

Low-Slope Roofing Market

Western Low-Slope Roofing Market May be on the Rise

by Marc Dodson, editor

This may be the news we've been hoping to hear for a long time: the low-slope market is holding steady and, in fact in some areas, is showing a modest increase. While the steep-slope market is still in the doldrums, the low-slope market in the West continues to buck the trend. Admittedly, the low-slope roofing market in the West has slowed slightly, but some areas are reporting increased activity. For the past couple of years, commercial roofing contractors were waiting for the other shoe to drop and bracing themselves for what they figured was the inevitable, and now it looks like it may never happen. If the economy begins its long anticipated turn around next year as is now being predicted, the low-slope roofing market might get through this recession relatively unscathed. The commercial side of the roofing market was relatively stable for the last few years, thanks in large part to the reroofing of shopping malls, schools, warehouses, government structures, and related support facilities.

A number of roofing contractors that we contacted, as well as several manufacturers, shared the opinion that the final totals for the 2011 Western commercial market will show a slight increase over last year. Figures compiled from our own survey, plus additional numbers supplied from several industry sources, indicate commercial and industrial roofing construction in the Western half of the U.S. will end this year in the black. This report is a compilation of the results of our survey sent to over 2,000 of our roofing contractor readers.

The low-slope roofing market will account for the major share of the total Western roofing market this year, with 69% of the total volume. Reroofing, as always, dominates the Western low-slope roofing market with

a predicted 63%, repairs and maintenance accounts for 24%, with new construction picking up the remaining 13%.

As far as the popularity of commercial roofing products, we saw some changes again this year. APP modifieds now account for 9.9%, SBS modifieds account for 12.5%, and self-adhered modifieds account for 4.7%. All together, modifieds now account for 27.1% of the low-slope roofing market. All forms of single-plys have a combined share of 31.3% and are the number one material in the commercial roofing market in the West for 2011 (combining EPDM, TPO, PVC, and CPE figures).

Among single-plys, once again, TPO showed the biggest gains once again by claiming the number one spot with an 18.2% market share, up from 16.1% last year, and 14.7% the year before. EPDM takes the number two spot with 9.4%, down slightly from 10.3% last year.

BUR, the perennial Western favorite, comes in this year with 17.9%, dropping from 21.3% last year, and 23.2% the year before. Liquid-applied products have shown large increases in the past few years, however, this year it looks even better for this product category as it increases to 8.6%. During the last two years liquid-applieds accounted for 6.1% and 5.9% respectively. Metal roofing products (both architectural and structural) and polyurethane foam also saw a rise in their market shares this year.

We can only rehash market history so much, but the question is; what will happen next year in the Western low-slope roofing market? As previously stated, from all economic indicators, the national construction economy may indeed be turning. We may have to wait awhile for the steep-slope market to catch up, but the low-slope segment seems to be leading the way with a modest increase. Everyone related to the construction industry would like nothing better. ●●●