

**GFRC Mix Design**

Vol. 8 No. 4 • June/July 2008 • \$6.95

# Concrete<sup>®</sup>

The Journal of Decorative Concrete

## Decor

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**Colorful Epoxy Terrazzo**

**Maintenance: Keep Up  
the Good Work**





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## Publisher's Letter



### Dear Readers,

If I were a betting man I'd wager that the decorative concrete trade is the most dynamic niche in the construction industry today. Nowhere else does there seem to be a wider range of products and applications and a more diverse group of artisans who are creating functional and fashionable works of art. Decorative concrete is truly limited only by the imaginations of those who embrace the possibilities it offers.

Like so many issues before, this issue of *Concrete Decor* holds numerous nuggets of information for concrete artisans. Of course, that's just my opinion. What I'd really enjoy is hearing yours.

To do so, I'd like to ask if you would take a few minutes to complete the enclosed survey. Your responses will tell me how you feel about *Concrete Decor*. More importantly, you'll provide input that tells us where we need to improve or, better yet, what we're already doing to help you. **You can find it between pages 48 and 49.**

In our next issue of *Concrete Decor*, we will publish a new supplement called Counter Culture. You won't want to miss this publication, which will focus on fabricating concrete countertops and other architectural concrete elements. It will contain valuable information for artisans focusing on this growing segment of decorative concrete. In order to make sure you get this informative publication, find out if your subscription is up to date by calling us at (877) 935-8906.



Also in August, *Concrete Decor* will announce the winner of our Concrete Countertop Competition. If you have not yet submitted your work for inclusion in this contest, get it in quickly. The judges will be tough but there are some valuable prizes in store for the winner. **See page 33 for details.**

Lastly, I'd like to share some great news. Just a few weeks ago *Concrete Decor* received a confirmation letter from the United States Patent and Trademark Office indicating that "Concrete Decor" is now a registered trademark. Thus, the "®" that now resides on the cover beside the name of our magazine.

We look forward to hearing from you soon. Enjoy.

Bent Mikkelsen, Publisher

### Get access to the *Concrete Decor* archives

Enter the access code shown below to gain access to *Concrete Decor's* online archive of articles.

#### Article Access Code: Grinder

This password changes every issue. To continue receiving both the print magazine and access to our archives, renew your subscription today. *Concrete Decor* is the industry's foremost magazine on decorative concrete.

*Concrete Decor* now features the industry's ultimate online search tool for finding just about anything related to decorative concrete. Start by going to [www.concretedecor.net](http://www.concretedecor.net). At the top of the page simply enter a keyword such as "stencil," "integral color," "admixture" or "rock features." In less than a second we'll search more than seven years of articles and information from the pages of *Concrete Decor* and provide you with an extensive list of results.



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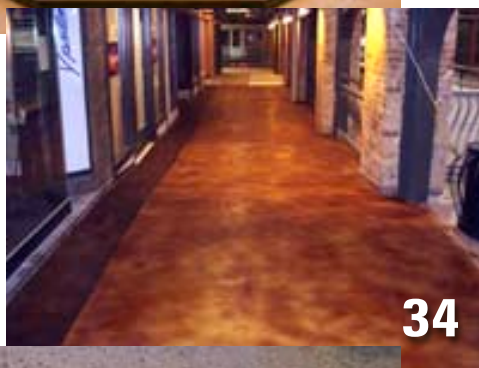
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This venerable contractor has given decorative concrete its own specialized division, plus a “candy store.”

*by Rob Spiegel*



## 34 **Project Profile:** **Trolley Square, Salt Lake City, Utah**

After decades' worth of ramshackle renovations and rehabilitations, the floors at this retail and residential complex were in sorry shape. Giving them one more facelift took some doing.

*by David Searls*



## 40 **Teaching Maintenance**

From presale to reseal, educating customers in how to maintain their decorative concrete is a lengthy process.

*by Mike Dawson*

## 44 **Epoxy Terrazzo: Elegance & Choice**

Using epoxy instead of cement opens up all kinds of new possibilities for terrazzo floors.

*by Amy Johnson*



## 50 **Copings & Edges: Forming the Future**

When it comes to bordering walls, pools and other installations, it pays to get edgy. Here are a few fresh options.

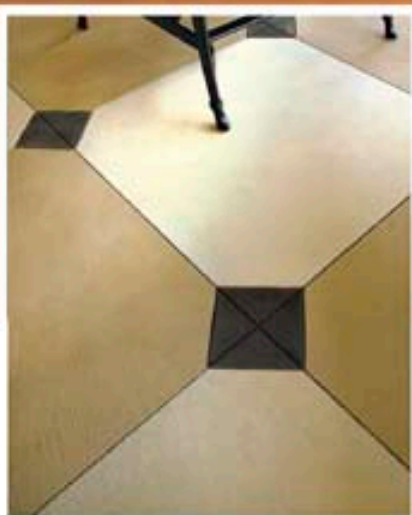
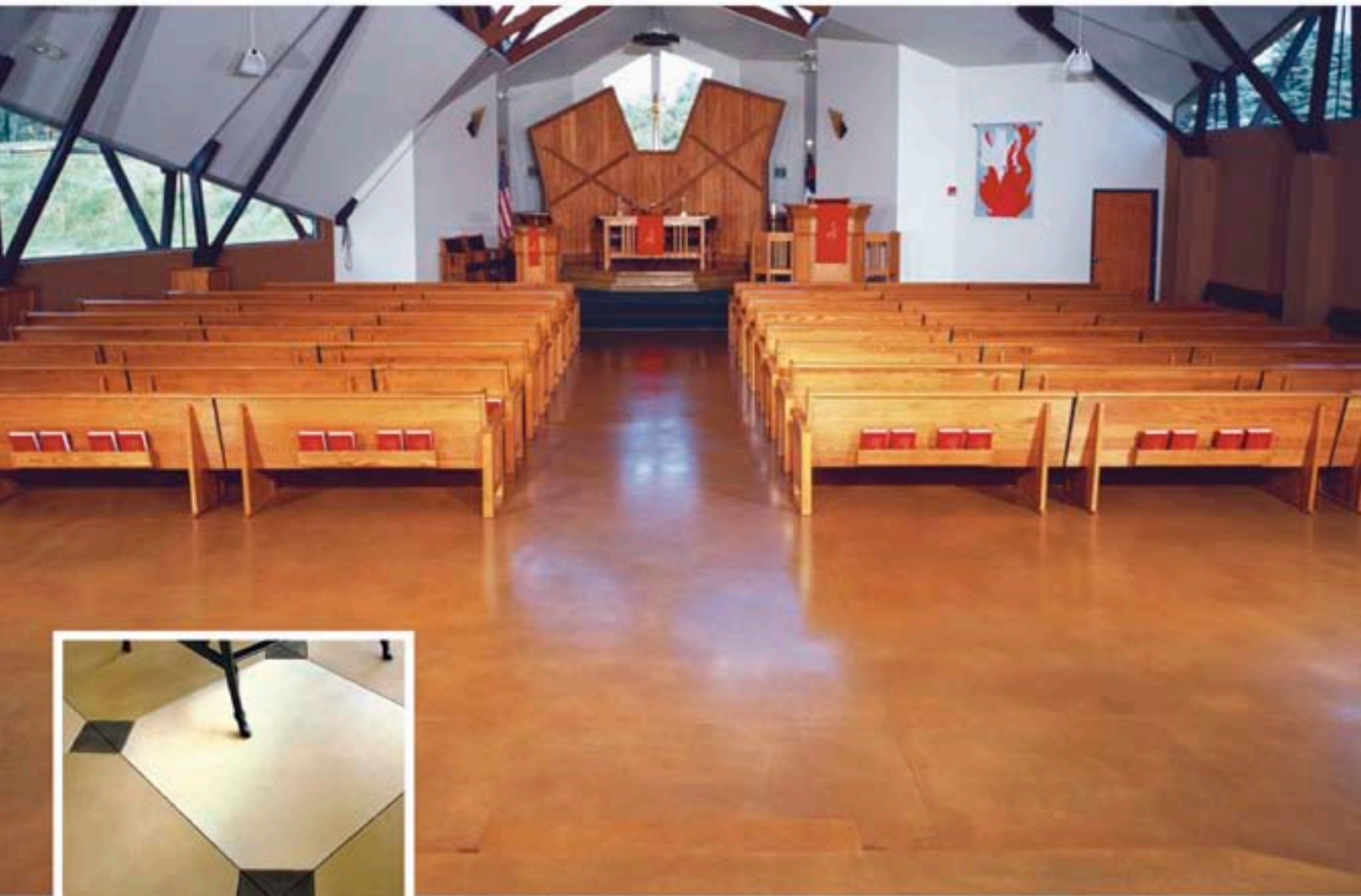
*by Mike Dawson*

**On the Cover:** New this year from Proline Concrete Tools, this Medallion stamp boasts a 13-foot diameter, making it the largest Medallion by far in the company's catalog. For more about this stamp and other unique texturing tools, turn to page 58.

Photo courtesy of Proline Concrete Tools Inc.



# What's Green in this Picture?



As the most trusted manufacturer of Decorative Concrete coloring and texturing products, Scofield is taking the lead in promoting sustainability in our built environment. Concrete is a green building material with high energy-efficiency and low life-cycle costs. At Scofield, we're committed to developing decorative concrete products that will enhance the appearance of concrete while helping to sustain the environment. Scofield and LEED...it all adds up.

## **WATERBORNE LITHOCHROME® TINTURA STAIN™ IS A GREEN BUILDING MATERIAL**

Using an environmentally-friendly stain such as LITHOCHROME Tintura is a great way to get the color and appearance you want while maintaining a healthy interior. Low-emitting Tintura may help earn LEED points under the Low Emitting Materials category 4.2 of the Indoor Environmental Quality Section.



## **SCOFIELD® SELECTSEAL-W™ IS ALSO A LOW-EMITTING MATERIAL**

For optimum performance and durability, SCOFIELD Selectseal-W was developed specifically to protect the beauty of surfaces colored with LITHOCHROME Tintura Stain. This one-component sealer is waterborne, clear and low-VOC, so it may also contribute to the Low Emitting Materials credit.



## **CONCRETE IS A LOCALLY PRODUCED, GREEN BUILDING MATERIAL**

Freshly placed, stained concrete has the added advantage of contributing to LEED points under the regional materials category of the Materials & Resources section. For existing buildings, stained concrete floors may earn credits for materials reuse. Consult USGBC documentation for details.

*Innovative*



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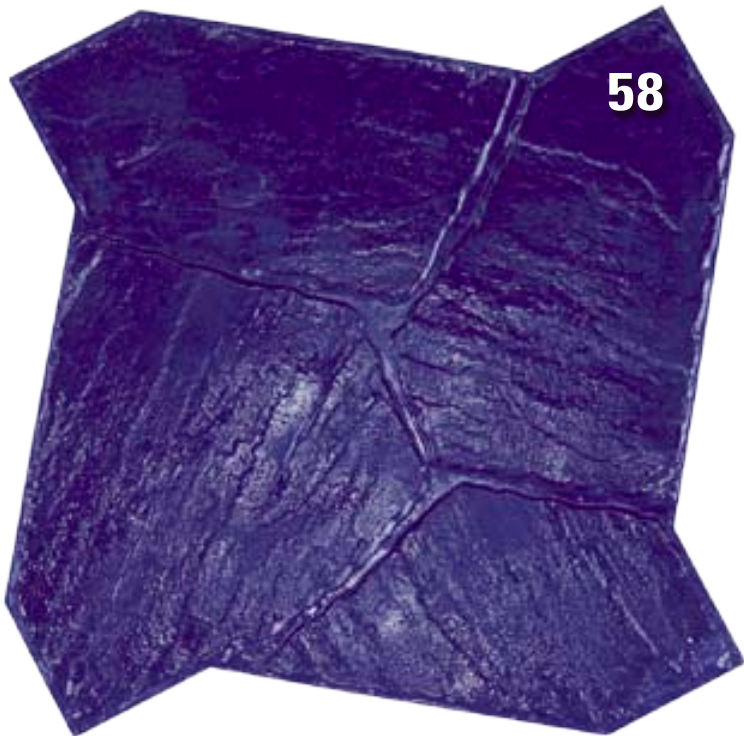
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## UP COMING HTC UNIVERSITY

July - 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>  
August - 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>  
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October - 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>  
November - 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>  
December - 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>

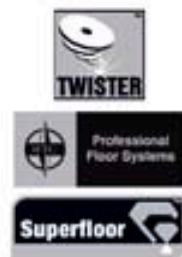
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Sign-up by visiting [www.htc-america.com](http://www.htc-america.com) or call HTC at 1-877-482-8700





## Solomon Colors acquires Brickform

Solomon Colors Inc., a pioneer in concrete coloring solutions, has announced the acquisition of Brickform, a leader in architectural and decorative concrete.

With the acquisition, Solomon Colors expands its product lines, as well as its distribution channels, to include concrete stains, dry-shake color hardeners, antique colored releases, stamp tools, an extensive line of concrete sealers, and other innovative tools for architects and contractors.

"We believe this acquisition will provide great benefits to Solomon Colors' current customers while adding diversity of products and stability to Brickform's customers," stated Rich Solomon, president of Solomon Colors Inc., in a news release.

[www.solomoncolors.com](http://www.solomoncolors.com)

[www.brickform.com](http://www.brickform.com)

## Scofield announces decorative awards program

L.M. Scofield Co. has announced its first Decorative Concrete Awards program.

Concrete contractors, architects and designers from across the United States are invited to submit their best decorative concrete projects using Scofield systems. Submittals may be made in three categories: Residential, Commercial and Unique Application.

To be eligible, projects must be completed between Sept. 30, 2007, and Sept. 30, 2008. The grand prize will be awarded at the World of Concrete in 2009.

[\(800\) 800-9900](tel:8008009900)

[www.scofield.com/dcawards](http://www.scofield.com/dcawards)

## Decorative Concrete Council announces awards program

The Decorative Concrete Council, a specialty council of the American Society of Concrete Contractors, has announced its awards program for decorative concrete projects.

