

ACAI NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Up On The (Metal) Rooftop ...

Fort Lauderdale, FL (December 2007) -- There is a group of under-the-radar professionals who made a substantive yet unrecognized contribution to this special holiday time of year. As we welcome in the New Year, let's be sure to raise a glass of eggnog to architects. Why so? Simple! Because of their applied roofing expertise, Santa was able to safely touch down his loaded sleigh on millions of roofs throughout the world!

"While the central purpose of a roof is to protect a building and its contents from the effects of weather, as architects we do have to keep in mind the weight-bearing effects of a sleigh full with gifts, nine domesticated reindeer, and one plump, jolly old man," states Adolfo Cotilla, AIA, with tongue firmly planted in cheek.

"Addressing these elements demands attention to detail," says Cotilla, president of ACAI Associates, an award-winning, full-service architecture firm with offices in Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach Counties in Florida. "Not only must the roof withstand the landing and take-off under cover of darkness, the once-yearly visit must be accomplished without causing leaks, eliminating any liability concerns for Saint Nick."

"And, of course, it goes without saying that Santa encounters significantly less problems during his long night when navigating metal roofs," further states Cotilla. "I've got it on good authority that before heading out from the North Pole, he adds some non-abrasive, non-slip coating to the runners of his sleigh to assure maximum adhesion, and he's good to go!"

As licensed architects, the project-tested ACAI team has been analyzing and designing building roofing, reroofing and waterproofing projects since 1985. With more than two million square feet of roofing design experience in all types of membranes and systems, the ACAI Roofing Division's projects -- from recover to full replacement -- have run the gamut from major sports venues, governmental buildings and healthcare facilities to schools, universities and office structures. Many have utilized standing-seam metal roofing systems. "In one roofing project," notes Cotilla, "we value-engineered our work and saved the owner an amount equal to our fee, enabling them to repaint the entire facility and add several very nice enhancements to the building."

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The logo for ACAI, featuring the word "acai" in a lowercase, red, serif font.

ACAI's award-winning design of the \$40 million, 800,000-square-foot Health Professions Division Campus at Nova Southeastern University, considered to be an architectural cornerstone of what is now one of the 10 largest independent universities in the United States, involved metal roofing in several of its buildings. For example, the assembly building encompasses under its arched metal roof two large auditoriums (500 and 250 seats) and eight 125-seat lecture halls. Its construction is concrete post and beams with steel truss and joist roofing systems and composite roof decking. A standing-seam metal roof vault spans the wide central section, creating internal height -- a design feature that is repeated in several of the other buildings on the campus. The metal-roof system -- which is also utilized on the entry pavilions to several of the other campus buildings -- is the consistent and signature design thread for the medical school.

Another education-oriented "metal" example -- ACAI recently designed a major addition (24-26 classrooms, \$7.5 million project) to a 15-year-old middle school in South Florida. Though the existing school building has a metal roof, the county in which the school exists wouldn't allow a metal roof on the addition that the firm was charged with designing. "Instead, we designed the addition to the school to reflect the character of the existing standing-seam metal roof by using a similar small component over the stairways, as well as using the material as a fascia across the top of the walls running the full length of the addition -- again, to reflect the aesthetic character of the roof," explains Cotilla, whose firm has retrofit metal standing-seam roofs on a half-dozen public and private schools in South Florida in the past decade.

"I am a huge proponent of utilizing metal roofs in our designs," states Cotilla. "Over the long haul, metal roofs are not only extremely cost-effective, they're also people-friendly during construction. By that I mean that there are fewer life-safety and liability issues -- no kettles, no torching, etc. In many of the retrofit applications on which we've run point, metal roofs were installed over old built-up and single-ply roofs, making for much easier installs while the buildings were occupied because there is no need for a temporary roof. Another bonus to that application -- because you don't need to remove the old roofing material, you're helping preserve valuable landfill space."

In addition to structural integrity and efficiency, another key focus for ACAI's reroofing projects is keeping a business running during roof repairs and related construction. It's a focal point on which ACAI excels. "With very few exceptions -- and especially so with metal roofs -- we are able to arrange to work around the day-to-day operations of a building's users," says Cotilla. "This requires a commitment from the design/build team, including the owner and user groups."

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The ACAI team's high standards for outstanding, functional design embrace the construction industry's new challenges and benchmarks tied to precise "green" factors such as water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, material and resources, indoor environmental quality, and, of course, innovation and the overall design process. This certainly includes roof design and theory.

"The roof and the building design play a major role in the thermal efficiency of a building," states Cotilla. Due to roof decks' perpendicular location in relation to the sun, roofing in South Florida, in particular, receives the brunt of the sun's heat and ultraviolet rays. Cotilla points out that today's cool metal roofs can reflect up to 70% of the sun's rays. "Shading a roof through architectural elements and use of highly reflective and highly emissive products, such as white membranes, combined with the proper amount of roof insulation, offers a roofing system that significantly reduces heat gain into a building."

For building owners and architects such as Cotilla who are committed to preserving natural resources, metal roof and wall panels also offer a unique, environmentally responsible and sustainable solution to their building's exterior requirements. "Roof and wall systems made of light-gauge steel contribute to the green-building movement due to their high recycled content, recyclability, sustainability and energy efficiency," states Cotilla. "Proper application and use also often helps earn points in the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) program."

"The bottom line is that a metal roof is an excellent application," states Cotilla. "While a building owner will come out of pocket a bit more on the front end versus traditional roofing material, the cost of metal roofing is well worth its price. Some studies indicate that metal roofs will more than double the lifespan than you would normally receive from traditional roofs. And metal roofing saves money because it is energy efficient, leading to lower A/C and heating costs. It's lightweight, low maintenance, long lasting, durable, functional, carries a long warranty, can usually be installed over an existing roof, and can be an attractive design element in the hands of a talented architect -- it can be bold or very unobtrusive, making subdued statements. A metal roof can literally do anything that budget will allow. What's not to like?"

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Cotilla concludes his roofing thoughts by pointing out that the jovial gentleman clad in the red suit with a proclivity for soot, white facial hair, pipes and chocolate-chip cookies and milk makes perfectly clear his rooftop “landing” preferences. “Usually around mid-January, we receive a list from the North Pole of buildings that require retrofitting with metal roofs,” states a smiling Cotilla. “As professionals, we’re not concerned with naughty or nice. Just the integrity of the rooftops. Of course, Santa usually asks us, also, to look into the trustworthiness and design of some of the chimneys he felt were problematic.”

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ACAI is an award-winning, full-service architecture firm with offices in Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach Counties. Founded in 1985, ACAI’s project-tested architects, engineers and construction professionals consistently deliver innovative, functional, sustainable and cost-effective design solutions. A minority-business enterprise, ACAI has built a longstanding reputation for excellence in the planning and design of universities, schools, local and state government buildings, healthcare facilities, industrial and commercial businesses, and private and public corporations. To learn more, contact Sandra Smerkers, LEED AP, ACAI’s director of marketing, at 954-484-4000, ext. 38, or ssmerkers@acaiworld.com.