

Houston businesses offering some protection from hurricanes' impact

■ Security film, laminate products options for storm preparedness

By KIM HUGHES
CHRONICLE CORRESPONDENT

Jim Nardone, president of Solar-X Window Film Systems, 625 West 16 St. in the Heights, said because of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, a product that has been around for years is new again.

He has seen a 60 percent increase in sales of Solar-X during the last year. "We have something called 3M Safety Security Window Film and it's been used in the commercial industry for years," Nardone said. "But in the last year, it has really taken off recently."

The film is applied to the interior surface of existing windows.

"It makes the glass shatter resistant, so you don't have to tape up or board up during severe weather," Nardone said. "The product has been around since the late 1970s, but became widely used in hurricane weather after (Hurricane) Andrew in '92."

Now in 2006, it's becoming popular around the entire Houston area.

"It protects from high winds and flying debris," Nardone said. "If something hits your window, it will hold the glass in place after the glass is broken. It's a super thick, strong product. You install it once. People are looking to take care of their windows once and for all, so they don't have to board up or apply tape."

Plywood alternative

Vicki Lee, office manager at Hurricane Glass and Mirror, 1418 Indiana St., agrees that people are tired of boarding up windows.

"During that last little storm known as Rita," Lee said, "we had more calls from residents



WINDOW PROTECTION: Abid Quraishi, left, and Doug Corrier roll out and measure Hurricane Film Ultra High Performance Safety and Security Window Film to be applied on windows.

who broke their own windows trying to board them up."

Lee said her company sells a product called Armorcoat, a safety film also applied to the interior surface of existing windows. Requests for information on the product are coming in daily.

"After the storms last year, people are looking at other avenues," Lee said.

The film bonds onto the glass with a special adhesive and will keep the glass as one panel even if it breaks.

"People won't be injured by flying glass," Lee said. "Rain can't get in and it can also help prevent looting after the storm."

Lee said new home builders have been inquiring about Impact Glass, a laminate product with "very thick plastic sheathing between two pieces of glass that makes it impact resistant."

This type of glass, which is required by building code in Galveston County, won't typically fit into standard existing residential frames because of its thickness, Lee said.

But for people who aren't in the process of building a new home, or for people who aren't sold on the idea of safety film,

there is another option.

James Fiume, president of Gulf Coast Windows Inc., 10839 Train Court in Houston, said in addition to replacement windows, they sell security storm windows that fit on the outside of existing windows.

"It will protect your existing windows," Fiume said. "It is put on the outside of the home on the main frame of your existing window. It's laminated glass. You can't tell it's there."

Windstorm insurance

According to the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association's Web site at www.twia.org, the nonprofit based in Austin provides wind and hail coverage to Texans when it's not available in the "insurance marketplace."

Fiume said business at Gulf Coast Windows has "practically doubled" since Hurricane Rita blew through.

"People tell me stories of rushing to the lumberyard, waiting in line for hours to get plywood, take it home, cut it to fit, mail it to their home," Fiume said. "It would be so much easier if people just called us and bought hurricane windows."

Give Back... Teach Someone to Read!

ILLIWA
Literacy Advance of Houston

Advancing Literacy
Advancing LIVES

713-266-8777
literacyadvancehouston.org

Bldg & Spa BLOWOUT SALE!
SAVINGS TOO NUMEROUS TO MENTION
NOTHING HELD BACK!

Morgan
Bldgs Spas Pools

28240 Southwest Freeway
Riceburg, TX 77471
(281) 342-3438

Open: Mon-Fri. 9-8 • Thurs. 8-9 • Sat. 9-6 • Sun. 11-5

Own Your Tomorrow!

HCC was just the beginning for Ana Torres, the first in her family to go to college; an HCC nursing degree allowed her to work and pursue further education... and to hang out her shingle, as Ana Torres, M.D.

HCC Northeast College prepares you for a career that counts.

