In the News

One Day at a Time

Communities grapple with rising numbers of day laborers

Activists on both sides of the immigration debate are organizing around the growing use of immigrant day laborers in the construction industry. While the federal government considers building walls at the Mexican border and issuing guest-worker permits, local governments are tackling the issue hands-on, some by banning curbside solicitation and others by establishing day-labor centers and hiring halls. Proponents of the latter approach say that setting up a formal space for day laborers can help regulate public safety, documentation, and education. Opponents argue that the centers legitimize illegal hiring practices.

Migrant labor has become an increasingly widespread and integral part of the U.S. economy. Foreign-born workers now number more than 21 million nationwide, reports the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Jeffrey S. Passel of the Pew Hispanic Center estimates some seven million, or one-third, of these workers are undocumented. Passel also notes that 15 years ago, most undocumented residents lived in just six states (California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, and New Jersey). However, as the undocumented population has grown — by an average of almost a half-million persons a year since 1990 — the distribution has also changed, with some 40 percent (up from 10 percent) now living in states other than those six.

Considering the controversy they generate, day laborers constitute a surprisingly small minority of total undocumented workers in the U.S. In 2001, the Bureau of Labor Statistics pegged their number at only 260,000, though Abel Valenzuela Jr., professor of urban planning at the University of California, believes that when current calculations are completed, the number will be much higher.

Many of these workers congregate in the parking lots of building-supply stores like Home Depot or in other areas where contractors can easily pick them up and bring them to a job site. But store customers often object to the presence of the laborers, who may end up moving several times throughout the day to different locations.

Police in East Hampton Village, N.Y., for instance, say they received numerous neighborhood complaints last year about day laborers gathering on the street, though the men weren't breaking any local laws. In response, the department implemented a plan in November aimed at discouraging contractors from hiring undocumented workers. Police photographed the license plates of vehicles used to pick up day labor-

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Homeowners should not have been granted class-action status in a construction-defect claim, ruled the Nevada Supreme Court in December. Craig Ranch Village homeowners had argued that all of their houses' foundations and slabs were damaged by the same cause — expansive soils — and therefore should be considered as a single case. However, a number of houses in the Beazer Homes development had no damage, due to differences in grading, landscaping, drainage, lot slopes, and retaining walls. Also, the homeowners alleged more than 30 additional defects that weren't caused by expansive soils. Justice Jim Hardesty wrote, "Because single-family–residence construction-defect litigation often raises diverse, individualized claims and defenses, we conclude that, generally, the requirements for class-action certification cannot be met." The homeowners may now either settle with Beazer or pursue individual claims in district court.

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ers and sent the pictures to the IRS, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency, and the N.Y. State Department of Labor.

According to police chief Gerald Larsen, the policy "worked great. There are no more day laborers up there. I've had two negative responses, but dozens of people have thanked me."

Other communities — such as Duluth, Ga. — that have struggled with similar issues have come up with a different solution: hiring halls. Duluth's Hispanic Community Support Center has served an average of 50 day laborers per day since its inception in 2000. The primary function of the center is "helping people adjust to the community, get jobs, and be self-sufficient," says director Maria Garcia.

As a condition of using the center's services, both contractors and laborers must show photo identification and provide an address and phone number. Garcia says that this policy, along with cooperation from local law enforcement, has resulted in a large drop-off in cases where laborers work but then aren't paid — a common complaint among day laborers. Employers are responsible for screening for documentation, and agree to hire a worker for at least four hours and to pay a minimum of $10 an hour.

In addition to serving as a place for workers and employers to connect, the center sponsors classes in literacy, English, personal finance, and citizenship. It holds a bilingual summer camp and an annual health and job fair. Neighborhood reaction has been positive, Garcia reports: "People call us and say the center is such a good thing. They are glad about it." — *Laurie Elden*

Katrina Reports Offer Expert View of Wind Damage to Wood-Frame Buildings

Gable roofs (A,B) typically sustain greater damage from high winds than hip roofs (C). Note the intact hip roof (D) in a neighborhood where gabled homes are stripped of siding and have lost sheathing.

Speak of load paths, and your average inland builder imagines gravity loads working their way down from roof to foundation. Builders who work near the coast or in tornado zones know better — or should. High winds turn the typical load path on its head, pulling upwards and sideways with unimaginable force.

Last August, Hurricane Katrina swept ashore in Louisiana and Mississippi with sustained 120-mph winds. With much of New Orleans un-

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der water and storm surges reaching far inland, most news reports focused on the flooding. But after the waters had receded, two teams of researchers — one affiliated with the National Science Foundation and the other with the Institute for Business and Home Safety — explored the storm path, looking specifically at damage to wood-frame buildings caused by high winds.

