

# Estimating Basics

by Pete Young

With so many computerized estimating systems being talked about these days, the straightforward basics of estimating are sometimes overlooked. Robert Petri's *Construction Estimating: Easy Material Estimating Rules* (\$50 from R.W. Publishing, 201 Claire Ave., Fullerton, CA 92835; 800/758-0029) goes back to the basics by providing clear, concise explanations of material takeoff methods accompanied by helpful drawings. At almost 500 pages, this hefty guide covers both wood and light-gauge steel construction, and is well organized into 14 sections with more than 100

subsections. The index quickly guides readers to specific construction details. This is not a price book; it's a manual intended for prospective builders and tradespeople who need to learn or hone estimating skills.

## Environmental Primer for Developers

As environmental issues affecting housing development continue to grow more complex, spec builders and remodelers may find themselves struggling over how to provide full disclosure to potential buyers. In *The Real Estate Guide to the Environment* (\$30 from Professional Education Associates, 37 Martin Lane, Hamilton, NJ 08619; 800/460-8602), authors Barry Chalofsky and Joel Finestine present developers, spec builders, and realtors with all the information they need to investigate and report on 50 environmental issues, including natural factors such as floodplains, radon, and pests; site contamination from asbestos, lead, and noise; utilities such as



## FREE & CHEAP

### Working With Concrete Block

A 40-page booklet entitled *Building Concrete Masonry Homes: Design and Construction* (\$5 from HUD USER, P.O.Box 6091, Rockville, MD 20849; 800/245-2691; www.huduser.org) uses case studies prepared by the National Concrete Masonry Association, the Portland Cement Association, and the NAHB to examine key issues related to building above-grade masonry walls. A dozen photos and several full-page drawings supplement the text.



### Geothermal Fact Sheets

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory offers four fact sheets on heat pumps: *Geothermal Heat Pumps*, *Geothermal Heat Pumps Make Sense for Homeowners*, *Geothermal Heat Pumps for Medium and Large Buildings*, and *Environmental and Energy Benefits of Geothermal Heat Pumps* (free from the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Clearinghouse; 800/363-3732; doe.erec@nrcinc.com). For more in-depth information on geothermal heat pumps, try the Department of Energy (202/586-5340; www.eren.doe.gov/geothermal) or the Geothermal Heat Pump Consortium (888/255-4436; www.geoexchange.org).



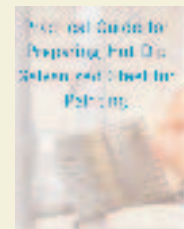
### Hearing Protection Pamphlets

The *Pocket Guide to Hearing Protection* (\$5.25) and *Noise & Your Hearing* (free sample or \$1.20 each in quantity) are two good resources for educating employees on how to protect hearing on the job. Both publications have employee sign-off pages that can be used as part of a company safety program. Contact Business & Legal Reports (39 Academy St., Madison, CT 06443; 800/727-5257).



### Prepping Galvanized Steel for Paint

Put out by the American Galvanizers Association (12200 E. Iliff Ave., Suite 204, Aurora, CO 80014; 800/468-7732; www.galvanizeit.org), the *Practical Guide for Preparing Hot-Dip Galvanized Steel for Painting* is a free 20-page pocket booklet that presents a four-step prepping and priming system to get galvanized metal surfaces ready for paint. The last few pages deal with common paint failure problems and their causes.



### Subcontractor Liability

Three bulletins from the American Society for Concrete Construction (38800 Country Club Dr., Farmington Hills, MI 48331; 800/877-2753; www.asccconc.org) provide advice on contracts, insurance coverage, and subcontractor selection that can help general contractors limit liability for site accidents involving subcontractors. The \$4 pamphlets are entitled *Risk Transfer*, *Glossary of Insurance Terms*, and *Selecting Safe Subcontractors*.



water supply, wastewater, and solid waste; as well as zoning, easements, and other development concerns. The appendices include a state-by-state listing of regulations and contact agencies, plus a sample environmental disclosure form.

## Laminate Countertops

In *Making Plastic-Laminate Countertops*, author Herrick Kimball rounds up tips and techniques for successfully



working with plastic laminate. The book covers everything from substrate prep to laminate layout, cutting, and gluing. Kimball identifies the right tools for laminate work and the best ways to use them. The 130-page book starts with a review of various products, moves on to design issues such as estimating

materials and laying out seams, and continues with a discussion of rough framing, substrate installation, laminate glue-down, and laminate trimming. A final chapter looks at custom edge treatments. Informative pictures, drawings, and charts make the book a top-rate professional guide (\$20 from Taunton Press, P.O. Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470; 800/888-8286; www.taunton.com).

## Roofing Materials Specs

The *1999 Steep-Slope Roofing Materials Guide* (\$85 from the National Roofing Contractors Association, 10255 W. Higgins Rd., Suite 600, Rosemont, IL 60018; 800/323-9545; www.nrca.net), presents valuable information about a variety of roofing products and manufacturers in an easy-to-use format. Each listing includes an in-depth description of a product, along with technical



data on fire rating and performance testing compliance. Asphalt, clay, concrete, metal, wood, slate, and synthetic products, as well as a variety of underlayments, are listed in separate sections for easy reference. One particularly useful section of this guide gives a point-by-point evaluation

of asphalt shingle warranties; unfortunately, no warranty information is given for other roofing materials. An index at the front of the guide lists companies alphabetically, gives their contact information, and points to page numbers where each class of product is listed. A CD-ROM version of the *Guide* sells for \$50. 