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Contact:
Vince Bevacqua
V.P. Public Relations, Prodigal Media
330-707-2088
vebevacqua@prodigalmedia.com

Amid weakened economy, experts say roofing needs must be met

Boardman, March 25, 2009 — Shrinking budgets and an economy in the midst of a recession have companies erring on the side of caution when it comes to maintenance spending.

With the pressure for more belt-tightening, the sheer cost of paying employees, contractors and bills can amount to a large sum, let alone the problems that may creep up at any time. According to the Whitestone Building Operations Cost Reference, in a single year operational costs for commercial buildings increased a staggering 10 percent. In comparison, the average increase during the previous five years was only 4.1 percent per year.

While maintenance repairs may seem easy enough to brush off in a budget crunch, the reality is they are the key to making it through the budget crisis. Steve Duke, Chief Financial Officer of Simon Roofing, a national commercial roofing company, recommends that companies continue their roof repairs despite the current economic conditions. “You can’t just let them go. If you spend a little now, you’ll save money later,” Duke said.

Duke added that addressing the small and seemingly minor problems now will help building owners and managers avoid costlier problems in the weeks and months to come. “You can’t afford to have water coming in your building,” Duke said, extending delays in maintenance will significantly compound the costs and increase the likelihood of other related issues regarding safety, mold, and structural integrity.

“Even though building owners may not be in a financial position to replace their buildings’ roofs now, Simon can help them extend the life of their roofs through innovative roof management programs that help get their costs where they need to be,” Duke said.

According to a recent Gallup Poll, three out of four Americans say that they have cut back on their spending in the last six months due to economic woes and in another poll, more than 75 percent of Americans expect the economy to get worse.

The budget tightening isn’t just affecting customers — the roofing industry is feeling the economy’s strain. According to Specialists in Business Information’s most recent report,

“Roofing Materials in the US 2nd Edition,” the roofing industry estimated a 16 percent decrease in 2008. However, the report is also projecting the business to pick back up again in 2010 and beyond to reach the same highs as in 2006.

Simon Roofing Vice President, Sales, Rick Cook sees the effect of shrinking budgets on his clients. “Everybody is facing budget constraints right now,” Cook said. But he was optimistic about how his clients can overcome the budget obstacles. “We would start with the roof evaluation, see what their portfolio consists of, and where can we help them. Our goal is to get in there and manage the process,” Cook said.

Mike Dohar, General Manager of Simon Roofing Products said that using products to extend the life of a roof is an essential part of a building management strategy. “With each dollar being carefully spent, it is essential that big budget items, such as roofs, last longer. Using the right products can help extend the life of a roof an additional 20 to 30 years,” Dohar said.

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