



Thermo-Tech Windows Growing with an Eye to the Future

Cynthia Lueck Sowden

A robotic arm slowly reaches out and pulls a sheet of glass toward the cutting table, then swings away as the glass tilts and falls neatly on a cushion of air. It's just one of many automated manufacturing procedures at Thermo-Tech® Windows in Sauk Rapids, Minn.

Started in 1992, the company is an outgrowth of East Side Glass Company, a St. Cloud glass company in business since 1953. "Demand for vinyl windows was growing," says CEO

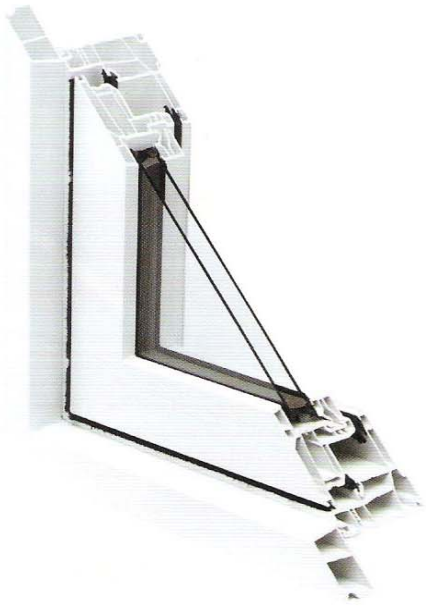
John Ferkinhoff. "We saw the opportunity knocking and here we are."

Thermo-Tech manufactures high-performance vinyl windows for new construction and retrofit operations. The frames are made of 100 percent virgin vinyl, with thicker-than-average wall extrusions and more internal chambers to promote energy efficiency and strengthen the frame. Sales and marketing manager Katie McCormick points out, "Our windows are four-point fusion-welded in

the corners, which increases the strength and stability of the frame and more exact frame dimensions."

The two panes of glass are double-strength glass, with an overall glass unit of 7/8-inch, and are separated by a warm edge spacer, which reduces condensation and improves energy savings. The space between them is filled with argon gas. The resulting windows are Energy Star® qualified in all four U.S. climate zones.

Thermo-Tech has offered a full



cost. Thermo-Tech places the film inside the windows, so homeowners never have to worry about damaging or removing the film when they clean. “When the light hits it the right way, it can give you a prism effect in the house—little rainbows all over your walls,” says Ferkinhoff.

Thermo-Tech uses a CNC machine to apply the film to the glass. The machine operates on a track on what looks like a giant drafting board. The machine head is loaded with a reel of

film, like an old-time movie projector. A sheet of glass is placed on the drafting board. The machine moves back and forth and up and down, laying down the film. It stops occasionally and makes angle cuts at the corners. The machine operator delicately removes the excess film and the corners and, voila! A beveled window is born. “We have the capability to produce standard and custom patterns,” says McCormick. “If a customer wanted a unique design,



range of window style options in standard and custom sizes “since the beginning,” says Ferkinhoff. The company continues to give builders and homeowners new options, such as wood laminate interior finishes in light and dark oak. The wood laminates are available in double-hung, casement, awning, fixed casement, direct set, and shaped windows and sliding patio doors.

Windows are also available in traditional white vinyl, tan and a darker sandalwood color that’s been hugely popular with homeowners.

What’s causing the buzz at Thermo-Tech’s booth at home and builder shows, however, is the windows and doors that are enhanced with 3M™ Accentrim™ Products optical window film. When applied to glass, the film creates the illusion of beveled glass, providing the same prismatic effect at a fraction of the





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we'd work with them to achieve the look they want. It's a great upgrade from a standard window grid."



Thermo-Tech products have a lifetime warranty on vinyl and hardware and a 20-year warranty on glass against seal failure. The glass enhanced with the 3M Accentrim product is carried under the glass warranty for 20 years as well. The warranty is transferable to another homeowner within three years of purchase.

The company offers InstallationMasters™ classes for builders. "It's a generic window installation class, not a Thermo-Tech commercial," says McCormick. "It's taught by a certi-

fied instructor and covers installation of windows and patio doors."

Thermo-Tech windows and doors are sold through lumberyards. To locate a dealer near you, contact Thermo-Tech at 1120 38th Avenue N.E., Sauk Rapids, MN 56379, 320-529-4012, or toll-free at 1-877-565-0159. You can also send an e-mail: info@thermo-techwindows.com. The Thermo-Tech website offers specifications and installation instructions on all its products. Visit it at www.thermo-techwindows.com.

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