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The Northeast Roofing Report

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CAPE COD CONTRACTOR: BIRD FIBER GLASS-BASED ASPHALT SHINGLE IS EASY TO USE YEAR 'ROUND

Sitting in his office surrounded by the sandy soil and scrub pine of Cape Cod, it may not occur to Charles Corey, but in his own small way, he's benefiting the national economy.

Corey owns a small company, Charles Corey Roofing Contractors, in Hyannis, MA. Corey's business enjoys a level of year-round productivity seldom seen in the Northeast. Despite the long and harsh winters of Cape Cod, Corey manages to employ a complete staff of 11 full-time roofers — all winter long.

In the roofing industry of the Northeast U.S., cold-weather stories abound. Tales of frostbite and slippery, ice-laden hammers go hand-in-hand. Although the cold weather problems that plague roofers are significant, by far, material-handling problems are the biggest obstacle to roofing in winter.



Charles Corey proudly displays a Bird fiber glass-based asphalt shingle before a recent application.

Because of their many advantages, fiber glass-based asphalt shingles have become the predominant material used by roofers. But most roofers willing to work in the winter and brave the cold must heat their shingles first with expensive torpedo heaters. Many close-up shop until spring.

Charles Corey won't hear of it.

"We have used torpedo heaters in winter," says Corey, "but now-a-days we don't even need them because heating the shingles isn't necessary. We use the fiber glass-based asphalt shingles from Bird Incorporated. My guys can't believe it, but it's the shingle quality that makes the difference.

"I look at it this way. I have plenty of business, and I also feel I have an obligation to keep these guys employed. The Bird shingles make it all possible."

It wasn't always that way. "It used to be very expensive to work in the winter," says Corey. "I needed a generator to run the torpedo heaters and someone standing there. It was an extra step that made working in the winter not worthwhile."

Corey uses Bird fiber glass-based asphalt shingles featuring new improvements such as dimensional consistency; reinforced tape-backing to increase nail holding power by 60 percent and improve sealing performance and wind resistance; a tougher sealant material with 90 percent more coverage via realigned dots, and packaging improvements that, when combined with more shingles in the bundle, provide easier handling.

"We like the long warranty (up to 30 years)," says Corey. "With Bird you've also got a Class 'A' fire resistant shingle instead of the lesser quality Class 'C' that is common with paper-based shingles. That's a major selling point for our homeowners.

The Northeast Roofing Report *is published to provide contractors with information about the roofing industry. For additional information on any of the items contained in this issue please contact Mark Linkous, Northeastern Division General Manager, (617) 361-8900.*

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"Our company isn't the fastest or the biggest, but we're the best," Corey says proudly. "And to stay the best you've got to give the best service and handle the best shingle. Right now Bird is the best."

Charles Corey knows his business. Since 1971 when he put away his carpenter's saw and decided on roofing full-time, he's built a reputation on Cape Cod that is second to none.

His stationery proclaims, "Cape Cod's Finest Roofs." In a business where word-of-mouth advertising is a key ingredient for success, Charles Corey has created quite a little niche for himself. Understandably, his employees like him too — especially in the winter.

Housing starts in the first 10 months of '83 exceed previous year. As reported in The Lumber Co-Operator, starts in the first 10 months of 1983 reached 1.445 million, 67 percent more than 1982. 1983 year-end figures are expected to show 1.7 million starts (up from 1.1 million in '82). A consensus in the industry indicates that 1984 starts will equal '83 totals.

Ken Doane is the Bird Incorporated Salesman of the Month. He's respectfully known as the "senior citizen," but Bird's Ken Doane works as hard as any young go-getter at providing his customers with unmatched service. Ken, 53, has been with Bird for 30 years. During his tenure he has serviced six different territories and made many friends throughout the Northeast along the way.



Ken Doane

Currently, contractors and dealers in the Bristol and Norfolk Counties of MA are regularly calling on Ken for his expert advice and reliable service.

The business he knows best is roofing. The Bird Sales Department often receives unsolicited praise from Ken's customers about his ability and service. "Knowing the business is the greatest service any salesman can ever offer his customers," says Ken.

Married for 27 years, Ken and his wife Marion reside in Barrington, RI and have three daughters, Diana, Susan and Cynthia. A graduate of Northeastern University, Ken holds a B.A. in business administration.

Bird's Norwood Shingle Plant continues renovation and expansion. Construction at Bird's Norwood, MA roofing complex continues as the new granule silo structure (160 feet long and 170 feet high) nears completion. The foundation for the new asphalt storage facility has already been laid and underground utility work has begun.



The new building which will store granules at Bird's Norwood, MA plant is 80 feet tall and capable of storing hundreds of tons of granules in 38 separate silos.

The complex, which is expected to be operational by the third quarter of 1984, will also feature the latest high-technology manufacturing equipment. A new computer, designed to precisely monitor and control the use of materials in the fiber glass-based asphalt shingle manufacturing process, has already been added to the Norwood facility.

