The preservation efforts for the Northern Pacific Depot in Ellensburg, Washington were at a critical juncture last summer that could have derailed the entire project. The original slate roof, built in 1910, was in a state of significant disrepair and those involved with the redevelopment project were concerned the structure may not survive another winter under the harsh conditions created by the Cascade Mountains. In a climate known for significant freeze-thaw cycles and strong winds that reach in excess of 70 mph the not-for-profit group heading the project, Friends of the Northern Pacific Depot (FNPD), turned to EcoStar LLC and its Empire Slate™ roofing system. Using Empire Slate in the Manhattan Midnight color blend allowed the group to maintain the classic look of natural slate while obtaining the synthetic industry’s leader in durability and sustainability.

“Our goal in restoring the depot is to maintain the building’s original grandeur, while abiding by the very stringent policies and standards in place for the restoration of historic properties in Washington State,” said FNPD board member Erin Condit, “and Empire Slate was the slate alternative that met our needs as well as the state requirements for LEED credits.”

Made in the USA, EcoStar Empire Slate is the second generation of synthetic slate tile from the New York-based producer of synthetic slate and shake tiles. Empire Slate maintains the look of natural slate while contributing to LEED® certification and provides enhanced performance in fire resistance, impact resistance and wind resistance testing through its proprietary compound made from recycled materials.

The first phase of the restoration revealed the original natural slate roof tiles measured only 1/8” thick, thus failing to meet the original building codes and architectural design requirements. In order to meet the current building codes and sustain the high winds the depot faces, the roof would have needed to be re-engineered to use 3/4” thick slate tiles – a major cost and structural issue avoided with the use of durable and lightweight Empire Slate tiles.

Empire Slate was the ideal choice for the FNPD since it offers a solution that preserves the historical look of the depot with tiles weighing significantly less than their natural counterpart. The roofing system also provides peace of mind for the long-term future of the depot with a product designed to withstand extreme weather conditions such as hail, driving rain and high winds.

“The value of it is much better, it’s a recycled material, it’s thicker, it’s safer, it’s not brittle, it’s fire retardant, a good thing for the environment and should last forever,” said FNPD president Steve Hayden.

The train depot in Ellensburg is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its role in the development of the Northern Pacific Railroad and was designed by architects Reed & Stern, the same team responsible for Seattle’s King Street Station (1906), Tacoma’s Union Station (1911), and New York City’s Grand Central Terminal (1913).

To find out more about the full line of sustainable roofing products offered by EcoStar, visit www.ecostarllc.com or call (800) 211-7170. Additional information on the restoration efforts in Ellensburg can be found at facebook.com/EllensburgDepot.