

# ROOFING BC

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Third-generation roofer Robert Greenough with one of the Tomtar Roofing & Sheet Metal trucks: crews have finished projects as far east as Saskatchewan. Photo: Douglas Farrow



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See pages 12, 16, 18 and 20

## Member profile: Tomtar, 3 decades and still growing

### Third generation roofers

**Tomtar Roofing has been at the peak of the roofing game for over 30 years**

By Frank O'Brien

Robert Greenough learned roofing at his father's feet. "I remember pounding out standing seam clips when I was seven," said the third

generation roofer. He also ruefully recalls his teenage rookie days stripping fibrous insulation during a Kelowna tear-off for his father. "I didn't know I should be wearing gloves and long sleeves," he jokes, "I itched for days."

Now, as the learning curve continues, Greenough, 28, is general manager of Tomtar Roofing & Sheet Metal Ltd. of Kelowna, and carefully taking the reins of the

company his father Tom founded in 1980. Today, Tomtar Roofing is one of the largest locally-owned roofing contractors in BC's central Okanagan, with its crews working across the region and as far east as Saskatchewan.

"We do jobs that other companies don't even know about. I'm not interested in show like some other guys. Most of our trucks don't even have our name on

them. I was even hesitant to even do this interview," Greenough said.

Tomtar has one of the most advanced sheet metal shops in the industry – three computerized folding machines including one of only two Jorns Twinmatics bi-directional folding machines in Canada. This, combined with crack crews – many of them long-time employees – means Tomtar is well

*TOMTAR continued on page 6*



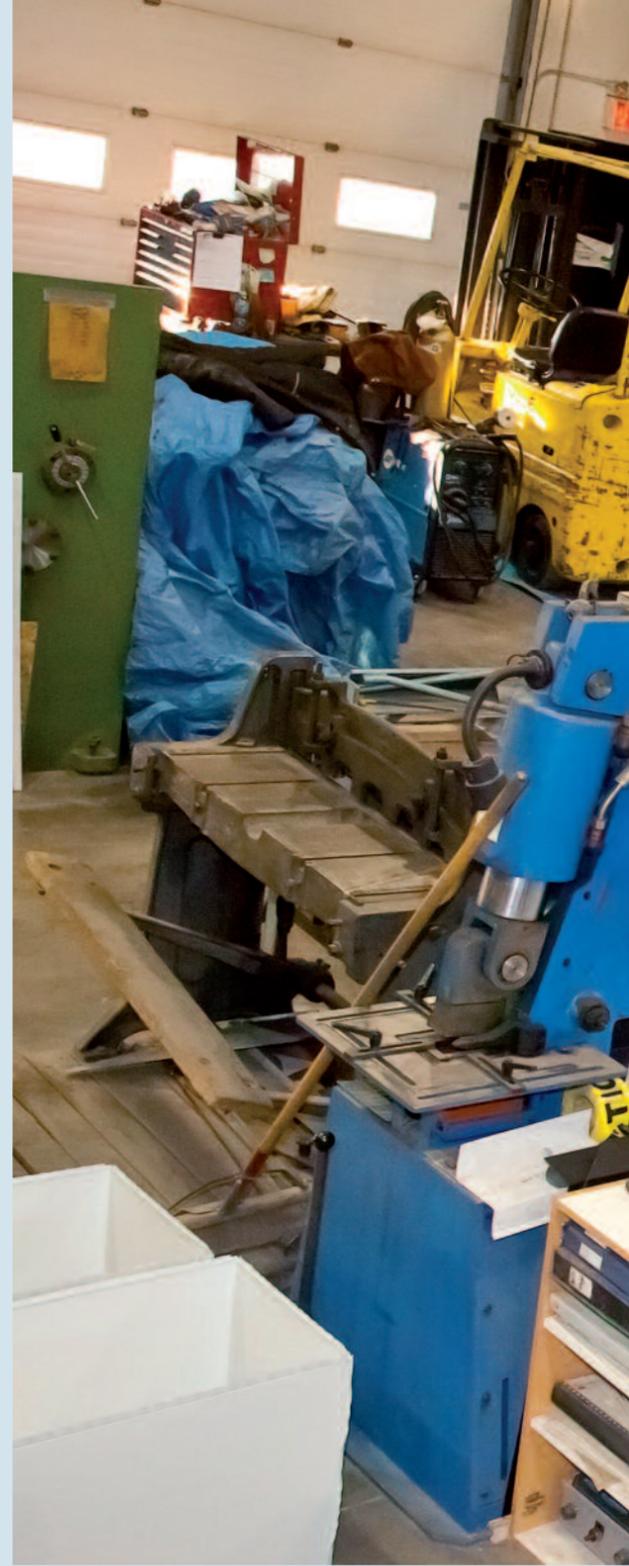
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Robert Greenough with office manager Cathy Ankerman and (in rear office) project manager Gilles Rouleau.  
Photo: Douglas Farrow



**TOMTAR** continued from page 1 known for its custom roofing, metal siding and ACM panels. Greenough, however, said the company's real strength is the versatility of its 50-person staff.