The competition is open to ASCC members and nonmembers. Entries are invited in several categories, including stamped and special finishes, stained, stenciled, polished, countertops, vertical application and concrete artistry. Except for countertops, two awards will be given in each category — for projects 1,500 square feet and less, and for projects of more than 1,500 square feet.

Projects will be judged on design, economy and craftsmanship, degree of difficulty, site compatibility, project challenges, ecological and environmental factors, and problem solving.

The deadline for submittal is Aug. 31, 2008, and the awards will be presented at an ASCC event in 2009.

[\(866\) 788-2722](tel:8667882722)

[www.ascconline.org](http://www.ascconline.org)

## U.S. Concrete recognizes new plant for use of EF Technology

BASF has been recognized by U.S. Concrete Inc. for utilizing U.S. Concrete's newly launched, environmentally friendly concrete mix designs, called EF Technology, in the construction of a new state-of-the-art resins manufacturing facility.

Superior Materials LLC, a U.S. Concrete company, worked closely with admixture supplier BASF's Admixture Systems business in designing the concrete mixture used in the 200,000-square-foot foundation of the newly

## Clarification

The photos in the *Concrete Decor* Vol. 8, Issue 3 Artisan in Concrete feature on Absolute ConcreteWorks were supplied courtesy of Absolute ConcreteWorks and Northlight Photography.



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Clear Polyaspartic \$89 Gal VOC Compliant Lacquer \$139 Pail 2K CRU \$59 Gal  
Versa-Crete Concentrate \$91 Pail Acid Stain \$19 per Gal 4195 DTC Epoxy \$45 Gal



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constructed plant in Wyandotte, Mich.

By utilizing EF Technology, BASF was able to eliminate between 100 and 300 pounds of carbon dioxide per cubic yard of concrete.

 [www.us-concrete.com](http://www.us-concrete.com)

 [www.basf.com](http://www.basf.com)

## USGBC awards 12 programs


The U.S. Green Building Council has awarded 12 programs with its inaugural Excellence in Green Building Curriculum Recognition Awards and Incentive Grants.

The awards and grants recognize pre-K through college-level curricula that advance green-building ideals of transforming how buildings and communities are designed, built and operated. Recognition awards honor existing green building education projects, activities or programs. The Incentive Grants provide monetary support of \$20,000 each for schools or organizations to develop new curricula.

Winners of the 2008 Recognition Awards include: School Building Week: School of the Future Student Design Competition, The Council of Educational Facility Planners (Scottsdale, Ariz.); Kentucky Green and Healthy Schools, Kentucky Environmental Education Council (Frankfort, Ky.); Residential Building Technology Program, Yavapai College (Prescott, Ariz.); "Beyond Curriculum: Cross-Campus Sustainability at Grand Valley State University," Grand Valley State University (Allendale, Mich.); The Alley-Flat Initiative, University of Texas (Austin); and EcoMOD, University of Virginia (Charlottesville, Va.)

There were also Incentive Grants, which were awarded to: "Architecture Handbook 2: A Student Guide to Understanding Buildings," Chicago Architecture Foundation; "Design + Build + Live Green," Youth Learning Academy (Charlottesville, Va.); Green Building Technologies course curriculum, Eastern Iowa Community College District (Davenport, Iowa); Green Building Off the Grid: A Net-Zero Energy Residence online course, Santa Fe Community College; Collaborative Green Building Practice course, Cornell University (Ithaca, N.Y.); and Sustainable Architecture that Teaches (SAT) curriculum, University of Maine Farmington (Farmington, Maine).

The recognition awards were judged on demonstrated success, ability of the work to be replicated, scope of influence, advancement of green principles within the educational community, and the fostering of a collaborative or interdisciplinary approach. Grant proposals were evaluated on originality, collaborative or interdisciplinary approach, scope of influence, feasibility, and ability to be replicated.

 (202) 828-7422

 [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)

## Sound-reduction materials earn LEED credits

USG has announced that the recycled content of its Levelrock brand SRB sound-reduction board and Levelrock SRM-25 sound-reduction mat can help architects and

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are going to get a call  
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# whose countertop is falling apart

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designers qualify for LEED credits from the U.S. Green Building Council.

SRB sound board has a recycled content of 49.7 percent, of which 17 percent is post-consumer material. The SRM-25 sound mat is typically

manufactured with 15 percent recycled content, 100 percent of which is pre-consumer/post-industrial material. Because these materials do not contain any CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons), cadmium or mercury, they are nonhazardous and nontoxic.

The sound board and sound mat help attenuate sound and are installed before flooring underlayment is poured. They join USG's Levelrock 2500 green, 3500 green and RH green floor underlayments, which also contain significant amounts of recycled material, as environmentally friendly flooring products.

☎ (800) 487-4431

🌐 [www.levelrock.com](http://www.levelrock.com)

### Lafarge acquires Memphis cement terminal

Lafarge has announced that it has completed the purchase of a cement terminal in Memphis, Tenn., from Angelle Concrete Products Group LLC, known locally as Memphis Cement.

The acquired President's Island

Cement Terminal and its employees will be consolidated into Lafarge Cement's River Business Unit operations. The addition of the President's Island Terminal to Lafarge's current Memphis terminal will help ensure reliable logistics services for meeting increased demand for both pure portland and portland blends, such as MaxCem, a high-performance blend of portland and slag cement.

The acquisition of the terminal in Memphis complements Lafarge's previously announced launch of a project to modernize its Joppa, Ill., cement plant. The plant will start up at the end of 2010.

☎ (877) 460-8884

🌐 [www.lafarge-na.com](http://www.lafarge-na.com)

### Bon Tool acquires Wha-Lite Corp.

Bon Tool Co. has completed its acquisition of Wha-Lite Corp. and the operating assets of the Chicago-based tool company.

For more than 60 years, Wha-Lite has manufactured professional-quality tools for plaster and concrete finishing.





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Bon will continue to manufacture select Wha-Lite magnesium products, maintaining Wha-Lite tool specifications as well as the Wha-Lite tradition of providing contractors with lightweight tools. More than 120 products will continue to be marketed under the Wha-Lite brand.

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## Supply store opens near Dallas

With 35,000 square feet of retail, distribution and training space, Decorative Construction Supply, the largest store of its kind in North Texas, officially opened for business June 9 in Mesquite, Texas, a suburb of Dallas.

Decorative Construction Supply's principal partners are president Cindy Hamm and vice president Corey Granger. Cindy, a veteran in decorative concrete, and Corey, an expert in the flooring industry, share a vision of uniting all aspects of decorative concrete in one place. They have established strategic alliances with a host of manufacturers and training services. As a full-service supply center for the decorative concrete industry, the store will offer click-and-pull orders via the Internet, shipping, and fax orders to expedite product pickup.

A grand opening event scheduled for July 9-11 will feature demos by decorative-concrete product manufacturers.

☎ (972) 289-1700

🌐 [www.decorativeconstructionsupply.com](http://www.decorativeconstructionsupply.com)

## New curing and sealing course available at AEC Daily Web site

W.R. Meadows Inc. has created a brand new AIA-approved continuing education presentation entitled "Concrete Curing Compounds and Sealers Examined, and The New Era of Polished Concrete." It is being hosted on the AEC Daily Web site.

The course provides an overview of differences between concrete curing compounds, cure-and-seals and sealers, as well as proper curing techniques for concrete. It also covers diamond grinding and polishing as an alternative treatment of concrete.

Courses through AEC Daily are free

and approved by AIA, CSI, and many other organizations. AEC Daily reports continuing education credits to AIA on the user's behalf.

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🌐 [www.wrmeadows.com](http://www.wrmeadows.com)

🌐 [www.aecdaily.com](http://www.aecdaily.com)

## Grace agrees to market slump measurement system

Grace Construction Products and

RS Solutions LLC, an independent, privately owned technology company, announced that they have entered into an agreement where Grace will be the exclusive sales and marketing agent for the Ready Slump System to ready-mix concrete producers worldwide.

The Ready Slump System is a truck-mounted process control system that can accurately measure, adjust and document concrete slump from the

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[www.readyslump.com](http://www.readyslump.com)

[www.graceconstruction.com](http://www.graceconstruction.com)

## Lafarge buys sand and gravel pits

Building materials manufacturer Lafarge recently completed the purchase of the southeastern Louisiana sand and gravel assets of Texas Industries Inc. The acquisition consists of four sand and gravel pits, allowing Lafarge to enter the southeastern Louisiana aggregates market.

The operations will be integrated into Lafarge's Eastern U.S. Aggregates and Concrete region.

[\(877\) 460-8884](tel:(877)460-8884)

[www.lafarge-na.com](http://www.lafarge-na.com)

## ASTM releases new edition of Standards in Building Codes

The 45th Edition of ASTM Standards in Building Codes is now available from ASTM International. The Building Codes contain more than 1,300 ASTM construction standards to give contractors the tools they need to design and construct buildings that satisfy requirements established by the International Code Council.

Copies of ASTM Standards in Building Codes, 45th Edition, are available in three different formats: online subscriptions, DVDs, and a four-volume print edition.

[\(610\) 832-9585](tel:(610)832-9585)

[www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org)

## Cemstone fills new sales manager position

Cemstone Products Co., a Midwest supplier, has promoted Jason Fritz to the position of sales manager, Cemstone Contractor Supply.

In this newly created position, Fritz will be responsible for strategic planning, sales, marketing and branding for all products and services distributed through Cemstone Contractor Supply. In addition, he will supervise insulating concrete form sales and field technicians, decorative concrete specialists and contractor supply sales representatives.

Fritz joined Cemstone in 1996 and most recently held the position of ICF sales manager for the company.

[\(651\) 688-9292](tel:(651)688-9292)

[www.cemstone.com](http://www.cemstone.com)



## Reardon joins Consolideck team

Prosoco Inc., a manufacturer of products that clean, protect and maintain concrete, floors and architecture, has added Joe Reardon as concrete products group specialist to its Consolideck finished-concrete flooring team.

Reardon will promote Consolideck high-performance flooring products, develop new business, conduct training and help solve job-site problems. Though he has responsibilities nationwide, he is based out of Orlando, Fla., and will focus mostly on the southeastern United States.

A 12-year veteran of the finished concrete-flooring industry, Reardon has helped install concrete floors in Home Depot, Office Depot, Best Buy and Wal-Mart.

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## Protecting Your Business In Today's Market

I couldn't help but overhear the two businessmen sitting at the table next to mine as one told the other they were born 20 years too late to be successful in business. I had to turn my smiling face away almost like an adult who had just heard a toddler use a bad word for the first time. I probably should have minded my own business but it's hard not to watch a train wreck when it is happening before your eyes. These two guys, in less than half an hour, made every excuse to fail and not one argument to succeed.



*by Doug Carlton*

I personally wasn't ready to admit the market had changed until recently, when we invoiced out a reseal project and received a goat and two dozen eggs for payment. In a nutshell, our market went from the strongest recorded to the lowest ever, and it had little to do with your trade, skill or reputation. The first appearance of this down market seemed like the end of all business, but I would like to shed a new light on it and see if your business can make an adjustment to power into the

next level of business. My goal over the next few paragraphs is to help put your business mind at rest by explaining why the market turned, but more importantly, how to push through to the other side.

### The why

The why still angers me because the fall of the home improvement industry, despite what economists say, had little to do with falling home prices or the low dollar. Your phone has slowed because people have become much more selective on spending. The reason for the ease up on spending is the nonstop pummeling about how bad the economy is. I completely believe that this era of 300 channels competing for our attention has created a competition of negativity, with the winner being the program that exaggerates the greatest.

Unless you are willing to go door to door and give each potential customer a hug of reassurance, you must be willing to adapt to weather this craziness. The bottom line in what we do in decorative concrete requires folks to spend and invest in their properties. People don't buy sunscreen when it's raining, and your business can do little to change



the fact that most folks have gone into lockdown mode. The good news is our society loves to spend — and borrow — money, and will do so as soon as the clouds part.

## Surviving

I have no doubt the decorative concrete industry in and of itself will come through the other side of this market fine. Our industry has a strong and respected foothold in the construction market and this is a good thing. You have many of today's decorative trailblazers to thank for that, and the list is too long for me to mention. The question is more about you and your business.

Your business will need to constrict according to the availability of work your local area is willing to give up. Most of you have noticed many other contractors slashing prices, leaving you asking how they can stay in business at these prices. My answer is, a drowning man will cling to anything, and some

businesses are desperate. There is no need for desperation, and I would recommend passing over most of these projects. If you feel you must compete, maybe to save your client base, than try formatting a letter explaining how you will match dollar for dollar and apples to apples any competitor's bid. This should give your clients the assurance that you realize the market is competitive but you will not compromise quality. It will also give you opportunity to negotiate the project into your corner.

Your best bet is to put your efforts into projects that aren't being bid by practically every contractor in your state. I realize the number of these jobs has decreased, but this is your best bet. You will find many competitors dropping off or shifting into different markets, and this will eventually open up more business for you. Many contractors will accept defeat because the monster market we all experienced not long ago created order takers out of

most contractors. Many became quite comfortable in answering the phone and assuming the flow would last forever. They were wrong. Stay proactive and keep turning over rocks.

## Get skinny

This is the most important part of this article, so please read it carefully. Every person, every piece of equipment you owe money on, must be self-sustaining for you to succeed. It doesn't matter how long they have worked for you or how much you have paid down on a piece of equipment. If it, or they, are not paying for themselves, than they must be liquidated, and hanging on for the market to change will suck your working capital or line of credit into a catastrophic state. The right time to do this was yesterday, because winter will be here sooner than you can imagine.

