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The GypChipper can efficiently pulverize 10,000 pounds of gypsum wallboard scraps per hour. The chipped board can then be recycled.

Using gypsum recycler may lower tipping fees

Mike Czok worked in the painting and wallboard business for 8 years. "Every time we had to throw out Sheetrock," he says, "I thought that surely there must be something else we can do with all this wallboard."

So when in 1989 Czok read about a gypsum recycling machine called GypChipper, he didn't waste any time checking out the Texas manufacturer. Now Czok, armed with several GypChippers, and in partnership with his friend Burt Morrison, has opened New England's first large-scale gypsum recycling operation in Windsor, Vt.

The company, called New England Gypsum/White Gold, will have the capacity to chip up to 120 tons of gypsum a day at

the Windsor facility, says Czok. In addition, Czok and Morrison hope to establish a network of "chipping stations" around New England to accept and chip more of the region's waste wallboard. The chipped wallboard will then be sold to manufacturers of wallboard sheets, portland cement, and fertilizer products.

New England Gypsum is one of what may soon be many local and regional gypsum recycling centers around the country. Though gypsum is easily recycled, relatively little of the estimated 3 million tons of scrap wallboard — approximately 1% of the U.S. waste stream — is recycled each year. The main reason so little wallboard gets recycled has to do with geogra-

phy. The primary recycling facilities are large-scale operations located near the few major wallboard plants, which are near the major gypsum mining operations, such as those in Nova Scotia, Florida, and British Columbia.

But GypChipper and other smaller, more affordable chipping machines may soon make gypsum recycling more widespread. GypChipper, made by National GypChipper (P.O. Box 418, Pflugerville, TX 78660; 512/251-3787) weighs 500 pounds, stands 4 feet tall, is 4 feet long, and at 34 inches wide just fits through a 3-foot doorway. It eats 2 square feet of 1/2-inch wallboard every second; that's about 10,000 pounds an hour. Czok says one worker could load "a whole house worth" of wallboard into one of these machines in half a day. The chippers can empty directly into a barrel or be hooked to a chute to send the chips to a dumpster.

At \$8,000 each, GypChippers won't soon be on every dry-wall contractor's truck, though large dry-wall companies may find purchasing or leasing one worthwhile. But they are light and cheap enough that recycling centers and transfer stations can buy and lease them so that they can accept waste wallboard.

New England Gypsum may be at the vanguard of wallboard

continued on next page

Job leads in Vermont construction directory

Vermont builders and tradespeople have a new source for prospective clients. "Works in Progress" is a directory of commercial and residential construction jobs being planned or started in Vermont.

Mike Dorey of Burlington, the service's founder, said he got the idea from his experience as a sales rep for wood-working companies.

"I went around to different sources to find information on projects that were planned or in the works. I often bumped into people from other companies doing the same thing. So I thought, if somebody put out something that gave me this

information, I'd gladly pay for it," he said.

After hustling up leads from planning boards, architects, regulatory agencies, town offices, contractors, and other contacts, he and his brother Ed distributed their first directory in April of 1990. They've published one every two-and-a-half weeks since then. Each issue has 200 or more listings, 60% to 80% of them new, divided into commercial and residential projects. The jobs cover most of Vermont, with an occasional project in a border town of a neighboring state.

Each listing indicates the specific type of project (such as new residence, rehab apartments, residential addition, restaurant renovation); its "status" (whether it is in planning, permit approval, or construction); an estimated starting date; the estimated cost of the project; its location,

owner, and, if available, the contracting builder. The idea, Dorey said, is to give builders and tradespeople a way to find out about jobs before all the contracts have been signed.

"We're trying to present it as a lead reporting service. It's so difficult in the residential market to find out about prospects before people have selected builders. That's why we look into lot purchases. It turns out about 40% of new lot purchases have owners who want to build."

The Doreys started with fewer than 20 subscribers, but now subscriptions have grown to almost a hundred. Subscriptions cost \$519 per year.

Mark Gilbert, owner of Quality Floors, Inc., of Essex Junction, Vt., a floor installation company with 7 employees has subscribed for several months. Along with referrals from his own string of contacts,

continued on last page

Disabilities Act may offer some opportunities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may provide exceptional opportunities for small remodeling and building companies.

The thrust of the legislation, which was passed by Congress last year, is to make all areas of the community accessible to all people, regardless of physical ability.

