

## SERVICE WORKS

## "UP ON TOP" NEWS

## Roof Coatings — Count The Benefits

If there's one lesson everyone has learned, it's that costs will almost always go up, and rarely ever come back down. Coupling steady cost increases with reduced available budgets typically sends building owners and managers scrambling to find ways to cover operating and capital expenses. One useful tool they are all discovering is sustainability.

When discussing sustainable initiatives in the roofing industry, we often hear the words or phrases "green", "environmentally friendly", "energy smart", "LEED", and many others that describe the maximum use and effectiveness of resources. These attributes describe significant economic and environmental benefits, which make sustainable roof choices a desirable option for many commercial buildings.

For most buildings, energy and operat-

ing costs have increased dramatically over the past few years. In addition, the materials and labor costs necessary to construct and maintain them have nearly doubled in that same short time. Building owners are taking a serious look at sustainable options to reduce costs for their facilities. This is where sustainable roof options can help. As part of the building envelope, roof systems and coatings offer a wide variety of choices that can help building owners achieve these goals. Roof coatings in particular offer the most economical, easy to install and least disruptive roof sustainability options available.

For most roof systems, roof coatings renew the integrity of the surface of the roof by filling in cracks and replacing weathered and worn areas. Roof coatings reinforced with membranes such as polyester or fiberglass can seal and waterproof a roof. They can also improve reflectivity and emissivity while reducing thermal shock. Coatings can extend the life of most low-slope commercial roof types for many years while reducing energy consumption, thus saving the owner more money.

Finding ways to increase the service life of roofs makes sense to owners and reduces the waste generated by roof tear-offs. Statistics compiled by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency show that waste generated from roof tear-offs accounts for 15%-20% of total landfill waste. By coating and maintaining roofs, one can dramatically increase the years of service they can provide.

When looking to save on energy costs,

reflective coatings can have a substantial impact. Reflective roof surfaces decrease heat absorption into a roof, so less heat is retained in the building and the surrounding environment. By reducing the surrounding air temperature and the amount of heat transfer through a roof, less energy is required to cool a building.

Reflective roof coatings can lower a building's energy needs, reduce the average cost per square foot to maintain the roof, and as if that weren't enough, positively impact the environment. Sustainable choices for roofing systems simply make good business and social sense.

Roof coatings have emerged as one of the most practical and affordable ways to save energy, money, and extend the overall life of the roof system. They are relatively easy to apply and inexpensive to install. A number of roof coating options are available for almost any type of roof, climate and budget.

The drive toward sustainability is the result of programs such as the U.S. EPA's Energy Star program, U.S. Green Building Council's LEED rating system, and a growing number of state and city standards for roofing performance. Some cities, municipalities, and even power providers are offering rebates for choosing qualified roof coating options.

With high-energy costs here to stay and building energy efficiency standards tightening, qualified reflective roof coatings will remain as one of the most effective and most economical ways to meet or exceed these emerging standards.



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