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FCW EXCLUSIVE Mohawk reveals marketing muscle behind SmartStrand Silk Reserve. See story on page 6.

Full Disclosure

Clarifying the conversation for a healthier population

BY ELISE LINSKOTT

Across the country, consumers are becoming more interested in knowing what the products they're buying are made of. This has also spread into flooring, where makers are being asked to provide more information about the ingredients in their products. That's why many rely on third-party certifiers and Declare labels — though there's still a long way to go in the global transparency discussion, particularly as imported products like resilient flooring continue to gain market share.

"Being upfront is very important," said Noah Chitty, director of technical services for Crossville. "It sets the bar and establishes the standard. In our 31-plus year history, we've always maintained this approach."

Crossville also errs on the side of being conservative — for example, some of its tile products may have color options that contain 20 percent recycled material yet other colors may have no more than 4 percent, in which case the company states that such products have "4 percent or more" recycled content instead of saying they have "up to 20 percent," Chitty said. This is because lighter colors take more new materials to make, whereas darker tiles can use more recycled materials.

According to David Kitts, Mannington Mills' Continued on page 14

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GreenStep
ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS PROGRAM

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Transparency transforms

INTERNATIONAL LIVING FUTURE INSTITUTE RAISES THE BAR FOR SUSTAINABILITY

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Health & sustainability in green installation

By Elise Linscott

Manufacturers of adhesives, grouts and installation products have been working to develop products that address specific problems while making formulations sustainably, using recycled materials as well as working to reduce the use of harmful chemicals industry-wide.

DEVELOPMENTS IN FORMULATION

Benny Dickens, CEO of Aquaflex, said that one new development in the moisture-tolerant arena for flooring adhesive chemistry isn't necessarily the formulation, but the process required to achieve bond.

"The industry faces OSHA regulations concerning RCS (respirable crystalline silica) in June of this year," Dickens said. "Epoxy mitigation required to protect moisture sensitive adhesive will become increasingly difficult if not impossible related to liability. Silica dust is the most hazardous material in

the flooring trade and has been simply brushed aside. While industry focus has been on the elimination of VOCs and PVC content, silica has remained one of the leading causes of COPD in the country — 2.3 million construction workers will be exposed this year and over 1,000 deaths will be attributed to long term exposure."

Consumers can and should look for independent, third party certification credentials that specifically test for various chemicals of concern, said John Lio, vice president of marketing for Dritac. One example would be the Carpet and Rug Institute's (CRI) Green Label Plus Program. The Green Label Plus Program's testing standards focus on certifying adhesives with the very lowest emitting VOC levels, he said.

Another new development in product technology has been the use of synthetic gypsum-based self-leveling compounds, which are especially suit-

able on all gypsum and cement-based substrates as well as on mastic asphalt, and are designed for refurbishment work in interior areas, according to David Stowell, technical director for HPS Schonox. He also noted that another trend in eco-friendly installation has been the development of multi-purpose adhesives, like universal pressure sensitive acrylic adhesives made for all flexible coverings.

ECO-FRIENDLY PROBLEM SOLVING

According to Mark Long, technical director for Stauff USA, as far as technologies go, "things haven't changed much since the year 2000."

"The same technology from then is still used today," Long said. "We do work on field solutions to specific problems for our new adhesives. Moisture issues have been the biggest concern to the industry in the last few years. Many of our new adhesives are

dealing with moisture issues. Our new R-701 Xtrem-Link will withstand an unlimited amount of moisture."

One trend that Sean Boyle, vice president, marketing, North America for Laticrete has seen in grout production is the use of recycled materials, such as recycled glass content, to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and produce a unique reflective appearance, he said. And these grouts are often UL Greenguard certified and meet or exceed ANSI A118.7 (Specification for High Performance Cement Grouts). In addition to improving workability for faster and easier installation, the grouts also offer the benefit of sustainably-sourced materials and low VOC emissions, he added.

Bostik recently launched Bosti-Set, a one-component adhesive for thin porcelain tile panel installations which utilizes the company's Tenirex adhesive, according to Eric Kurtz, LEED green associate market manager.

"Understanding this new category of tiling as well as current limitations in current installation techniques, Bostik R&D created a revolutionary new installation system," Kurtz said. "We developed a product that immediately grabbed porcelain tile panels in a single coat, did not allow any sag, yet made it possible for these panels to be repositionable for at least 30 minutes. Technologies used were environmentally friendly and contributed toward LEED points."



Dritac offers underlayments, shown above, as well as wood and resilient flooring adhesives with zero VOCs or solvents.

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