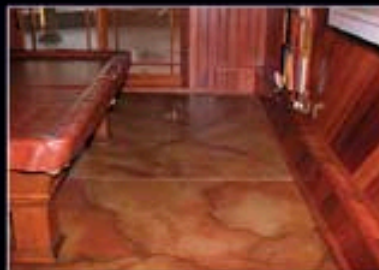
Have your bookkeeper run you a line item of every expense that is included in your overhead. I will bet you a shrimp cocktail at the World of



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Concrete you will see expenses on the list you didn't know existed. I did. Cut loose everything that is not directly related to profitability. Most contractors do this too late. The level of cuts should be directly related to the level of business that is currently flowing in. My corporation does this MONTHLY. The answer is not to scalp jobs to the point of break-even but to cut expenses to the point of surviving. Many contractors are panicked about their fuel budget and are justified in their concern. Parking a work truck is not a sign of failure. Get creative and let everyone who cashes one of your payroll checks know the urgency of the times. It is in everyone's best interest for your business to succeed. In all honesty, you may find yourself with just a few good men standing after the dust settles, and this is beyond your control. Don't beat up on yourself — just do what it takes to keep your business in the blue ink.

### Last word

I was very hesitant to write this article, because part of me feels like I'm surrendering to the gloom-and-doomers by just putting these words to paper. But the fact is that most folks, builders and developers, are cautious to say the least. My take is that the land of milk and honey, albeit flowing at a trickle right now, is as sweet as it ever was. Let me know how it goes when I see you on the other side. 🚗

*Doug Carlton operates Doug Carlton Concrete in Visalia, Calif. He can be reached at [carltondoug@comcast.net](mailto:carltondoug@comcast.net).*

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## The Small Company's Advantage: Vision

by John R. Abrahamson

**M**ost polished concrete companies are small and just starting out. Like in any industry, they compete with more established companies and larger, more established industries.

If you are just starting out as a small company, you are well aware of your hurdles. You know that larger companies have more resources. But you should also be aware of your advantages. They far outweigh your disadvantages.

Small companies can, for very little money, look organized and professional. But beyond this, you have the freedom of movement to quickly adapt and change with the business environment and the personal contact that is so vital in building relationships. If you hone your leadership skills, the business is theirs to lose and yours to gain.

Entrepreneurship, leadership and relationships are the three greatest advantages of the smaller company. Larger companies discourage entrepreneurial thinking. They like things down to a science, and don't usually appreciate someone who thinks differently. The small company, in closer contact with the customer, can more quickly identify changes in the marketplace and much more quickly adapt to the changing marketplace. The new entrepreneur is more likely to try new ideas and forge new business frontiers. The new entrepreneur is also more likely to convey a vision. In larger companies, ownership and management

are further away from the customer. The company vision can easily lose its emotional appeal on its journey through the chain of command. The company can easily become out of touch with the customer.

Everyone knows that relationships are important in sales, but not everyone understands how closely relationship building and leadership are connected, and most don't understand the subtle difference that makes some people extremely successful in leadership and relationship building while others succeed only moderately. The difference is emotional intelligence. People who are good at building strong relationships have charisma, which is nothing more than emotional intelligence.

A leader with a vision and a visionary leader are not the same. It is not enough to simply have a vision and convey the vision to a group of people. You must be emotionally intelligent to understand how to emotionally convey a vision. Without creating an emotional connection, your message won't be felt or even fully heard. Emotion is vital in creating a connection with the customer and your employees. Whoever first said, "It's not personal, it's only business," didn't have a clue. Business that is conducted impersonally is business that is vulnerable. You have to remember that you are more than a businessman. You are a leader.

Visionary leadership requires



sincerity. It requires honesty. It requires a humble leader that is not above any task and not above any customer. It is important to be on the same wavelength as your customer. It is important to understand your customer's point of view. You cannot simply dictate. You must listen.

It is also very important to communicate with all your employees on a regular basis. They are usually best connected with reality. It is important to understand the current reality in order to change it to a new reality.

Visionary leadership requires the ability to use emotional intelligence to capture an audience and affect their attitudes and cultures. It requires reading emotions, capturing emotions, and, finally, directing emotions.

Barack Obama has great emotional intelligence, and he harnesses it effectively. Ronald Reagan had emotional intelligence. Sam Walton had emotional intelligence. It is common in entrepreneurs, rarer in larger companies, and virtually extinct in publicly held or investment group-owned companies.

If you are a small guy just starting out, hold onto your dream and your vision, and work on your skills as a visionary leader. Convey your sincerity, confidence, and excitement to others — and include them in it. Make them feel as though the outcome of your vision depends a great deal upon them.

Remember that survival of the fittest doesn't mean survival of the biggest. Dinosaurs continue to die out every day, and new opportunities arise for the smaller, more agile, more adaptable and more charismatic. 🦖

*John Abrahamson has been in the polished concrete industry since 2000 and was in the flooring industry for 15 years before that. His former positions include president of HTC Inc. and national sales manager for VIC International. He recently started a hard-surface flooring company in Knoxville, Tenn.*

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## Finding and Keeping Employees



Photo courtesy of Tom Ralston Concrete

Tom Ralston of Tom Ralston Concrete demonstrates glass embedment to his crew members.

by Frederick Jerant

**U**nless you can handle every decorative concrete job yourself, a skilled, reliable crew is one of the keys to staying in business.

*Concrete Decor* talked to several business owners and got some great advice about effective ways to train and keep a crew.

There's a high level of artistry in decorative concrete work, and many different techniques in play. Sometimes, it's worth training your crew members yourself. That's the approach taken by Tom Ralston, president of Tom Ralston Concrete in Santa Cruz, Calif.

Most of Ralston's workers receive extensive on-the-job training. "I've trained most of them myself," he says, "and I've taught them what I know about making our work better and easier."

Gregory Mata, president of Cutting Edge Decorative Concrete in Richfield, Ohio, relies on on-the-job training as well as written instruction

manuals. "Usually, we pair up a new guy with someone who has more experience," he says. "Unfamiliar tools, equipment or techniques are explained repeatedly."

Quality-control meetings can also be educational, as long as these sessions don't simply focus on "what-went-wrong," but also help the crew better understand the various factors involved in successful jobs.

Steve Schmid, owner of Stone Touch Inc., Salt Lake City, believes trade shows such as World of Concrete can be excellent opportunities to learn about new products and techniques.

"We also keep an ear out for seminars run by individual manufacturers," Schmid says. When possible, he sends crew leaders to the sessions who pass new knowledge to other workers when they return home.

Mata agrees with Schmid. "That stimulation



creates new ideas for your business. It is definitely some of the stuff that keeps a contractor on top."

In-house training programs for the inside staff — such as programs on design and bidding techniques — can also pay off.

All that education adds up to a major investment of time and money, whether it's in one employee or 30. So to take things to the next logical step, there's plenty you can do, our experts say, to keep your human assets happy and productive.

Kelly Dickinson, owner of Superior Concrete & Masonry Construction, Riverside, Calif., offers these simple tips. "Help your employees believe in you and in the company. Give them a reason to take pride in the company they represent." And make sure they have fun, he says, whether the company hosts a cookout, provides tickets to a ball game, or sponsors some other activity.

"Treat your workers with the utmost respect," says Ralston. Their work is dirty and stressful, and your ongoing support of their efforts is essential. If needed, don't hesitate to pitch in yourself on a project.

Ralston is a firm believer in financial rewards for extraordinary work. Just last year, he says, he distributed a substantial amount of bonus money among his employees. "It gets costly," he says, "but it's worth it."

You might consider helping them further their education, and not just in professional areas. "If they want to improve themselves, I'm all for it," Schmid says. And he proves it by underwriting — and sometimes providing transportation for — English classes (taught by local schools and church groups) for his Spanish-speaking employees. He even picks up part of the tuition costs for night school in any subject his crew members want to study.

Barry Fisher, owner of Unique Concrete, West Milford, N.J., says offering flextime can be beneficial, as long as the policy is not abused. "You must recognize that they have a private life, and can't always take care of personal business during their off-hours," he says.

Dickinson notes that a company's


owner often needs to act as a cheerleader and coach, to keep morale high. He also suggests that owners focus on keeping the crew consistently busy. "It's tough to manage, but it's achievable," he says. "When the guys put in extra effort, the company will thrive."

Thriving can be a difficult task in today's economy, but our experts offer succinct advice. "Take jobs for less money, to keep your guys busy. But don't settle for peanuts or work at a loss," Ralston says.

Greg Mata offers: "If you operate

as a professional in everything you do, you'll never fail, you'll never be out of work, and you'll always make money."

"Minimize your overhead and personal expenses even if it means making unwanted sacrifices. Strengthen your workforce and hold everyone accountable for their results and actions," says Dickinson.

Barry Fisher's tip? "Use your imagination to expand your products and applications. Find a niche, and do what others are not." 



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## T.B. Penick & Sons Inc. San Diego, Calif.



Photos courtesy of T.B. Penick & Sons Inc.

by Rob Spiegel

**W**hen landscape architecture firm MW Peltz & Associates drafted a plan to create playground trails and basketball courts for Fletcher Cove Park in Solana Beach, Calif., it turned to one of the largest decorative concrete companies in the country, T.B. Penick & Sons Inc. of San Diego, to bring a wide range of cutting-edge decorative concrete systems to the project.

Penick's decorative concrete group, Innovative Concrete Systems (ICS), provided the Fletcher Cove Park project with a stunning array of decorative walls, paths, courts and playgrounds.

Fletcher Cove has won a number of awards, including the 2007 Cornerstone Award and the 2007 Concrete Pavement Award for Decorative and Durable Design. "This parking lot and access area to the ocean at Solana Beach wasn't being utilized for anything," says Byron Klemaske II, executive vice president and head of the Penick decorative concrete group. "Now it's a park that has grass, seating, bench walls and play areas."

The park showcases a number of decorative concrete systems, including ICS's patented Lithocrete, Lithocrete Quarried Stone finish for flatwork, and glass-seeded





Lithocrete with bronze letterings. Even the basketball court incorporates decorative concrete, as reactive stain was used to outline different areas of the court.

This was just the latest job-well-done for T.B. Penick & Sons, which was launched more than 100 years ago and now has more than 400 employees. Over the years, the company has branched out into several divisions, including Structural Concrete and General Construction. The ICS division was launched in 1999 to focus entirely on decorative concrete. The goal was to capture a larger share of the decorative concrete business that had just started to flourish. ICS now has 130 employees and has performed decorative concrete work worldwide, including at Hong Kong Disneyland. In

2006, the company opened a new office in Columbus, Ohio.

From the beginning, the decorative division grew. ICS now claims to be one of the world's largest decorative concrete businesses, with revenues of \$18 million in 2007. "We look to be on track to do \$21 million in 2008," says Klemaske.

### Grasscrete and Lithocrete

ICS offers a long list of decorative concrete systems, from porous paving and terrazzo to reactive coloration and Grasscrete — a patented process that allows grass to grow over concrete lanes. "With Grasscrete, you're able to pour structure concrete with voids that you fill in with soil," says Klemaske. "Then you can hydroseed or

plug it and have grass grow over it while it recharges the aqua system."

He notes that ICS uses Grasscrete for fire lanes at colleges. "Instead of stark white concrete, you have a green belt. The grass grows over it, yet it still remains a road."

Another patented product from ICS is Lithocrete. This is an architectural concrete paving system that combines the structural properties of reinforced concrete with the aesthetic qualities of surface-seeded select aggregates. The aggregates can include crushed rock (granite, obsidian, quartz, serpentine, marble), glass (opaque or translucent in hundreds of colors), gems and minerals (turquoise, agate, pyrite, jasper), seashells, beach pebbles, or limestone, terra cotta, slate, tile and brass.





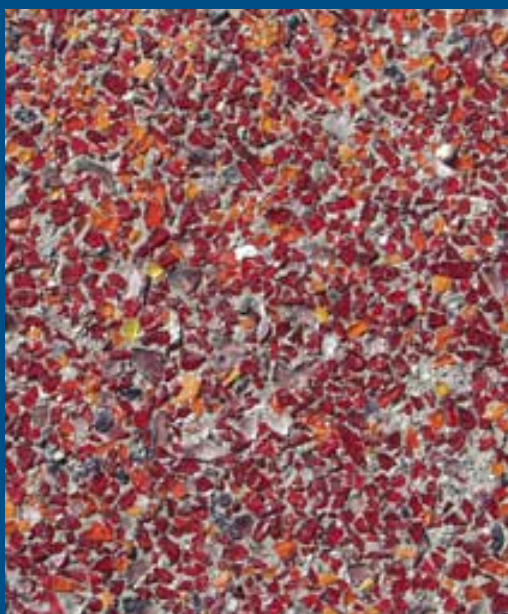
Klemaske notes that in the past, keeping small reactive aggregates embedded in the surface of concrete paving was difficult. Lithocrete was designed to permanently bond reactive and nonreactive aggregates in order to eliminate failure.

### **The candy store**

ICS displays its selection of Lithocrete aggregates at its “candy store,” a showroom located at its four-acre San Diego headquarters. “The candy store had hundreds of different materials that we are able to seed into concrete during the plastic stage,” says Klemaske. “You can take those materials and make any combination you like. We invite our clientele over here so they can utilize the candy store to create.”

The company has also created interior floors in its offices that display





the possibilities of decorative concrete. "People can walk through our offices and see the different patterns and colors that are possible," says Klemaske. "It comes to life on our floors, so they can get their own ideas of how they may want to use concrete as artistic exploration."

## Going green

The recent worldwide interest in environmentally friendly materials fits well with decorative concrete. Klemaske points to a number of ways that concrete fits the growing need for green construction.

"Concrete itself is green. Just look at reflectivity," says Klemaske. "A concrete parking lot versus an asphalt parking lot means a cooler surface and lighting reflectivity. With a concrete parking lot, you need fewer lights. That means less electricity."

He also points to pervious concrete as a green solution. "The pervious concrete allows the runoff water to enter back into the soil and recharge the aqua system rather than going into storm-water drains," says Klemaske. "This is becoming a big deal throughout the world, especially here in the

United States. We have probably installed more than 300,000 square feet of pervious concrete."

