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IN DEPTH: INSULATION AND HOUSEWRAP

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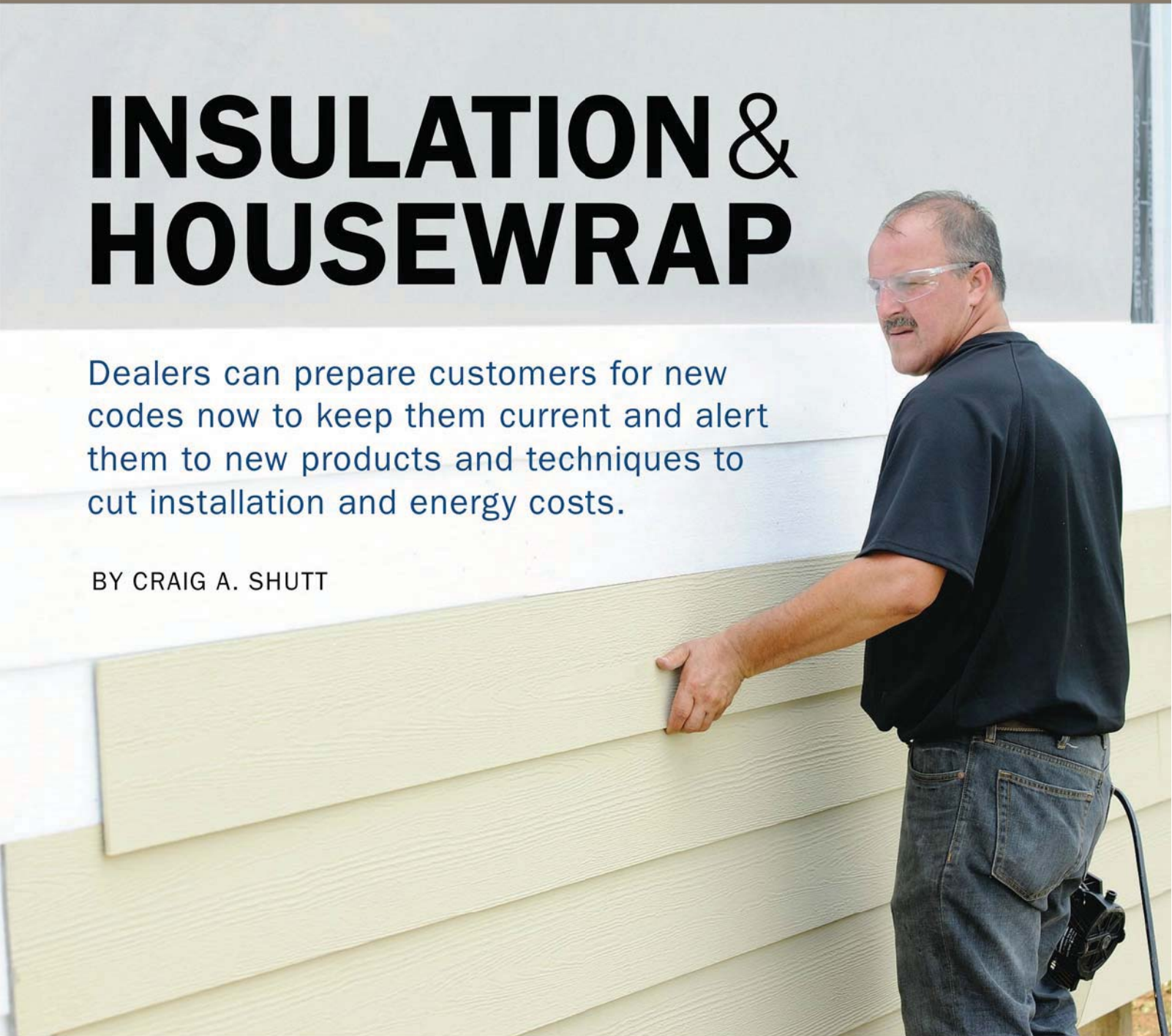
Island Home Center & Lumber:
Sales Under \$10 Million

Doug Mans, president, N.A. Mans & Sons

INSULATION & HOUSEWRAP

Dealers can prepare customers for new codes now to keep them current and alert them to new products and techniques to cut installation and energy costs.

BY CRAIG A. SHUTT



ABOVE: Fullback siding insulation from Progressive Foam Technologies offers a thermal break as well as energy savings and a reduction in air infiltration. The field-applied insulation saves time on the jobsite by providing “ledges” on the siding that are used as a guide by installers. The insulation adds up to R-3.5 to wall systems.