That means all public places, such as stores, restaurants, and libraries, will need to make some accommodations for the handicapped. In states where handicapped accessibility laws are already in force, many of these establishments have ramps, special restrooms, and counters at a height a wheelchair-bound person can reach.

However, where no such state legislation has been passed, most public places do not comply with the spirit of the act. The Department of Justice is expected to publish regulations governing changes to public buildings by July 26, 1991. Enforcement of the new standards will begin Jan. 26, 1992.

While it is too early to determine the size of this market, Bryan Patchan, of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Remodelers Council, said it should definitely offer the best opportunities to small companies. Since most of the expected renovations will be custom and relatively short-term jobs, the flexibility of a small

company should provide a competitive edge, Patchan said.

"I can't conceive of how else it will work," he said.

Remodelers could easily transfer expertise gained on small commercial retrofits to residential work, he added.

"It will take a new expertise. A remodeler is going to learn a lot of the nuances doing the small commercial jobs," he said.

Stuart Wells of the NAHB Commercial Council agreed that small companies are likely to benefit most from business generated by the law. He noted that for larger construction companies with 15 employees or more, the costs of complying with the regulations must also be considered.

The NAHB had fought the bill fearing that it might require a construction site to be accessible for handicapped people, which would be a hardship on the contractor, Wells said.

While the bill clearly spells out the intention to make all areas accessible to all people, its coverage of specifics is vague, Wells said. Basically, the language of the bill requires accommodations when they are reasonable and not a hardship for the business, which means initially the rules will be determined in the courts.

"The real problem is the uncertainty. There is no way to tell how 'reasonable' and 'hardship' will be defined," Wells said.

N.E. building conference planned

Stewart Brand, author and founder of the *Whole Earth Catalog*, is the scheduled keynote speaker at this year's 8th annual Quality Building Conference (QBC).

Formerly called the Advanced Residential Construction Conference (ARC), the QBC is scheduled for March 1-3, 1991 at the Sheraton in West Springfield, Mass.

Brand, who is expected to be available throughout the conference, will focus on the topic of his soon-to-be-published book, "How Buildings Learn: and Fail to Learn."

In addition, Floyd Stein, a Danish architect, will share some European methods of building sustainable, energy-

efficient housing.

As in previous years, practical seminars and workshops will make up a large part of the schedule, including one- and two-day Energy Crafted Homes Workshops. Other planned sessions are: Joe Lstiburek on moisture and air quality; Rick Karg on heating and ventilation systems; as well as seminars on new materials, craftsmanship, and business issues.

The QBC is sponsored by the Northeast Sustainable (formerly Solar) Energy Association (NESEA), Northeast Utilities, the New England Electric System, and Boston Edison.

For more information, contact NESEA at 23 Ames St., Greenfield, MA 01301; 413/774-6051.

Consulting business working for ex-contractor

The home building and remodeling business can be a battlefield, with contractor, owner, and architect at war with each other. Then there are the skirmishes with subcontractors, code officials, and suppliers.

Enter Richard Connolly, a Massachusetts ex-contractor turned peacemaker. As a building consultant, employed by the customer, it is Connolly's job to make building and remodeling jobs proceed smoothly.

His company, Cornerstone Consulting, Inc., founded in 1988, in Weymouth, Mass., has served over 100 clients in its 2½ years in business; Connolly says the company is continuing to "grow rapidly in a down market." On all jobs, Cornerstone acts as an advocate for consumers, and is paid only by them.

The company provides three basic services: It helps consumers find and hire designers, contractors, and subs. It helps them develop specs and negotiate bids. And, if requested, it will coordinate the entire project, often with the owner acting as general contractor. The service varies with the specific job — on more than one occasion, says Connolly, he's found himself a reluctant marriage

counselor. The company charges by the hour for some services, but usually also receives a percentage of the total cost for project supervision — 10% for projects in excess of \$10,000.

Connolly's goal, he says, is to create a "win/win situation," where the contractors and subs know exactly what services they are providing at what cost, and the homeowner knows the same. On jobs managed by Cornerstone, the owner buys all materials, and the contractors and subs provide only labor.

When criticized for depriving contractors and subs of profit they need to survive, Connolly counters that contractors appreciate his service because it relieves them of their usual level of aggravation and risk and lets them do what they do best — build. Also, he argues, it gets them into the growing market of owner-contracted projects.

