

Project Profile



Project

Erie Intermodal
Transportation Center
Erie, PA

Owner

Erie Metropolitan
Transportation Authority

Architect

Roth Marz Partnership P.C.
Erie, PA

Roofing Contractor

A.W. Farrell & Son, Inc.
Erie, PA

Roofing System

Décor Roof System, Adhered,
using patina green, 60 mil G410
membrane

Project Size

18,200 square feet

Completed

June 2002

A Transportation Hub Takes Shape

Although Congress approved funding for the Erie Intermodal Transportation Center in 1994, construction didn't begin until late 2001. Extensive transportation studies caused delays along with numerous changes to the location, scope and design of the project. Originally intended to be a parking facility, the Transportation Center evolved into a 56,000 square foot hub for buses, taxi cabs, limousines, water taxis and ferry boats, with space for offices and retail stores as well.

Meanwhile, the Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority (EMTA), the Center's owner, wanted the building to be even more. "We wanted the Center to be a focal point on the revitalized Erie bayfront," said Lorene McGuire, grants/planning manager at the EMTA. "We wanted it to be a beacon to boaters on Lake Erie, as well as to travelers of all kinds. So, the aesthetics of the building were very important."

Designed by architectural firm Roth Marz Partnership, the Erie Intermodal Transportation Center would be a striking combination of brick and glass with dramatic standing seam metal roofs.

"Initially, the two domed roofs joined by the linear barrel vault were to be clad in metal – because it complimented the design of the building and set it apart from others around it," said Robert Marz, vice president at Roth Marz Partnership. "We actually bid out the project using metal on the roofs, but it came in over budget."

Sarnafil – the Cost-Effective Solution

"When we learned about Sika Sarnafil's Décor Roof System and how it creates the appearance of a traditional metal roof using a high quality membrane, we priced it out. Sika Sarnafil resulted in a savings of about \$1 million even though the Transportation Center is not a real large building," said Marz.

The architect and building owner liked what they heard, so they investigated further, visiting other Sika Sarnafil Décor Roof Systems around the Niagara Falls area.

"We thought Sika Sarnafil was a great alternative," said Marz. "The Patina Green color gave us the look of aged copper, which was exactly what we had in mind. But more importantly, the owner would get the long-term, proven performance they required."

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“Further,” said Marz, “not only did it cut costs, but it was easier to install than the metal would have been.”

Construction Begins at the Worst Possible Time

In Erie, there is no such thing as a mild winter. High winds and cold, snowy weather are typical throughout the winter months – and the winter of 2001-2002 was no exception.

“We started the job in November, one of the worst times of the year to install a roof here,” said Will Davis, superintendent at A.W. Farrell & Son, Inc., a Sika Sarnafil Elite-level applicator chosen to install the roofs. “The buildings are located 500 feet from Lake Erie, so we got all the winter weather.” In fact, the A.W. Farrell installation team had to pick and choose the days they could work, as over 100 inches of snow fell in the first four months of the project.

Domes Create Challenges, Too

In addition to the weather, the design of the roof also created some challenges for A.W. Farrell. In order to produce a truly rounded shape on the two domed roof sections, workers had to cut the insulation and roof membranes into triangular pieces, much like slices of an orange.

That said, the process was an improvement over what would have been required to build and install a metal dome. “The Décor Roof System was more adaptable to the dome’s shape than the metal would have been,” Marz notes. “And even though I hadn’t planned to use it at first, I didn’t need to make any adjustments to the plans to accommodate the new roof system. It was an easy change to make.”

Because the layout and configuration of the insulation and membrane were critical to the appearance and performance of the roof system, A.W. Farrell worked with Sika Sarnafil technical representatives to design special schematics and details. “Working



Roofing Contractor A.W. Farrell & Son began work on the Erie Intermodal in a November, and the bitter winter months typical to the Erie area that followed made for arduous work conditions.

with Sika Sarnafil’s technical experts and documentation saved us countless hours of hand fabrication,” said Davis.

Profiles Complete the Metal-Like Look

Although the membrane was installed in the winter, the extruded Décor profiles were not hot-air welded to the membrane until the following spring. “Originally, we weren’t going to use the profiles,” said Marz, “But we convinced the owner that they really completed the metal-like look. The profiles create just enough shadow to break up



the flat sheet, create the vaulted look and simulate an architectural metal roof.”

Compliments All Around

Since the completion of its new roof, the Erie Intermodal Transportation Center has become a fixture on the waterfront — and its owners are delighted. “We love the roofs on our new complex,” said McGuire. “The building shape, along with the colored roofs, makes the Center a virtual showplace. Everybody in Erie knows exactly where the Intermodal Transportation Center is, and I understand that people who have viewed the bayfront from Presque Isle have commented that it really stands out.”

“I run into people all the time that think it’s a metal roof,” added Marz. “Not only does the Center have roofs that provide the leak-proof security of hot-air welded thermoplastic, but it’s got the look of standing seam metal at a fraction of the cost.”

Local building professionals have noticed, as well. “Since we completed the transportation center with the Sika Sarnafil Décor Roof System,” Marz reports, “some of our colleagues have used it in other projects in Erie.”

To learn more:

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