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“This [our ICC-ES Evaluation Report] adds credibility to what we are doing and makes it easier for our customers to apply for building permits and explain what our products are and how they are supposed to perform.”

**STAN HATHORN,  
SPECIAL PROJECT ENGINEER  
HOMELAND VINYL PRODUCTS, INC.**

## Gorilla Decking® and Vinyl Railing Systems Offer More Design Choices and Improved Safety

There is a vibrant, growing market all across America for products dedicated to outdoor living. That is why the topic of decking material is hotly debated among architects, developers, builders and homeowners. The decking issue is complicated today by there being so many options as to wood types and preservation treatments, composite wood-plastic materials and pure polymers. Everyone is trying to determine the best value as regards materials and installation costs, durability, ease of maintenance and aesthetics.

Over the past decade, the Gorilla Deck® System, manufactured by Homeland Vinyl Products, Inc., has emerged as a preferred PVC (poly vinyl chloride) decking and railing product. Homeland has manufacturing locations in Birmingham, Alabama, Millville, New Jersey and Logan, Utah, and distributes nationally through fabricators and wholesale distribution companies.

“We are in a very competitive environment,” says Stan Hathorn, special project engineer at Homeland. “We filed applications with ICC Evaluation Service (ICC-ES) in November, 2010 to evaluate our new Nexus guardrail system. We wanted to give our customers additional design options as soon as possible and be in compliance with current building codes. That’s why the reissue of ICC-ES ESR-1657 on January 1, 2011, which included Nexus, was so critical to our business. We are delighted that ICC-ES completed the evaluation so promptly.”

“The product added to the ESR-1657 report was our new Nexus rail system.” Hathorn continues. “It’s a smaller T-rail type guardrail that minimizes visual





obstacles so that the user can maximize the view from their deck or balcony.” The Nexus system incorporates aluminum reinforcements in the top and bottom rails, and uses aluminum railing brackets to add security through the attachment of the metal in the rails to the metal of the brackets.

Produced by an extrusion process in three colors (white, tan and adobe), Gorilla Deck® and Homeland Vinyl Railing systems components can be configured to build a wide variety of open-air decks, balconies and porches in several architectural styles. The interlocking deck material measures approximately 1¼ by 7 inches and is available in lengths of 16, 20 and 24 feet.

“The Gorilla Deck product,” says Hathorn, “features a wood-grain texture for slip resistance and sheds water to allow dry space underneath the decking, which is a great benefit for second-story applications. “The material is very strong, and one of the benefits of that is that it can be installed on 24-inch centers versus the more common 16-inch centers.”

Homeland Vinyl Railings are installed between support posts and attached using brackets. They are constructed with top and bottom horizontal rails that are filled with vertical balusters. The top rails are reinforced with aluminum extrusions to add strength and durability to the vinyl material.

Hathorn attributes the growing market appeal of Homeland’s vinyl products to the fact that little regular maintenance is required, as compared to wood. “The vinyl always has the fresh look of a well-maintained deck and railing without ever having to be painted.”

Barry Johnson, ICC-ES senior staff engineer, evaluated the Homeland products. He says, “Homeland had well documented test data ready. We evaluated the Nexus guardrail system and compared it to what is required in the acceptance criteria. We had a few questions, but Homeland responded right away and that really expedited the evaluation process for me and the engineers who reviewed my work. It was a good cooperative effort all the way down the line from customer relations through to publishing the report.”

The Gorilla Deck and Rectangular T-Rail, and R-Rail System were first recognized by ICC-ES in April 2006, when under ESR-1657 was published and declared the Gorilla System to be in compliance with the 2006 *International Building Code*® (2006 IBC) and the 2006 *International Residential Code*® (2006 IRC). In 2010, compliance with the 2009 IBC and 2009 IRC was added to ESR-1657.

“It’s not just me, or our engineers saying it’s a good product,” says Hathorn. “We’ve gone through a third-party testing process and through ICC-ES staff review. Our testing and engineering data shows that our product meets the intent of the codes. This adds credibility to what we are doing and makes it easier for our customers to apply for building permits and explain what our products are and how they are supposed to perform.”

To find out more about this product, view [ESR-1657](#), Gorilla Deck™ and Rectangular, Nexus® T-Rail, T-Rail, and R-Rail Guardrail Systems reissued on January 1, 2011. All Evaluation Reports can be accessed and downloaded free of charge at [www.icc-es.org/evaluation\\_reports](http://www.icc-es.org/evaluation_reports), and are readily searchable based on attributes such as product type, manufacturer or report number.

*\* This article is intended to provide information on a new or innovative building product or system for which an ICC-ES Evaluation Report has recently been issued. It should not be construed as a product endorsement or a recommendation for its use.*