

Tinting's Finest



by Katherine Coig

This year's Top Dealers List has some new companies, new names and more importantly—new numbers. Across the U.S., Top Dealers' tint sales are surging in every department: commercial, residential and automotive. The average annual sales of the top ten for 2016 was \$4,535,012, a 19-percent increase from 2015, when the average was \$3,813,338. Eight of the top ten from 2015 have remained on this year's list, with Jeff Franson's Window Film Depot in Marietta, Ga., still occupying the top spot.

Graffiti Shield of Anaheim, Calif., and its sister company, Xlnt Tint (Nos. 2 and 8), have both dropped from the list as Graffiti Shield focuses on becoming a mainstream supplier. The list saw two new deal-

erships: Window Genie (all franchises) and Protective Solutions of Holliston, Mass.

While calculating these lists, a few noteworthy things stood out. The average number of employees dropped to 17, whereas last year's average was 22. However, overall sales continued to grow, averaging \$266,765 per employee at this year's top dealers (though some operate with subcontractors).

Residential sales saw an increase of 31 percent from 2014 with our top ten sellers totaling \$9,805,808 for 2015—Coastal Applied Solutions ranking No. 1 for its second year in a row. Commercial sales also saw an uptick with an 18-percent increase from 2014 to \$25,346,845 in 2015.

The highest jump of all sales was in automotive film—up 82 percent from last year's top five list with a total of \$8,629,155. Chris DiMinico, president of Protective Solutions in Holliston, Mass., sold \$4,275,000 in this sector alone—but that's not what separates Protective Solutions from the others. A whopping 85 percent of his sales (\$3,633,750) was in paint protection films. If there's anything to take away from this, it's that customer awareness of PPF is growing.

These dealers were selected based on 2015 sales and input from industry insiders. If you think your company may qualify as a top dealer for next year, contact assistant editor Katherine Coig at kcoig@glass.com to be considered.

King of Commercial

Jeff Franson, CEO of Window Film Depot in Marietta, Ga., has been in the window film business for 19 years, and he's been making headway in the industry ever since.

"If there's one word that could describe our company, it's resilient," says Franson. "You have to have resiliency—it's having the foundation of doing the right thing, working hard and coming out stronger on the other end."

His company has consecutively led commercial film sales on WINDOW FILM magazine's Top Dealers, and it's this business motto that has allowed it to achieve such success—completing more than \$6,030,000 in

sales representing more than 4,000 installations in 2015 (a 20-percent increase over 2014).

However, operating a business that doubles every three to five years isn't an easy feat. A lot of trial and error had to happen to make Window Film Depot the national installation company that it is today. It all began with two brothers trying to make it in the residential film market.

"In the early 2000s, we were approached by a national shutters and blinds franchise about our film," Franson says. "People already had shutters and blinds, so what else could we give these cus-

tomers? We enabled the franchise to offer our product and use our installers." Partnering with a company that already had a footprint in the market allowed them to expand into a national company.

Seems simple, but things have a way of changing—quickly. The economic crisis of 2008 cut the company's revenue in half overnight.

"We were forced to switch to commercial installations to survive. We had a lot vested in residential, but we made the switch quickly. We really had no other choice—we couldn't quit; we had to have the will to see it through," says Franson.

The Top Dealers in the U.S. by Sales Volume

Rank	Company	President/Owner	2015 Sales	2014 Sales	Percent Change
1	Window Film Depot Marietta, Ga.	Jeff Franson	\$6,700,000	\$5,700,000	18%
2	Window Genie Cincinnati, Ohio	Ken Fisk	\$6,200,000	\$4,100,000	51%
3	National Glazing Solutions Atlanta, Ga.	James Beale & Patrick Coyle	\$5,100,000	\$4,500,000	13%
4	New York Window Film Co. Farmingdale, N.Y.	Steve Pesce	\$4,700,000	\$4,200,000	12%
5	Protective Solutions Holliston, Mass.	Chris DiMinico	\$4,500,000	\$4,000,000	13%
6	Solar Art Irvine, Calif.	Matthew Darienzo	\$4,378,000	\$4,292,000	2%
7	Campbell Window Film Huntington, Calif.	Brad Campbell	\$3,987,836	\$3,300,000	21%
8	T&T Tinting Specialists Inc. Honolulu, Hawaii	Tommy Silva	\$3,583,286	\$3,008,891	19%
9	Coastal Applied Systems Hilton Head, S.C.	Dennis Fusco	\$3,311,000	\$3,187,000	4%
10	ClimatePro Santa Rosa, Calif.	Jeremy Dobbins	\$2,890,000	\$2,396,000	21%

The Prudential Tower, located in Newark, N.J., is Window Film Depot's current installation project with 120,000 square feet of 3M Prestige 50.

