

Roofers see spike in worried customers wanting snow gone

BY TIM SCHOOLEY

There's nothing like more than two feet of snow to weigh down your thoughts.

With owners of flat-roofed commercial buildings and the contractors who serve them, that weight overhead from the past week's winter blast of snow has proven to be an ongoing issue to monitor and, for some, an unexpected business opportunity.

In the case of Canonsburg-based **Centi-Mark** Corp., one of the country's largest roofing contractors, the major accumulation of snow in the Washington, D.C., and Baltimore area has led to more than a dozen crews being hired to shovel and snow-blow the roofs of flat-roofed commercial buildings throughout the region, said Tim Dunlap, president of the company.

"We figure that will generate anywhere from \$250,000 to \$500,000 of revenue this month in snow removal," Dunlap said.

He doesn't see much reason to fear the kind of roof collapse experienced by the ice rink in Rostraver, Beaver County, that garnered national press attention during

the past week. Instead, Dunlap sees building owners of shopping centers and offices hiring his company's crews to keep their roofs clear as a result of the negative perception such events can cause.

That concern has led Joe Petak, the managing director of asset services for CB Richard Ellis, to have his crew inspect daily the roofs of the 25 properties he oversees for the company in western Pennsylvania. Petak said the age of the property is the first thing to assess, since a building code change in the 1980s led most properties to build much stronger roofs.

Michael Kobetich, an estimator with Wilkinsburg-based Flynn Construction for 19 years, said his company has gotten its share of calls from mostly small building owners suffering some minor damage from too much snow.

"I think some of your larger businesses have people on the roof removing snow," he said, but smaller businesses may not have the resources to do so.

tschooley@bizjournals.com | (412) 208-3826