"Our crews are trained as specialists in everything," Greenough said. Most of their current work is large scale 2-ply torch-on flat roofs for such projects as the LEED-rated Kelowna General Hospital expansion, where

Soprema's Soprastar HDGR reflective cap with SopraNova coating was installed; the Orchard Park mall expansion; the new Wal-Mart Superstore (where the entire envelope was done by Tomtar), and the new Snyatan Fashion Centre that required 750 squares of roofing.

The company recently also refinished an 80,000 square foot roof that they originally installed back in 1984. "It never leaked,"

Greenough said, "but the owner thought it was time for preventive measures."

Tomtar was also among the first BC contractors to complete a green roof, for the Mission Hill Winery, more than a decade ago.

#### Deep roots

Greenough came right out of high school to start work with his father and gained a college business diploma while working. He has a preference to torch-on

two-ply roofing and has invested in state-of-the-art spray equipment for cold applied systems.

He also admits to a slight aversion to green, with its potential for maintenance and repair problems if something starts leaking beneath soil and plants.

"Two-ply is bullet proof. Other trades can walk across the roof

after it's installed and not do any damage," he said, "and we don't like call backs."

**"Our crews are trained as specialists in everything."**

Tomtar has been a member of the Roofing Contractors Association of BC for 30 years, but the Greenough's RCABC roots go even deeper – Barr & Andersen's Kelowna branch, owned by Robert's grandfather Harold Greenough in the mid 1940s was the first RCABC-certified

Tomtar provided the entire envelope for the West Kelowna Superstore.  
Photo: Tomtar Roofing and Sheet Metal Ltd.





Tomtar's state-of-the-industry sheet metal shop has three computerized folding machines including one of only two Jorns Twinmatics bi-directional folding machines in the country. Photo: Douglas Farrow

roof contractor in BC outside of the lower mainland.

"RCABC membership means you are held to a higher standard," Greenough said. He praised the RCABC's apprenticeship program – which is often used to train Tomtar staff, including its female foreman; but he said the Association is not doing enough to promote itself. "We should get the word out more about the RCABC warranties, which are the best in the roofing business," he said. He agreed that concern may be addressed as the RCABC rolls out the new 'RoofStar' promotion of its warranty coverage.

#### Challenges

Challenges facing professional roofers in the Okanagan are the "fly-by-night" or low-ball contractors whose quality is not up to standards. Greenough said he has seen competing quotes from non-RCABC members that "were priced at our cost." Often, he said, Tomtar is called in to repair jobs done by such low-bidders. "I ask who did the work and why they don't call them back for the repairs. They tell me they just don't want to deal with them, or won't return our calls," Greenough said.

The competition for roofing work in the Okanagan will likely become

**TOMTAR** continued on page 8



This 30,000 square foot private residence is roofed with Tomtar's proprietary copper tile roof. Photo: Tomtar Roofing and Sheet Metal Ltd.



The Kelowna General Hospital project is one of Tomtar's larger projects. Photo: Tomtar Roofing and Sheet Metal Ltd.

**TOMTAR** continued from page 7 even more cutthroat in 2012, Greenough said, as reroofing is now dominant in the market. He also cited the rise and fall of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) as a costly blunder that "continues to

cost us all money."

Competition and fighting back come naturally to Greenough. At one time a Western Canadian champion in jiu-jitsu and a Canadian National discus champ, he knows what it takes to win.

Greenough also has a pilot's license, and he often uses his small plane to check on roofing projects, an indication that Tomtar is ready to use any means necessary to find and finish a job.

The young roofer is modest when

asked about his future with Tomtar. "I still have a lot to learn," he said. "I have some pretty big boots to fill. My father [Tom] sacrificed a lot to make Tomtar what it is today."

He is extremely confident that Tomtar will remain one of the top

roof contractors in the Okanagan. "With so many roofing companies in the area you can't rest on your laurels," he said. "Hard work, perseverance and a devotion to quality is what will keep us here, and we plan to stay." ■

Public washrooms in Gerstmar Park, Kelowna, using 100% aluminum composite material (ACM) panels