Opportunity came a few years later that set the foundation for Window Film Depot to grow into a national entity when 3M asked it to take over a nationwide project. It was also the company's biggest learning curve to date. With a lot on the line, Franson accepted eagerly.

"The project was a national rollout for the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers' recruiting centers," he explains. "They wanted us to install security film with caulking—that's a difficult application, and we were young, just learning what to do. There were 1,500 cites, and

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Fastest Growth

Of our top dealers, these 10 companies experienced the fastest growth spurts in terms of sales across a period of one year.

Rank	Company	2014 Sales	2015 Sales	Percent Change
1	Advanced Film Solutions Lutz, Fla.	\$785,000	\$1,300,000	66%
2	Mobile Tint and Audio Metairie, La.	\$1,400,000	\$2,200,000	57%
3	Window Genie (All Franchises)	\$4,100,000	\$6,200,000	51%
4	Genesis Window Tinting Elk Grove, Calif.	\$764,000	\$1,100,000	44%
5	A Plus Tinting Inc. Stuart, Fla.	\$549,000	\$745,000	36%
6	Custom Car and Stereo Charleston, S.C.	\$1,000,000	\$1,300,000	30%
7	Designer Graphics & Window Film Sheffield, Ala.	\$890,000	\$1,100,000	24%
8	Campbell Window Film Huntington Beach, Calif.	\$3,300,000	\$3,987,836	21%
9	ClimatePro Santa Rosa, Calif.	\$2,396,000	\$2,890,000	21%
10	Tint King Billerica, Mass.	\$852,000	\$1,020,000	20%

Lean Operation

These top 10 companies run the leanest operations in terms of employees per sales dollar.

Rank	Company	No. of Employees	Sales Per Employee
1	National Glazing Solutions Atlanta, Ga.	12	\$425,000
2	Coastal Applied Systems Hilton Head, S.C.	12	\$275,917
3	Sunmaster Window Films Napa, Calif.	3	\$266,667
4	Window Film Depot Marietta, Ga.	27	\$248,148
5	New York Window Film Co. Farmingdale, N.Y.	24	\$195,833
6	ClimatePro Santa Rosa, Calif.	17	\$170,000
7	Solar Art Irvine, Calif.	28	\$156,357
8	Tint King Billerica, Mass.	7	\$145,714
9	Advanced Film Solutions Lutz, Fla.	10	\$130,000
10	T&T Tinting Specialists Inc. Honolulu, Hawaii	30	\$119,443

Top 10 Commercial Film Dealerships

Rank	Company	President/Owner	Percent of Sales	2015 Sales
1	Window Film Depot Marietta, Ga.	Jeff Franson	90	\$6,030,000
2	National Glazing Solutions Atlanta, Ga.	James Beale & Patrick Coyle	100	\$5,100,000
3	Solar Art Irvine, Calif.	Matthew Darienzo	82	\$3,589,960
4	New York Window Film Co. Farmingdale, N.Y.	Steve Pesce	75	\$3,525,000
5	Campbell Window Film Huntington Beach, Calif.	Brad Campbell	70	\$2,791,485
6	ClimatePro Santa Rosa, Calif.	Jeremy Dobbins	60	\$1,734,000
7	Coastal Applied Systems Hilton Head, S.C.	Dennis Fusco	40	\$1,324,400
8	Sunmaster Window Films Napa, Calif.	Peter Mott	65	\$520,000
9	Advanced Film Solutions Lutz, Fla.	Mike Feldman	30	\$390,000
10	Advanced Window Solutions Poughkeepsie, N.Y.	Marc Vitaliani	90	\$342,000

