



September 2010

A newsletter for professional glazing contractors, published by RJL Associates Inc.

## What the market gurus looking at the market say

### What to expect:

- More consolidations
- More attempts at price adjustments from current levels
- Tougher line on credit terms and account limits
- New alliances formed
- Changes in Florida's line up of glazing firms
- Need for better education to deal with structural changes

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new Fire Rated CW
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Many topics are of interest to the glazing contractor --- changes in Codes, products, pricing pressures, and more --- but the state of the building construction market is one that hits home deeply as this is what fuels sales and a firm's health.

We receive information from the major services (FW Dodge, Reed, Financial Times and others), plus analysis from internal sources from manufacturers we represent, so from these varied points of view we can derive a general trend and a slightly more focused "guess" for Florida and the general Southeast area. This is best summarized as a glimmer of hope.

With all of the politics going on, the fall of home values, lower budgets for the gov-

ernmental units, pressure on banks as far as lending policies, conservative assumptions being the rule, and a personal savings rate which has dramatically increased over the past 2-3 years, a glimmer should be considered hopeful.

If we take the middle of the road with the best guesstimates, we will be seeing a slight increase in construction volume in institutional and education, fairly steady remodel volume, but no big increase until mid-2011 if the trends continue. Both the USA and offshore trends seem to indicate that things are touchy, but hopeful, and that this is an 18-36 month process to get to a reasonable level of construction we can call somewhat normal.

Local governments will not see any real increase in revenue streams for another two years, and even then the pressures will be for more responsible spending, as the backlog on projects will not be addressed for several years.



The fog obscures the view of these carriers in port, just as we seem to have a fog over what the future landscape holds for the local market

## What's new in the market - comments on actual developments and rumors

One of the interesting things in reading product sheets is the terms the marketers use - "polished clear", "clear wireless", and others with regards to the conventional ceramic products. Needless to say, the conventional ceramics have an amber color and the deepness of the tint varies, but "clear" is not a word I would use.

With the introduction of Schott" Pyran family, we

have a micro-float product with a change in the formula via the elimination of certain metals, and this changes the tint, and is better optically, but I don't call it clear (I use 6mm clear float as my standard to compare to). I have seen and played with the product, and it is a step in the right direction, but does have its limitations.

Now comes the FireLite HD, and I have seen the photos

and presentation on their website, and spoken to industry members who have been given the PR packages and "advance" information, but no samples. Is it a shift in formulation? Is it a micro-float? Do they have to polish it? Sizing? Limitations? All up in the air, with introduction promised for November. We can speculate, but seeing product is the best thing to form an opinion.

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You have to understand listings to better grasp what products and systems can and cannot do.

**What's new in the market – comments on actual developments and rumors - Continued**

SAFTI First has been pushing to get a UL listing for its products again. Now they have the UL listings, but there are “adjustments” needed in their product sheets. Among them are:

- SuperLite I-XL is restricted to a 20 minute rating only
- SuperLite I-W maximum sizing for door use is restricted to smaller sizing (1296 square inches in 20 and 45 minute applications)
- SuperLite II-XL-45 has a reduced maximum area for its 3/4” version, and larger areas can only be achieved with the 1” thickness (that is the same as for their SuperLite II-XL-60)
- Their GPX listing limits maximum, per lite areas as well as maximum percentage of wall usage

Will this lead to more conservative claims?

Kawneer is now in the fire rated glazing business – partly true. Kawneer has teamed up with Forster on their fire rated curtain wall systems, and are trying to compete against the TGP system for a piece of the action. Fire rated glass for the systems is being furnished by Vetrotech Saint-Gobain. Availability is limited to Kawneer dealers on the system. They are not furnishing loose glass or other systems, so they are working in a niche area.

RJL Associates is expanding its sales area to other Southeastern states — pure rumor. What has occurred is that its principal, Ron Lesica, has accepted an additional assignment from Vetrotech Saint-Gobain and assumed the role of Eastern Regional Sales Manager to support other reps in those areas.

Vetrotech Saint-Gobain is planning to put on a regional show in Florida for architects and commercial glazing firms — rumor and taken out of context. The comment has been made on several occasions that local shows are easier for some firms to attend and more cost effective as they usually are targeted to an area easily accessible, and of a shorter, more economical duration. They along with others would consider participating at local CSI and AIA shows, as well as those by SEGA and others based on the location, timing and composition.