New energy codes that begin approval processes in 2012 will significantly increase insulation requirements, requiring some contractors to change products or approaches to their insulation. Although the codes often take time before they are widely adopted, dealers can alert customers to the coming changes now introduce them to new energy-efficient solutions.

“The current economy has posed challenges, but we view it as an opportunity to rethink how we deliver energy-efficient solutions to the market,” says Mark Zeigert, senior brand and marketing communications manager for Johns Manville in Denver. “As homeowners stay in their homes longer, they’re increasingly receptive to making their homes more energy efficient to lower their energy bills.”

Remodeling customers and homebuyers are receptive to products and techniques that will save energy, notes John Neely, marketing manager at Fiberweb Inc., the Old Hickory, Tenn.-based maker of Typar weather-protection products. "Home buyers respond to the message about the need for an air barrier because they want a comfort level that their home will perform efficiently and be protected from the weather."

Code Changes Coming

Interest in insulation products will be encouraged by imminent code changes produced by the 2012 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) and Energy Star 3.0 that took effect January 1. "DOE's immediate goal with the 2012 IECC is 30% incremental savings over the 2006 IECC," says John D. Wagner, an expert in sustainable-design concepts and an *LBM Journal* columnist.

That creates opportunities for dealers to educate their contractor customers and make sure they're ready. "Building codes are driving more use of insulation in many applications to break thermal bridges and improve energy efficiency," says Pat Culpepper, president of Progressive Foam Technologies, a Beach City, Ohio-based company that makes siding insulation.

Dale Winger, residential marketing manager at Dow Chemical Co. in Midland, Mich., agrees that opportunities exist. "The new codes give builders much higher incentives to use continuous insulation," he says. "More builders are realizing that it's good building science to eliminate thermal breaks in structures, and these codes aim to do that. There are strong incentives to go to continuous insulation, and we expect the impact of the new codes will come quick."

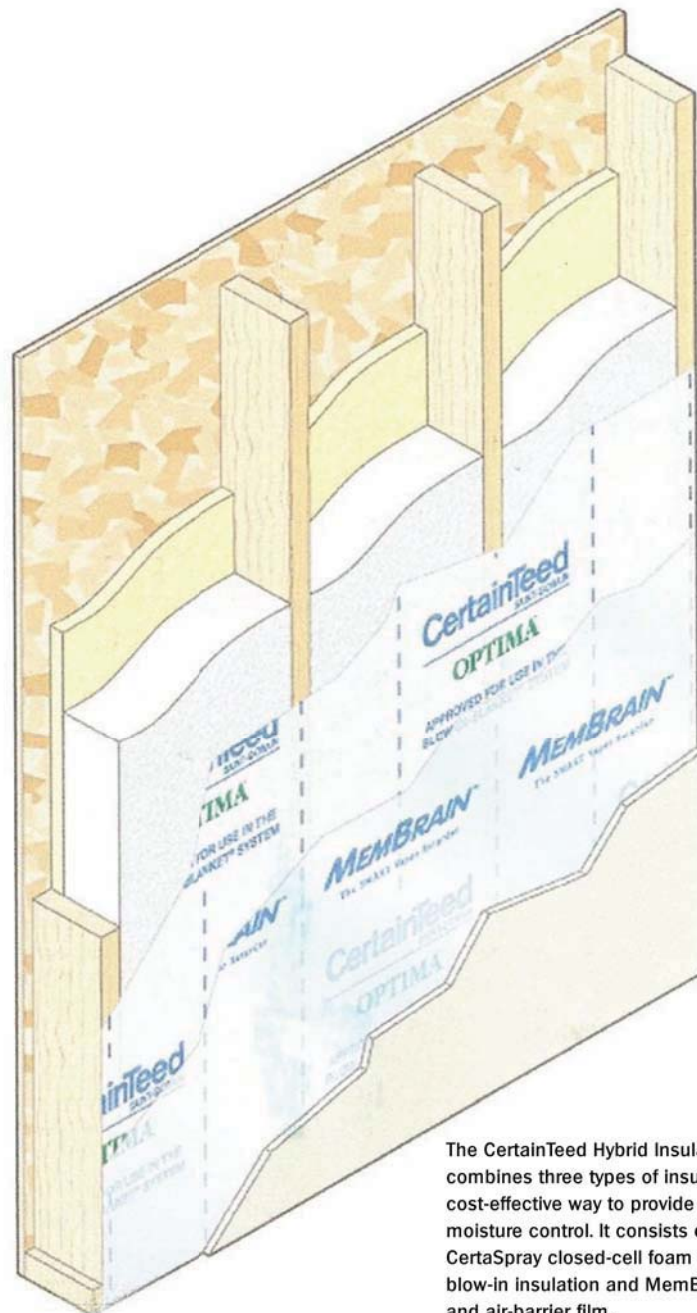
But not all agree that the impact will come quickly. "There is some question about how mandatory these energy codes are," says Culpepper. "There are still provisions in the 2006 IECC that are news to some builders, and the changes have

been slow to be adopted. It's also a matter of who is checking up on the codes and if they're enforceable. Some states use the code as a recommendation, but builders today aren't doing what is recommended, they are doing what is required. They don't want to add cost if they can avoid it, especially since they're competing with a large inventory of existing homes."