His system for selecting a contractor and an architect, bidding, and contracting is systematized and fully computerized. His next plan is to offer his software and management system as a franchise to other contracting veterans who are looking to get out of the trenches and into the consult-

ing business. Franchisees pay a fee of about \$22,000, most of which goes toward a computer and Connolly's proprietary software. So far, he has signed on two other franchises in Massachusetts and Maine.

For the contractor burnt out on juggling clients and job-site headaches, this type of service,

says Connolly, has great profit potential and less aggravation. He says, "It's a great opportunity for knowledgeable contractors who are just worn out and looking for a change."

For more information, contact Richard Connolly at 79 Mill River Drive, Weymouth, MA 02188; 617/331-1097.



Former contractor, Richard Connolly of Weymouth, Mass., now helps homeowners handle construction projects.

Recycler, continued from previous page

recycling. The company will accept wallboard in pieces or chipped for a fee of \$15 to \$30 a ton. Their network of chipping stations will probably have to charge around \$50 to \$60 a ton to make it worthwhile to collect, chip, and ship the gypsum to the Windsor plant. But those rates are still about half what many New England contractors pay to dispose of their wallboard at landfills.

Czok says the first chipping stations will likely be established at existing construction debris recycling centers or transfer stations in major cities such as Boston, Hartford, Conn., Portland, Maine, and Albany, N.Y. In addition, New England Gypsum may rent or lease GypChippers to larger drywall companies so they can chip on site; chipping on site can reduce the volume of wallboard debris by about 60%, according to Czok, easing transport problems and reducing dumpster fees.

Whether gyp chipping will catch on remains to be seen. Drywallers and contractors will have to make a few adjustments in the way they handle their waste. But Czok is counting on New England's high disposal fees — over \$50 a ton almost everywhere, and over \$100 in many areas — to convince drywallers that recycling beats throwing away whole truckloads of wallboard.

— David Dobbs

From What We Gather

Money spent on remodeling has gone from \$12 billion in 1967 to \$101 billion in 1989 for an average increase of 10.3% per year. Correcting for inflation, the average increase was 3.4% per year during the 22-year period, according to *Housing Economics*.

Boredom and burnout were the most common reasons small- and medium-sized business owners sold out, according to a survey by a mergers and acquisition service. Other reasons included lack of capital, fear of economic slowdown, and age and health.

Next time an owner flinches at a house price, charge by the pound. According to

Builder magazine, a 2,000-square-foot house selling for \$100,000 costs 29 cents/pound. Compared to a Rolls-Royce (\$20/pound), a personal computer (\$100/pound), or Jose Canseco (\$97,917/pound over five years), houses are a bargain.

First there were gold-plated sinks. Then came cast bronze bathtubs. Now Innovative Marble and Tile, a New York-based tile firm, is marketing lapis lazuli floor and wall tiles. Imported from Chile, the deep blue, semi-precious tiles boast an abrasion resistance that is almost five times better than marble. But prices are steep. A 4-by-4-inch stone costs about \$48.

Estimating made easy is the claim of this new software called *Turbo Construction Estimator*. The IBM-compatible relational database-type program features pop-up menus and windows, and does not require memorizing codes. For more information, contact TCE, P.O. Box 2068, Vashon, WA 98013-2068; 206/463-5326.

Archicad Version 4.0 is on the way. The current upgrade of the design software is the most comprehensive since its revision for the Macintosh II. For more information, contact Graphisoft, 400 Oyster Point Blvd., Suite 517A, S. San Francisco, CA 94080; 800/344-3468.

Design hydronic heating systems with Hydron, a new CAD program for IBM-compatible computers. The program relies on a detailed engineering analysis to maintain a high level of accuracy. For more information, contact Technology Transfer Associates Inc., P.O. Box 5187, Utica, NY 13505; 315/733-4732.

Write a proposal for a remodeling job in no time with *Quick Bid*. The IBM-compatible program permits a contractor to select from about 300 paragraphs that describe typical remodeling tasks. Actual quantities, materials, and dimensions are added. For more information, contact Northwest Construction Software, 11110 S.W. Partridge Loop, Beaverton, OR 97007; 503/644-6152.

