



*Nova Walkway Pads at  
McCormick Pier, Portland, OR.*

**R**ecycling, Energy Star®, green roofs—all buzzwords in an industry that is making a transition into the world of sustainable building products. The roofing industry is on the environmental fast track. We are experiencing everything from shingle wraps that read “please recycle” to asphalt roofing recycling centers to a commitment to the new Energy Star® program. Roofing manufacturers, consultants, and contractors are beginning to offer several different forms of earth-friendly products and services.

Across the country, national and local government agencies are initiating programs that give preference in specifications to sustainable building materials. An example of a governmental agency taking the lead in sustainable building recently occurred in Seattle, Washington. In late January, Mayor Paul Schell of Seattle announced that the city has committed to build all public buildings over 5,000 square feet to meet or exceed the silver rating of the U.S. Green Building Council’s (USGBC) LEED Green Building Rating System. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

In a public statement, Schell noted, “Our goal is for the city facilities to become models of sustainable environmental stewardship and healthy worker environments. We think that the LEED rating system provides the best standard for defining what constitutes a ‘green’ building.”

Through the leadership of government agencies, individuals, and progressive manufacturers, sustainable building is continuing to take hold. Recycling is gaining prominence throughout the world. Consultants are standing at the forefront of roofing’s sus-

tainable building movement. It is an opportunity that should show a substantial return in the coming years.

Sustainable building actually consists of three key elements. The product is 1) made of recyclable materials; 2) is recyclable; and 3) has long life. There are several companies that are manufacturing products that meet all three of these criteria. One of these companies is EcoStar, Inc. out of Chicago, Illinois.

EcoStar distributes Majestic Slate Tile and Nova Walkway pads, both made of 100% recycled post-industrial rubber and plastics. These products are also recyclable and through time and testing have proven to have long life.

Majestic Slate is made of the raw material Starloy. Starloy is manufactured using a special formula of post-industrial rubber and plastics. It has been in use for over 25 years and has been a pioneering product in the recycled product industry. It is used to manufacture dock mats for shipping yards. “We are finding interest in every industry for the use of recycled products,” commented Barbara Staroba, Director of Operations at EcoStar’s manufacturing plant. “The roofing industry is just at the beginning of truly utilizing the recycling technologies available.”

One of the first jobs for Majestic Slate was the Pennsylvania Resource Council (PRC) building in the late 1990s. The PRC installed a recycled roofing product, Majestic Slate Tile, on its main building. “Our mission is to educate the public and promote the use of sustainable building products throughout Pennsylvania. In sustainable building products, we look for three qualities: long life, the formulation of recycled materials, and recyclability,” stated Michael Kane, formerly with the Penn-



*Majestic Slate Tile, made of recycled post-industrial rubber and plastics, at Schweitzer Mountain, Idaho.*

sylvania Resources Council (PRC).

Kane continues to promote the use of sustainable building products throughout Pennsylvania and has approvingly watched them emerge. "In the past, recycled products had been considered more expensive and substandard in quality. That has changed in the last couple of years, and I have seen that same change in roofing materials."

Currently, EcoStar is working with Interstate Roofing, Inc. in Portland, Oregon on an upgrade for McCormick Pier, a waterfront complex in downtown Portland. Interstate Roofing recommended using the Nova Walkway Pad system for the numerous decks throughout the complex. Interstate Roofing had already worked with Duro-Last Roofing to provide an Energy Star® roofing system, and with the addition of the Nova system, the project became a great case study for using sustainable building products.

McCormick Pier management had started out with some basic needs: 1) ease of use for tenants, 2) low maintenance, and 3) reasonable cost. "Sustainability was not the first criteria for McCormick Pier in their decision-making process, but it definitely played a part," stated Jay Reid, estimator for Interstate Roofing, Inc. When they realized that the roofing held an Energy Star® label and the decking was recycled and recyclable, it really added weight to the final decision."

That is the message now permeating the roofing industry—combine economics and environment to the benefit of both. Another example of success in this area happens every day with an architect in Sandpoint, Idaho. Tim Boden works with roofing consultants, roofing contractors, and property management to create economical solutions that also work for the environment. "I look for environmentally correct products that can be used economically. That does not mean cheap; it means that they are quality products that will last," stated Boden.

"There is no downside. If it is a quality product that is made of recycled materials and is recyclable, I am not giving up anything," said Boden. "We are using raw materials which would normally go into a landfill to make products for the building trades. This is just a win/win for everybody. We have to use these sustainable products or our landfills will be completely filled with old roofing."

"Even though we are environmentalists, we can't push green building products unless they function, are aesthetic, and cost-effective. That is the future; products must be good for the environment and good for business," concluded Boden.

Now is the time for consultants to take a lead with sustainable building. For those who are stepping forward, the rewards should be great. ■

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Heidi J. Ellsworth** is the owner of HJE Marketing, a full-service marketing company specializing in the roofing industry, which she started in 1998. With a degree from the University of Portland in Communications Management, she has worked in marketing for the industry since 1993. Ellsworth's articles on roofing topics have appeared in numerous trade publications and she continues to write on all types of construction topics with a focus on roofing.



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