We are considering participating at the 2011 BOAF Convention in June as this will be an excellent educational venue for building officials.

Do you know of local trade shows that are of benefit to you? Let us know.

**Aluflam’s New Wall System – additional information and responses to questions**

Since our initial introduction of Aluflam’s CW-120, two hour fire rated wall system, we have received a number of questions regarding ratings, availability and options. Aluflam has been working on an updated binder, tentatively scheduled for release later this fall, but limited details on the CW-120 are available.

To address some common questions, here are some

points to be aware of:

- Currently there is no 90 minute rated door to compliment the fixed wall system; a prototype test is scheduled for this fall, but it is not expected that the door will be introduced until mid-2011 at the earliest
- The CW-120 has a UL listing and can be used

for interior or exterior applications; testing in accordance to ASTM standards for air, water, static and dynamic wind loading have been completed, but these have not been submitted as of the date of publishing to the FBC for product approval (this would allow use in non-HVHZ areas only);

**(continued next page)**

### Aluflam's New Wall System – additional information and responses to questions - Continued

- a hurricane impact version is on the R&D list, but is not expected to hit the testing scheduled until late 2011 at the earliest
- System is available for quoting and shipping, and orders for it have been received and in the process of being fabricated
- System uses the Contraflam-120 glazing by Vetrotech Saint-Gobain, but Aluflam quotes as systems so you will get a cost for the wall framing and glass (no option for purchasing framing only)
- Pricing is very competitive, but we are not using any budget figures due to the different configurations being requested; typical pricing turn around with complete information is currently 1 to 2 working days
- A variety of finishes is available including standard clear and color anodized, powder coat polyester, and 2 and 3 coat Kynar finishes.



Aluflam one hour fire rated doors and framing system installed at FIU School of Law—Miami, FL



### Q & A Corner

***I have seen a number of projects which specify HM frames being used mainly as sidelights to 90 minute doors with notes to supply either 90 minute or 2 hour fire rated glass for them. Is this possible, and what can be used?***

The 2007 Florida Building Code has a requirement for openings in 2 hour rated walls which basically mandates that they meet temperature rise requirements, as outlined under ASTM E-119 standard. In fact, the NFPA 257 standard used for fixed HM frames (transoms, sidelights and borrowed frames) stops at 45 minute rating level. Why do HM suppliers try to supply these frames when they know they cannot comply with the Code and label them (UL or WHI/ITS)?

Money may be one answer, with another common one being ignorance, but most

legitimate HM distributors will exclude this from the scope of their quotes or list them with "construction labels" which mean nothing under the Code.

What can you do? Try and RFI with the information to the designer would be a first approach, if time permits. The other would be to bid the proper glazing for it (yes, we do have glazing that could fit into properly labeled HM frames), and then note that the glazing must be installed into proper UL or WHI/ITS labeled frames by others. I also suggest that at the time you bid the project you also include a voluntary alternate add to supply the frames in question, thus defusing any complaints later on when the proper labeled frames must be purchased.

***I have a customer asking for a piece of Keralite FR-L to be drilled for a speak hole and have a pass-thru***

***slot made in it, which will be installed in a rated HM frame. Is this possible?***

No. Code does not allow fire rated components to be penetrated for use with non-rated accessories. There are some fire rated pass-thru drawers which can be installed below the frame in the wall, and electronic mike and speaker combinations can be used for communication. Remember this is a fire rated application and a breach violates the integrity of the assembly!

**If you have a question on an application you need an opinion on send it to us via fax or e-mail. See page 4 for contact information.**

**Our next newsletter issue will be in December 2010.**

The 2009 edition of the Florida Building Code is being finalized by the Florida Building Commission. This will take effect in December 2011.

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**Calendar and Notes**

September 6 <sup>th</sup>	Office closed in observance of Labor Day
September 14 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup>	Glass Build – Las Vegas (neither Vetrotech Saint-Gobain nor Aluflam will be exhibiting)
November 25 <sup>th</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup>	Office closed in observance of Thanksgiving Holiday
December 23 <sup>rd</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup>	Office closed in observance of Xmas and New Year's Holiday

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You can forward information, including take-offs, specifications, details and related information to us for pricing, with a typical turn-around of one business day, in most cases. Our firm represents Vetrotech Saint-Gobain and Aluflam North America.

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One hour fire rated, butt glazed wall system by Vetrotech Saint-Gobain. Includes entry door option.