

# what's

## Here Is an Array of Innovative New Tools Designed to Make Your Job Both Easier and More Productive

*Editor's Note: To enhance your "New Products Experience," we have added circle numbers for each of the products mentioned in this article. Use the Free Advertiser Information Card bound into this magazine, to request more information from the manufacturer.*

"There has got to be a better way" has been the traditional lament of people working in muscle intensive professions such as walls and ceilings. But manufacturers are now increasingly taking the first step and asking, "How can we make it in a bet-



ter way?" Here's a toolbox full of innovative new products designed to both enhance the quality of the finished work while making your job of installation so much easier.

The **Rotary Work Platform** from Innovative Fabricators, Inc. of Watertown, S.D. was specifically designed to provide safe, efficient and economical means of reaching over stationary machines, wiring and other hard-to-reach areas when attached to a forklift. It can rotate a full-360 degrees, enabling the operator to access difficult areas safely

President Nick Ksenych reports that "unlike the 4 x 4-foot box that usually confines the worker, this equipment covers a 16-foot diameter area and is operated from the platform." Though it weighs only 450 pounds, it has a capacity of 400 pounds. It can be knocked down for shipping and is easy to reassemble. Two removable legs permit standing the unit in an upright position for removal from the forklift. It features a handy tool shelf, safety tiebacks and safety yellow paint covering.

The Teg-Rat Acoustical **Tile Cutting System**, says Vincent Testa, president of Vinal Industries, Inc. of Ipswich, Mass., "is the first full system for cutting 2 x 4 acoustical tile." The collapsible cart, which carries three cartons of ceiling tiles, is equipped with a self-contained dust collection system and an adjustable slide angle rule to 45 degrees. The unit is designed to not only increase productivity, but also ensure consistency from one tile to the next and from one worker to the next.

# new?

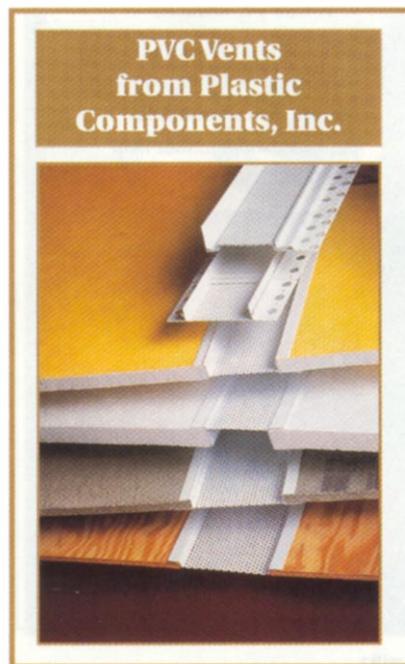
By Michael J. Major

“We offer several options for our cutters, so you can make factory-appearing cuts on the wall or in midfield where you might have linear defusers or unconventional field lighting.” Newly introduced is a cutter that cuts and reveals tile while simultaneously creating a slitting kerf cut on the cut edge of the tile, where it rests on top of the wall angle. “It creates a void on the tile so now instead of having to measure each tile individually, you can take an average of all the cuts on a particular wall, and cut to only one dimension,” Testa says.

**PVC Vents** from Plastic Components, Inc. of Miami were the first PVC vents. “PVC is easy to work with and never rusts, which is often a problem with vents,” says John Larson, sales manager. “We’ve found PVC to be competitively priced compared to galvanized or regular aluminum.” The vents are produced for a variety of applications, including a one-piece vent for stucco in a variety of thicknesses and widths. There are three-piece vents for several different soffit positions,

