In the early 1990s, Paul Betty was in the business of designing and restoring high rises in the Washington area. He came upon a common problem with the balconies of existing buildings. The rebars that make up their bones could not be inspect for rust.

So Betty, of Newark, had the idea of creating a flooring product that could be pulled up and put back down.

Betty sold his part of that original business and went all in for Coverdeck systems Inc., which has ended up with a long list of high profile clients, including the Super Bowl. Other companies have come up with interlocking panel floors, but Coverdeck patented and elevated system thats able to drain and air-dry carpet, and has a unique ability to expand and contract so the floor doesn't buckle.

Today, the business offers not just carpeted removable floors, but tiles of a variety of materials and styles. Options include the hardest wood on Earth, South American walnut, or ironwood, Betty said, noting than it is made from sustainable forestry practices. The featherstone composite, he said, uses recycled milk jugs with a mineral foam.

The pieces of floor are 12 by 12 inches. No matter what they're topped with - wood, composite, carpet - they connect with interlocking injection-molded polypropylene underneath. The parts are made at factories that Coverdeck contracts with in Pennsylvania, Chicago and Georgia.

Betty's company received a patent on its product in 1997, and received some great press in industry publications, which helped boost sales, he said. It was later featured on the show "Weekend Makeover TV."

Beyond condos, wood decks, roof decks, dance floors and basements, the product has turned out to be great for the rental industry, Betty said. No more using a carpet once for a convention, then pulling it up and sending to a landfill, he said.

For instance, it's used at "big icon" events like the Super Bowl, the Ryder Cup, the America's Cup and the U.S. Open in Flushing, N.Y. , he said. Locally, the Delaware Technical Community College has used it for commencement, he said.

The Greater Lehigh Valley Auto Show is held each March in a community that does not have a convention center, said Tom Kwaitek, the executive director of the auto dealers' association in that area. So they hold the event at the Lehigh University athletic complex. Organizers can roll out traditntal carpet inside the arena and field house, but thats not enough space, Kwaitek said. So they put up a tent in the parking lot, he said.

To avoid rolling the cars onto concrete, they rent Coverdeck's carpeted tiles, which are durable enough to not only hold the cars, but the front-end loaders that manufactures use to set up their displays, as well as pedestrian traffic, he said.

"For us, without Coverdeck, we wouldn't have a show," Kwaitek said.

Coverdeck, fo all of its high-profile clients, is based in a relative small budding in an unassuming industrial area of Wilmington, on Meco Drive near Maryland Ave.

The Wilmington headquarters include several rooms with the company's flooring installed, as well as some sample displays outside, as a demonstration.

"People come here from all over the country to take a look at what they want," said Betty, the company's president.

The Delaware business has six to 10 employees at any given time, in sales, assembly and research and development. The company also stores the rental flooring in Wilmington, as well as Georgia, Betty said.

For a man who used to restore high rises in meters Washington, the story has come full circle: The largest condominium in Washington has purchased the South American walnut tile for its roof deck, Betty said.

The company, Betty said, is "really ready to go the next level. "He's been approached over the past year about selling the company, but " I'm not in a hurry," he said.

"We'll just sit back and wait and see what happens."

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