

Products

by Patrick McCombe

High-Strength Underlayment

With compressive strength from 6,000 to 8,000 psi, USG's *Proflow Gypsum-Based Floor Underlayment* is suitable for commercial and other heavy-duty, high-traffic applications. The self-leveling product can be stamped or decoratively finished or covered with virtually any floor covering. According to the manufacturer, the product can be installed from feather edge to 1 inch thick and requires less surface preparation, dries faster, and is more economical than Portland cement-based products. Installed prices run about \$7 per square foot at 1/4-inch thickness.

USG, 800/487-4431, www.gypsumsolutions.com.



Low-Slope Roof Solution

Suitable as a finish roofing, *LeakBarrier Mineral-Surface Cap Sheet* is a peel-and-stick membrane for low-slope residential and commercial applications. The fiberglass-reinforced membrane is coated with ceramic granules for UV resistance and protection from physical damage. According to the manufacturer, the product installs 30% to 40% faster than other systems. The material can also be used as a roof tile underlayment and as a flashing material for roof penetrations like skylights and vents. A 75-pound roll covers 108 square feet and is available in seven colors. Prices vary by region, but you can expect to pay about \$26 to \$30 per roll.

Tarco, 800/365-4506, www.tarcoroofing.com.



New Roof Nailer

With 20% more power than its predecessor, the *Paslode R175-C Roof Nailer* drives fasteners from 7/8 to 1 3/4 inches. Weighing in at less than 6 pounds, the new nailer sports a rubber-covered, contoured handle, a two-finger trigger, and an adjustable exhaust port to improve user comfort.

A hardened-steel driver blade, wear plates on the housing, and a carbide-tipped nosepiece assure long-term durability. The nailer has a street price of \$310.

Paslode, 800/682-3428, www.paslode.com.



Router Tables

Promising to make job-site routing easier and safer, the *Wolfcraft Model 540 Bench-Top Router Table* features a 570-square-inch work surface and a heavy-duty aluminum top. According to the maker, the table can accommodate most routers without an adapter plate, and tabletop measuring guides permit quick setup. Dust collection is easier, thanks to an integral dust port and an additional switched outlet. The table includes a feather board, a miter guide, and a large safety shield. The bench-top model 540 sells for \$119; the free-standing model 670 with similar features sells for \$179.

Wolfcraft, 630/773-4777, www.wolfcraft.com.



ON THE JOB

Easy Rainscreen

by Peter Bush

After attending a seminar on providing a drainage plane and an air space behind wood siding, I decided to try the technique on our next project — a 4,000-square-foot ranch sided with cedar shingles and channel-rustic lap siding.

I started on the gable ends, where cedar shingles were being installed. We installed horizontal 1/4-inch lath strips, ripped from 2x4s. We cut the strips into 4-foot lengths and nailed them to the layout line, leaving a 1/2-inch gap between the ends to allow for some vertical air movement. Progress was slow, and I really wanted something that provided more air movement.

I hit upon Benjamin Obdyke's *Home Slicker*, a yellow plastic mesh that is designed to go up behind horizontal wood siding. (It's similar to Obdyke's Cedar Breather, only thinner.) The material is about 1/4 inch thick, and the siding is applied directly over it. It's thin enough that you can still use 5/4-inch casing and trim, leaving a 1/16-inch reveal; extension jambs can be standard widths. The mesh allows air and water to move through it in all directions, regardless of siding type. A 39-inch-wide roll weighs about 7 pounds and covers approximately 150 square feet. Home Slicker ended up costing me \$75 per roll (52¢/sq.ft.). I ordered it through my local yard and had the material in about a week.

The stuff goes up quickly. You roll it out and staple it up, butting seams and courses and cutting it in around doors and windows. It's important to install screening at exposed edges to keep out insects. Before installing the bottom course, we stapled a 6-inch strip of fiberglass screen along the bottom edge and left it hanging. After installing the Home Slicker, we folded the hanging screen back over the front, forming a J-shaped insect screen along the bottom edge.

Benjamin Obdyke, 800/346-7655,
www.obdyke.com.

Peter Bush is a builder and remodeler in Sevierville, Tenn.



On a recent project, the author first tried using lath strips to create an air space behind the cedar shingles on the end gable — a tedious process.



Home Slicker creates a 1/4-inch air space behind the siding — plenty of room to allow water to weep out over a properly detailed drainage plane.

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Products (continued)

Better Knuckle Buster

Tubing cutters are among the simplest of tools. A sharpened wheel is rotated



around the tubing until it cuts through. Close quarters require a mini cutter, a tiny version of the same tool. The tradeoff is an uncomfortably small knob for adjusting pipe size and tensioning the wheel as it cuts. Ridgid's *Self-Acting Midget Cutter* has a spring-loaded cutting wheel, so you don't have to keep turning a small knob as you cut through the pipe. The cutter works on copper, brass, and aluminum tubing from $\frac{3}{16}$ inch to $\frac{15}{16}$ inch. It lists for \$16.50.

Ridgid, 800/769-7743, www.ridgid.com.

