

Adding a Deck Pays Off

Pacific-area homeowners benefit most

The numbers look good for the decking industry in *Remodeling* magazine's "Remodeling Cost vs. Value Report 2006," an annual Hanley Wood publication that compares the amount homeowners paid for various remodeling projects with what those improvements added to the resale price of the house.

In the study, the cost of a deck addition is based on a 16x20 deck constructed with composite decking, pressure-treated joists, 4x4 posts, and concrete footings. Features include a bench, a planter, a three-step stair, and matching railing.

On average, U.S. homeowners can expect to recoup more than 75 percent of what they pay for such a deck on the resale of their home. That figure is as high as 91 percent for residents of the Pacific region, comprised of Alaska, Hawaii, California, Oregon, and Washington. Residents of the East North Central region — Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin — earn the smallest average return in the survey, still a respectable 63.6 percent.

Average Cost and Resale Value of a 16x20 Deck			
Region	Homeowner Cost	Resale Value	Percent Recouped
National	\$14,728	\$11,307	76.8%
New England (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)	\$14,723	\$11,630	79.0%
Middle Atlantic (NJ, NY, PA)	\$15,033	\$11,817	78.6%
East North Central (IN, IL, MI, OH, WI)	\$15,081	\$9,594	63.6%
West North Central (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)	\$15,063	\$9,729	64.6%
South Atlantic (DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV)	\$13,975	\$11,611	83.1%
East South Central (AL, KY, MS, TN)	\$13,891	\$11,488	82.7%
West South Central (AR, LA, OK, TX)	\$14,006	\$10,601	75.7%
Mountain (AZ, CO, ID, NM, MT, UT, NV, WY)	\$14,672	\$10,740	73.2%
Pacific (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)	\$16,297	\$14,846	91.1%

Reports for 60 individual cities can be purchased from Hanley Wood and downloaded at www.costvsvalue.com. A complete, preprinted report is also available. (In the interest of full disclosure, Hanley Wood also owns *Professional Deck Builder*.) — Laurie Elden

The EPA ruled against the use of Acid Copper Chromate (ACC) to treat lumber for residential purposes. In its January decision, the agency determined that the chemical — which contains hexavalent chromium, a known carcinogen made famous by Erin Brockovich — poses health risks to treatment plant workers,

contractors, and consumers. If that weren't enough, the EPA also concluded that at the end of the lumber's useful life, it might have to be disposed of as hazardous waste, posing an environmental threat. According to the EPA, "The risks of concern associated with the proposed residential uses of ACC outweigh the minimal benefits."

Widely spaced horizontal balusters were blamed for the fatal fall of a Chicago man on New Year's Eve. Michael Doyle fell through a gap that "may have been 22 inches from the top to the second rail," building department Peter Scales told the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Though the railing met code when built, it wouldn't meet current code.

TimberSIL Hits Snag, Regroups

You may remember hearing about TimberSIL, a nontoxic, noncorrosive alternative to ACQ; but you may also be wondering why you haven't seen it at your local lumberyard.

After all, the product got a lot of buzz. It was one of BuildingGreen's Top 10 Building Products of 2004, and won a *Popular Science* "Best of What's New 2005" Grand Award.

The reason for the attention is that TimberSIL takes a unique approach to protecting wood: Rather than making the wood poisonous to insects and fungi, as traditional pressure-treating chemicals do, it uses a barrier method. The TimberSIL process soaks the wood with a sodium-silicate solution and then heats it to essentially

surround the wood fibers with thin layers of amorphous glass. If the treatment works as advertised, the lumber then ceases to be a food source for fungi and insects, without leaching toxic chemicals.

But Timber Treatment Technologies, the Springfield, Va.-based company that owns the TimberSIL technology, has run into difficulties in recent months. In September, it was sued by Northern Crossarm, a Chippewa Falls, Wis., company it had contracted with to produce the treated lumber. Northern Crossarm, according to *Chippewa Valley Newspapers*, sought payment for almost \$900,000 of treated lumber and alleged that TTT misrepresented the manufacturing process. The dispute

has been moved to arbitration, but as of the end of January, there was no negotiated settlement. And in addition to its legal woes, TTT lost its national distribution agreement with Huttig Building Products.

Currently, the company is operating exclusively out of its Greenville, S.C., facility, which has a capacity of 30 million board feet a year. It's got three authorized dealers in South Carolina, one in Florida, and one in Kentucky. The company is actively pursuing sales agreements with distributors and hopes to gradually open additional regional plants. It has also received some inquiries from abroad, but doesn't have any commitments in hand at press time. — L.E.

Procell Decking Systems will be merging operations with Azek Building Products, a wholly owned subsidiary of CPG International. John R. Loyack, president of Scranton, Pa.-based CPG, said the plan is to combine "Azek's brands and sales team" with "the people and technology of Procell." Procell, located in Foley, Ala., manufactures decking made from solid-core cellular vinyl, a similar technology, according to a CPG statement, to that used in Azek exterior trim products. CPG completed the purchase of 100 percent of Procell's outstanding stock for \$54 million, at the end of January.

DeWalt has recalled 44,000 DC305 reciprocating saws, after receiving four reports of short-circuiting switches. If your DC305 saw has a date code between 200601-49 and 200640-49 printed under the handle where the battery is inserted, call DeWalt at 866/751-9562 for a free repair.

ON THE INTERNET

For virtual fun with trucks, check out Knaack Manufacturing's Weather Guard Web site (www.weatherguard.com). The newest addition to the site is a "GearUp Truck Fit Guide": Select the year, make, and model of your truck and get an interactive list of

suitable Weather Guard truck boxes and racks. Also at the site is an updated version of Weather Guard's "Vehicle Solutions," a program that lets you create a 3-D design of your work van fully fitted out with your choice of storage options.

Ebuild (www.ebuild.com) got a facelift in January. Hanley Wood (owner of *Professional Deck Builder*) relaunched the free public Web site, which contains information about construction products, materials, and tools for residential builders and remodelers. New features include specification guides, a video library, and builder brand-use studies. ❖