NEW Year, NEW Gear

For tools and equipment, the only constant is change.

by Mary E. Chollet-Lordan

The Good Book writer who yawned that there was “nothing new under the sun” must not have done much contracting work. When PWC requested supplier input for a round-up on new tools and equipment for this issue, the response was an avalanche.

From prep to disposal, scores of new options have come to market in the last year, offering contractors a wide range of ways to save time, improve quality and try new markets.

In fact, the response has been so great that our May-June “Green Issue” will include even more new “green” products, with special attention on greener prep. Meanwhile, here are some cool new things to get you started.

Prep products

Masking is one of many thankless, yet critical, prep tasks. 3M, granddaddy of masking products, has just rolled out improved versions of its Hand-Masker Masking Film Plus and Contractor’s Plastic, pre-folded masking films designed to work with the Hand-Masker tape dispenser. Contractor’s Plastic (available in four sizes) is recommended for single coat and dust containment applications. Masking Film Plus (seven sizes) is recommended for multi-coat spray applications.
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Clock to deliver detailed time and activity tracking at the job site. Each FastTrakker handheld contains up to 1,000 cost codes (activities) of the owner's choice. Workers select a cost code on their personal FastTrakker, then clock in on The JobClock.

Meanwhile, mJobTime offers a wireless GPS-enabled employee time and equipment tracking software solution that requires minimal manual entry and interfaces with most common accounting systems. Built on a secure SQL database, mJobTime enables field foremen to collect employee time, daily field reports and equipment usage in real time, or input these later.

Measurement tools are more precise than ever. On the commercial/industrial side, Fischer Technology's DuAlscope FMP100 is a compact coating thickness measurement instrument equipped with measurement probes for precise evaluation and statistical control.

Estimating software options also continue to grow, with PEP Associates LLC unveiling a major upgrade of its program. The IBM-compatible PEP XP Version .08.0016, designed for all contracting sectors, now calculates materials for the items added to the estimate. The program comes preloaded with certain materials, but these can be easily altered.

Then there is Sto Corp., wading ever deeper into the growing EIFS sector with its new Architectural Toolbox. This EIFS selector tool allows architects, designers and specifiers to build a variety of EIFS systems using pull-down menus and many options. Users can instantly download Revit models, specifications for their system choices, technical bulletins and sales materials.

And then there's...

No roundup would be complete without that clever, why-didn't-I-think-of-that collection of miscellaneous products popping up at all points of the job. This year's crop includes:

- **DrywallStencils.com** (DCI), which combines 40 patterns, joint compound and 35 colors to create the appearance of endless varieties of tile, brick or stone for less than $1 per square foot.
- **Little Giant Synergy** (Little Giant Ladders), a lightweight, five-to-eight-foot stepladder with deep rungs, wide-flared leg and telescoping sides for use anywhere, including staircases.
- **Level Best®** (SLK Development Group), a 4-in-1 tool that levels, plumbs, squares and measures.
- **ScreenKleen** (Linzer Products), which offers a new niche in cleaning windows and doors without removing, hosing and spraying. The product penetrates the mesh, removing dust and allergens from both sides at once.

- **Coating Defect Identification Labels** (TQC — Thermimport Quality Control), which provide easy, detailed marking of defects for repair and points of attention before painting.
- **Weather Guard Downspout Side Boxes** (Knaack), which combine great storage space with maximum rear-window visibility. The locking boxes carry Knaack's new limited lifetime warranty.
- **ZipHook** (ZipWall) clamps to ZipWall's SLP 12-foot and KT-20 20-foot poles for keeping up to 40 pounds of cables, tools and hoses off floors.

Mary E. Chollet-Lordan (mchollet@paintsquare.com) is the editor of PWC.