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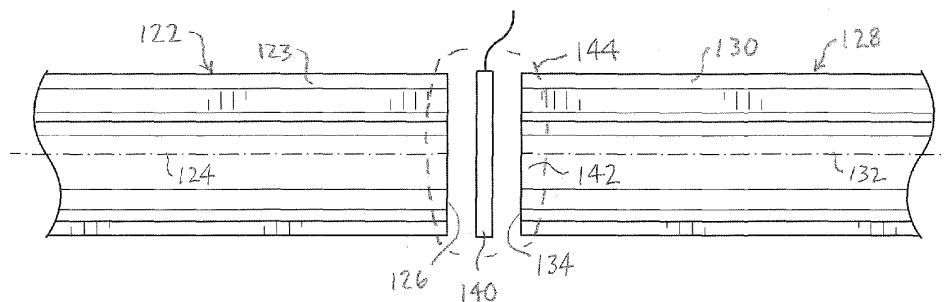


FIG. 2A

(57) Abstract: A method of forming a fused rail assembly in which one or more heating elements are positioned in a gap between first and second end faces of aligned first and second rails. The end faces are covered by a non-oxidizing atmosphere, and the heating elements are energized, to heat portions of the first and second rails to a predetermined hot working temperature. While one or more of the first end faces is moving transversely relative to center lines of the rails, and while the heated portions are at the predetermined hot working temperature, the first and second end faces are engaged with each other, to fuse together, forming the fused rail assembly. The transverse motion of the first end face or the second end face or both may commence before or after the first and second end faces are engaged.



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