Top 10 Residential Film Dealerships

Rank	Company	President/Owner	Percent of Sales	2015 Sales
1	Coastal Applied Solutions Hilton Head, S.C.	Dennis Fusco	60%	\$1,986,600
2	Campbell Window Film Huntington Beach, Calif.	Brad Campbell	30%	\$1,963,508
3	New York Window Film Co. Farmingdale, N.Y.	Steve Pesce	25%	\$1,175,000
4	ClimatePro Santa Rosa, Calif.	Jeremy Dobbins	40%	\$1,156,000
5	Solar Art Irvine, Calif.	Matthew Darienzo	18%	\$788,040
6	Advanced Film Solutions Lutz, Fla.	Mike Feldman	60%	\$780,000
7	Window Film Depot Marietta, Ga.	Jeff Franson	10%	\$670,000
8	Absolute Perfection Window Tinting Skysville, Md.	Bill Valway	20%	\$510,000
9	T&T Tinting Specialists Inc. Honolulu, Hawaii	Tommy Silva	14%	\$501,660
10	Genesis Window Tinting Elk Grove, Calif.	Sid Maharaj	25%	\$275,000

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Top 5 Automotive Film Dealerships

Rank	Company	President/Owner	Percent of Sales	2015 Sales
1	Protective Solutions (PPF) Holliston, Mass.	Chris DiMinico	95%	\$4,275,000
2	Mobile Tint and Audio Metairie, La.	John Kent	97%	\$2,134,000
3	T&T Tinting Specialists Inc. Honolulu, Hawaii	Tommy Silva	55%	\$1,970,807
4	Custom Car and Stereo Charleston, S.C.	Steve Cramer	70%	\$910,000
5	Tint King Billerica, Mass.	Brian Timm	70%	\$714,155

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we completed 30 to 50 installations a week across the country. People warned us that we would lose money ... and we did.” But Franson was okay with this; he knew it would be a benefit in the long run because it forced them to become a completely different company and reorganize how they handled business. They were aware of their national capability for the first time, and it gave them a solid foundation for growth. For this, Franson is nothing but grateful to 3M and the opportunities it has awarded Window Film Depot.

“They’re the reason we’re successful. They’ve supported every decision we’ve ever made,” he says.

Since then, the company has expanded and now operates seven locations across the United States.

“What makes us unique is that the majority of our work is done by our own employees and not sub-contractors,” he says. “We work with some across the country for installations, but when you’ve got really good employees, you don’t need much else.”

The company uses some sub-contractors occasionally, but it undertook a competitive process to narrow it down to the best, he admits. “We hired 200 to 300 installers and fired 150 to find the 50 that were right for us and were



Window Film Depot’s latest installation, the Prudential Tower in Newark, N.J.

competitively priced.”

Moving forward, Franson believes the company is in a great position working in the energy and security film market, an industry that’s tied to construction.

“The stars are aligned for us,” he says. “Trends are in our favor, construction continues to grow and our company’s awareness is increasing. I own less than one percent of the market share. I tell my employees all the time that that leaves us room to grow—even if we double our sales, we still wouldn’t make up one percent. Opportunity is a long runway, and if you take it, the story will write itself.”

Franson has his sights set on the future, but he doesn’t plan on

taking it for granted. He knows nothing comes easy, but learning through the hardships yields the greatest outcomes.

“There will always be downturns, and we need to be prepared, but I’m only concerned about the things that I can control, and I don’t care about the rest,” he explains.

“Good employees fuel great outcomes, and that creates a winning environment. It’s important to respect your employees, respect your customers and respect your partners. That’s what I intend to do. The rest will fall into place.”

WF

Katherine Coig is the assistant editor of WINDOW FILM magazine.

Report: Architectural Tinters' Pricing Power is On the Upswing

A new report from IBISWorld, an industry and procurement research firm, says the average national price for architectural window tinting services is \$8.70 per square foot—up 20 cents from last year's report.

The report, which says it aims to “assist buyers of window tinting and film services,” lays out what’s

driving the pricing of tinting services and what it thinks consumers should expect to pay.

Services are in the \$5- to \$20-per-square-foot range, the report says.