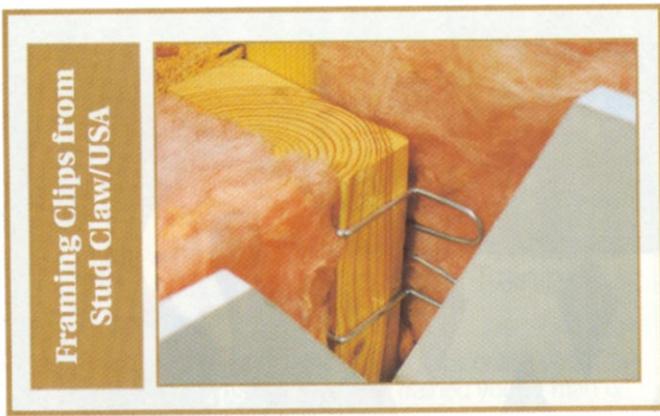
as well as those for EIFS, sheathing boards, new cement boards and a variety for plywood sheathing.

For most sheathing materials, the vents are 3/8" to 1" thick and provide on average 15 square inches of airflow per lineal foot. All the vents are designed for different amounts of airflow. Other features include paintability, extra-wide mounting/nailing flanges and striations for positive bonding.



The R-Plug Warm Corner **Framing Clips**, says Roger Wynar, vice president of Stud Claw/USA of Orchard Park N.Y., are two-stud corners with drywall clips intended to take the place of three-stud corners. “Two-stud corners are now recommended by almost every authority in the business,” Wynar says. “But removing the third stud from the corner used only to back up the drywall means some provision has to be made.”

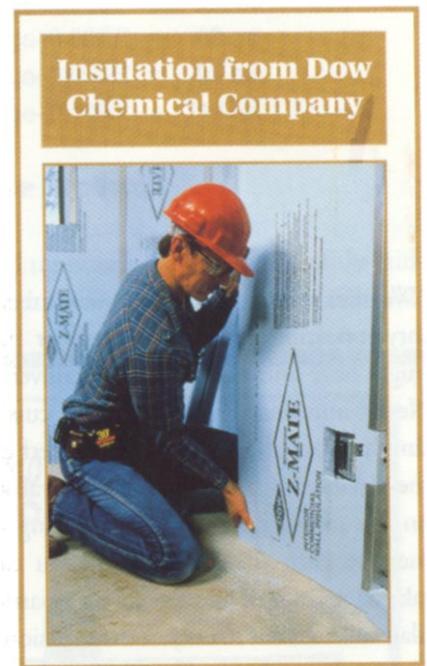
R-Plus Clips grip the framing with sharp talons, requiring neither nails nor tools.



They easily install on studs or coiling plates, having passed a two-hour fire test for rated walls. By omitting the third stud that can cause a "cold shaft" in every corner, this product eliminates cracks and mildew

problems. These two-stud corners also conserve forests and save labor as well as heating/cooling energy over the life of the building.

Styrofoam Z-Mate **Insulation** from Dow Chemical Company, Midland, Mich., is a rigid extruded polystyrene foam insulation that fits between Z-furring channels. Precut to 23 7/8" wide, this insulation fits between furring channel placed on 24-inch centers without cutting or trimming, thus saving time and money, says Product Mar-



keting Manager Jim Gurnee. "In the past you normally had to trim every board," Gurnee says. "That means more labor and more effort. This is a simple invention. People often say, 'Oh, this is so simple. Why didn't somebody think of it before?' Well, they didn't."

The goal here was to provide an insulation that meets installers' needs—one clean and easy to install when finishing interior walls. Gurnee says this product shares the same qualities as all of Dow's

rigid, extruded polystyrene foam, including moisture resistance and R-value retention, plus durability, reusability and versatility. One change, though, is the phasing out of its previous Greyboard insulation so that the color blue takes its place as part of the recognizable Dow trademark.

The TrusSteel **Light Gauge Steel Trusses** are the result of an alliance formed by Alpine Engineered Products, Inc. of Pompano Beach, Fla. and Unimast, Inc. of Shiller Park, Ill. The intent says Alpine's Donald Kitzmiller, manager of advertis-



ing/communications, was to bring truss engineering and design technology together with steel roll forming and steel construction technology in a concerted effort to develop a unique, proprietary light gauge steel chord section.

