

A Patent on a Building Need

*As the proverb goes:
Necessity is the mother
of invention*

In 2001, when the U.S. Justice Department mandated universal compliance with new building requirements to benefit the blind and visually impaired, a foursome of construction industry professionals - Shawn Shelton, an estimator, his father Delbert Shelton, a retired concrete worker, and project managers Jeff Anderson and Ricky Eischen - observed a need that led to the creation of Scottsdale-based RampDome Systems LLC. The need was a detectable warning surface for the disabled at curb ramps, transit platform edges and hazardous vehicular ways that was both easy to implement and that met Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

The solution was RampDome Systems' lightweight concrete truncated domes. When asked to describe the company's truncated domes in layman's terms, Shawn Shelton aptly calls them "Braille for the feet." Durable and conducive to hot season temperatures, the RampDome System surface is series of lightweight 0.2-inch-high concrete domes installed by lowering them into a metal form cast into a ramp. The tactile, indeed Braille-like nature of the domes allows the blind and visually impaired to feel with their feet the onset of busy intersections and other potentially hazardous areas. RampDome Systems also offers their product in any color, the only limitation to selection is that (in accordance with



ADA guidelines) it must contrast with the surrounding area.

Awarded a U.S. Patent in September 2005 for the RampDome truncated domes, RampDome Systems LLC has won business from cities across the Phoenix Metropolitan area and serious interest from public works agencies, developers and construction companies throughout the United States. As an awareness of the new product's resilience and cost saving appeal reach

the masses in the industry, builders increasingly plan integration of RampDome

truncated domes into specs.

"We continue to network with our local colleagues in the construction industry who, like us, had been looking for a better option to the current truncated domes available to them," states Shawn Shelton. "Our patented lightweight concrete domes have become the solution to the needs of municipalities and developers alike due to our system's

ease of installation, high traffic durability and visually appealing design which provides a win-win for the built environment."

As to the selection of Scottsdale as its base of operation and the possibility of expansion through investor dollars, Anderson comments: "Launching Rampdome Systems LLC in the Scottsdale area has proved very positive due to the scope of development and the emphasis on architectural quality and design in the Valley. In addition to steady growth locally, our Web site is bringing out-of-state inquiries on a weekly basis; therefore, we are equipping ourselves for the pending demand from the national marketplace. It's an exciting time for Rampdome Systems. As far as expansion or going public, at this phase in our business plan, we will remain a privately held corporation so that we can focus on firming up our production systems, marketing strategies and business infrastructure. We look forward to a bright future."

— Elizabeth Hughes

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