Some states adopt new IECC codes by law, notes Wagner, and 46 states have adopted the 2006 IECC. "When it's adopted,

it has the force of the local building code, but it becomes confusing with overlapping regulations. Energy Star is voluntary, for the most part, whereas IECC will be required if or when it's adopted."

North Carolina adopted the new IECC changes in January, notes Culpepper. "Builders there are panicking, because they have to make changes immediately. Most builders understand the benefits, but they don't want to change unless it's mandated." >



The Certainteed Hybrid Insulation System combines three types of insulation to create a cost-effective way to provide air resistance and moisture control. It consists of the company's CertaSpray closed-cell foam insulation, Optima blow-in insulation and MemBrain vapor-retarder and air-barrier film.

Dealers can get ahead of the curve by alerting customers to the variety of insulation options available. They include:

become familiar with the products so they can introduce them to their customers.”



SPRAY FOAMS

One- and two-part spray foams help builders ensure tight insulating qualities in difficult locations. CertainTeed, for instance, last fall introduced a single-component, latex-based ignition barrier that is sprayed over its open-cell polyurethane spray foam to enhance the foam’s fire rating. The material meets Energy Star requirements and must be applied by a certified installer.

“Spray polyurethane foam insulation offers a key area for growth,” says Dow’s Winger. “New products are being introduced in both one- and two-component formulations that offer benefits for dealers and contractors.”

This is new territory for many in both camps, he notes, leading Dow to create a variety of point-of-purchase displays and materials. “We want to help dealers



FIBERGLASS

The familiar batt insulation also is gaining features, notably enhanced sustainable-design benefits that supplement Energy Star and green-building concepts. Toledo, Ohio-based Owens Corning promotes a variety of green features for its new insulation line, including recycled content and certification under GreenGuard Children & Schools.

These products sell well to homeowners, who are familiar with their use. Owens Corning emphasizes the ease of installation, notes Tom Quigley, vice president and general manager of Residential Insulation. “It provides homeowners with an approachable solution for the home,” he says. “Our goal is to empower homeowners to take control of their own comfort and increase the energy efficiency of their home.”

BELOW LEFT: JM Corbond III insulation from Johns Manville, a premium, closed-cell spray-foam insulation, is said to provide superior thermal, acoustic and moisture performance. Featuring a unique lavender color, the product joins a line of spray foam and fiberglass products from the company that aim to provide a continuum of cost-effective insulation products.

BELOW RIGHT: Froth-Pak Foam Insulation from Dow provides both insulating and air-sealant capabilities to seal cracks, crevices and penetrations. The two-component, low-pressure polyurethane foam quickly expands to fill cavities and cures completely in minutes. It and Froth-Pak Sealant are applied with Insta-Flo dispensing spray guns with an anti-crossover nozzle.





Green options are growing, notes Johns Manville's Ziegert. "As homeowners and homebuilders tighten homes to improve energy efficiency, they should consider products that are free from formaldehyde and other VOCs. Concerns about mold growth inside walls also have increased, in part from fears that more tightly built structures trap moisture."

CertainTeed too has emphasized green-building techniques, offering kraft facing certified by SFI. It also is addressing green-building needs for commercial projects by expanding its line of Sustainable Insulation products to include duct wrap, blanket insulation and metal-building insulation for commercial applications. The products exceed the California Air Resource Board indoor air-quality regulations.

"Our customers now have a wider range of product options that meet stringent indoor air-quality and environmental requirements," says Mike Lembo, senior product manager for the Mechanical & Industrial Insulation Group.



STRUCTURAL INSULATED SHEATHING

This category offers great potential, if dealers can persuade builders of the benefits. "It provides three functions: structural support, R-value and an air barrier," explains Dow's Winger. "But builders don't like changing processes, so dealers have to stress that it will make it easier for them and save them time and money." >

Correct installation is critical to ensuring the Typar Weather Protection System achieves its full performance attributes. The material creates an air barrier that greatly reduces "windwash" or the loss of R-value due to wind intrusion. It also provides optimal moisture vapor transmission and superior tear strength.