The 1.5 x 2.75 in. and 2.5 x 4 in. sections are formed in 22 to 16 gauge material to provide the designer and engineer with solutions from the shortest jacks to 80 foot clearspan trusses. The high strength-to-weight ratio of the TrusSteel trusses make them easier to deliver, handle and install. Kitzmiller says the trusses are extremely light in weight, about 50 percent less than wood and 20 percent to 30 percent lighter than other steel trusses. They are also laterally rigid, which, along with the light weight, make them easy to handle.

One man can typically lift and carry a 40-foot truss by himself. Also, the lateral stability created by the unique chord design and tight chord-to-web joint connection achieved with double shear screw technology provide handling capabilities uncommon to other steel truss designs.

Firm-Fill 4010 **Underlayment** from Hacker Industries Inc. of Newport Beach, Calif, is designed for thin capping concrete

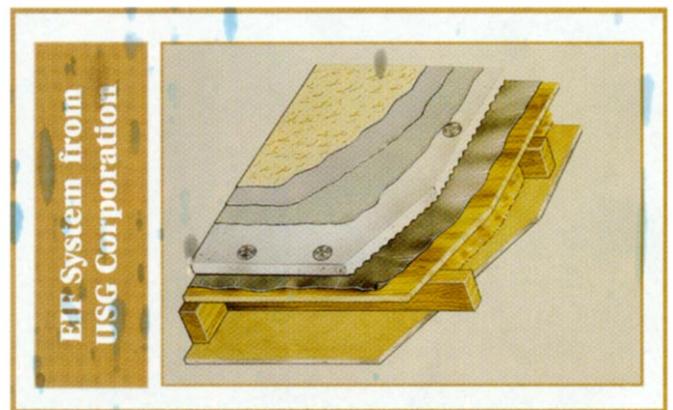
in new construction and renovation products. President Wesley Hacker reports that this product was developed in part to eradicate the common problems of most portland cement-based concrete toppings. "Firm-Fill is formulated to impart a non-shrinking quality that ensures a crack-free surface," Hacker says. With measured maximum resistance of up to 5500 P.S.I. (approximately 37.9 MPa), Firm-Fill also dries hard with superior indentation resistance.

Among its competitors, this product has one of the shortest preparation times. Portland cement-based products require primer, shotblasting and/or bonding agents in order for the underlayment to bond to the subfloor. This process adds considerable time and cost to building schedules. However, since Firm-Fill was specially designed to bond to the subfloor, in most cases it needs only primer applied before pouring the mixture.

"Firm-Fill is cost-efficient," Hacker says. "In addition to savings from shotblasting prior to pouring, it is, bag for bag, 50 percent less costly than the current leader in cement toppings."

Hacker says this new underlayment will be of special help to walls and ceilings contractors who often encounter topping repair needed before and after installing suite improvements. This product caps damaged concrete as it self-levels. It's high compressive strengths ensure a hard and durable surface for subsequent trades to work on.

**INSULSCREEN 2000 Water-Managed Exterior Insulation and Finish System** from United States Gypsum Company com-



bines outstanding stucco-look aesthetics with insulated water-managed performance. The system features a vertically grooved insulation board mechanically attached over a weath-

er-resistive barrier, resulting in excellent water-drainage performance.

“We feel water-managed systems represent the next generation in stucco-look exteriors,” says Marty Duffy, USG’s marketing communications manager. He contrasts USGS system with standard barrier systems that are designed to keep moisture out, but have no provisions in case moisture does intrude the wall cavity. “Basically, the INSULSCREEN 2000 system drains any moisture that may intrude the wall cavity before it has the chance to create any problems,” he says.