Klemaske invites concrete contractors to use the knowledge gathered by ICS. "On a day-to-day basis, our goal is to make ourselves a resource to the industry, including landscape architects, contractors and residential homeowners," says Klemaske. "We try hard to help them with the process and we hope that any time they have questions about concrete, they know T.B. Penick will be able to help them." 📞



Photos courtesy of Brandon Gore

## GFRC Mix Design

by Brandon Gore

**L**et's start at the beginning: What is GFRC, what are its benefits and what are its downsides?

GFRC stands for glass-fiber reinforced concrete. The GFRC I use is a composite of portland cement, silica sand, Forton VF-774 (an acrylic admixture), Liquefaction Compound (a dry plasticizer specifically formulated by my team for use in GFRC), Vitro Minerals VCAS-micronHS (a pozzolan that adds strength and helps to decrease porosity), water, and alkali-resistant chopped glass-fiber strands. Combine these ingredients and you have an extremely strong, ductile, easily formable material that excels in architectural precast applications.

GFRC pieces differs from traditional precast pieces in application techniques and reinforcement. Other than these two fundamental differences,

### Part one of a two-part series on glass-fiber reinforced concrete

the material reacts the same to acid staining, sealing and so on.

At the same time, the benefits of GFRC are tremendous, making it one of the hottest methods used in the creation of cutting-edge concrete pieces. GFRC weighs on average 30 percent to 75 percent less than comparable wet-cast. This weight savings benefits you by reducing risk of injury or damage, as well as making transportation and placement of the piece much easier.

GFRC can be cast as thin as 1 inch, opening up a world of possibilities for products and applications.

As GFRC pieces are typically cast hollow, there is no need to reinforce the mold. Mold construction time is cut in half, increasing productivity and profitability.

And there is no more need for rebar. GFRC pieces are their own reinforcement. There is no



guessing on how to reinforce a complex shape. No more fussing with bending, rebending, cutting and tying rebar and wire mesh.

Since GFRC is sprayed, there is no need to vibrate the pieces, and the finish is completely smooth and bughole-free 99 percent of the time, eliminating tedious and time-consuming slurry coating and polishing.

The GFRC methods we outline here do not require expensive equipment. Most concrete artisans already own the required tools, but if not, they can be purchased from any home improvement store for a relatively low cost.

The downsides of GFRC are few, but they should be considered when bidding projects. The primary downside is exposed aggregate. GFRC is sprayed, which does not lend itself to the use of decorative aggregate. Adhering the pieces into the mold first, then spraying over the pieces, can allow for installation of limited amounts of exposed aggregate, but this can be a time-intensive process.

## The ABCs of mix design

Now that we have covered the basics, let's get to it! First, you will need to secure the following ingredients. If you need help obtaining any of these



products, you may visit my supplier Web site, ConcreteApothecary.com.

- Type I/II white or gray portland cement
- No. 30 silica sand
- Forton VF-774 acrylic admixture
- Liquefaction Compound
- Vitro Minerals VCAS-micronHS
- OCV Reinforcements Anti-Crak HP 12 mm AR glass fiber

Next, you will need to gather the necessary tools. You will need:

- An air compressor rated at 15 cubic feet per minute or more. Used air compressors can be found online.
- A drywall hopper. Be sure to secure the plastic hopper bin backwards, as we typically spray down into a mold and we do not want the concrete to spill out, and use the largest-diameter tip provided with the hopper.

• A handheld mixer. We use Collomix mixers, but a high-powered drill with a paddle will work fine in the beginning.

• Plenty of 5-gallon buckets, as well as a few 20-gallon or 25-gallon plastic buckets if you can find them.

When we discuss GFRC mix designs, we talk in quarter batches. This is because we typically divide a 94-pound bag of portland cement into four equal parts. A "full batch" would be four quarter-bag batches.

The only time we ever recommend mixing a "full batch" is in the use of a self-consolidating back-coat.

Once your mold is constructed, calculate your material requirements using the following formulas:

Square footage:

Length (inches) x Width (inches) = Total square inches / 144 = Total square feet.

For 3/4-inch thick GFRC products:

Number of square feet x 0.1875 = Number of 1/4-bag batches

For 1-inch thick GFRC products:

Number of square feet x 0.28125 = Number of 1/4-bag batches

For 1.5-inch thick GFRC products:

Number of square feet x 0.375 = Number of 1/4-bag batches

Now we will provide an overview of the three different mix designs and their respective uses.



Sprayable face coat, step 3: Adding acrylic emulsion.

## Sprayable face coat

The sprayable face coat will form the surface of your piece, and as such, does not contain any glass fibers. You will always mix this coat first, and always in no more than a quarter batch at a time. It is very important to spray a fresh mix to achieve the highest quality-finish.

Ingredients for face coat:

- 20.5 pounds portland cement
- 3 pounds Vitro Minerals VCAS-micronHS
- 1 quart acrylic emulsion
- 2 ounces Liquefaction Compound
- 17 to 18 pounds No. 30 silica sand

Order of mixing:

1. Silica sand
2. 2 quarts chilled water (plus an extra 1/2 quart ready for use as needed)
3. 1 quart acrylic emulsion
4. 2 ounces Liquefaction Compound
5. 3 pounds Vitro Minerals VCAS-micronHS

Mix. If using pigment, add it at this point and mix again.

6. Add cement SLOWLY while mixing.
7. Scrape sides of bucket with a trowel.
8. Mix for 45 to 60 seconds then allow concrete to rest for two to three minutes.
9. If needed, add a small amount of water and mix again.



Sprayable face coat, step 6: Cement must be added slowly while mixing.



Sprayable face coat, step 8: Mixing the face coat.





Vertical back coat, after step 3: Mixing the vertical back coat.



Vertical back coat, step 4: Add cement slowly while mixing. Add an additional amount of water if it is needed.



Vertical back coat, step 8: Add glass fiber while mixing slowly.

## Vertical back coat

The second mix design is for the vertical back coat, which is used to form drop-down edges, sinks, and so on. This mix does not contain Liquefaction Compound. However, it does contain glass fibers. It is a fairly stiff mix that lends itself to not slumping. We mix this only in quarter batches to maintain a good working consistency.

Ingredients for vertical back coat:

- 23.5 pounds portland cement
- 1 quart acrylic emulsion
- 19 to 20 pounds No. 30 silica sand
- 1 pound AR glass fiber

Order of mixing:

1. Silica sand
2. 2 quarts chilled water (plus an extra 1/2 quart ready for use as needed)
3. 1 quart acrylic emulsion

Mix. If using pigment add at this point and mix again.

4. Add cement SLOWLY while mixing.
5. Scrape sides of bucket with trowel.
6. Mix for 45 to 60 seconds then allow concrete to rest for two to three minutes.
7. If needed, add a small amount of water and mix again.
8. Slowly add glass fiber while mixing SLOWLY. It is important to keep the mixer speed slow to prevent damaging the glass fibers.

## Self-consolidating back coat

The last mix design is for the self-consolidating back-coat. This is often the last mix you will apply. The mix design generates a very wet mix that self-levels and does not require vibration.

Depending on the quantity needed, the coat can be mixed in single quarter batches or full-bag mixes.

Ingredients for self-consolidating back-coat:

- 23.5 pounds portland cement
- 1 quart acrylic emulsion
- 12 ounces Liquefaction Compound
- 19 to 20 pounds No. 30 silica sand
- 1 pound AR glass fiber

Order of mixing:

1. Silica sand
2. 2 quarts chilled water (plus an extra 1/2 quart ready for use as needed)
3. 1 quart acrylic emulsion
4. 12 ounces liquefaction compound

Mix. If using pigment add at this point and mix again.



Self-consolidating back coat, step 8: Add glass fiber

5. Add cement SLOWLY while mixing.
6. Scrape sides of bucket with trowel.
7. If needed, add a small amount of water and mix again
8. Slowly add glass fiber while mixing SLOWLY. It is important to keep the mixer speed slow to prevent damaging the glass fibers.

We've covered the benefits of GFRG, the ingredients and equipment needed, and the mix designs. In the next issue of this magazine, we'll tackle the most important piece of the puzzle — technique. 🛠️

*Brandon Gore operates Gore Design Co. LLC, based in Tempe, Ariz. He can be reached at [info@goredesignco.com](mailto:info@goredesignco.com). Training DVDs, sink molds and mold-making supplies can be found at his supplier Web site, [ConcreteApothecary.com](http://ConcreteApothecary.com). He also offers hands-on training workshops at [GFRGworkshop.com](http://GFRGworkshop.com)*

*Part two of Gore's GRFC technique — the application process — will be published in the August issue of Concrete Decor.*



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# Project Profile



Photos courtesy of E.B. Berger

## Trolley Square Salt Lake City, Utah

by David Searls

In an October 2006 announcement, *The Deseret Morning News* envisioned a rosier future for one downtown Salt Lake City historical landmark-cum-bedraggled shopping mall. "Imagine Trolley Square, only brighter, with a broader mix of tenants and without the empty dead-end corridors," it said.

Trolley Square is a 239,000-square-foot former trolley car barn built in 1908. It suffered a prolonged near-death experience after World War II before being repurposed in the 1970s as a shopping venue and local tourist attraction. That staved off irrelevancy for a while, but by the turn of another century Trolley Square was once again marking its glory days in calendars past.

Even dark and dreary, however, the structure caught the eye of developers. Mark

Blancarte, an executive with Blake Hunt Ventures, was quoted in the same 2006 *Deseret Morning News* article as calling Trolley Square "one of the most unique pieces of property anywhere in the country."

All it needed, apparently, was a facelift involving fountains, skylights, a glass elevator, a central courtyard, parking garages, outdoor landscaping, lighting and design, and new retail and residential space.

As part of the first phase of the ambitious multimillion-dollar renovation, E.B. Berger, a residential, commercial and industrial building contractor based in greater Salt Lake City, spent the last quarter of 2007 answering the challenge of breathing new life into some 39,000 square feet of dull flooring in the public areas: century-old (and looking it) brick



pavers on the ground floor and tired tile upstairs. But all of their work, as with renovations throughout the structure, had to take place off-hour so that shoppers and employees could traipse freely during mall hours.

No easy task, especially on the top floor, where decorative concrete work was done, says Stace Nield, a sales professional for Ardex Engineered Cements, the flooring materials supplier for the project. "That job was extremely challenging because of the multiple substrates and the varying elevations."

For instance, in some areas the Berger crew was dealing with a quarry tile substrate, while in other sections the challenge was porcelain tile installed over tongue-in-groove plywood sheets over floor joists.

Some areas, says Nield, "were a complete disaster" after multiple renovations over the structure's century of life. "Just try pouring self-leveling cement with a change in elevation every four or five feet."

But the job got done. Here's how.

### **Upstairs: Only at night**

The 17,000 square feet of ceramic tile was to be transformed into a stylish polymer-modified cement diamond-design floor.

"It was the most difficult floor design we've ever done," recalls Bill Young, division director for E.B. Berger. "And we had to work quickly enough that we could open up each section for traffic the next day."

All after-hours progress had to come to a finish point that would let them, by daybreak or so, spread paper to accommodate daytime users. That routine provided even more opportunity for failure.

"How do you constantly stop and start pouring over a large designed floor and make it all look seamless?" Nield asks.

Bill Young's brother, Jason, served as project manager. He and his patient crew, which numbered about eight on average, undertook a couple thousand feet of flooring per night, and spent



about four nights per section. Here's how it went, day by day:

Day one: Shot-blast the ceramic tile.

Day two: Pour a coat of solvent-free, two-component Ardex EP-2000 Substrate Preparation Epoxy. "We threw sand in it to create a better substrate," says Bill Young.

Day three: Pour Ardex SD-T Self-Drying, Self-Leveling Concrete Topping, and cut a diamond pattern and border to take on the appearance of fine tile.

Day four: Seal and stain in two colors. "That was a real challenge, staining and sealing the same day," says Bill Young.





Elevation changes on the second floor posed challenges when workers poured self-leveling concrete.

## Downstairs: Blast, clean, repair, beautify

The initial challenge here, says Bill Young, was to remove “30 years of wax” that had turned the floor dark and dingy, then painstakingly repair and bring back to life the century-old pavers. Working a few thousand square feet at a time, Jason Young and his crew were to complete the following routine over and over again throughout a five-week period:

Day one: Shot-blast the brick to remove layer after layer of wax buildup.

Day two: Clean pavers with a pneumatic needle scaler and repoint the grout.

Day three: Painstakingly repair broken pavers with colored cement.

Day four: Apply two coats of MMA floor coating for the toughest possible finish against heavy foot traffic.

## Aged beauty

When the job was completed, floors upstairs and down had a rich, bright, multicolored appearance that enhanced the building’s history rather than diminishing it.

“They didn’t want a perfect look,” says Jason Young. “They wanted the place to show its age.”

That’s no wonder. Trolley Square is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as well as being a Utah Historic Site. Brand spanking new was a style that just wouldn’t accommodate

the century-old, mission-style structure.

Weston Woolsey from Okland Construction, the general contractor, was especially pleased with the downstairs brickwork. “I thought they did a pretty decent job of stripping and redoing the pavers,” he says.

As for the upstairs concrete, the jury’s still out: “The only issue I saw was that the finish seems to wear off, but they’re going to take care of that,” says Woolsey.

Jason Young addresses that situation: “There are a few reasons for the sealer wearing off. One is, they are still in the middle of heavy remodel construction (and) they have man lifts and other heavy equipment going across





This particular section of floor was prepped, stained with two colors and sealed in the same evening so it would be ready for shoppers the next morning. Because of the fumes from the acetone dye, contractors had to wait until the weekend to do the work when no other subcontractors would be in the building.





the floor.”

The salt used in Utah to melt the ice in winter is also partly to blame, Young says. When tracked in, the road salt “kind of acts like a sandpaper,” he says.

The fix isn’t difficult, Young states. “We only have to completely clean all contaminants off and reseal.” With that done, “the material re-emulsifies and bonds to the original coat.”

