

Tools and materials seen at *JLC Live*

# Innovative Products 2013

by Charles Wardell

**A** lot of construction pros say that the *JLC Live* show is the most valuable annual event they attend. That's no surprise. In addition to a full lineup of educational seminars and live demonstrations, the event includes a jam-packed exhibition where attendees can put their hands on any number of new tools and products. The *JLC* editorial staff spent

three days at this year's Providence, R.I., show walking the floor and talking with vendors, and found lots of products that solve a variety of problems faced by builders and remodelers in the field. Here's a small sampling of what was on display.

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## On Track

One of the busiest spots at this year's show was Festool's booth, where attendees flocked around the new **TS 55 REQ** track saw, a redesign of the TS 55 EQ. New features include an easy-to-read depth scale, a control knob for finer depth adjustments, a flat housing for flush-cutting against walls, a riving knife that emerges from the base before the saw blade (for easier positioning in existing cuts), and improved dust extraction. Like other Festool track saws, this one includes a slip clutch to reduce the chance of kickback, limit stops that prevent the saw base from rising during a plunge cut, and a guard that keeps the blade covered above the cut line. It costs \$585; a 75-inch guide rail adds about \$185.

**Festool**, 888/337-8600, festoolusa.com.



Insul Cube



Automatic Operator



Zip Liquid Flashing

## Insulation Bag

The band-joint area can be a challenge to insulate correctly. A lot of contractors don't want to spray foam into the area, so they opt for less-than-ideal solutions like cutting fiberglass batts and stuffing them into place. If you're using blown fiberglass or cellulose, National Fiber offers a third way. Its **Insul Cube** is a fire-rated bag that you fill with blown insulation on the job site, then friction-fit between the joists. You vary the amount of insulation according to the size of the space. If you need to squeeze the bag behind pipes or wires, you can put it in place empty, then fill it. The bags cost \$1.35 each.

**National Fiber**, 800/282-7711, insul-cube.com.

## Invisible Motor

Most powered window operators have a less-than-elegant look. Andersen's new low-voltage **Automatic Operator** is an exception because it's built into the window frame. It comes with a wall-mounted controller and a handheld remote that can control up to four windows. A sensor automatically closes the window when it starts to rain. The window won't operate if the screen is removed (a safety feature that was designed to prevent it from closing on someone's hand). The operator is available on the company's 400 series and A series awnings, for window sizes from 2 feet by 2 feet to 5 feet by 4 feet. Added cost is \$400 for the first window and \$220 apiece for up to three additional ones.

**Andersen**, 800/426-4261, andersen corp.com.

## Liquid Flashing

People who don't like to detail flashing tape around pipes and other curved wall penetrations might consider **Zip Liquid Flashing**. This liquid-applied product is being marketed as a complement to flashing tape and will waterproof and air-seal penetrations in one step. The maker's engineers told us that it combines the waterproofing properties of polyurethane with the long-term durability of silicone. The application temperature range is 35°F to 110°F. It can be applied to wet surfaces and dries tacky in 15 minutes. It's sold in 20-ounce sausage tubes or cartridges; a tube costs around \$20.

**Huber Engineered Woods**, 800/933-9220, huberwood.com.



**Q Premier Boiler**



**Garage Ventilator**



**Tru Exterior Trim**

## Compact Combo

The **Q Premier Boiler** combines a 132,000-Btu heating-only boiler and a 24-gallon charged indirect hot-water tank in one compact unit with roughly half the footprint of a conventional boiler and water heater. One potential problem with a combination boiler/hot-water heater is a mismatch between the heating and DHW loads, but Rinnai claims that this isn't an issue with the Q Premier: You can size for the heating load yet still get 243 gallons of 107°F water during the first hour after a full charge, thanks to temperature stratification (heating the top of the tank first) and domestic priority (in which DHW takes precedence over heating). The boiler costs \$8,475.

**Rinnai**, 800/621-9419, rinnai.us.

## Exhaust Fan

People who use the garage as a workshop and keep it sealed up in winter may be exposing themselves to a toxic stew of fumes from paints, fertilizers, pesticides, and stored gasoline — not to mention potential carbon monoxide from car exhaust and that open-combustion water heater that hasn't been serviced in years. Enter the **Garage Ventilator**, a 7-cfm continuous-exhaust fan that goes on the floor of the garage next to an exterior wall and is ducted to the outside. The manufacturer also offers a fan-powered makeup register that can pull makeup air from inside the house, if needed. Pricing starts at \$795.

**E-Z Breathe**, 866/822-7328, ezbreathe.com.

## Beadboard From Fly Ash

Boral's **Tru Exterior Trim** is made from PolyAsh, a blend of 70% fly ash and proprietary polymers. Its expansion rate is one-third that of PVC, says the maker. Screw heads can be driven cleanly flush to the surface without mushrooming (at least that's what we found on the samples we received). The material is approved for ground contact and is compatible with silicone and acrylic caulking. It can be painted with any acrylic latex. The company just introduced a 5/8-inch by 6-inch beadboard that sells for \$1.60 to \$1.70 per linear foot.