Residential and Commercial MD Systems are the new **EIFS moisture drainage systems** from Dryvit Systems, Inc. of West Warwick, RI. They incorporate drainage channels designed to direct incidental moisture out of the wall.

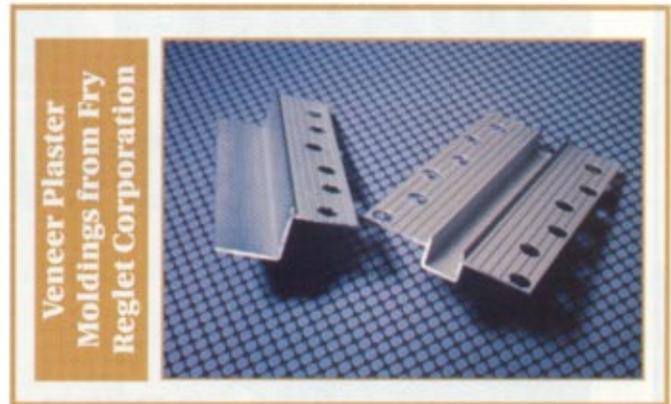
“The new system has all the traditional benefits of Dryvit EIFS, including the design flexibility, range of colors and textures and energy efficiency, but now we have an additional measure of peace of mind,” says F. Douglas Doscher, residential marketing manager. “Even if there is a breach in the wall that allows water to enter between the substrate and the insulation board, the system is proven to channel the water out.”

However, Tony Stall, Dryvit’s commercial marketing manager, explains that there is a difference between the residential and commercial system. The residential option drainage channels in the back get mechanically attached over plywood, and the drainage channels empty into a vinyl track at the bottom of the wall. “While this works very well for residential construction, we don’t feel it’s suitable for commercial work,” Stall says. “The commercial product has positive moisture drainage, but it is fully tested for fire hazards, so there is no exposed plastic or vinyl trim. We allow the system to remain adhesively attached.”

**Veneer plaster moldings** are the latest addition to the extensive aluminum trim profiles of Fry Reglet Corporation of Alhambra, Calif. Director of product management Ed Ternan says that the development of this line had its inception in custom parts for high profile building projects such as the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland and the Federal Triangle Building in Washington, D.C. “The parts provided attractive appearance and easy application of veneer plaster,” Ternan

says. “with traditional drywall, you put it up, tape the joints and paint it. But veneer plaster applied over drywall gives the look of plaster and some of the other benefits of plaster.”

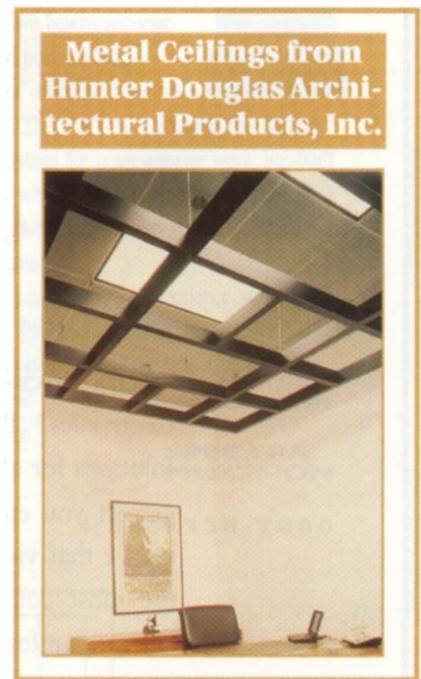
The extrusions offer subtle modifications for improved performance, including taller reveal edge to provide for 1/16" to



3/32" veneer plaster thickness, reveal edge that slopes away from the taping flange to prevent cracking at the joint, and a sharper reveal edge so that less metal is visible and the reveal is clean and crisp.

Luxalon **Metal Ceilings** are the new wide panel ceilings that Hunter Douglas Architectural Products, Inc. of Norcross, Ga., have added to its full line of metal ceilings.