“People think cement is bulletproof, but it’s not,” observes Nield of Ardex. “You’re putting on a paper-thin layer of color followed by a thin layer of sealer. There’s nothing to protect that finish against the kind of traffic you’ll get in a mall except by maintenance.”

A final coat of polish and wax should protect against scuffing and salt damage, he predicts.

As for the quality of the work by E.B. Berger, Nield says: “It’s absolutely a good job. The workmanship was very good. But it’s a learning experience. There’s not another contractor in Utah that could have pulled that off.” 📱

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# Teaching Maintenance

Photo courtesy of Andre Plouffe, Designs in Concrete

An employee for Designs in Concrete seals a project at the Orsini complex, a series of three new high-end luxury condominiums in downtown Los Angeles.

By Mike Dawson

**W**hen selling a job, there shouldn't be any gray areas about the maintenance of colored concrete. Educating clients about maintaining the application and managing their expectations for the future begin during the sale, say veteran troubleshooters in the industry.

"It comes down to communication between the contractor and the client," says Chris Sullivan, national sales manager for QC Construction Products.

Colored concrete comes with a different set of expectations than gray flatwork, he says. Homeowners who write hefty checks will give it more scrutiny. Commercial customers consider it part of a business's identity, and want the most for their money. As a prominent feature on the property, the application will serve as a showpiece —

or a black eye — for the applicator and the industry as a whole. How the appearance holds up will in large part determine whether the work serves as good or bad publicity.

Sullivan says that he's learned from troubleshooting hundreds of installations that too many contractors fail to address maintenance as part of selling and finishing the job. The client needs this information, in writing, from the start, he says.

Clark Branum, western division training and support manager for L.M. Scofield Co., offers similar advice. "Maintenance should always be addressed during the planning phase through front-end work," he says. "The client needs to know the durability of the selected sealers or waxes, and also needs to be given proper maintenance





Since clear sealers scratch over time, they need to be protected by periodic cleaning and an application of maintenance wax, which serves as a sacrificial coating over the sealer. After initial application when the decorative concrete floor is installed, the wax will require periodic reapplication after a thorough scrubbing and cleaning.

guidelines to work with. This can be done during the hand-over and final walk-throughs.”

“(During the walk-through,) they should be handing out written guidelines in a complete maintenance package,” Sullivan says.

What that maintenance package entails depends on whether the application is interior or exterior, polished, textured or stained, and how it was sealed. Homeowners and businesses can adopt some routine maintenance tasks that will promote the longevity of their colored applications.

If the application is on the floor, Sullivan says that owners should put down walk-off mats at entrances and exits, especially in commercial applications. That’s where traffic concentrates and grit collects underfoot like sandpaper. Then sweep, mop with soap and water, and rinse clean. It’s that simple. Most floors need it daily regardless of the material.

## Sealers

The next level of maintenance, resealing, can be done by the client or hired maintenance contractor. The decorative concrete contractor is not responsible for resealing, but he or she is responsible for educating the client on the topic. Some applicators are selling long-term maintenance contracts with the jobs, and much of the work involves resealing.

“The frequency depends on the use and the type of sealer used,” Branum says. Most exterior sealers are acrylic-based, and the quality of the acrylic resins will vary by manufacturer, he says. Some things to look for in a sealer include UV inhibitors for protection from sun exposure. “Not only does this protect the colored concrete surface, but it also protects the acrylic film from UV breakdown,” he says.

In lightly used areas, good quality acrylic films should



Photos courtesy of Butterfield Color

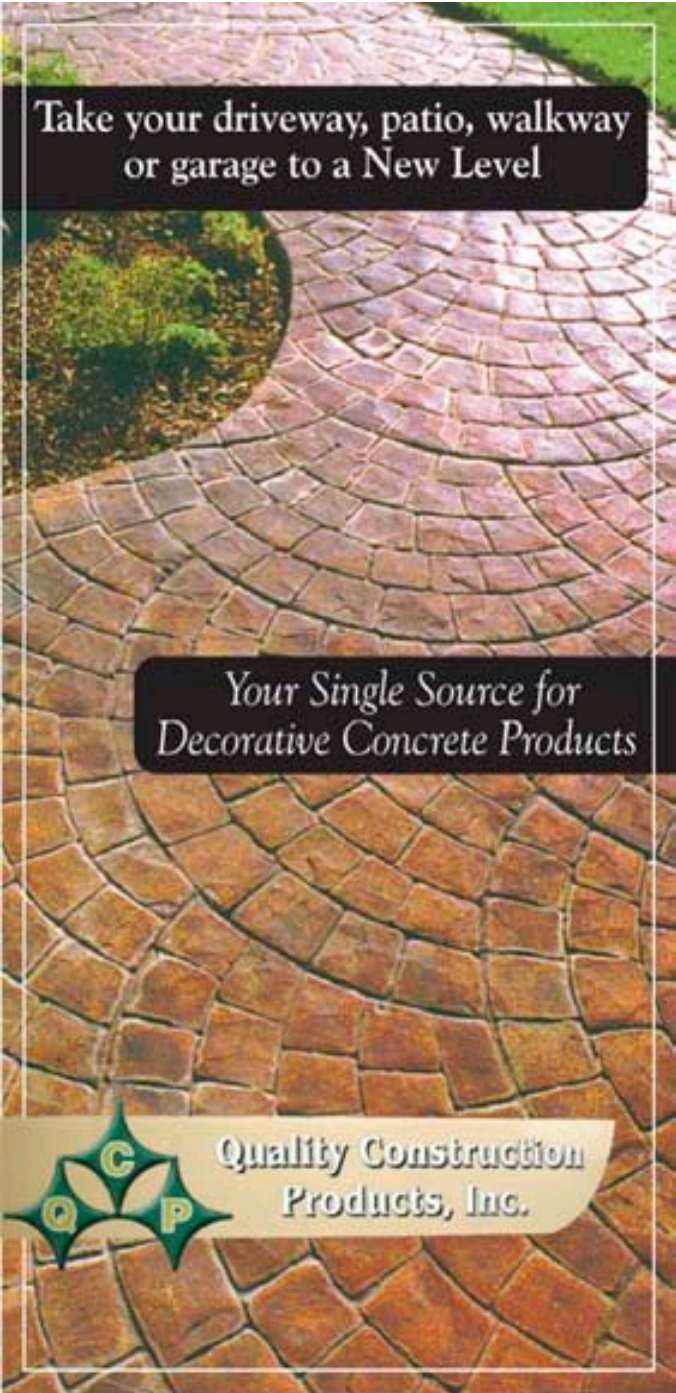
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stand up one to two years before needing a recoat. In high traffic commercial areas, annual or biannual recoats may be required. "Acrylic-urethane blends tend to work better than standard acrylics, because they offer greater chemical resistance and improved abrasion resistance," Branum says.

Even if it's not a strong profit center, a maintenance division is a way for a company to ensure that applications continue to speak well for themselves. "Some companies have maintenance divisions now that specialize in cleaning and resealing textured concrete and pool decks," says Branum.

If neglected, dirt and grit tend to accumulate in the textured surface of stamped concrete, so it should be kept clean in order to prevent the growth of fungus or moss. Depending on the sun exposure and the rate of wear, the color may require touch-up when it is resealed, Branum says.

When it comes to exterior stain work, Steve Schmid, owner of Stone Touch Inc. in Salt Lake City, provides customers with a maintenance manual, some training, and even the sealers. "I'm willing to sell them the products at cost. I just want to keep them happy and recommend us to their friends."

On stained interior floors, Schmid used to recommend wax products, provide a maintenance program and hope that the customer followed through. But now Stone Touch is in a win-win business relationship with a maintenance company. When the installation is finished, Schmid turns the floor over to a maintenance team from Waxie Sanitary Supply. Waxie, a janitorial company that operates in the Western states, sends in a training team to set the customer up with a maintenance program using Waxie's products. There is no cost to the contractor, but it enables Schmid to guarantee his work as long as the customer follows the maintenance program.

"Honestly, it makes us look better," Schmid says. "And if there is a problem, we know exactly what they've done and have not done with it, and we know exactly how to take care of it." Schmid says callbacks have dropped by 75 percent since he started the program.

### Not fade away

Applications with integral colors may benefit the most from customer education and periodic maintenance. Sullivan points out that the color of exterior surfaces will change over time as the iron oxide pigments get dirty, and it's important to teach customers that the original color hasn't faded — it's still there. A good cleaning and resealing will restore bright colors to their original tones, Sullivan says. He suggests that contractors offer a maintenance contract with the integral-color installation, so that it keeps the artisan looking good. 🛠️

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Photo by Eric Laignel/Rockwell Group

# Epoxy Terrazzo

## Elegance & Choice

Nobu Fifty Seven is the first uptown New York restaurant for chef Nobu Matsuhisa. Its Asian-style decor includes sliced bamboo stalks embedded in terrazzo tiles.

***Using epoxy instead of cement opens up all kinds of new possibilities for terrazzo floors.***

By Amy Johnson

**E**legant terrazzo floors in the United States got their start from a commonplace and perhaps unexpected source — ships' ballast. Ships crossing the Atlantic in the early 20th century carried marble chips to aid weight redistribution and maintain balance as coal was consumed during the voyage. Craftsmen in New York and other coastal American cities "recycled" this material as the aggregate in a cementitious binder or matrix to create Italian-style terrazzo floors for luxury hotels and apartment lobbies.

The late 1970s saw epoxy resins from Europe enter the U.S. market as an alternative to terrazzo's traditional cement matrix. Epoxy terrazzo remains

an attractive option for installers to this day.

However, unlike binders that contain cement and cure by hydration, epoxy resins are polymers that cure by chemical reaction. This has a significant impact on how the products are installed and how the finished projects look.

### **Exciting design options**

There are some good reasons why contractors would favor epoxy terrazzo over the more traditional cement-based variety.

"The biggest advantage of epoxy, the thing that really stands out, is color," says Dan Steiner, manager of terrazzo



for Polymerica Inc. “Epoxy colors are pretty much unlimited. Cement is limited to pastels and some darker colors.”

Lee Tizard, sales representative for Urethane Polymers International Inc., also cites color as an advantage. “Epoxy delivers more vibrant colors,” he says. “While you can produce a wide range of colors with conventional cement matrices, you won’t get the vibrant colors, the dynamic reds. And epoxies keep their intensity, while cement lightens as it dries.”

This permanent color intensity has good implications for repairing damaged epoxy terrazzo. “As long as a good record is kept of the color formulation and the aggregate, epoxy terrazzo patches can be matched perfectly,” says Steiner.

In addition to their color potential, epoxies make it possible to use aggregates that are not compatible with cement. Gary French, vice president of terrazzo business development for General Polymers, a Sherwin-Williams company, explained that aggregates such as glass, mother of pearl, plastic and metal can be used with epoxy, but not cement. Not only does the dense surface of these aggregates prevent bonding with cement, but shrinkage during cure can cause the aggregate to pop out when the surface is ground.

Tizard predicts that innovation in colors and design will fuel rapid growth in use of epoxy terrazzo. Epoxy resins can be formulated to be translucent, so elements under the floor can show through. Tizard has seen fiber-optic lights installed to make a floor light up and phosphorescent pigments incorporated into epoxy so a floor will glow under black light. He also foresees a resurgence in historic Italian terrazzo designs and techniques, including the incorporation of mosaics and slabs of stone.



Photo by Dan Steiner

Still, one color issue remains a problem for epoxy resins. They are sun-sensitive. “Ultraviolet (UV) rays and heat are a challenge for epoxy,” says Allen Sedaka, founder of Durite Concepts, New York City. “As a result, they are used more often inside than outdoors. People are experimenting with exterior applications, and there is a water-based resin that can be used outside, but it is very specialized.”

### Strong and thin

“Normally (90 percent of the time) epoxy terrazzo is thin-set, one-half inch or less. Traditional terrazzo is an



These fish can be found on the floor of Emeril’s New Orleans Fish House, a new restaurant located in the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. The restaurant specializes in Creole/Cajun food, and fish are prominently featured in its decor.

Photos by Dan Steiner





A tabletop with leaf inlays made by Allen Sedaka of Durite Concepts.



inch thick or more – it has to be thick to have strength,” says Dan Steiner. “This gives epoxies an advantage in existing buildings, because it doesn’t change the floor elevation.”

Sedaka confirms that advantage. “In New York City we don’t have the luxury to pour one or two inches,” he says. “With epoxy we don’t have to modify door jambs or entrances. There is less demolition required, saving owners and contractors a lot of headaches.”

Its thin-set quality also means epoxy terrazzo can be used on upper floors without additional structural support. French claims that epoxy terrazzo weighs about 3 pounds to 4 1/2 pounds per square foot, in contrast to 30 pounds for traditional terrazzo set in a sand-cushion bed.

This makes epoxy terrazzo an attractive material for precasting countertops and other features when pouring on-site is not an option. “You can cast cove details, wall panels or stair treads in much thinner sections than you ever could traditionally,” Tizard explains. “For example, you can precast a rounded cove, then heat it on-site and bend it to fit exactly.”

Even at a fraction of the depth, epoxy terrazzo is much stronger than cement. Gary French puts the compressive strength of thin-set epoxy according to ASTM D695 at 10,000 psi, compared to 4,800 psi to 7,000 psi for cement at a thickness of 3 inches. This means epoxy stands up better to abrasion and impact damage.

Perhaps more importantly, epoxy resins offer high tensile strength (French reports 3,000 psi, measured according to ASTM D638). This means epoxy can flex and give without cracking, so it can be used over a larger area without expansion joints. The fact that epoxy resins are 100 percent solids means they do not shrink during cure, eliminating shrinkage cracks.

Thin-set does mean more attention must be paid to the underlying substrate. Flaws or cracks in the substrate will be telegraphed to the terrazzo surface. Tizard recommends using a crack isolation membrane. Also, epoxy will not allow water vapor transmission, so the underlying substrate must be completely cured and dried. A vapor barrier may be required.

The ability to release trapped moisture vapor is another reason cementitious terrazzo is preferred over epoxy for outdoor applications.