"These manufacturing improvements and additions will make the Company one of the most efficient producers of fiber glass-based asphalt shingles in the Northeast marketplace," said

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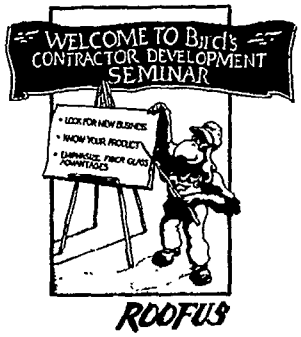
Mark Linkous, General Manager of Bird's Northeastern Division. "These steps exemplify Bird's commitment to the roofing industry and to the Company's long-standing tradition as a leader in the building materials industry."

ARMA reports 73 percent of strip shingles shipped in '83 were fiber glass-based. The Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association (ARMA) has reported that 73 percent of all strip shingles shipped in 1983 were fiber glass-based asphalt shingles. The Association expects that number to continue to rise through 1984 and beyond.

Bird's contractor development program is a huge success. This month, Bird Incorporated began a comprehensive program to meet with contractors and discuss ideas to make it easier for every contractor to do business better. A series of meetings are being held throughout the Northeast where contractors can learn tips on selling techniques, business management and information about how Bird Incorporated can assist contractors in their personal business efforts.

The first two seminars held in Hartford, CT and Springfield, MA won praise from all of the contractors in attendance.

"The individual events are brief, yet comprehensive, four-hour programs," reports Tom Hartnett, Director of Contractor and Builder Sales, "designed to make it easier for any contractor to conduct his day-to-day business. The contractors who have attended the single sessions have enjoyed the events, including lunch on us, and left with information that they'll be able to apply to their businesses."



Letters to the Editor: In the last issue of The Northeast Roofing Report, we asked our readers to submit letters to the editor about the newsletter, the roofing industry or anything else that comes to mind. The letter below is representative of some of the many responses received. We'd like to hear from you and continue to provide an opportunity to voice your opinions. Write to: The Editor, The Northeast Roofing Report, Department CD, Bird Incorporated, East Walpole, MA 02032.

Dear Editor:

I just want to take this opportunity to thank you for a job well done. As a contractor, each month I look forward to seeing The Northeast Roofing Report and the information about the industry that it contains.

I think you do a fine job providing helpful and interesting information about the trade. I would like to see more articles about individual contractors and some mention as to how each goes about his business. To the members of the trade, this information will always be interesting.

Sincerely,
W. Herbert Goodick
W. Herbert Goodick, Inc.
Gloucester, MA

Contractor Tip of the Month: How to make that difficult reroofing sale. Many roofers report a reluctance among homeowners to "dive into" the purchase of a new roof. As a contractor trying to sell your services, this often is your biggest challenge. However, by following just two easy steps, you may be able to improve your chances of making that sale.

1) Knowledge is a selling point: Know your shingles. Take the time to explain about the superior qualities of the shingle you install and educate a homeowner about the products you use. For example, explain that fiber glass shingles carry longer warranties and offer greater fire protection.
2) Explain potential problems. While measuring a roof to make an estimate, or prior to approaching a homeowner about his need for a new roof, carefully examine the condition of the roof and explain exactly why the homeowner needs a new one. The "penny wise and pound foolish" argument is a good one when you can back it up with an honest assessment of any deficiencies the roof, gutters or flashings may have.

Remember 1983? Don Kent recaps the highs and lows of last year's weather. I'm happy to be joining Bird Incorporated as weather consultant and will take every opportunity to spread the word about protecting yourself from the elements, the latest advances in weather-protection products and the weather peculiarities unique to New England.


Don Kent

If you're a roofer in New England, no one needs to tell you that what we experienced in 1983 covered the full range of the weather spectrum. The '83 weather surely tested the roofs, and roofers of our area, with record breaking rainfall and number of days with 90 degree heat.

To recap some of the highlights (or should we say lowlights?): Boston's total rainfall was 53.60 inches, a full 10 inches more than normal. Reading, MA recorded 67.18 inches of rain, the wettest year in 85 years of record keeping. Providence, RI also had the wettest year in its history.

Dozens of New England communities had over 60 inches of rain for the year. Normal yearly rainfall is usually close to 40 inches. One thing is certain, all reservoirs and wells should be full by now!

As you probably remember, January through May, November and December were the real wet months — limiting the number of days you could work on roofing jobs. Then came the sun and the record breaking number of days of 90 degree heat or more from July through September.

Normally, in New England the temperature reaches 90 degrees 10 or twelve days each summer. The summer of 1983, including September, saw 30 days of 90 degree heat. The previous record was 28 days. Remarkably, despite all of the rainfall throughout the year, September was the sunniest month in history. The sun was shining 86 percent of the daylight hours.

There were several storms with wind gusts of 40-50 mph and a few brief, stronger gusts, but only the Texas area had a roofing emergency — the result of the only destructive hurricane of 1983.

What about a weather prediction for 1984? With all of my years in the business and regardless of the new technology we have at our fingertips, I still insist there is no sure and accurate way to make a long-range forecast. Short-term is another story. Athough I retired from WBZ-TV, Boston, on March 18, 1983, I'm still actively forecasting weather daily on WBZ Radio and on several other radio stations.

Finally, if there is any consolation for you roofers who braved the harsh weather of 1983 it may be this: There was much less rain in the summer months. If you were able to withstand the extreme heat, you probably did quite well. Furthermore, you can look at the year's weather optimistically; it is probable that all of the rain, 90 degree heat and long hours of sunshine have taken their toll on older roofs — which may mean more business soon.

Don Kent