Computer Bytes



1989 Top Ten Residential Remodeling Markets by Total Number of Permits

Metro Area Value	Number of Permits (actual)	Dollar Value (in 1,000s)	Av. Dollar Per Permit
1. Los Angeles/Long Beach	73,192	\$1,074,849	\$14,685
2. Washington DC/MD/VA	48,158	457,686	9,503
3. Philadelphia/NJ	33,033	15,015	9,536
4. Detroit	30,632	225,595	7,364
5. Minneapolis/St. Paul	24,868	220,853	8,881
6. Boston	23,948	309,246	12,913
7. Anaheim/Santa Ana	23,436	226,682	9,672
8. Newark	22,549	219,432	9,731
9. San Francisco	22,490	335,929	14,936
10. Baltimore	22,131	261,396	11,811
All Metro Areas	1,118,879	11,701,007	10,457
Total U.S.	1,331,152	13,408,758	10,073

NAHB chart

Mass. offers wetlands mediation

Volunteer lawyers will now mediate wetlands disputes pending between developers and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in a state program intended to speed the process.

As Massachusetts has tightened its enforcement of wetlands regulations during the last five years, such disputes have delayed or stopped many projects. The disputes usually arise from builder appeals of wetlands rulings made by local conservation commissions and can take many months to resolve.

Builders, developers, and private owners seeking to build in or near wetlands have waited up to two years for appeals to be heard by the DEP board. The backlog of wetlands cases before the DEP has doubled since 1985.

The mediation program is designed to cut that backlog. The lawyers, all from the Boston Bar Association's environmental law section, will not have the power to make rulings on the disputes. But it is hoped that the mediation will sufficiently narrow the issues so that the developer and the DEP can resolve it. If no resolution is reached, the case will be considered by the DEP as usual.

The program, which was scheduled to start in late October 1990, costs the developer, builder, or other person appealing the original wetland ruling \$500. That fee covers administrative expenses; the lawyers work for free. But the program's administrators say it may save much more than that in attorney fees if it can speed or simplify the resolution of a case.

Real-estate investment pools strain market

A deluge of customers withdrawing cash from real-estate investment pools may exacerbate an already over-supplied commercial real estate market. The pools, started in the late 1970s, permitted pension funds and other large institutional investors to diversify from stocks and bonds according to a story in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Now, however, the slack real estate market has prompted an estimated total of \$2 billion in withdrawal requests, which have been put on waiting lists until property can be sold to cover the payoffs. Investment pool managers, mainly insurance companies, say that considering the current market, it could take years to settle the accounts.

Tax Talk

How to increase your auto deduction

By Irving L. Blackman

It requires some planning to get the most tax-saving dollars per gallon from legitimate deductions of automobile expenses. Most taxpayers have not figured a way to beat the current tough automobile rules.

Good news, there is a way to get the job done. First, the basic rule that causes the problem: You can only deduct business use of your auto. For example, if you drive your auto 20,000 miles in a year and only 8,000 miles are for business, you can only deduct 40% of your auto expenses and depreciation.

Here's a way to win the auto game. What if you have two autos? Make the second car a dinky car that you keep at home, use on weekends, and drive to and from your office, where you house your expensive business car. Each car is driven 10,000 miles per year. Now, the business

car is used 80% for business. Under the rules, you can deduct 80% of the expense and depreciation of the business car. The legitimate tax savings are substantial.

To nail down your larger business car deduction, you should do two things. First, keep a log of business miles and total miles driven, and record expenses in the log backed up by receipts. Would you like to learn how to deduct every dollar of auto expenses you are entitled to under the law? Send for *The Complete Guide to Building Your Automobile Deduction...*

Legally; \$19 to the Book Division, Blackman Kallick Bartelstein, 300 South Riverside Plaza, Chicago, IL 60606.

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Leads, continued from first page

"Works in Progress" has helped Gilbert stay as busy as ever during the recent downturn.

"I don't want to say anything good about them, because I don't want other people to use them," said Gilbert. "That directory is our number one source for finding new contacts. I'd say, conservatively, we've landed at least five or six homes and a couple of good-sized commercial projects through them. We're flourishing."

"Works in Progress" isn't a

cure-all, of course; Gilbert attributes much of his success to attention to quality and quick service. But he's found the directory well worth the investment.

Dorey, of course, agrees. "Often people will say, 'This is great, but we can't afford it right now.' But if they find one or two jobs in this thing, it pays for itself."

For more information, contact Dorey at Works in Progress, P.O. Box 1528, Burlington, VT 05402; 802/658-3797.