## Installation and maintenance

Besides the extra attention that must be paid to substrate and vapor transmission issues, contractors should be aware of differences in cure mechanisms.

Epoxy cures much more rapidly than a cementitious terrazzo matrix. “In New York, everything moves so fast that

These horns liven up the floor at Paschal’s Restaurant, a cafeteria serving Southern-style food at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

Photos by Dan Steiner





The Jerome Schottenstein Center is home to the Ohio State Buckeyes hockey and basketball teams as well as this 71,000-square-foot terrazzo floor, which won 1998 Job of the Year and Job of the Century from the National Terrazzo and Mosaic Association. The floor features mural portraits of former student athletes and was created using six different shades of gray.



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a floor has to be ready to use quickly," Sedaka says. "With epoxy you can walk on it six hours after you install it. You can grind it the next day and it's ready to open to the public."


However, he warns that this quick cure time imposes some restrictions on installation. "Epoxy will go off if you don't get it out of the mixer and install it right away," he says. "If lumps begin to set, they are nearly impossible to get out. A jackhammer will get stuck in cured epoxy! Be sure you have a crew large enough and skilled enough to get the material down in time. It is extremely demanding."

Sedaka also advises users to pay attention to temperature and humidity. He believes that an ambient temperature of between 50 and 60 degrees is ideal for installing epoxy terrazzo.

The final step in installing a terrazzo floor, whatever the matrix material, is grinding and polishing. Steiner believes the tight finish and high gloss of terrazzo are due in part to the weight of traditional grinding machines, which he says weigh thousands of pounds. The longer and smoother the floor is ground, the less maintenance it will require. "Some installers grind to 120 grit and then seal the floor," Steiner says, "but real terrazzo artisans want a floor you never have to wax or polish. It's more expensive to keep grinding, but when you reach the level of 800 grit — some go to 5,000 grit — you don't have to seal or wax."

Epoxy terrazzo offers an additional maintenance advantage — it is highly resistant to chemical agents. "Any job we do, we can go back 20 years later and it's identical, because it's resin," Sedaka says. "Cement oxidizes with salt, urine, coffee or cleaning materials. These things don't discolor or oxidize epoxy." Steiner recommends regular cleaning with autoscrubbers to prevent abrasion damage, but says little else is required.

Twenty years may sound like a long time for a floor to stay looking like new, but in fact the lifespan of an epoxy terrazzo floor is comparable to traditional cementitious terrazzo, commonly estimated at 40 years or longer. Many of the floors installed in the 1920s heyday of terrazzo are still in use today. French uses numbers compiled by the National Terrazzo and Mosaic Association (NTMA) to show that over a 40-year lifespan, the cost of epoxy terrazzo averages \$0.85 per square foot per year, 2 cents lower than cement terrazzo.

Steiner offers this perspective on the lifespan of terrazzo floors. "You and I will be gone — our grandchildren will be gone — and the floor will still be there. That's the beauty of terrazzo." 

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# Copings & Edges: forming the future

*By Mike Dawson*

**T**he market for coping and edge forms continues to expand with the decorative concrete industry. Some manufacturers are looking to serve the specific needs of decorative concrete craftspeople in this niche. They are bringing new materials and technologies to form production to directly address the demands of the decorative concrete applicator.

This is a look at some of the new products out there and what the experts advise when considering a purchase of coping or edge forms.

A coping form is most often used on a pool. Think about the cantilevered, bull-nosed overhang on most pools. A coping is also the top layer or covering of a wall or pier that is exposed to the weather. It is usually sloped to carry off water.

An edge, of course, is just an edge of

a pour or overlay. However, whether it's a sidewalk, countertop or stair tread, the edge profile can range from flat to fancy.

## **Reusable or one-time forms**

Whether coping or edge, forms can be arranged under two categories — one-time and reusable. If you're shopping for edge and coping forms, one of the main considerations is whether to buy a reusable product for multiple pours or spend less on a one-time item to be stripped out and thrown in the dumpster.

The typical one-time-use form is made from low-density styrene foam, which is light and economical but one of the less rigid and durable materials on the market. One-time forms are often the least expensive and generally the most cost-effective if your business does not need the form regularly, says Cameron





Edge form molds by Colledi Designs of Fresno, Calif., are made from hard but flexible plastic, designed with computer drafting software and cut with a router. This method of production enables the decorative concrete applicator to draft the entire form installation on the computer and customize sections such as radius strips or blended profiles.

Morgan, who represents the Pacific Formliner brand, offered by Pacific Concrete Images in California.

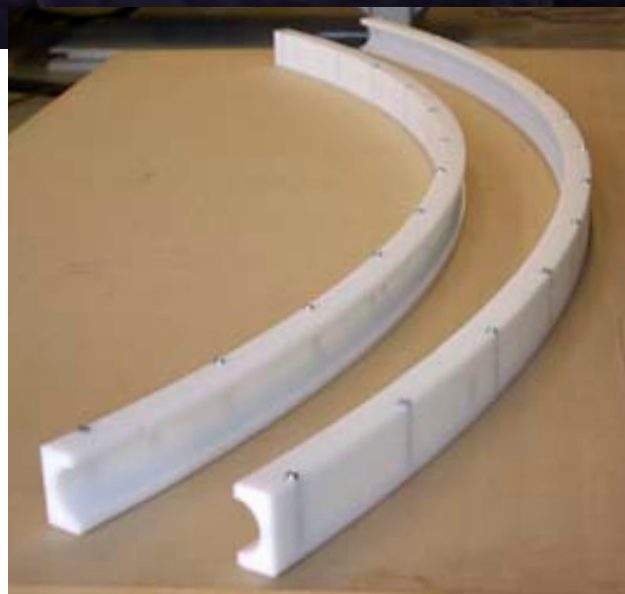
Reusable forms cost more, but if purchased intelligently they should pay for themselves with multiple uses. Reusable forms are generally made from tougher materials, which can often perform better in a radius or detailed profile, he says.

Chris Swanson, owner of Colour, a concrete company in Placerville, Calif., says he goes with reusable plastic forms whenever possible. The reusable forms cost more upfront, but the cost is usually built into the bid, and the expense is recovered with multiple usage. "I try to get them paid for in the first or second job," Swanson says.

The advantage of the reusable form is in its toughness, Swanson says. "They're just flat out more rigid." That means straighter lines and better profile integrity. "You just don't get as much detail from foam," he says.

If Swanson uses the right forms installed the right way, he can strip them out and have little to no handwork left to do. The ultimate goal of forming is to strip it out and walk away, he says, and reusable plastic forms get the user much closer to that goal than the one-time products.

Swanson uses forms made by a small company that manufactures using a unique method that Swanson predicts will be common across the industry within a few years. Colledi Designs is essentially a wood shop that started carving concrete forms. The company began using its sign-making equipment — an industrial router and design software — to cut forms from polyethylene stock.



Photos courtesy of Colledi Designs





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The company sells several stock profiles, but what really makes it unique is custom design. Swanson says that he can work with Colledi on their computer drafting system to design custom profiles and an entire forming installation. That way, every piece is custom cut and the installation is planned on paper.

The router can produce tricky radius forms, as well as carve transition

pieces that blend one profile into another in one length of form. "You can create any shape you want," Swanson says.

Heidi English, co-owner of Colledi Designs, which is located in Fresno, Calif., says the wood-oriented company first entered the concrete business when asked to make a stencil for a decorative concrete applicator. The company now makes custom stencils and forms.

It works with applicators to design increasingly more detailed profiles and is developing a 3-D profile form.

English says that product innovations are often the result of collaboration with the creative minds of local decorative concrete applicators. "They are developing new ideas and new techniques right along with us."

Swanson says the rubbery plastic of a Colledi form releases well, and some applicators do not use a release agent with it, although a light application is recommended. Swanson says the material strips better than any other he has used.

Unlike most established makers of one-time forms, this newcomer offers no systems for setting up the forms. Attachment is left to the contractor.

However, some other innovators in the form market have addressed attachment.

Mike Eastergard, owner of PreiTech, a Georgia company, says that he discovered that contractors installing foam coping forms in pools had to use tie wires because the water-soluble adhesives did not hold up. "There was room for improvements on several different levels," Eastergard says.

His company offers a system with 3-inch-wide double-back tape to attach the forms. The forms themselves are made of high-density foam, which makes them more rigid and durable than typical one-time forms.

PreiTech has also addressed the shortcomings of polystyrene utility under a miter saw. "It tears more than it cuts," Eastergard says.

To help applicators in the field, he offers pre-cut corners in angles of 15 degrees, 22.5 degrees, 30 degrees and 45 degrees.

If flex is the most important feature you are looking for, the market addresses that need as well. One example is the Formliner brand from Pacific Concrete Images. The company offers forms for everything from pool copings to fireplace surrounds and wall caps in reusable polyethylene.

The forms are good for 8 to 10 pours, Morgan says, if the forms are rinsed and stored in their liners after each use. Each profile comes with

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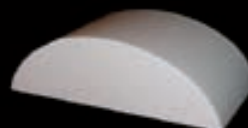
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The wall caps on this fountain were created with a flexible, reusable Classic profile from Pacific Formliner.



Photos courtesy of Grant Gaspar

matching finishing tools. The advantage of such a reusable form is its flexibility and cost-effectiveness. If the job calls for straight lines and you don't foresee a future need for the forms, then a one-time product is probably the way to go, Morgan says.

For those who install a lot of flat work with flat profile edges, there are a range of reusable forms that feature flexibility. These forms are an alternative to building forms out of lumber.

One is Plastiform, which is made by The Plastiform Co. in Seattle. Owner Mike Lane says that customers report using the plastic form boards for years and hundreds of pours. The key feature of Plastiform is that it bends to a 3-foot radius.


Its other distinct offering is a slide clamp. Replacing pocket stakes, the clamp slides in a groove in the backside

of the form board so it can be moved to wherever you want to place a stake. Stakes can then be arranged in whatever spacing is necessary.

Plastiform recommends keeping the forms oiled to improve releasing, cleanup and longevity.

Another of these types of forms is Poly Meta Forms from Metal Forms Corp. of Milwaukee. These are plastic forms with steel stake pockets.

Company president Tom Miller says the system is a labor- and money-saving alternative to forming concrete with wood.

So when shopping for forms, first consider how many pours you will expect your forms to deliver and how much detail you need. Those answers will determine whether to go with a one-time form or a reusable system. 

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# Product Profile



After soaking in Poof! for three weeks, this standard 8-inch-by-16-inch building block fell apart.

## Poof! from Kover Krete Systems Inc.

By Stacey Enesey Klemenc

**H**ave you ever looked at your concrete-covered tools and wished you could just — poof! — make the hardened mess disappear?

Well, that's the premise behind Poof!, a cleaning agent from Kover Krete Systems Inc. in Orlando, Fla.

Poof! is a salt-based cleaning product that chemically breaks down hardened concrete. It was developed about two years ago for contractors who were tired of using muriatic acid to clean their stamping tools and mats, says Monica Stamper, president and CEO of Contract Packaging Inc., which manufactures the products for Kover Krete Systems. "We've improved the

product (since then) and have made it even more powerful. Everyone who tries it, loves it."

When the product has worked its magic, hardened and encrusted concrete will turn to mush that's easily washed off with water. If concrete remains after the initial application, wait for the surface to dry and then reapply. Without any hocus pocus, Poof! will get the hardened concrete off no matter the buildup. Case in point: As a test, a concrete block was submerged in 3 inches of Poof! About two to three weeks later, the block had virtually disintegrated.

The product is designed to only

work on concrete, Stamper explains, so it can be safely used on many painted surfaces without marring the finish. It also works great on tile and will take off the white-scum film left behind after grouting. At pools, it can be used to remove cream spots on cement finishes with aggregates in the mix. Just spray it on and rework the area. It also will remove concrete from aluminum handrails and screen cages around pools.

"Basically, it'll work on anything that's portland-cement based," Stamper says. The only thing she cautions contractors to do is to test Poof! before coating any surface or tool that has not



Photos courtesy of Kover Krete Systems





Poof! quickly dissolves regular concrete on tools and machinery. The key to success is making sure the area being treated stays wet with the cleaner.



been proven to respond well to the cleaner. "It may oxidize some hand tools if they're soaked too long," she warns.

The cleaner's material safety data sheet states that it is nonhazardous, odorless and water-soluble, and that neutralization occurs when it is combined with strong alkalites. Water will also neutralize its action.

Ideally, the product, which has a viscosity similar to water, should be used in temperatures ranging from approximately 40 F to 80 F, Stamper says.

"The key to this product is you've got to keep the area you want cleaned wet (with Poof!) for Poof! to do its job," Stamper explains. She recommends using a pump-up spray bottle to apply the product directly to encrusted areas.

Poof! works on mortar mixers whose blades have frozen, Stamper adds. For some tools, such as concrete-caked gauge rakes, it's best to fill a bucket with Poof! and leave the rake in the solution for an hour or so until the concrete dissolves. "If it's regular concrete, it will dissolve pretty fast," she says. "But if it's decorative concrete with acrylics, it will take longer. The tool may even have to be soaked overnight." 📱

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### Art Stamped Concrete — Spread Eagle Stamp

The spread eagle stamp from Art Stamped Concrete has become enormously popular for the company. The eagle design is lifelike, and its head is extremely detailed, clearly showing its beak, nostril and eye. The eagle's wingspan is 38 inches, and from wing tip to talons it is 18 inches in height. The primary feathers in the stamp are composed of spines that were created individually. The mat makes an impression of about 1/8 inch to 1/4 inch deep, and it is seamless, so you can texture right up to the design. It can be used in any application.

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🌐 [www.artstampedconcrete.com](http://www.artstampedconcrete.com)



### Colledi Designs — Rubber Stamps

Colledi Designs' rubber stamps are cast from high-density urethane and primer-coated to give greater detail to the finished stamp. These three-dimensional stamps are 1/8 inch thick and very easy to use. A nylon strap handle allows for easy removal.

Colledi Designs has many premade stamp designs, but can also custom-design to any size specification.

