Revolver	CF Revolver																				
Tenor	3 years	5 years																				
Purpose	Corporate Purposes	Corporate Purposes																				
Ratings																						
S&P	NR	BB																				
Moody's	NR	B1																				
Amortization	-	-																				
Pricing at close (bps)																						
All-in Spread	150.0	260.0																				
SOFR Margin	150.0	250.0																				
Facility Fee	<i>Not disclosed</i>	-																				
Commitment Fee	<i>Not disclosed</i>	37.5																				
Sustainability Adjustment	<i>Not disclosed</i>	-																				
Pricing Detail (bps)																						
	<i>Not disclosed</i>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Total Leverage Ratio</th> <th>SOFR Spread</th> <th>Comm. Fee</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>≤ 2.00x</td> <td>175.0</td> <td>25.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>> 2.00x</td> <td>200.0</td> <td>30.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>> 2.50x</td> <td>225.0</td> <td>35.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>≥ 3.25x</td> <td>250.0</td> <td>37.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Total Leverage Ratio	SOFR Spread	Comm. Fee		≤ 2.00x	175.0	25.0		> 2.00x	200.0	30.0		> 2.50x	225.0	35.0		≥ 3.25x	250.0	37.5
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SOFR Adjustment (bps) (1-mo / 3-mo / 6-mo)	<i>Not disclosed</i>	10.0 / 10.0 / 10.0																				
Rate Floor	<i>Not disclosed</i>	0.00%																				
Financial Covenants																						
Interest Coverage Ratio		3.00x																				
Net Leverage Ratio	<i>Not disclosed</i>	4.00x ¹																				
Debt to Capital Ratio		-																				
Fixed Charge Coverage		-																				
Secured	Yes	Yes																				

Sources: S&P Capital IQ, Moody's, Refinitiv Loan Connector

¹ Nets (i) domestically held unrestricted cash and equivalents, and (ii) non-domestic unrestricted cash and equivalents up to \$20.0 million; aggregate amount cannot exceed \$100.0 million

1 World Bank. 2023. *Global Economic Prospects*, June 2023.

2 Bloomberg Finance L.P.

3 U.S. Census Bureau.

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