Drafting and Design Technology • Biotechnology
Automotive Technology • Commercial Truck Driving
Electronic Engineering Technology • Fire Protection
Law Enforcement/Criminal Justice • Business
Chemical Laboratory Technology • Process Technology • Teacher Education

Ana Torres, MD
Internal Medicine

Register Now!

HCCS seeks to provide equal educational opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

Houston Community College
713-718-8300 hccs.edu

Dream home loan.

Get zero points! New lower rates!
Plus, adjustable rate payment options with Premier America mortgages.

6.375%
30-YEAR FIXED* NO POINTS LIMITED TIME

6.50%
40-YEAR FIXED** NO POINTS LIMITED TIME

Whether you're buying your first home, refinancing, or even consolidating mortgages, a Premier America mortgage can save you a lot of money. And we can promise you fast service and extremely low fees. So please call us today or visit one of our community branches and get all the advantages of joining one of the country's largest and strongest credit unions.

1.713.972.9800
www.premier.org

Premier America
CREDIT UNION
10001 Westheimer Road • Carillon Shopping Center

Rates and terms are effective 8/1/06, are not available for all properties and are subject to Credit Union loan policies and may change without notice. *Based on a 30-year term (paid \$100,000 conforming loan with 20% down and no cash out, the monthly payment is \$6.24 per \$1,000 borrowed for an APR of 6.49%**. **Based on a 40-year term (paid \$100,000 conforming loan with 20% down and no cash out, the monthly payment is \$6.88 per \$1,000 borrowed for an APR of 6.41%). Membership in Premier America is open to anyone who lives, works, worships or attends school within 10 miles of our Westchase branch, or is a member of AAME. A one-time membership fee of \$5 is required to join.

Prudential Neighborhood Realtors

GARY GREENE REALTORS
GaryGreene.com
SOLD

River Oaks 2001 Morse St.
Gorgeous TH, 5+BR, 3.5BH, both furnished & family rm. Climate controlled wine rm. SS appliances, big yards.
\$529,000
MLS#0743652
Tina Degeorgio
713-907-9667

Oak Forest 5125 Lido
Desirable neighborhood. Home is totally updated w/many extras. Great backyard w/deck.
\$198,000
MLS#116472
Barbara Deprato
713-412-6414

Eastwood 4331 Coyle
Unique 2 story Cape Cod style home, 2/3 bed, 5 baths, arched interior updates, galore, plus apt.
\$178,500
MLS#5925406
Mark Wade
713-256-0435

Oak Forest 5013 Viking
Light & bright w/3 spacious bedrooms, cute kitchen while floor. Great yard & cute as can be!
\$149,900
MLS#6385191
Call Today
713-686-5454

Forest West 6111 Autumn Forest
Come discover Forest West! Three bedrooms, 2 baths, 2 car garage in a great neighborhood. Close to Downtown and the Galleria.
\$144,900
MLS#603264
Penny Crestinger
713-398-7928

Houston Heights
Craftsman style home built 2005 w/3 or 4 bedrooms, 3 baths and 2 car garage. Island kitchen and double porches.
MLS#8875903 \$479,900
Jeff Cox 713-240-2044

Shepherd Park Plaza 1130 Richelieu
Great floor plan in this 4/2.5/2 w/many extras including plantation shutters, wood floors & much more.
\$255,000
MLS#7691750
Janet Schmidt
713-419-7918

Eastwood
Wonderful updated home in the Eastwood/Lawndale area. 3 bedrooms, fresh paint & carpet.
MLS#4653643 \$125,000
Mark Wade 713-880-1400

Open This Sunday 2:00-4:00

Eastwood/Lawndale 5026 Lindsay. Beautiful brick home with updates. Large living room and dining room. Fresh paint in the kitchen. MLS#5630624. \$148,500

Walden on Lake Conroe 13531 Summerhill. Beautiful golf course home. Built-ins, arches, high ceilings. Covered porch to relax and enjoy 5 homes to choose from. MLS#2764136. \$195,000

Prudential GARY GREENE REALTORS

Garden Oaks/Oak Forest 713-686-5454
Heights/Neartown 1717 Yale @ 18th Street 713-880-1400