

Earthwise Group embraces Super Spacer

The Earthwise™ Group, headed by Rick Kennel of RJT Industries, will celebrate its second anniversary in January. Kennel describes it as a strategic alliance of 14 experienced and successful vinyl window manufacturers. Its members pool their knowledge, technical expertise and purchasing power, to provide highly engineered, quality products to consumers located throughout the eastern and mid-western United States. Meeting four times a year in rotating locations, members regularly review marketing, products and manufacturing processes. Sharing information and leveraging the group's combined purchasing power are key functions of Earthwise Group members.



"Earthwise" is the Group's proprietary window brand as well as the name of this association of 14 independent window manufacturers.

The Group's "Earthwise" brand name was selected to promote products and practices that work to make both consumers' and employees' living and work spaces more comfortable, affordable and healthier. Each member is challenged to use practical measures to reduce and recycle waste, and to share ideas on product improvement and cost reduction. The Group's purchasing committee recently named Edgetech a preferred supplier of Warm Edge spacer to its member companies.

RJT Industries Incorporated, Mr. Kennel's company, was founded by his father, O.J. Kennel, in 1976. The three sons, Richard, Jeffrey and Thomas, now run the company from two locations in Virginia; one in Woodbridge and the other in Richmond. Historically a replacement window manufacturer, RJT is seeing growth in the new construction market for higher-end products



Rick Kennel, President (R), and Thom Kennel, Vice President (L), head RJT Industries.

used in additions, and by smaller builders. "When consumers can choose products for their home, they will generally pick the higher-performing ones," observes Kennel.

"Thermal efficiency and dependability are important product attributes to all Earthwise members, and Super Spacer® is widely used by members of Earthwise Group," says Kennel. "Some of our smaller members use Super Spacer exclusively, while the larger companies are more and more using it for special shapes. One member, C&S Distributors of South Windsor, Connecticut, is currently working with Edgetech to install a fully-automated I.G. line."

Kennel notes Super Spacer's dual seal application and flexible construction assure virtually the lowest seal failure rate in the industry. Better Argon retention, and protection against mildew and mold are other reasons Earthwise Group members say they like Super Spacer, according to Kennel. "And Edgetech's *Health Smart Windows*® program, with its emphasis on condensation reduction and energy savings, fits nicely with the Earthwise message."

RJT offers a lifetime warranty on

Earthwise brand products it manufactures, and has over a six-year history of working with Super Spacer. "Our lifetime warranty includes the glass, and Super Spacer is like having an insurance policy for peace of mind," explains Kennel.

The company makes up to 125 windows per day using Super Spacer, with a four-person I.G. line equipped with a Super Shuttle, air float table, and hot melt butyl gunning operations. RJT uses 9/16" charcoal Standard Super Spacer. Says Kennel, "We feel we can make up to 250 windows a day under our present manufacturing setup, so there's room to grow before we need to consider adding automated I.G. equipment."



Rick Kennel and plant manager, Johnny Sheffield, observe Super Spacer application.

Rick Kennel also cites his personal preference for the aesthetic side of NO-Metal Super Spacer. "I like the tight, sharp edges and corners. Super Spacer is easier to apply than other flexible spacers and looks better."

As for the future, Kennel sees expansion for both RJT Industries and The Earthwise Group. "Because each Group member is locally owned and operated, the products are tailored to provide the most appropriate and popular features and options for that region of the country. This assures consumers that they are purchasing a product designed for their needs, and not simply a generic one designed for mass distribution." 