

Wilma's aftermath: Roofers struggle on

One punch after another, and Florida residents keep getting back up. Last year, it was Charley, Frances, Jeanne and Ivan. This year it was Dennis, Katrina, Rita and Wilma. Florida roofers have managed to get back on their feet and repair roofs after each. However, several have said, "enough is enough." Fortunately, hurricane season officially ended November 30.

The latest hurricane, Wilma, a Category 3 storm, made landfall in Southern Florida, near Marco Island, Monday, October 25 leaving billions of dollars of damage and millions without electricity. The most populated areas hit were Ft. Lauderdale, Miami and West Palm Beach. The hurricane did the worst damage to Ft. Lauderdale—the strongest storm in the area since 1950.

Florida Roofing and Sheet Metal and

Air Conditioning Contractors Association (FRSA) Executive Director Steve Munnell said there is a lot of commercial building damage in Ft. Lauderdale (Broward County) from Wilma. Damage to roofs was major in some cases. He said surprisingly there was little damage where it came ashore in the Marco Island area. It was considered a large storm with the eye about 75 miles wide.

Munnell said most of the buildings damaged were built prior to the South Florida Building Code kicking in.

"A lot of hip and ridge tile was lost," according to Munnell. "Older shingles did not fair too well, but the newer shingles that meet the codes that went into effect after (the South Florida Building Code) and now the Florida Building Code fared much better."

Several weeks after Wilma, there were

still areas where power had not been restored, but 98% of the power was back at press time.

Temporary blue tarps were being installed on roofs to dry them in. Munnell commented, "We're hopeful that more and more of our members that are outside of that area will go down (to South Florida) to do work because a lot of our other area members have really reached the end of reroofing from last year's hurricanes. That will be one help.

"Communication has been difficult. We are still not in touch with some of our (contractors) down there because even though the power is back on, the communication systems took a good hit, too," he said.

He also said that materials were in short supply, because some distributors took damage in Florida from the hurricane and were just re-opening. The material in greatest demand is tile and will be a problem for some time. The wait was running well over a year in some cases.

Munnell said, "Manufacturers after last year's hurricanes had dramatically reduced the number of colors that they were producing in order to speed up production. Even so, we hear from our members that their lead times are nine months to a year, and that was before Wilma. After Wilma, there were two plants (in Florida) that were out of business for at least three weeks." However, he doesn't expect other materials to remain in short supply for very long.

Florida Governor Jeb Bush extended an executive order allowing Florida



Many commercial buildings were damaged when roofs peeled back, revealing metal decking, such as this roof in Pompano Beach, FL. (Photo courtesy of Billy Cone, president, Rooftech Roofing & Sheet Metal, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.)

DAY'S END

Focus on good design and clever construction

A Porch for All Hours

The challenge was to build cabinetry to make an ordinary Murphy bed fit in with the Adirondack-style decor of the customer's screen-porch: The successful result is shown in the photos below. By day, the bed is concealed

behind a bench seat, which is flanked by matching end tables. A cedar-lined chest serves as a coffee table (top left).

When the sun goes down, the porch can easily be transformed into a bedroom. The bench's back folds onto the seat (top right); the picture frame doubles as a handle (bottom right) to pull the bed down to rest upon the blanket chest (bottom left). Uplighting for mood and downlights for reading are mounted in the headboard, which also hides a stereo.

The four-piece unit was designed by master carpenters Mike Hover and Eric Smith in collaboration with Mary Gunion (the homeowner) and Ron Cascio (the owner of the design/build company Chestnut Creek, in Berlin, Md.). Hover and Smith crafted the furniture from beaded yellow pine, Philippine mahogany, and eastern red cedar. — Laurie Elden



PHOTOS BY RON CASCIO

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