

Blow-In Retrofit

by Charles Wardell



You've heard of the Blown-In-Blanket insulation system for new construction. Well, now there's a related product for older homes. *Fiberrific* is a foam-based fiber insulation consisting of an adhesive latex binder and a fibrous material like fiberglass or cellulose. It's pumped at the consistency of shaving cream, so it easily slides around hidden obstructions inside the wall cavity. And because it bonds to concrete, metal, or wood, *Fiberrific* can also be sprayed onto an exposed surface, then troweled smooth and covered with wire lath and stucco.

Fiberrific sets up to the consistency of a dry sponge. It neither expands nor contracts as it dries; and because the fibers remain suspended in the adhesive after the foam dries, they won't settle. The product contains no plastics, formaldehydes, or resins, has an ultimate R-value of 3.5 to 4 per inch, and is available from licensed installers for around 25¢ per square foot for a 3½-inch-deep cavity (as a comparison, batts cost about 21¢ per square foot).

Contact: *Fiberrific*, 2191 S. Jason, Denver, CO 80223; 303/922-8277.

Measuring Temperature and Humidity

You've been called back by some clients who want to know why they've been waking up every morning with condensation on their new windows. But when you take out your handy psychrometer, you get a relative humidity reading of only 40% — a number that doesn't predict condensation prob-

lems. What your clients don't mention, however, is that they've been running a humidifier overnight. Enter the *Airguide* combination hygrometer/thermometer. Just clear the battery-operated device's memory and leave it in place. When you return, the LCD display will show maximum and minimum relative humidity and temperature for the period.

The device is also useful for monitoring comfort in an existing home. Comfort is determined in part by how quickly moisture on our skin can evaporate (that's why humid summer days are so uncomfortable). The *Airguide*'s display flashes the word "comfort" when the temperature is between 62°F and 70°F, and the humidity between 45% and 65%. The words "wet" or "dry"



appear when temperature and humidity fall outside that range. You can order the *Airguide* directly for \$26.35 plus shipping and handling.

Contact: *Therma-Stor Products*, P.O. Box 8050, Madison, WI 53708; 800/533-7533.

Improved Circuit Sleuth

How many of you have spent time flicking breakers, trying to shut off the circuit you wanted to work on, only to have to go around the house resetting the digital clocks? The *Breaker Finder* eliminates all that. The *Breaker Finder* consists of two

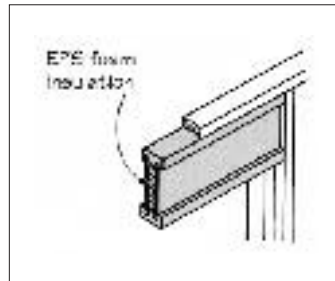
components: a transmitter that plugs into the outlet you want to shut off, and a hand-held receiver for scanning the breaker panel.



Simply wave the receiver past each breaker like a magic wand. It beeps when passed near the correct one. The device is available from electrical wholesalers and specialty tool catalogs.

Contact: *Multi Systems Corporation*, P.O. Box 1027, Clinton, NJ 07014; 800/875-5897.

Factory-Insulated Header



Window and door headers are thermal weak links in most buildings. An interesting response to the problem is an engineered header with built-in insulation. *SWII Headers* consist of machine stress-rated flanges, and an expanded polystyrene core sandwiched between two oriented-strandboard webs. It gets an R-value of about 15.5. An 11¼-inch-deep header with 2x4 flanges costs around \$3.50 per foot; 2x6 flanges raise the price to around \$4.40.

Contact: *Superior Wood Systems*, P.O. Box 1208, Superior, WI 54880; 715/392-1822.

No-Rust Concrete Ties

If you build your own concrete forms you'll be interested in



SuperTie fiberglass form ties. The high-tensile strength fiberglass rods are installed like other pass-through ties, but since fiberglass doesn't rust, they don't have to be removed after the pour or cut back below the surface. They're held in place with a wedge and gripper that you can rent or buy from your local supplier. An accessory clip lets you attach a second tie between the forms for use as an internal spreader. *SuperTies* come in bulk lengths that are cut at the job site.

Contact: *RJD Industries, Inc.*, 26945 Cabot Rd., Suite 107, Laguna Hills, CA 92653; 800/344-4753.

Interior Vinyl Trim



Vinyl trim just came in from the cold. *PVC Trim* pieces consist of foamed PVC cores and solid exteriors. They're designed for use as baseboards, window sills, and door and window casings. They're available in eight different shapes and a variety of widths. *PVC Trim* can be cut with a fine-tooth saw and installed with *PVC* adhesive or white-headed nails.

Contact: *Rehau Inc.*, P.O. Box 1706, 1501 Edwards Ferry Road, Leesburg, VA 22075; 703/777-5255. ■