

BUILDING SCENE

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1993

BUILDING SCENE'S NAMES & PLACES

Ford & Earl VP



Nicola Balderi has joined Ford & Earl, the Troy interior design firm, as senior vice president. He will be responsible for product development and product design services. He is a former director of design for Smith, Hinchman & Grylls in Detroit.

Open for business

Canton is the home of the newly formed George J. Hartman Architects/Engineers, a firm that specializes in architecture, engineering and construction management services for commercial, industrial and residential projects. Architect-owner Hartman opened an office at 5840 Canton Center Road (Suite 240). Phone number is 453-9445.

Quality seminar

Implementing total quality management in a construction company will be offered 3-4:30 p.m. Sept. 23 at the sponsoring Associated General Contractor's conference center, 23999 Northwest-ern, Southfield.

William A. Abberger, a consulting group director for quality and productivity training for Falls Management Group, will lead the seminar. Participants will be given a booklet with suggestions on starting a TQM program in a construction-related business.

To register, call Joe Neussendorfer at 948-7000.

Construction conference

Tom Wilson, president of the Detroit Pistons, will discuss team building as the keynote speaker for the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants, which is presenting a construction industry conference 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Sept. 24 at the Grand Manor at Fairlane, Dearborn.

Among the 14 sessions included are TQM, personnel and employment law issues, and constructing financial statement disclosures.

Cost of the conference is \$120. Attendees can receive eight hours of CPE credit. For more information, call 855-2288.

Producing energy — up on the roof

Double duty for roofs may be the wave of the future, but it's going to take concentrated cooperation from builders, suppliers and researchers before roofs will become energy sources.

By DOUG FUNKE
STAFF WRITER

Roofs of the future may do more than keep rain and snow off a building.

During the next century roofs could generate electricity from solar energy through special "shingles," supplementing power provided by Detroit Edison here and other utilities around the country.

Energy Conversion Devices in Troy and the National Association of Home Builders Research Center will receive upwards of \$9.2 million from the federal government over three years to study the possibilities.

Stephen J. Hudgens, director of research and development for ECD, is intrigued about the applications.

"Sunlight is a wonderful source of energy," he said. "Our principal goal is to develop something the home building industry and electric utilities agree is an acceptable product."

ECD is working on prototypes that will be tested on a commercial building in Arizona and a typical subdivision house in Maryland.

An isolated house in Michigan's Upper Peninsula probably also will be included, an NAHB spokesman said.

"It can be done now," Hudgens said of the technology. "Builders will build anything they're asked. Decisions are entirely cost driven. I think we have the ability to be competitive at a large enough production volume."

Shifting energy sources

Solar electricity currently costs about three times as much as electricity produced by fossil and nuclear fuels, Hudgens said.

But costs will shift, he predicted, as government subsidies and tax policies move toward solar energy applications and production of photovoltaic roofing systems steps up in a big way.

There are 90 million existing homes, all of which periodically need new shingles, and one to two million houses built nationally every year, noted Larry Zarker, NAHB spokesman.

"There's a general enthusiasm that this should be investigated," he said. "We're convinced here photovoltaics has a role in housing."

Fred Capaldi, president of the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan and a Rochester Hills residential builder, also is curious about the potential of photovoltaic roofing.

"We have to continue to look at new and better ways of doing things," he said. "We probably have been lulled to sleep the last few years. Fuel has been cheaper."

"If we can get mass production volume, it should be less expensive," Capaldi said of energy-producing shingles. "If they can do this, I think it's a heckuva idea."

Cooperation the key

It's important that builders, suppliers, power companies and researchers work together to come up with a usable product, Zarker and Hudgens noted in separate interviews.

"Without input, it becomes a hard sell," Hudgens said. "The purpose of the contract is to develop a practical product to meet a practical need."

See ROOF, 2F



BILL BRESLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Covering up: Roofs and shingles serve a single purpose today. Products of tomorrow, if a study works out, may help generate electricity. Here, Jeff Toliver of Superior Roofing lays traditional shingles at a house under construction in Canton.

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