Wind forces are greatest at roof edges (above and right). Perimeter sheathing should be nailed at a closer spacing in high-wind regions.

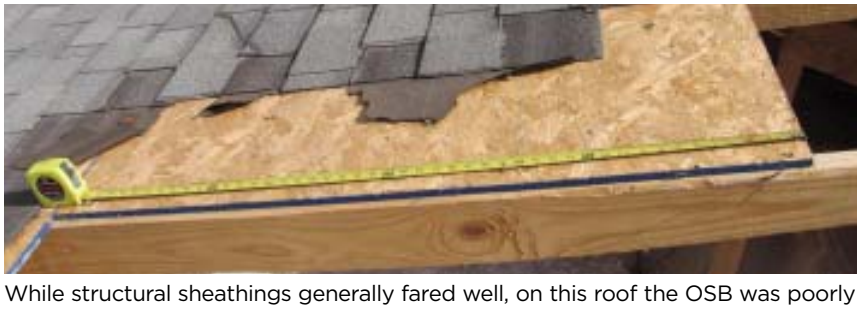
The damage they found was similar to that seen in earlier hurricanes. Exposed gable ends fared poorly compared with hip roofs (see photos, page 2. Roof edges typically experienced greater damage than the field of the roof, suggesting that perimeter sheathing should be nailed more closely and shingles should be both nailed and glued down in vulnerable areas (photos, left).

The lack of hold-downs and metal connectors also contributed to the destruction, as did shoddy nailing of roof sheathing (photos, next page).

Many homes in the region were built with a mixture of sheathing types — enough structural panels to meet code, infilled with nonstructural panels, which cost less than plywood or OSB (photos, page 4). One of the most striking and repeated observations in the reports is that nonstructural sheathings — fiberboard or rigid foam — often blew right off, leaving the house wide open to the rain. While the intact structural panels — mostly OSB — may have protected the frames from complete destruction, water damage from the breaches was severe and costly.

On this home (far left), the roof over the carport was framed as a continuation of the main roof, but the posts supporting it were not anchored. When the wind lifted the carport, the roof of the house was also breached. Nearby, a properly anchored porch post (left) held fast, losing only some of its vinyl trim.

The researchers note that builders and code officials in the Gulf area may be working under "conventional construction provisions" when they should be applying high-wind details like those found in the American Wood Council's *Wood Frame Construction Manual, 1995 SBC High-Wind Edition,* or the Southern Building Code Conference International's *Standard for Hurricane-Resistant Residential Construction.*



While structural sheathings generally fared well, on this roof the OSB was poorly fastened with staples 12 inches or more on-center and single staples straddling the joints between panels.

The researchers also point out that newer homes seemed to fare better than older ones, offering this as evidence that

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post-Andrew code changes, as well as improved building materials, may be having an effect. While the reports are not conclusive, they offer good advice for anyone building where wind is an issue: Install structural sheathing on the entire frame, use a close nailing schedule on roof edges, and provide a continuous load path from roof to foundation with metal connectors and proper nailing.

The reports are available online at www.engr.colostate.edu/~jwv and www.apawood.org (type Katrina in the publications search). — *Don Jackson; thanks to John van de Lindt of Colorado State University and Tom Skaggs and Bryan Readling of the APA/Engineered Wood Association for photos.*

While it is not uncommon for hurricanes to pull off siding, what's underneath often determines the extent of the building's damage. This building (A) lost its brick veneer, which was inadequately tied to the foam sheathing beneath. Once the siding was gone, the foam panels blew off, exposing the interior. Note the intact OSB panels at the front corner. In a similar case (B), plywood panels held while fiberboard sheathing came loose. Though this home (C) next to the Gulf was swept from its foundation, its frame was remarkably preserved because of the plywood sheathing. A home sheathed with OSB (D) fared well despite loss of its vinyl siding. However, the omission of building paper beneath the siding contributed to water intrusion; note the stains beneath the gable window.

Louisiana adopted a statewide uniform building code on November 29. The International Building Code, International Residential Code, Existing Building Code, Mechanical Code, and Fuel Gas Code will apply to coastal parishes this year and to all construction in the state beginning in 2007. Coastal parishes that already enforce a building code were required to comply with the wind and flood provisions of the IBC and IRC as of December 29. Coastal jurisdictions that don't currently enforce a code have until February 27 of this year for implementation. The legislation also created a state code council with 19 members to be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate.

