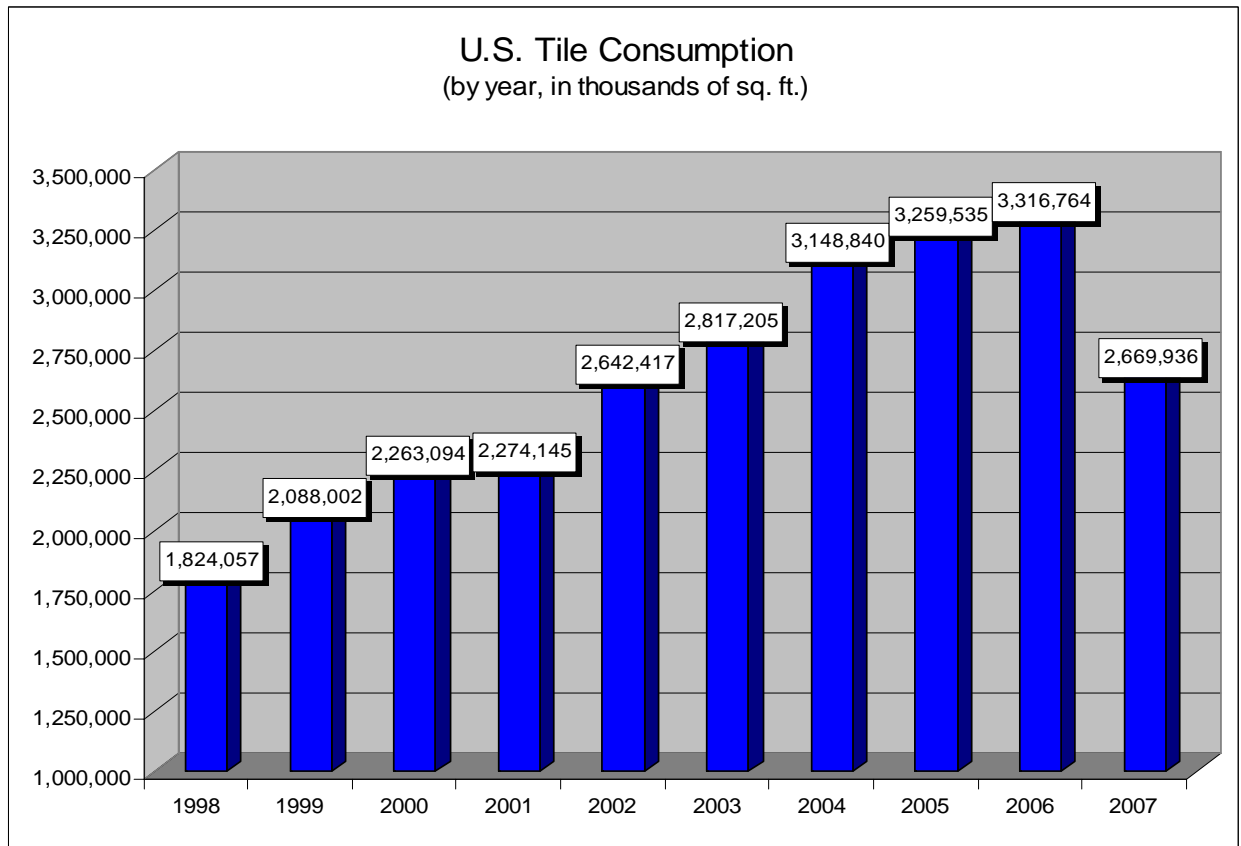


TILE COUNCIL NEWS

1) U.S. Tile Consumption

The U.S. ceramic tile market had a major downturn last year, following the trend of the declining housing market. Total tile consumption was 2.67 billion sq. ft., down 19.5% from 2006, and the lowest consumption has been since 2002. It is also the first time since 1994-95 that total consumption decreased from one year to the next.

This decrease comes on the heels of record growth in the industry. Despite the recent decline, in the last nine years, consumption increased 46%!



-MORE-

TILE COUNCIL OF NORTH AMERICA, INC.

100 Clemson Research Boulevard . Anderson, South Carolina 29625 . Phone: 864-646-8453 . Fax: 864-646-2821



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2) Glossary of Terms Now Available in the Spanish Versions of the 2008 TCA Handbook and ANSI A108/A118/A136.1

To assist installers, more than 260 terms are defined in the glossary of the *Manual TCA 2008 para Colocación de Recubrimientos Cerámicos*. Additionally, the *2008 Normas Nacionales Norteamericanas Especificaciones para la Colocación de Recubrimientos Cerámicos (A108/A118/A136.1)* includes a glossary with over 200 terms. “The Installation Committee of TCNA-Mexico recommended adding a glossary to the Handbook and ANSI manuals, since different product terminology is used in Mexico. For example, dry-set mortar is commonly known as “adhesive” in Mexico. The glossaries in both publications will assist in clarifying commonly used terms,” remarked Fernando Lozano Assad, Director of TCNA-Mexico.