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### The Concrete Edge Co. — Landscape Logs

The Concrete Edge Co. has introduced texture mats to help create concrete landscape edging that looks like tree logs. The edging creates a natural look around landscape plant beds without the problems associated with using natural tree logs for edging. Concrete disguised as wood is very durable and, unlike real wood, will not rot, move, separate or attract insects. The use of these new texture mats along with a dome-shaped mold on a concrete curb machine and a little colored release powder will create natural-looking concrete log borders of any shape for any landscape.

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Kraft Tool Co. texture mats leave a three-dimensional impression on concrete with every detail of the shape, texture and feel of natural stone or brick. They are an alternative to brick or tile for patios, driveways, walkways, poolside decking and many other applications. The mats are 3/4-inch thick and made from flexible polyurethane.

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### Matcrete Inc. — Grand Ashler Slate

The Grand Ashler Slate was introduced at the 1996 World Of Concrete by Matcrete Inc. The patented design of Grand Ashler Slate allows rotations of 90 degrees, 180 degrees and 270 degrees, virtually eliminating the hard lines in traditional single-notched ashler patterns. The versatility of this rotating stamp allows 256 assembly combinations.

With a user-friendly 36-inch-by-36-inch stamp size, the Grand Ashler Slate is one of Matcrete's best-selling patterns. The realistic benefits of this stamp come not only from the tool's inconspicuous perimeter but also from the defined character of hand-chiseled pieces of slate.

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### Proline Concrete Tools Inc. — Aztec Calendar Medallion

This year Proline Concrete Tools Inc. has added many new and unique stamps to its catalog, one of them being an Aztec Calendar that is 4 feet in diameter. This new stamp has drawn international attention.

When Proline opened a facility in Mexico, requests for this unique stamp came immediately. Two Proline artists spent 14 days hand-carving this replication, and the final stamp has distinct authentic detail. Due to the incredible detail and size, this stamp is best served as a centerpiece. The stamp has been popular in not only Mexico, but the United States and Canada as well.

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## Proline Concrete Tools Inc. — Large Medallion

A 13-foot Medallion has been added to Proline's 2008 stamp lineup. It is by far the largest Medallion stamp in their catalog.

To create the Medallion imprint, Proline has created a nine-piece stamp set with panels that fit together in tight precision. The set is crafted using a variety of textures, giving the Medallion a look of natural hand-cut stone.

This stamp set is comprised of one center piece and eight perimeter pieces. The center stamp can easily be replaced with another design, creating a custom Medallion centered with a corporate logo, monogram or private branding symbol.

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## L.M. Scofield Co. — Rustic River Rock Texturing Skin

L.M. Scofield Co. has introduced the Lithotex Pavecrafters Rustic River Rock texturing skin. The design offers the natural look, character and depth of river rock. Durable Pavecrafters tools are made from high-quality polyurethane and produce realistic details.

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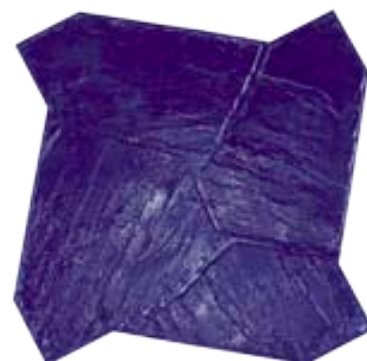
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# Product News



## Kipper Crete introduces lightweight finishing trowel

Kipper Crete LLC has introduced what it calls the only lightweight battery-operated finishing trowel on the market: The Kipper KPR-11.5-FLB.

The newest in the family of Kipper surface finishers, the 11 1/2-inch battery-operated finishing trowel allows users to float and finish around pipes, edges on slabs, and anywhere else a float or steel-trowel finish is required without having to bend over or finish from knee-boards. It weighs 14 pounds, including extension, drill, battery and finishing head, and its light weight allows the user to better control how much pressure is applied. The trowel's self-adjusting replaceable blades finish up to 2,000 square feet. It works with industry-standard variable-speed controlled polishers and drills. A V-28 lithium-ion battery boasts a quick recharge time.

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## Buddy Rhodes replaces liquid color with Ultra-Fine Pigments

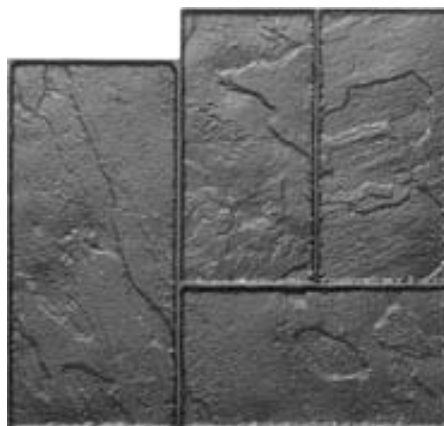
Buddy Rhodes Artisan Concrete has introduced Buddy Rhodes Ultra-Fine Pigments. The new product replaces liquid color in the Buddy Rhodes

Concrete Countertop line.

Ultra Fine Pigments are available in the standard Buddy Rhodes pallet of 15 colors and are packaged in two-pound recyclable canisters or 25-pound bags. Custom colors will soon be available. The pigments are just as easy to use as the liquid — simply place the water-soluble bag in mix water, mix well, and add Buddy Rhodes Artisan Concrete Mix to produce a beautiful integral color. As before, one canister will color two bags of mix.

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## MagnumCrete debuts

MagnumCrete, a new company, is focusing solely on stamps.

Made from the highest quality urethanes, MagnumCrete concrete stamping tools boast, not only durability, but also unique patterns and easy workability. They also carry a lifetime warranty.

MagnumCrete was founded to give experienced concrete contractors world-class products at the lowest prices available, which is done by selling the stamps at wholesale prices, direct from the manufacturer. MagnumCrete's startup development is nearly complete, and the company will soon be taking orders online.

🌐 [www.magnumcrete.com](http://www.magnumcrete.com)



## Banana Pads aid maintenance

Superabrasive Inc. has introduced Banana Surface Polishing and Maintenance Pads, its own brand of top-performing, flexible, long-lasting pads for scrubbing, polishing and maintaining concrete floors.

Banana Pads are among the few effective diamond pads developed for maintenance of previously polished concrete. Their biggest advantage is restoration of polish glossiness. Recommended for wet applications, they fit on most floor-polishing machines. The size of the segments is what helps them last longer — more material is embedded into these segments. The banana shape helps the pad attach to the curve of the tool-holder head. The pads are backed with rubber and attach with Velcro.

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## Decra-Seal provides clear membrane for surfaces

Decra-Seal from W.R. Meadows Inc. is a nonyellowing, acrylic-based, high-solids liquid curing and sealing compound for decorative concrete.

Specifically formulated for the residential decorative concrete market, Decra-Seal is clear, transparent and easy to apply. It also offers improved resistance to water, alkalis, mild acids and petroleum spirits. The product has been formulated to seal and





protect decorative colored concrete by producing a hard yet flexible clear film. It is designed for various applications, including exterior concrete surfaces, driveways, patios, swimming pool areas, exposed aggregate, and any exterior surface where protection and sealing of concrete is desired. Decra-Seal meets maximum VOC content limits for concrete curing and sealing compounds as required by the U.S. EPA Architectural Coatings Rule.

Decra-Seal W/B, a water-based version providing exceptionally low VOC content, is also available.

☎ (847) 214-2100

🌐 [www.wrmeadows.com](http://www.wrmeadows.com)



### Countertop system with applicator

Surfacing Technology has introduced ST Counter Stone countertop surfacing system, the first and only cementitious countertop system with its own applicator.

The system gives users the ability to do complete one-day installs over solid substrates. It offers green materials with no VOCs, the ability to create consistent horizontal or vertical looks, the ability to restore surfaces or create new ones, unique designs that rival granite, the ability to install food-safe surfaces, and single-component products without the epoxy mess. ST Counter Stone conforms to any shape or radius, factory or custom fabricated.

Only factory-trained and approved contractors are eligible to purchase and install the ST Counter Stone system.

☎ (888) 654-7866

🌐 [www.surfacingtechnology.com](http://www.surfacingtechnology.com)

### Axim adds eight

Axim Italcementi Group continues to innovate the concrete technology field with its recent launch of eight new products.

The products are Catexol Hydrosense, Catexol Collaxim L7, Catexol Trim-Air, Intrapel XLT, Axim-Seal Plus+, Catexol Cure & Seal HG,

Catexol Cure & Seal Plus+, and Catexol Surface-Set.

☎ (800) 899-8795

🌐 [www.aximconcrete.com](http://www.aximconcrete.com)

### Leica develops new laser meter

The new pocket-sized Leica DISTO D2 laser meter developed by Leica Geosystems is a compact, ergonomic-designed device that can measure

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distances and calculate area and volume using the indirect functions at the touch of a button with fast, reliable results.

The Leica DISTO D2 includes a soft grip, flip-out end-piece and shortcut keys for addition, subtraction, area and volume, and simple Pythagoras (indirect)

calculations, as well as the ability to stake out positions using equal distances. The flip-out end-piece guarantees accurate results when measuring from edges or corners, while shortcut keys ensure rapid access to frequently used functions.

☎ (770) 326-9500

🌐 [www.disto.com](http://www.disto.com)

🌐 [www.leica-geosystems.us](http://www.leica-geosystems.us)

### Versatile rotating laser enters market

The new, versatile Leica Roteo 35 rotating laser instrument from Leica Geosystems offers simple-to-operate and lightweight automated self-leveling functionality suitable for a wide range of interior leveling or alignment jobs.

The instrument includes an integrated motorized mount with intuitive remote operation capabilities that make it easy to set working heights or move positions. Automatic self-leveling rotating laser offers operational



flexibility for indoor construction leveling and alignment tasks of all sizes and complexity.

The all-in-one Leica Roteo 35 features an integrated motorized mount that quickly adjusts the laser height to millimeter accuracy by remote control. The Leica Roteo is a fully automatic horizontal or vertical laser with a 90-degree plumb beam, and a self-leveling range of plus or minus 9 degrees. It offers manual functionality for varying slope requirements on inclined planes. Its scanning modes enhance visibility in bright light conditions. Its user interface is simple and intuitive.

☎ (770) 326-9500

🌐 [www.disto.com](http://www.disto.com)

🌐 [www.leica-geosystems.us](http://www.leica-geosystems.us)

### Two more for Ingersoll Rand compactor line

Doosan Infracore Portable Power has introduced the Ingersoll Rand BXR-60H and the BXR-200H as the newest additions to the Ingersoll Rand product line of reversible vibratory plate compactors.

At 158 pounds, the BXR-60H offers 3,417 pounds of centrifugal force. The unit is powered by a rugged and reliable Honda GX120 four-cycle gasoline engine. With a plate size of 14 inches by 19 inches, the BXR-60H is recommended for a maximum compaction depth of 13 inches.

The larger addition to the line is the BXR-200H, weighing in at 518 pounds. Powered by a Honda GX240 four-cycle gasoline engine, this compactor delivers 7,053 pounds of centrifugal force. The BXR-200H has the ability to compact at a depth up to 18 inches and can cover 5,231 square feet per hour with its 18-inch-by-29-inch durable plate.

The addition of the new BXR-60H and BXR-200H complements two existing models in the Ingersoll Rand BXR-Series. The Ingersoll Rand BXR-Series offers high compaction performance and smooth movement to maximize productivity in graded aggregates, sand and mixed soils.

🌐 [www.doosanportablepower.com](http://www.doosanportablepower.com)



### New cordless impact driver

Makita USA Inc. has released its new 18V LXT Lithium-Ion Cordless Impact Driver, model BTD141. This powerful impact driver delivers 1,330 inch-pounds of maximum torque, yet weighs just 3.4 pounds.

The Makita-built four-pole maximum torque motor with variable speed delivers 1,330 inch-pounds of torque, 3,200 impacts per minute, and 2,300 rpm for a wide range of fastening tasks. The BTD141 is equipped with a “one-touch” chuck. Without the need to pull the sleeve for bit installation, this new chuck provides faster, easier bit changes. It also has a built-in LED light that helps illuminate the work surface. It is powered by Makita’s 18V LXT Lithium-Ion Battery Technology and Rapid Optimum Charging System.

☎ (800) 462-5482

🌐 [www.makita.com](http://www.makita.com)

### Kit offers two drills in one

Makita USA Inc. released its new 18V LXT Lithium-Ion Hammer Driver-Drill Kit, model BHP452. The BHP452 can be used as a driver-drill or a hammer-drill.

The Makita-built four-pole maximum torque motor delivers 450 inch-pounds of efficient torque in a compact size. At 4.2 pounds and with an ergonomic shape, the BHP452 is designed for reduced operator fatigue. The BHP452 is also equipped with an LED light that illuminates the work area. The Shift-Lock drive system sleeve quickly shifts from “hammer drill” to “driver” mode.

A related tool, the new BHP452HW is unique in both design and performance. The Makita-built motor



delivers 450 inch pounds of torque in a compact design weighing only 3.6 pounds, the best power-to-weight ratio of any compact hammer driver-drill on the market. The BHP452HW has a variable two-speed motor, delivering 400 rpm and 6,000 blows per minute in low speed, and 1,500 rpm and 22,500 blows per minute in high speed.



The BHP452HW Compact Hammer Driver-Drill is powered by a Makita-built four-pole motor design, which generates more efficient power in a compact size.

☎ (800) 462-5482

🌐 [www.makita.com](http://www.makita.com)

## Rotary hammer good for heavy-duty applications

Makita USA Inc. launched a new addition to the company's growing industrial hammer line, the HR5210C two-inch SDS-Max Rotary Hammer with Anti-Vibration Technology.

Model HR5210C is a versatile, high-powered rotary hammer for heavy-duty applications. The hammer features dual-mode operation: hammering with rotation and hammering only. A torque limiter ensures stable torque control and disengages the motor should the bit bind or hit reinforcements. In addition, not hammering while idling ensures longer life and greater performance of the tool, while electronic speed control reduces speed loss when working in heavy applications to ensure maximum productivity. This new hammer also has large carbon brushes that can last two times longer than competitive models. The 15-amp motor provides 260 rpm and 1,350 to 2,750 blows per minute.