These new offerings, says vice President of Sales and Marketing Tom Ayres “provide economical alternatives for metal acoustical ceilings with a wide linear panel, easy installation and a monolithic ceiling plane.” The lengths go up to 19 feet as opposed to a typical 12. The space between



the carriers is 7 feet as opposed to the traditional 4 feet. “Since it’s got fewer panel joints, it offers a smooth, continuous ceil-

ing plane,” Ayres says, “which makes for a very subtle, attractive ceiling.”

Laser Alignment Inc. of Grand Rapids, Mich., will introduce the LB-9 **Laser Beacon**® to the market early next month. This revolutionary laser features an intense bright beam that is four times as bright as some conventional lasers, and is visible at long distances and in bright sunlight conditions. Other features of the LB-9 include a nitrogen seal and robust design.



The laser features a plumb beam that goes up and down for all applications where vertical plumbing, horizontal layout, 90-degree alignment and setting over a point are required. “In the laydown position, 3-4-5 squares are a thing of the past,” says Paul Norton, publicity manager. This is true because the LB-9 has a beam scan selection range from 10- , 45- , 90- , 180- or a full 360-degree rotation. Wireless remote control provides for any function from more than 300 feet (90 meters). Three axis self-leveling provides quick leveling from the horizontal to the vertical position. “This laser and its features were designed and built with the customer in mind. We have built the laser every interior contractor wants and needs,” Norton says.

The Laserplane 600 Leveling System is the new **electronic level** introduced by Spectra Precision of Dayton, Ore. Eric Carson, marketing manager for general construction products, reports that this new transmitter, which can work with one or more receivers, allows contractors and builders to perform the work of two people with only one.

This transmitter, which operates unmanned, sends a continuous self-leveled 360 degree reference plane that covers the entire work area. This plane can be simultaneously picked up



by receivers that can be hand-held or attached to a grade rod or machinery. It can be used for all construction applications such as setting, adjusting, elevations, marking and excavation cutting depth.

“This unit has a self leveling accuracy to eight arc seconds, which is by far the most accurate in the industry,” Carson says. The Laserplane also has a built-in shock watch, which indicates substantial shock to the laser and warns the user with a flashing light that the calibration needs to be checked.

If jarred out of its self-leveling range, the transmitter flashes the warning and stops transmitting, thus saving contractors time, money and re-work time. It is also dust and water proof and uses no bubble vials.

The TRAXX Data Management System, from Brady USA, Inc. of Milwaukee, Wis., is **software** that is designed to help users track, store and manage information about inventory, assets, tools and supplies. “We’re offering a total solution,” says Product Manager Tom Shenk. This software package contains the following four “managers.”

The StockRoom Manager package is designed to easily record issues and receipts by individual employees, departments or job numbers. The Inventory Manager helps users manage unlimited inventory items, instantly find stock, automatically reconcile with master inventory records, track lot and expiration, manage multiple sites for inventory tracking by facility, establish primary and secondary stocking location, and produce history logs for complete audit trains.

The Asset Manager creates asset labels for inventory, finds fixed assets, maintains information on asset values and identi-



fies missing assets. It is suitable for tracking computers machinery, equipment, fixtures, furniture and vehicles.

The software permits users to manage unlimited assets, conduct multiple site asset tracking by facility, upload from portable bar code readers, produce extensive exception reports

and compile history logs for complete audit trails and add to or edit any record on screen.

With the ToolCrib Manager, companies can conduct routine physical inventories, manage a perpetual inventory and track tools checked out to employees or customers. The software helps maintain inventory of tool cribs, maintenance parts and central stores. Among its capabilities are on-line bar code support for parts counting, maintenance and calibration date rental, cost tracking and overdue item identification.

So there you have it: some of the newest products available to the wall and ceiling industry Now go shopping! 🏠

#### **About the Author**

Michael J. Major of Anacortes, Wash., is a free-lance writer for the construction industry