The new EcoTouch fiberglass insulation from Owens Corning offers a variety of sustainable-design features. These include content of at least 58% total recycled content, certification by GreenGuard Children & Schools program, a formaldehyde-free composition and 99% natural ingredients.



SIDING INSULATION

These product lines add some energy efficiency to the walls while offering benefits such as an air and moisture barrier as well as providing uniform support that enhances the siding's look. "Some insulation layers may just provide a vapor barrier rather than energy savings if they aren't designed properly," says Progressive Foam's Culpepper. "It needs to be a product that was designed to enhance the siding's performance and durability."



HOUSEWRAP

"Homebuilders talk about R-value, but the sophisticated ones understand the critical role the air barrier plays," says Fiberweb's Neely. "Contractors who are concerned with energy efficiency should

be explaining to their customers the importance of a quality, properly installed air barrier as a key component."

Proper installation is a critical element, he stresses. Wagner agrees. "I can't count how often I see housewrap improperly installed," he wrote in a recent *LBM Journal* column. "Housewrap is designed to work as a system."



BELOW-GRADE INSULATION

A variety of rigid-foam products are gaining popularity as homeowners decide to stay put and upgrade their homes, with basement seepage being a key focus. "Proper exterior continuous-foam insulation systems can significantly reduce heat loss through concrete walls, resist hydrostatic pressure, keep crawl spaces dry and protect against frost," notes a spokesman for Dow. "This is value and performance that homeowners understand."



HYBRID SYSTEMS

"One way savvy installers have made improvements in energy efficiency is through combining products as part of hybrid systems," says Johns Manville's Ziegert. Spray-in insulation can be combined with a caulk air-sealing product or be used as part of a hybrid system with higher-density closed-cell spray polyurethane foam. "That will stop the flow of air completely."

CertainTeed also has introduced a hybrid system, which combines closed-cell foam insulation, blow-in insulation and vapor-barrier film. The product can set builders apart from competitors and provide high R values along with an airtight seal and a moisture barrier.

"The industry is beginning to be intelligent about building science and realizing that the products all have to work together as a system," says Progressive Foam's Culpepper. "If they are choosing products independently, they don't get the full benefits that they would if they choose products that enhance each other."

These options offer benefits that can be optimized if they are understood and explained well to customers. Companies offer a variety of merchandising aids as well as seminar programs and web-based tools to help dealers explain options. "No one person has all the answers on codes," says Dow's Winger. "Our goal is to be a source of education and create partnerships with our dealers to learn the needs in each local area."

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Johns Manville's Ziegert agrees. "We rely heavily on our market-development managers to be well-versed on local building codes and communicate changes." The company also has developed QR codes for packaging that allows customers to access information from the JM website via their smart phones.

Typar has grouped together its house-wrap, tapes and flashing to emphasize the system approach and created point-of-purchase displays. "Our goal is to educate customers on the system and the system warranty," says Neely. "We have designed a tool set for dealers to utilize in their stores."

The potential to boost this category will grow as energy bills rise and municipalities adopt the new, more stringent codes. "Some builders are offering seminars, but many more will have to do it to get the word out," says Dow's

Internet Information

To learn more about these companies' products, visit these websites

Companies in bold participated in this article.

AlphaProTech: www.alphaprotech.com	Knauf Insulation: www.knaufusa.com
CertainTeed: www.certainteed.com	NCFI Polyurethanes: www.NCFI.com
Cosella-Dorcen: www.cosella-dorcen.com	North American Insulation Manufacturers Association: www.NAIMA.org
Dow: www.building.dow.com	Owens Corning: www.owenscorning.com
DuPont: www.dupont.com	Progressive Foam Technologies: www.progressivefoam.com
GreenGuard: www.greenguard.org	Thermafiber: www.thermafiber.com
Guardian: www.guardianbp.com	Typar: www.typar.com
Johns Manville: www.jm.com	

Winger. "For dealers, there is good value in spreading this information about new products that can help meet the codes and in explaining the benefits that the builder and homeowner can receive." ■

Craig A. Shutt, senior contributing editor of *LBM Journal*, has more than 32 years of experience covering the LBM industry.

HOW TO STEAL BUSINESS FROM THE COMPETITION WITHOUT USING PRICE AS A WEAPON

In today's difficult housing market, your highest odds of increasing sales is to teach your salespeople how to steal business away from the competition, without, of course, resorting to low-ball pricing in an attempt to entice the prospect to give them an order.

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