**Boral Composites**, 800/926-7259, boraltruexterior.com.



Flak Jacket



Flex 100H



Club House

## Slow Burner

Weyerhaeuser's **Flak Jacket** is an intumescent fire-resistant coating for Trus Joist TJIs. In multifamily buildings, it provides a one-hour fire rating for floor and ceiling assemblies with one rather than two layers of 5/8-inch drywall. In single-family construction, it gives I-joists the burn equivalency of solid 2x10s, a requirement for unfinished basements in some jurisdictions that have adopted the 2012 IRC. Of course, the first thing we noticed is that the flanges are only partially coated. No problem, says the company: The coating swells when heated, covering enough of the flange to achieve the needed fire rating. Expect to pay about 50% more than for the company's standard I-joists.

**Weyerhaeuser**, 888/453-8358, woodbywy.com.

## Small and Smart

The **Flex 100H** heat-recovery ventilator is designed for homes with less than 2,000 square feet of floor space. In Eco mode the fan runs continuously at the speed needed to maintain the home's preset temperature and relative humidity. The maximum continuous speed is 100 cfm, but Turbo Touch mode lets the user boost output to 150 cfm for 20- to 60-minute intervals, which means the HRV can double as a bathroom exhaust fan. The company's EcoTouch Controller (sold separately for \$130) has a dedicated button for the Turbo Touch feature. The Flex 100H costs about \$920.

**Fantech**, 800/747-1762, fantech.net.

## New Twist on PVC

**Club House** decking is a cellular PVC product with a core that the maker says is engineered for strength and water resistance. The cap stock is co-extruded using a material that expands and contracts at the same rate as the core, which supposedly reduces chipping and delamination. The boards come in two patterns — an earth tone and simulated hardwood — with a different shade of color on each face. They carry a 25-year fade and stain warranty and cost \$3.50 to \$4.25 per foot.

**Deceuninck**, 877/563-4251, deceuninck-america.com.



Bestfence V3 PRO



Embassy Ceiling



Column Wrap

## Quick Workstation

Setting up and breaking down stationary tools can be a time-sucking vacuum, but the **Bestfence V3 PRO** system gives you some of that time back. Setup is a matter of folding down the hinged legs, extending and locking the rails, then removing the rail tables from their cradle on the back of the saw and snapping them into place on the rails. Breakdown is similarly simple and quick. Lockable wheels make the workstation easy to move from place to place. It costs \$850.

**Fastcap**, 888/443-3748, fastcap.com.

## Suspended Ceiling

An **Embassy Ceiling** not only looks better than a conventional suspended ceiling, it also eats up less headroom. Once installed, the bottom of the cross members lies a mere  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches below the bottom edge of the joists. Both the cross members and the 2x2 panels are made from MDF with a laminated paper finish. They come in three colors: white, coffee, and maple. As with any suspended ceiling, the panels can be lifted in and out of the frame. The system costs \$4.15 to \$4.50 per square foot, including panels, cross members, and all hardware.

**Embassy Ceiling**, 800/567-5813, embassyceiling.com.

## PVC Column

Wrapping columns with cellular PVC trim used to be a fussy job, but the major PVC suppliers are coming out with column wraps that make things a lot easier. Azek's **Column Wrap** has three connected panels with press-fit lock seams that, when folded together, wrap around the structural post. The fourth panel then locks into place to create a tight and secure enclosure. The product comes with a smooth or white matte finish in 10-foot lengths and in sizes that fit around 4x4, 6x6, and 8x8 posts. Prices range from \$90 to \$180 per post.

**Azek Building Products**, 877/275-2935, azek.com.



## Instant Dust Door

The **Zip Door** is made from 4-mil plastic sheeting with a built-in zipper. It can be installed in less than a minute and is applied to the wall opening with two-sided tape. The side that goes against the wall adheres gently to the wall surface like traditional painter's tape; the side that sticks to the plastic makes a stronger bond but can be repositioned for up to an hour before it's fully set. In cases where lead paint is present, the door meets the EPA's RRP requirement for a covered doorway, says the maker. A 3-foot by 7-foot door costs about \$30, and a 4-foot by 8-foot door about \$35.

**ZipWall**, 781/648-8808, zipwall.com.

## Triple-Pane Windows

Marvin Integrity Windows has added a triple-pane glazing option to its **Wood-Ultrex** casements and awnings. The glazing uses three panes of glass, two low-e coatings, and argon gas fill to achieve U-factors of .18 to .20 (compared with .28 for the company's best double-pane casement). The triple glazing is available on casements up to 3 feet wide by 6 feet tall. Prices range from \$430 to \$900, depending on window sizes and options. The company declined to provide a window-to-window price comparison with equally sized double panes, but did say that the triple-pane option makes the most sense economically in cold northern climates.

**Marvin**, 800/328-0268, marvin.com.

## Carpet Board

**NyloBoard** decking was described to us as a "noncomposite composite." The resin is mixed with post-industrial carpet fiber rather than sawdust. Although the product is 80% carpet fiber by volume (20% by weight), the resin makes it impervious to water. It looks like capped decking but isn't — the resin rises to the surface during the manufacturing process. Board edges can be grooved or square. The 1x6 boards come in lengths up to 24 feet and are rated for 200 pounds per square foot for a 16-inch span, 100 pounds for a 24-inch span. They cost \$3.50 to \$4 per linear foot.

**NyloBoard**, 877/695-6909, nyloboard.com.