message from the Editor

Here we are... back with our second edition of the The North Country Slate Standard and hoping it reaches all our customers, suppliers, architects, consultants and specifiers. I hope every one is enjoying prosperity in 2006 and had a great summer!

Is it just me, or is anyone else snarled out by the wild claims of "artificial" slate manufacturers and marketers in their advertising, literature and promotional materials? Really... they're comparing their value, performance and environmental benefits against real "natural" slate?

There are three reasons why "Un-Natural" slate would be used on a building... weight (under-designed for real "natural" slate), price (under-budgeted for real "natural" slate), or performance (under-expected to last as long as real "natural" slate). In the past ten years, the market has been flooded with "slate wanna-be's", most poly-down the drain quite a bit... (or not so quietly) after performance problems on roof tops. Funny how actual durability on a roof top can be so different than in a laboratory, where "marketing durability" for "Un-Natural" slate is established for advertising campaigns?

All our readers probably know of real "natural" slate roofs that are still beautiful and actually performing (outside the lab) after 100 years on roof tops in our communitites. The "Un-Natural" stuff is a step up from those shaublinges, but make no mistake... it ain't slate! Let's continue to keep it real guys!

Once again, if you are reading this, it probably means you have read at least some of the other articles in this newsletter. I hope you have found them to be interesting, amusing, thought provoking or controversial. I look forward to your comments, opinions or suggestions.

Regards
Dave Large

NORTH COUNTRY PRODUCTS

Unfading Green

North Country Unfading Green roofing slate meets, or exceeds, the requirements of an S-1 rated roofing slate under ASTM C406. This beautiful material, produced by quarries in Vermont and New York, is available in smooth, medium or rough textured: 1/4", 3/8", 1/2", 3/4" and 1" thickness. In general, texture will be more evident as slate thickness increases or slate face dimensions decrease. Texture refers to the degree of "tear back" from the trimmed edges, the presence of knots, knurls and cramps on the face of the slate; and the variation in thickness of slates in a shipment. An increase, from smooth to medium or rough texture, will lead to greater definition of the individual slates on a roof top. North Country monitors these "textures" to ensure that they fall within traditional North American limits.

Select quarries, producing North Country Unfading Green roofing slate, must meet our expectations for stone and fabrication quality, production capacity, and adherence to delivery lead time schedules. Our quarry suppliers have been in production for generations and have proven capabilities in meeting the demands of our discerning customers. They blend the traditional, centuries old, art of roofing slate manufacture with the mechanization and automation required to be successful in today's modern roofing slate industry.

North Country Unfading Green roofing slate has been specified and installed on prestigious private homes, courthouses, churches, university and institutional buildings throughout North America. Our customers are thrilled and our competition is green with envy!

Projects of Note

Residence - Vancouver, BC
Semi-Weathering Grey/Black

Residence - Winnipeg, MB
Unfading Black

Hamiltont County Courthouse - Aurora, NE
Unfading Black

James J. Hill House - St. Paul, MN
Unfading Black (Sawn Edges)

All Saints Church - Keokuk, IA
Unfading Black

University of St. Mary of the Lake - Mundelein, IL
Unfading Black

Montgomery County Courthouse - Crawfordsville, IN
Unfading Green

Residence - Palma, OH
Unfading Mottled Purple

Birge-Carnegie Library - Toronto, ON
Unfading Green

Royal Victoria Hospital - Montreal, PQ
Unfading Black

Amherst College - Amherst, MA
Unfading Black (Diamond Point)