Coping Mechanism

Coffered ceilings and other cope-intensive details can be made faster and more accurately with a new purpose-built tool. The *Copemaster* works something like a key-duplicating machine: It uses a perfectly coped piece of molding to reproduce others in less than 30 seconds. The 10-inch circular blade tilts for both left and right copes



and can accommodate molding up to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches thick and $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide. The

65-pound machine folds for transport. The price is \$1,895.

Copemaster,
800/630-1104,
www.copemaster.com.

Frozen Pipe Protection

Frozen pipes spell disaster for builders and homeowners alike. The *FreezeAlarm* alerts homeowners when the indoor temperature in an unoccupied home drops below 45°F. The alarm automatically dials up to three programmed telephone numbers and sounds an alarm tone. The unit continues to call until it's reset or the temperature rises above 45°F. A 9-volt battery maintains protection during power failures. Premium models can even raise the temperature in a home with a phone call from a remote location. Prices start at \$100.

Control Products, 800/947-9098, www.freezealarm.com.



► Products (continued)

Little Level

If your torpedo level isn't quite big enough and your 2-footer is a little too big, Empire's *1-foot Magnetic Level* should be just right. The extruded aluminum frame has a full-length magnet on one side and a V-grooved edge on the other. Durable vials show plumb, level, and 45 degrees. A fourth vial can be used for sloping gutter or pipe. But best of all, this level fits in your toolbox. List price is \$14.

Empire, 800/558-0722, www.empirelevel.com.



Instant Hand Rail

These days, many building products arrive on the job site ready to install, but perhaps the most astonishing is the preassembled *Wonderail Handrail System*. The 34-inch-high rail system is shipped completely factory-assembled, including red oak or primed balusters. Plowed rail and special hardware allow the system to work with virtually any tread width and riser height without modification. The system can even be ordered pre-finished in golden oak, early American, and provincial stains. Oak rail with primed balusters runs about \$40 to \$45 per linear foot; oak rail with oak balusters runs about \$58 per linear foot.

Coffman, 276/783-7251, www.coffmanstairs.com.



Wet Floor Fix

Most flooring manufacturers won't recommend installing their products on a concrete surface with a moisture vapor transmission (MVT) rate in excess of three pounds over 1,000 square feet in a 24-hour period. *Dex-O-Tex Vapor Shield* from Crossfield products allows the installation of epoxy, vinyl, or wood over concrete with MVT rates as high as 10.4 pounds. The product also acts as an underlayment for smoothing, leveling, or sloping and, according to the maker, has no significant odor during installation. Depending on the severity of the moisture problem, prices range from \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot.

Crossfield Products, 310/886-9100, www.dexotex.com.



Drywall Productivity Pack

The special features of the *Score N' Snap* tool combo make it the ultimate for hanging drywall. The kit includes a 25-foot tape and a utility knife. The tape's slotted hook guides a utility knife blade, increasing safety and accuracy when making cuts. The 1¹/₄-inch tape has a shock-absorbing case and extends to 11 feet without support. The knife comes in a traditional nonretracting style but includes a unique rasp-type handle for smoothing and trimming. The kit costs \$25.

Warner, 877/927-6378, www.warnertool.com.

Products (continued)

Low-VOC Construction Adhesive



Solvent-based construction adhesives have advantages over water-based adhesives, but the VOC (volatile organic compound) content makes them less environmentally friendly. Many builders prefer the greater working temperature range and faster grab of solvent-based products. OSI Sealants recently introduced *SF-400® VOC Construction & Sub-Floor Adhesive* with all of the advantages of products with higher VOC content. A 28-ounce tube sells for about \$4.

OSI Sealants, 800/321-3578, www.osiproseries.com.

Protection Plan

Struggling to manage a large set of plans on the job site can quickly lead to dogears, stains, and, worst of all, missing pages. Transport and protect your plans with the *Easi Carrier* from Easi File, a manufacturer of blueprint storage cabinets for architects and engineers. The soft-sided caddy is available in 24x36-inch and 30x42-inch sizes. It unfolds to create a hard surface for writing notes and making revisions. The smaller size starts at \$100.



Easi File, 800/800-5563, www.easifileusa.com.

Window to the World

Increasingly popular on high-end homes, French casement windows have no frame or mull post separating the two sash, allowing an unobstructed view. Lincoln Windows offers *Wood French Casements* in six aluminum cladding colors or primed wood. Operation is easy with a multipoint latch that controls both top and bottom locks and provides a tight seal against the weather stripping. Sash operate independently for better ventilation control.



A clad unit (R.O. approx. 4x4 feet) with four ⁹/₁₆-inch jambs and a screen has a list price of \$1,066.

Lincoln Windows, 715/536-2461, www.lincolnwindows.com.

Long-Life Light

At only 5 inches and a little over 2 ounces, the *Mini-Flash LED Pocket Flashlight* is perfect for a glove compartment or toolbelt. The little light will last 82 hours on a new set of N-cell batteries, and the three impact-resistant LED bulbs will burn for more than ten years before needing replacement. The aircraft-grade aluminum housing is sealed with rubber O-rings, so it can easily take a dive into wet concrete or a mud puddle. The light costs about \$20.

LEDtronics, 800/579-4875, www.ledtronics.com.