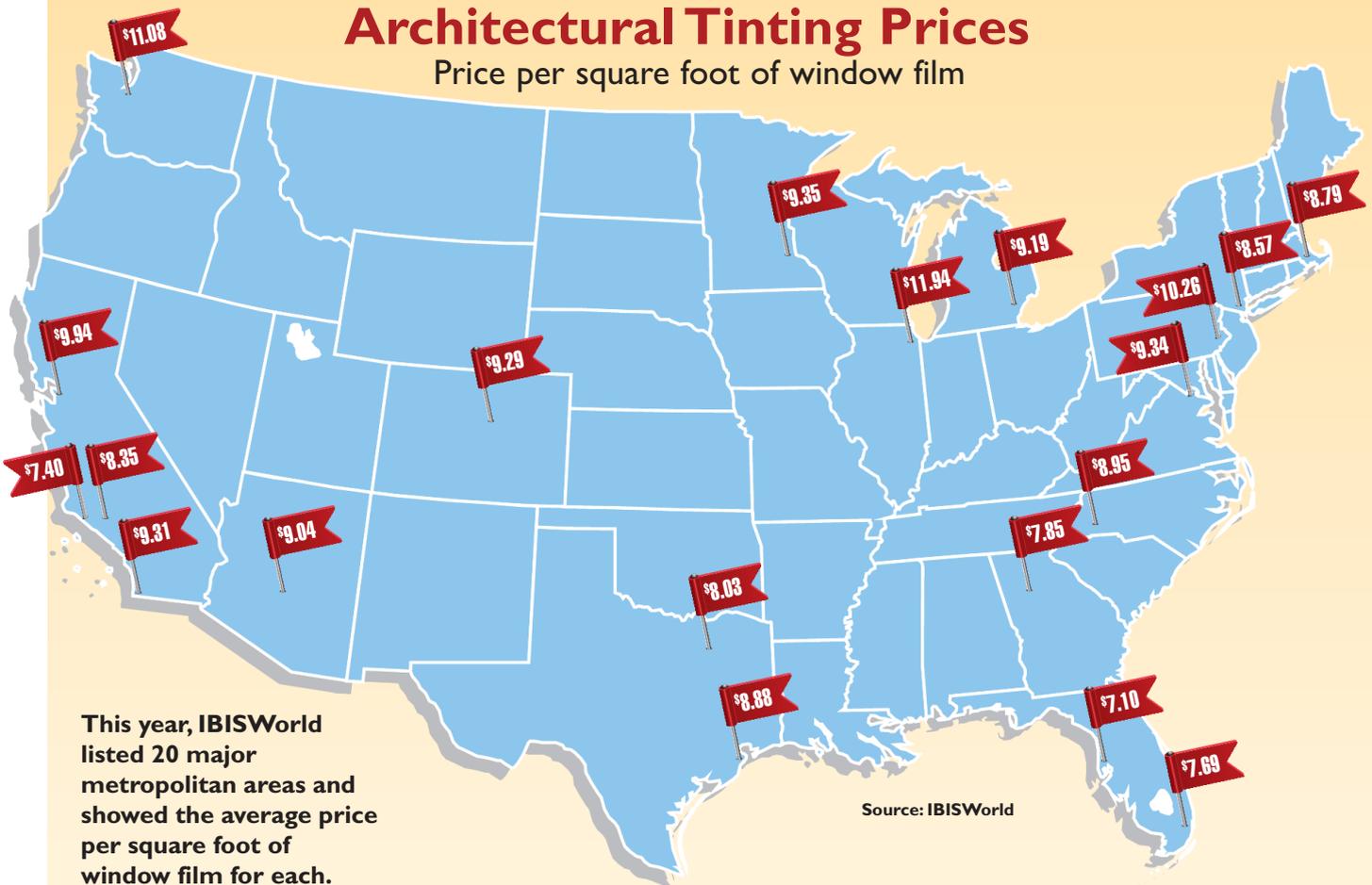
How'd They Do it?

Wage data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics from glass and

glazing contractors was used, which the report's author Agiimaa Kurchkin claims “are the most representative of average wages for tinting services,” although some glaziers and tinters alike dispute this assumption. The company then was able to break down the average pricing of film installation for the different cities.