Yale University - New Haven, CT
Unfading Black

Gardner Earl Memorial Chapel - Troy, NY
Unfading Black

Old Lehigh County Courthouse - Allentown, PA
Unfading Black

National Institute of Health - Bethesda, MD
Unfading Black

Residence - Palm Beach, FL
Unfading Black

Residence - Chattanooga, TN
Semi-Weathering Green

Mississippi State University - Starkville, MS
Unfading Black

University of Arkansas - Fayetteville, AR
Unfading Black

Residence - Kansas City, MO
Semi-Weathering Green

Residence - St. Louis, MO
Unfading Green

Residence - New Orleans, LA
Unfading Black

Dallas Women's Club - Dallas, TX
Unfading Black

Residence - San Francisco, CA
Semi-Weathering Grey

THE SLATE FACTS

The natural mineral makeup of slate will determine its color. Hematite produces purple tones and chlorite produces green. Black and gray colors are created by carbon. The presence of iron compounds, primarily fine grained iron pyrite, can lead to the "weathering" of these original colors to tones of buff and brown in various percentages. This characteristic produces the "semi-weathering" or "weathering" designation of slates and has lead to the development of commercial color descriptions. Unfading Black, Semi-Weathering Black, Semi-Weathering Grey/Black, Unfading Green, Semi-Weathering Green etc... to signify the color stability of slate from a given source.

For more information on how North Country Slate can help with your next project, contact:
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T H E  N O R T H  C O U N T R Y  S L A T E  S T A N D A R D

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

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TEXAS COURTHOUSES
RESTORED TO ORIGINAL GLORY

When the new Republic of Texas formed in 1836, the government quickly drew up counties and began building courthouses to create a civic foundation in the rugged landscape. Because it was the only capital expense that counties were allowed to finance over time, these elaborate courthouses were constructed using the very best construction materials of the day. During the "golden age" of public-sector construction in the 1830s and 90s, many were topped with black or dark gray slate, which was typical for distinguished buildings of that era. The courthouses became symbols of pride for the pioneers settling there.

"One of the things that they could entice people with, was a very prestigious looking courthouse," says Sharon Fleming, AIA, with the Texas Historical Commission (THC).

Texas Courthouses

"For many Texas communities today, it remains the very best building they have."

As part of a comprehensive program launched in 1999, historic courthouses throughout Texas are being restored. To match the original architectural designs, many are getting North Country Unfading Black roofing slate. To ensure historical accuracy, THC project manager Mark Cowan looks in attics and digs underground for slate shards to determine the original color. “When we’re excavating around the building, we look for original slate,” says Cowan.

"We want the new slate to be a visual match with the original.” On all the projects he’s worked on so far, Cowan says North Country Unfading Black Slate is identical to the slate being replaced.

See Texas Courthouses page 2
A report was made on the use of slate as a roofing material. The McEssy Theological Resource Center, which is undergoing a roof replacement project, is being studied extensively. The new roof system is expected to last for at least 100 years due to the durability of slate material. The president, Rys, has selected North Country Unfading Black Slate for its aesthetic and functional properties. Slate has been installed on the campus since 1891, and it continues to be a popular choice for its longevity and beauty.

After researching roofing slate, Rys selected North Country Slate and credits their decision to the aesthetics and durability of the material. The company has been installing slate for 25 years and has worked on over 100 projects requiring slate, with six more pending. Rys has applied for state grants to assist with the restoration and has set a personal guarantee of 100 years on the materials used.

This newsletter discusses the importance of having a strong specification for slate installations. It emphasizes the need for clear communication and collaboration between designers, architects, and installers. The National Slate Association recently revised the C120 Standard Test Methods of Flexure of Slate and Materials, which is crucial for ensuring the quality and durability of slate installations.

Key points from the updated standards include:

- A minimum side lap of 3 inches is recommended for slate installations.
- A minimum of 18 inches of overshoot (headlap) is required to create a waterproof seal.
- The length, gauge, and type of nail used in the installation should be considered to ensure a secure attachment.
- Flashings, valley metal, and various wooden cant strips are essential for a proper installation.

The newsletter also highlights the versatility and strength of slate, making it an ideal choice for long-term projects. Rys comments on the aesthetic appeal and the grandeur of slate installations, which are a symbol of the kind of material that it installs. The reference to the concept of pride and accomplishment that rests only in a slate roofer’s tool belt, and the importance of having a strong specification to keep students there.

A detailed CSI Part 3 roof specification is available online, and a good specification will keep students there. A good slate installer is very protective about their tools and materials, and the slate hammer is something more personal. It is important for there to be a strong specification clearly stating expected installation practices and material requirements. Having everyone on the same page is important – a good specification will keep them there.