

Special color for special project

By Jim Austin, senior editor

Sometimes, it's what you know AND who you know.

Ashley Furniture HomeStores, the largest home furnishings manufacturer in the United States and the No. 1 selling

brand in North America, wanted blue roofing accents on its new buildings. The company had long chosen to install tile roofing and then paint it to match the Ashley Furniture Blue. Unfortunately, it wouldn't take long before the blue paint faded and the clay tiles were no longer

Ashley Blue.

"The person in charge of corporate store construction happened to be my roommate in college," says Jack Rabedeaux of A.H. Bennett Company, an Eau Claire, Wis., a distributor of Metro Roof Products. "The challenge was coming up with a match to the Ashley Blue."

Metro manufactures several profiles of stone-coated metal panels. To attain the perfect (and long-lasting) match, Rabedeaux worked with Dan Henkel and Pete Croft of Metro to use different ratios of blue and black stones on the metal panels. The 18th combination proved to be the magic formula.

"They wanted to go with standing seam roofing and it makes sense because a lot of jobs like that are standing seam, so we had to teach them about the difference with our prod-





Metro Roof Products photos

uct,” says Henkel. “It took us about three months to get the color right for what they wanted. It was close to what we had and 65 feet in the air, where they were using it, you couldn’t tell the difference.”

But when the decision came down to install the Metro Roman tile on the storefront awnings — it had to be perfect.

“Now, all the new stores have to go with our product for their roofing material,” Henkel says.

Metro worked with Ashley to ensure a quality installation with each job — it’s written into the spec. Anyone who lands a bid for the job has to meet one of two criteria: The contractor has to have been trained to install Metro roofing before and completed a job; or pay for training from Metro’s corporate trainer.

The Ashley Furniture stores all have the same design — 52,000 square feet of showroom floor. Most of the roof is a flat roof, but the attractive entrance all feature the Ashley Blue roofing from Metro.

The roofing and the awnings for each store come to about 4,500 square feet. Ashley has plans to build dozens of stores in the next 10 years, so the square footage will add up fast. The first job was completed on a store in Kenosha, Wis.,



in 2007. A second store in West Bend, Wis., was recently completed. Part of the plan is to install Metro Roof Products on about a dozen stores in the Chicago area during 2008.

“It’s great exposure for Metro,” Henkel says. “It helps get the product out there in visible places and we’re picking up some contractors who have never worked with our product before.” ■