Architectural Tinting Prices

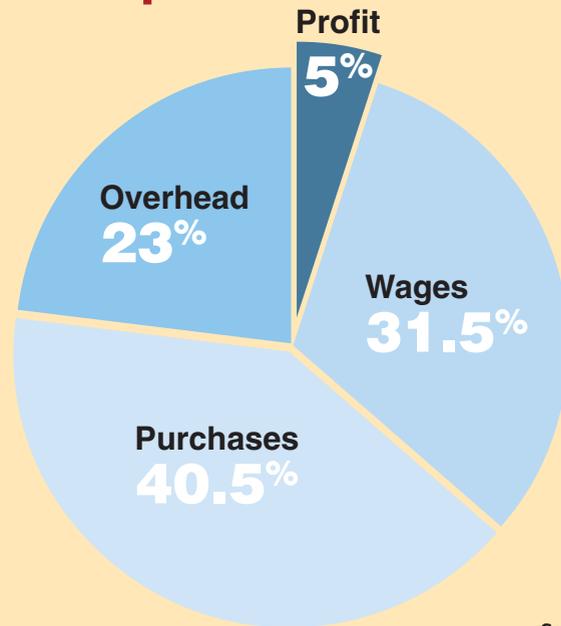
Price per square foot of window film



This year, IBISWorld listed 20 major metropolitan areas and showed the average price per square foot of window film for each.

Source: IBISWorld

Tint Shop Cost Benchmarks



Source: IBISWorld

“Because wages are one of the main drivers impacting service prices, our analysts use wage data for the major metro areas from the BLS to calculate the service prices for that area,” says Ashley McKay, media coordinator.

Part of this annual report breaks down the average cost of architectural window tinting services

(including solar control and security film for commercial and residential installations) in 20 major U.S. cities.

the lowest market in the country,” he says, though he expected Tampa to have ranked higher than Miami, which is at an average of \$7.69 per square foot. “There are rumors in the Central Florida area that the Tampa market has a higher per-square-foot average than the Orlando market. People come to Orlando from Miami, and it’s very common for people to say ‘in Miami, we can get it for this,’ but in Tampa, we don’t get that same response.”

Most tinters agreed that the prices were inflated, but offer an interesting comparison nonetheless. Jeremy Dobbins, operations manager at Santa Rosa, Calif.-based ClimatePro, says that while his prices don’t reflect those in the report, they should—and he has an idea why they don’t.

He says it won’t happen “until more efforts are put into creating accredited training for installers and manufacturers change their ‘sell-to-anyone-with-a-credit-card’ policy. When the barrier to start a window tinting business is basically zero, you will always have swinging prices as people come and go from the various markets.” **WF**

Atlanta, Ga.	\$7.85
Boston, Mass.	\$8.79
Charlotte, N.C.	\$8.95
Chicago, Ill.	\$11.94
Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas.....	\$8.03
Denver, Colo.....	\$9.29
Detroit, Mich.....	\$9.19
Houston, Texas.....	\$8.88
Los Angeles, Calif.	\$7.40
Minneapolis, Minn.	\$9.35
Miami, Fla.	\$7.69
New York, N.Y.	\$8.57
Philadelphia, Pa.	\$10.26
Phoenix, Ariz.	\$9.04
Riverside, Calif.	\$8.35
San Diego, Calif.	\$9.31
San Francisco, Calif.	\$9.94
Seattle, Wash.....	\$11.08
Tampa, Fla.	\$7.10
Washington, D.C.	\$9.34

Major Metros Ranked

Of the cities the firm identified, Chicago had the highest average price per square foot at \$11.94 and Tampa had the lowest at \$7.10.

Eddie Shultz, general manager of Midwest Glass Tinters in the Chicago area, says the report doesn’t line up with what he’s seen in the city.

“I would love for it to be that—that would be great,” he says. “That doesn’t seem to jibe with what we run into. It depends on the film ... sometimes we might flirt with that, but that’s sporadically.”

Shultz says the \$5 to \$20 range is “spot on” and he reaches the average on higher-end jobs, while eclipsing it when he does security film.

As for the Tampa market, Tampa Window Tint Specialists owner Matthew Fisher says while he’s not surprised a Florida city is at the bottom of the rankings, the \$7.10 average seems a little high as well.

“Generally speaking, Florida is