3) TCA Handbook Committee Meeting June 19, 2008 in Greenville, SC

The TCA Handbook Committee will meet June 19th at the historic Westin Poinsett Hotel in downtown Greenville, SC to revise and update the *TCA Handbook for Ceramic Tile Installation*. The meeting is open to anyone with an interest in tile industry installation methods.

4) TCNA Product Performance Testing Laboratory Addresses Industry Needs

The TCNA Product Performance Testing Laboratory continues to expand its testing services:

- 1) Providing testing for the measurement of light reflectance and small color differences
- 2) Evaluating performance characteristics of flexible grouts and mortars
- 3) Performing accelerated freeze/thaw testing.

Measurement of Light Reflectance and Color Differences

The new version of ASTM C609, which measures light reflectance and small color differences between pieces of ceramic tile, requires the use of spectrophotometric-type devices. TCNA equipment can take measurements along different wavelengths to help the user more accurately predict whether or not two specimens will match under varying lighting conditions. Additionally, the method now contains a procedure for measuring light reflectance of ceramic tile surfaces.

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Performance Characteristics of Flexible Grouts and Mortars

TCNA's laboratory formalized techniques for testing resilient mortars that include materials such as pre-mixed grouts and mortars. Through the use of TCNA's universal testing equipment, the laboratory is able to perform comparative analyses that interpret the "stiffness" of flexible grouts and mortars through the measurement of elastic modulus.

Accelerated Freeze/Thaw Testing

TCNA's laboratory developed equipment to perform automated high-cycle freeze/thaw testing. This equipment allows TCNA to perform frost resistance testing in a fraction of the time once required. TCNA designed this equipment to be programmable and compatible with several different test methods.

5) TCNA Sponsors Performance of Mac Arnold and Plate Full O' Blues

As was done at Coverings 2007, TCNA will sponsor a performance by Mac Arnold (the former bass player for Muddy Waters) and Plate Full O' Blues at the Coverings Appreciation Night scheduled for May 1, 2008 at Orlando's House of Blues. Last year in Chicago, this performance was a huge hit, and TCNA will again give away a commemorative Mac Arnold & Plate Full O' Blues CD to attendees.

6) New Standard for Manufacturing Ceramic Tile

The American National Standards Institute's Specifications for Ceramic Tile, A137.1, has been newly revised, and available later this summer. The new standard establishes:

- ❑ Five tile types: Tile performance by type is presented in five separate tables, each on an easily referenced single page. The tables summarize the relevant performance criteria for mosaic tile, quarry tile, glazed wall tile, pressed floor tile, and porcelain tile. Previously, porcelain tile and pressed floor tile fell under a single category called pavers, and carried the same performance requirements.
- ❑ Five aesthetic classes V0 – V4: The classes describe the amount of variation in color and texture in a product line. Tiles in class V0 have the least variation, while class V4 have the most. The test method for measuring tile in Class V0 was revised and made more stringent. A new test method for determining if tiles in classes V1 – V4 meet manufacturing targets was also developed.

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- ❑ Mounted mosaics: An improved method for evaluating sheets of mounted mosaics was developed. Included are methods for evaluating the uniformity of grout joints.
- ❑ New dimensional tolerances: The new tolerances are significantly tighter in each aspect measured: facial dimensions, edge warpage, diagonal warpage, wedging, and thickness. Tiles are categorized as natural, calibrated, or rectified, depending on whether sorting equipment (calibration) is used and whether subsequent grinding (rectification) is employed. Natural tiles are allowed the most size variation and rectified tiles allowed the least. Previously, there were no dimensional criteria defining rectified tile.
- ❑ Visible abrasion classifications: This new standard establishes six categories for glazed tile to convey their resistance to abrasion. Appropriate environments are also described for each category:
 - 0 - Not recommended for floors
 - I - Light residential
 - II - Residential
 - III - Heavy residential/light commercial
 - IV - Commercial
 - V - Heavy commercial
- ❑ Trim shapes: Fifty 3-D drawings are included to illustrate the way trim is used within installations.

7) TCNA –Mexico

TCNA – Mexico Membership Represents 93% of Mexican Production

TCNA – Mexico consists of 18 member manufacturers, representing 93% of Mexican tile production.

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TCNA – Mexico Works to Build National Tile Installation Training Program

TCNA – Mexico is leading the way in training, building a national tile installation training program (Instalación de Recubrimientos Cerámicos) designed to train tile installers in Mexico. A program to provide government certification through CONOCER is currently being developed. Construction has begun on doubling the size of the Monterrey training facility to allow for day and night courses. A second facility is planned for later in the year sited in Mexico City. To date, seventy installers graduated from the pilot program at the Monterrey facility.

Mexican Customs Agents Trained by TCNA – Mexico

Training is also being provided by TCNA – Mexico, through its members, to Mexican customs agents, operating at 18 border locations, through which 99% of all imported tile passes. In partnership with the Mexican government, training is being provided to inform customs agents in how to correctly classify tiles for the proper tax assessment. A training video is being produced for future customs agents.

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Contact: Shannon Woodmansee, Director of Membership and Public Relations
864-646-8453, ext. 107

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