☎ (800) 462-5482

🌐 [www.makita.com](http://www.makita.com)

## New angle grinders from Makita

Makita USA Inc. has released three new angle grinders equipped with Super Joint System (SJS) technology to prevent gear damage.

The three new angle grinders — 9564PC (4 1/2 inches), 9565PC (5 inches) and 9566PC (6 inches) — are powered by Makita-built industrial 13-amp motors to deliver more output power for increased performance.

The three new grinders are engineered with Makita's exclusive SJS technology. If the grinding wheel should accidentally catch or bind, the gears automatically disengage from the motor. SJS stops the wheel, minimizes grinder kickback, and protects the gears. The three new grinders also feature a labyrinth construction, which seals the motor from exterior dust and debris with a complex set of channels. Also, the protective zig-zag varnish seals the motor from dust and debris by creating a barrier under rotation.

In addition to durability and

performance, Makita engineered comfort and ergonomics into the grinders for professional use all day long.

☎ (800) 462-5482

🌐 [www.makita.com](http://www.makita.com)

## NLB adds long-life seal to rotating UHP lance

The new NCG8450A-3 rotating water jet lance from NLB Corp. has a UHP seal that lasts an average of 40 hours — five times longer than previous seals. The field-repairable lance delivers UHP water (up to 40,000 psi) with a rotating action, widening the spray pattern and making product removal more productive.



The NCG8450A-3 can be used with any of NLB's multi-orifice heads, which are designed to suit a variety of applications. Its rotation speed is

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variable up to 3,000 rpm and is provided by a reliable, air-driven swivel. The ergonomic lance enhances operator protection in several ways, including dual-trigger operation and instant pressure dump. It comes with a 36-inch barrel. Another model, the NCG8450LA-3, has a 48-inch barrel.

Operation of an NLB rotating lance requires an NLB 8488 Bi-Mode valve and a hose assembly. The NLB 8488 minimizes downtime with two disposable cartridges (like those used in NLB lances and foot controls) that can be replaced in just 60 seconds.

☎ (248) 624-5555

🌐 [www.nlbcorp.com](http://www.nlbcorp.com)

### Exaktime announces JobClock.NET

Exaktime Inc. has announced the full availability of JobClock.NET, a service that enables subscribers to transfer time and attendance records over the Internet from the field.

JobClock.NET brings added convenience and savings to users of the JobClock system who have job sites located far from the main office. With JobClock.NET, there are three ways to transfer records from the field to the home office. Most subscribers will simply use a PDA with an Internet connection. Data transmission is secure, and JobClock.NET maintains a backup of all records on its server.

☎ (888) 788-8463

🌐 [www.exaktime.com](http://www.exaktime.com)



### In Print

#### Bon's master catalog expanded

Bon Tool Co.'s 2008 master catalog of contractor-grade hand tools and materials for the building trades has been expanded by more than 80 pages with more than 300 new products.

The 384-page Bon catalog offers its largest selection of tools ever, featuring more than 4,000 products for masonry, concrete and decorative concrete finishing, drywall, plastering, EIFS, flooring and general construction trades. New Bon items span the trades, including a stainless steel walking edger/groover and heavy-duty stainless steel kneeboards for concrete, a heavy-duty floor scraper and carpet seam rollers for flooring, and new foam floats, spreaders and tapered darbies for the plaster and stucco trades.

☎ (724) 443-7080

🌐 [www.bontool.com](http://www.bontool.com)



#### Metabo Corp. general catalog released

Metabo Corp. has released its 2008/2009 general catalog outlining the company's full line of cordless and corded power tools, accessories and abrasives.

A main addition to this year's catalog includes a line of upgraded small angle grinders that feature improved performance and longevity and incorporate advanced ergonomic features, such as two comfort zones for superior grip and a "racket" grip for increased control. The new catalog highlights Metabo's two new SDS-Max



Rotary Hammers, a 1 3/4-inch and a 2-inch model, as well as two SDS-Max Demolition Hammers that allow for 12 or 16 chisel position settings with "D" support handles. The literature provides detailed specification information. An updated list of Metabo-authorized service centers and a comprehensive part list are also included for easy reference.

☎ (800) 638-2264

🌐 [www.metabousa.com](http://www.metabousa.com)

### On the Web

#### Cemstone site easier to navigate

Cemstone Products Co. has relaunched its Web site with a more robust look and an interface that is said to be easier to navigate.

The site contains comprehensive information and interactive support for architects, engineers, contractors, builders and homeowners. Popular features on the Web site include project files and news, an online "virtual project" planning tool and an online store with more than 10,000 professional-grade concrete and masonry products.

🌐 [www.cemstone.com](http://www.cemstone.com)

#### Ardex relaunches Web site

Ardex America's has relaunched its Web site to enhance customer access to the latest information on products and services.

In addition to enhanced access and navigability, the new site showcases featured products and case studies. Other features include product finders and calculators, seminar registration and product usage guidelines. 📱

🌐 [www.ardex.com](http://www.ardex.com)

"Just wanted to let you know that this was the **most organized & informative conference I have been to.** I am in the precast concrete business & was looking at the possibilities of countertops. I thought going to the conference would give me an idea or two for some of our upcoming projects, but **I was blown away.**

**The seminars were great and the vendors really knew their stuff.** I go every year to the World of Concrete, but this is the first time **I really got to ask the questions I wanted to and had quality time with fellow attendees and vendors.**

Several of the speakers were accommodating and answered questions after their seminars.

**It was worth the money** and one could tell a lot of work went into it behind the scenes."

**Jonathan Cardinal,**  
CCIC 2007 Attendee

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## American Concrete Institute

### ACI co-sponsors concrete canoe competition

The American Concrete Institute announced its continued co-sponsorship of the annual National Concrete Canoe Competition.

The event, sponsored by the American Society of Civil Engineers and hosted by École de Technologie Supérieure, was held June 19-21 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

More than 200 university teams competed in 18 conference contests last spring to qualify for participation at the national level. Winners at each conference level were invited to participate in the 21st Annual NCCC in June.

Academic scholarships totaling \$9,000 were awarded to the winning teams' undergraduate civil engineering programs. In addition, ACI presented the "American Concrete Institute Award for Excellence in Concrete Canoe Design" to the team that best recognized the use of basic design principles for unconventional applications.

☎ (248) 848-3700

🌐 [www.concrete.org](http://www.concrete.org)

### SDC meeting results

The concrete industry's Strategic Development Council, a council of the American Concrete Institute, met in Irving, Texas, on April 22-23 to discuss several issues and initiatives facing the concrete industry.

Bob Risser, SDC member and president of the Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute, agreed to serve as an industry champion on the issue of building information modeling. In addition, an update on SDC's concrete sustainability initiative, which is championed by J.C. Roumain of Holcim Inc., was presented at the meeting.

SDC's next membership meeting is Oct. 8-10 in Palm Harbor, Fla., at the Innisbrook Resort & Golf Club.

SDC membership consists of concrete industry leaders, and it exists to identify technologies and issues that affect the industry.

☎ (248) 848-3755

🌐 [www.concreteSDC.org](http://www.concreteSDC.org)

🌐 [www.concrete.org](http://www.concrete.org)

## American Society of Concrete Contractors

### Annual conference planned in Texas

The American Society of Concrete Contractors will hold its Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas, Sept. 11-14. The event, with the theme of "Remember Our Mission," is comprised of seminars, round-table discussions and demonstrations. There will be activities for spouses for an additional fee.

One of the demonstrations will involve a vertical diorama of the Alamo. The one-third scale replica will depict the front of the building, using vertical specialty cement applied over a foam backing and highlighted with texture and color.

☎ 866-788-2722

🌐 [www.ascconline.org](http://www.ascconline.org)

## International Concrete Repair Institute

### ICRI announces new repair manual

The International Concrete Repair Institute has announced the availability of the third edition of the Concrete Repair Manual.

The manual comprises more than 70 documents from many of the associations involved in the concrete repair industry's Vision 2020 plan, including ACI, ICRI, NACE, SSPC and the Army Corps of Engineers. Topics include condition evaluation, materials for repair, surface preparation, application methods, corrosion management, structural strengthening, and protection methods. This latest edition of ICRI's comprehensive collection of information on concrete repair is available in a softcover manual edition and as a CD-ROM.

☎ (248) 848-3809

🌐 [www.icri.org](http://www.icri.org)

## Portland Cement Association

### PCA announces 2008 fall seminar schedule

Portland Cement Association's Education and Training department's fall course schedule offers a range of seminars that address current industry concerns and challenges.

Courses employ seasoned professionals to enable participants to master the skills they need. The courses stress discovering and understanding

real-world problems through laboratory experiences that reinforce practical and immediate solutions. The fall lineup includes courses on Kiln Process, Mill Grinding, Design and Control of Concrete (formerly called Concrete: Principles & Practices), Troubleshooting: Solutions to Concrete Field Problems, Aggregates and Chemical Admixtures for Use in Concrete and Cement Manufacturing for Process Engineers.

All courses are held at PCA headquarters in Skokie, Ill.

☎ (847) 972-9032

🌐 [www.cement.org](http://www.cement.org)

## Post-Tensioning Institute

### PTI announces 2008 award winners

The Post-Tensioning Institute, a nonprofit organization for the advancement of post-tensioned, prestressed concrete design and construction, has announced the winners of its 2008 awards competition.

The Project of the Year, Award of Excellence for 2008 went to the new Guthrie Theater center in Minneapolis. Submitted by post-tensioning supplier AMSYSCO Inc., the project was entered in the mixed-use building category and includes three theaters and a 1,000-space parking garage. The post-tensioned concrete framing system provided the most effective solution for the main theater and parking structure. The main theater's framing system consists of an 8-inch-thick sloping slab supported by a radial/circular network of beams and cantilevered girders on five tiers. This unusual design required a high degree of technical expertise in post-tensioning to accommodate the heavy live loads and large, column-free areas. For the traditional six-level parking structure, an encapsulated post-tensioning system provides maximum corrosion protection and longevity. Other project team members include Jean Nouvel and Architectural Alliance (architects), Erickson Roed & Associates (engineer) and McGough Construction Co. (contractor).

Other winners included: Suncoast Post Tension Ltd., Commercial Building; Cary Kopczynski & Co., Residential Building; Forell/Elsesser Engineers Inc., Award of Excellence, Buildings: Repair/Rehabilitation and Strengthening; Tipping Mar & Associates, Award of Merit, Buildings: Repair/Rehabilitation and Strengthening; Suncoast Post Tension Ltd., Award of Excellence, Slab-on-Ground; GSI Post-Tension, Award of Merit, Slab-on-Ground; and Walter P Moore, Award of Excellence, Parking Structure.

PTI's annual awards program honors superior post-tensioning projects in the construction industry. The judges evaluate submissions based on creativity, innovation, ingenuity, cost-effectiveness, functionality, constructability and aesthetics. 📄

🌐 [www.post-tensioning.org](http://www.post-tensioning.org)

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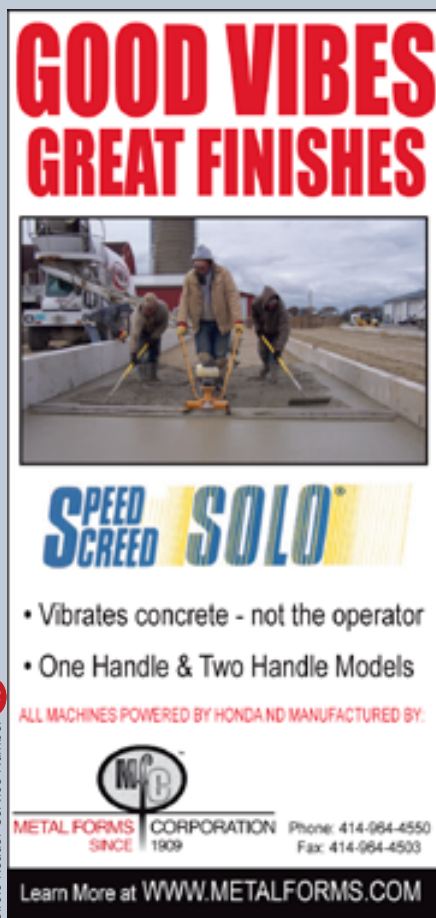
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# Final Pour



Photos courtesy of Heidi English, Colledi Designs

## Little Fresno

**T**here's a very lucky group of kids at Bluff View Private Preschool in Fresno, Calif. Thanks to contractor Chris Swanson of Colour and his team, the students now have their very own "city" to play in.

Swanson was approached by Bluff View and its team of architects, who had come up with the initial concept. It was up to Colour to create the final look. "A lot of the creative side was left up to us," Swanson says. "We were just trying to create a somewhat miniaturized form. We wanted a realistic city with a childlike touch to it."

The little city is home to about a dozen different buildings, including a post office, costume shop and an old-fashioned gas station. All the storefronts are located along the sides of the room, with streets in the middle for the kids to ride their tricycles on.

Almost all the buildings were constructed using foam shapes with cement overlays, although a couple of the buildings have basic framing and sheetrock in addition to the foam. They were then textured using stamps, trowels, plaster finishes and hand carving. Because the city is located inside a preschool, most of the coloring had to be done with water-based stains.

Helping Swanson out with the project was Americrete, which helped with the entire project, and Colledi Designs, which did the signage on all the buildings. All told, the project



took around four or five months.

As one might expect, there were several challenges along the way. "We had to work on it during school time, so we had to be careful about the noise we made and the mess we made," Swanson says. "Some of the design (we made up) as we went along. It can be a challenge at times to create what you think people want."

In this case, Swanson's understanding is that the kids love it. He said there were a lot of parents coming up and talking to him about how excited the kids were. "It's definitely a very unique little place," he said. "It's been a real discussion piece in Fresno."

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