DeKalb, Ill., city council members voted on November 14 to more than triple impact fees on new development to pay for schools. One council member, Donna Gorski, said that such a drastic increase was necessary because the previous fees "were pathetically low," reports *The Northern Star,* a local newspaper. The fees will jump from $4,800 on a four-bedroom home to $18,330. The only member of the council to vote against the measure expressed a reservation "that an owner of a $200,000 home would pay the same as the owner of a $450,000 home."

RESOURCES

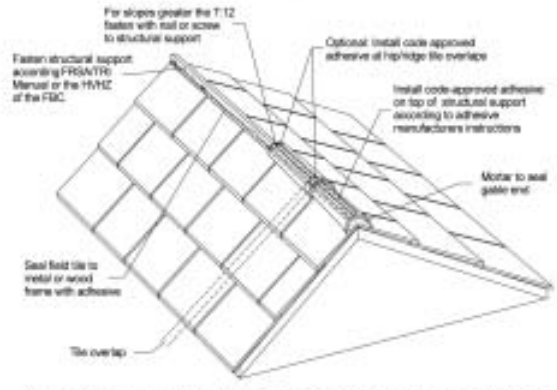
Roofing-Tile Installation Manual

Following the 2004 quartet of hurricanes in Florida, the Tile Roofing Institute (TRI) and the Florida Roofing, Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors Association (FRSA) studied the pattern of damage to tile roofs throughout the state. The two trade organizations found that code changes made after Hurricane Andrew did in general improve the performance of tile roofs.

However, one ineffective form of attachment — floating hip and ridge tiles on just a small bead of mortar along the edges — is still common, says TRI technical director Rick Olson. TRI and FRSA's new instructions — which were adopted in November 2005 as code in Florida — direct roofers to fasten hip and ridge tiles to a metal or wood nailer board when using a mechanical or adhesive fastening system; roofers who use mortar for structural attachment should use prebagged mortar rather than mixing it on site.

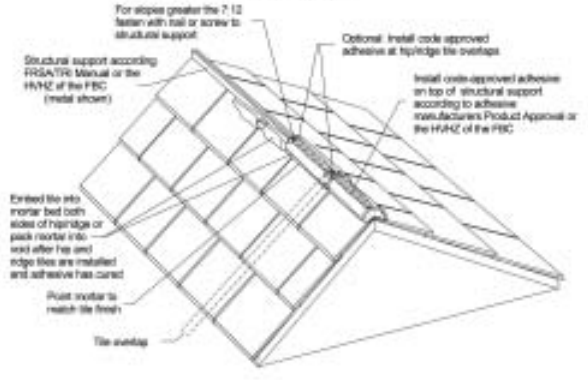
The 30-page "Instructions for Hip and Ridge Attachment" is available separately or as part of the fourth edition of the *TRI/FRSA Concrete and Clay Roof Tile Installation Manual for Florida*. Either version can be downloaded free from www.tileroofing.org. The installation manual can also be ordered from FRSA (407/671-3772, ext. 155) for $40 plus shipping and handling.

Drawing 16



Adhesive-set Hip/Ridge Tile Using Adhesive as Weather Blocking

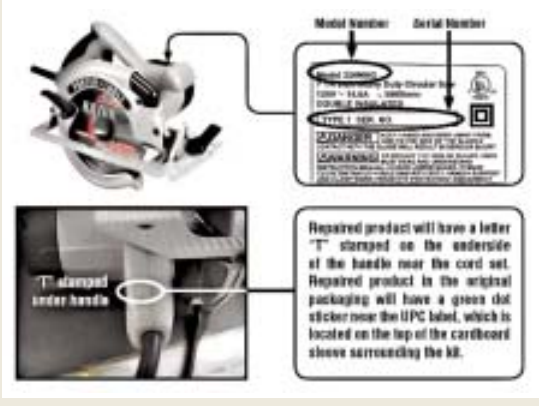
Drawing 17



Attaching Hip/Ridge Tile with Adhesive Using Mortar as Weather Blocking

Circ Saw Recall

Porter-Cable recalled 196,000 MAG-Saw circular saws (see chart, far right) in November because the lower guard can get stuck in the open position, posing a hazard. A "T" marked on the label indicates that the company has determined the saw is fully functional and thus not subject to the recall. For a free inspection and repair, call Porter-Cable at 800/949-7930 or visit www.porter-cable.com.



Recalled Porter-Cable Circular Saws

Model	Serial Numbers
324MAG	10001 - 108962
325MAG	10001 - 014712
423MAG	10001 - 100371
424MAG	10001 - 012690