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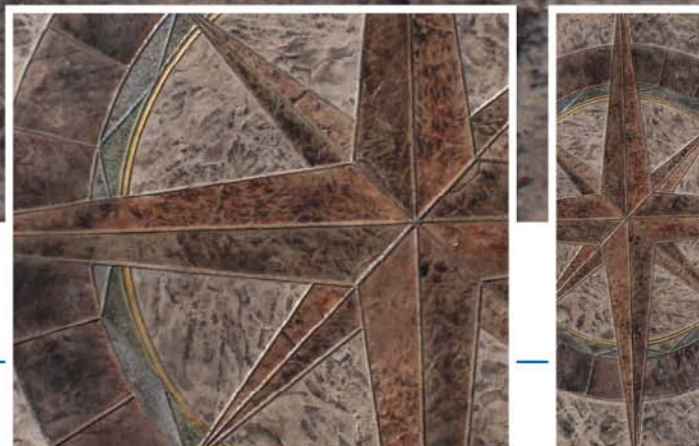
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Publisher's Letter



Dear Readers,

Early on a recent Saturday, our little dog Truffle died suddenly of a stroke at only seven years of age. While I personally have limited affection for small dogs, the family was pretty devastated. The incident saddened me as well as I witnessed my family's unhappy loss.

At church the next morning, it struck me as I gazed upon the cross mounted behind the altar that we don't fully appreciate many things in life until they are taken away from us. It's only then that we begin to notice

another's influence on our lives.

The evening of Truffle's death, our family decided to find a movie that could lift everyone's spirits. We ended up watching "Elf," a humorous holiday movie about one of Santa's oversized helpers named Buddy. While the other elves enjoy Buddy's friendship, they just don't see any potential for this oversized elf as a toy maker. Buddy ultimately catches on to their discontent. Fortunately however, Buddy possesses an incredible Christmas spirit, and he clearly has more than enough to go around.

Ultimately, Buddy is encouraged to go find his real dad in New York. There, he not only finds his dad, he makes some good friends. Although many see him as an oddball because of his cheesy smile and elf outfit, they grow to appreciate his Christmas spirit, and it quickly becomes contagious and evident in everyone's life. When Santa's sleigh suddenly experiences jet-engine problems and has to land in Central Park for repairs, the fact that everyone's spirit is reaching an all-time high results in Santa's sleigh no longer needing the engine to propel itself.

While "Elf" temporarily raised the family spirits at home that evening, the movie's underlying message also impressed me. "Elf" promotes an essential ingredient for bringing quick and sustained relief to our industry — namely, a positive attitude.

As I mentioned in the previous issue of this magazine, it's up to each of us, as family providers and as business and community leaders, to demonstrate confidence and commitment to progress. Without this, economic woes will only be seen as destructive and unfortunate, rather than as an opportunity.

As you peruse the pages of this issue I'm confident you'll find that the decorative concrete industry has no shortage of opportunities.

Sincerely,

Bent Mikkelsen, Publisher

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View demonstrations of our vastly improved precast cove system at The World of Concrete, booth S14327

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One of the largest decorative concrete companies in the country is still finding plenty of room to grow.

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At their showpiece house, the artisans at Flying Turtle Cast Concrete let their imaginations soar.

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by Amy Johnson

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We announce the winners in Exterior and Interior categories.

On the Cover: A fireplace in a Modesto, Calif, home is just one of many decorative concrete showpieces installed at the residence. Flying Turtle Cast Concrete made the piece. For more information, please turn to page 40.

Photo by Matthew J. Visser

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- September: 15th - 17th
- October: 20th - 22nd
- November: 17th - 19th
- December: 8th - 10th

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A new division of Metal Forms Corp.

Metal Forms Corp., a manufacturer in the concrete construction industry since 1909, has launched a new Meta Art division.

Using recycled scraps from Metal Forms Corp.'s major manufacturing operations, Larry Oleson, Meta Art's master sculptor, hand-crafts each Meta Art sculpture to capture the strength, beauty and unique characteristics of bears, moose, large birds and other animals.

Made from steel scraps and powder coatings, these environmentally friendly art pieces are strong and durable. Large sculptures can come with custom name engraving.

www.metalforms.com

Foundation releases guide to fly ash study

The RMC Research & Education Foundation has released "Guide for the Construction Team," a companion to "New Technology-Based Approach to Advance Higher Volume Fly Ash Concrete with Acceptable Performance," a report released in September.

The new guide complements the original study, which was conducted at the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association's research laboratory. The study demonstrated that ready-mix concrete producers may use a greater amount of fly ash — a recycled material — in concrete mixtures while maintaining strength and performance and while still being able to attain early-age strengths. The new guide is intended to assist the entire construction team in efforts to integrate more fly ash in a variety of construction projects.

Both the original study and the guide are available for download from the Foundation's Web site and are also available as part of the Foundation's Research Supporting Sustainable Development CD.

www.rmc-foundation.org

Husqvarna combines operation facilities

Husqvarna Construction Products has integrated its Corona and Torrance operations in one facility located at 265 Radio Road, Corona, Calif. The move was completed at the end of September.

Husqvarna Construction Products is a market leader in machinery and diamond tools for the construction and stone industries. Its product lines include power cutters, floor saws, tile and masonry saws, wall and wire saws, core drilling machines and diamond tools for these and other applications.

www.husqvarna.com

Prosoco hires group specialist

Prosoco Inc., a manufacturer of products that clean, protect and maintain concrete, brick and stone architecture, has added a new member to its Consolideck finished concrete flooring team.

As Prosoco's concrete products group specialist, Jeff Dykstra will promote Consolideck high-performance flooring products, develop new business, conduct training and consult on projects. Though he has responsibilities nationwide, Jeff is based out of North Las Vegas, and will focus mostly on the Western United States.

A 20-year veteran of the construction industry, Dykstra has run his own Chicago-based finished concrete flooring company, A & I Futuristic Flooring, since 2000. He's installed more than half a million square feet of finished concrete flooring throughout the Midwest, including at numerous Expo Design Centers and Chicago's City Colleges.

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Promotions and a hire at Tindall

Tindall Corp. has announced two promotions at its Virginia Division, and one new hire at its Georgia Division.

Charles "Chuck" Wynings has been promoted to General Manager of the Virginia Division, located in Petersburg, Va. Wynings has been with Tindall Corp. since 1999, previously serving as engineering manager. His career has included five years with consulting engineers H. Wilden & Associates Inc., and nine years with precaster New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co. Inc.



Also at the Virginia Division, Jeff Lepard, P.E., has been promoted to engineering manager. Lepard has served at Tindall for more than seven years, previously as a project engineer. His extensive precast experience also includes a decade with a Pennsylvania precast company.



Phillip J. Iverson, P.E., has been appointed to the position of general manager for the company's Georgia Division in Conley. A member of the precast industry for many years, Iverson comes to Tindall from Spancrete of Illinois Inc., where he most recently served as director of business development. His precast experience includes engineering, estimating and sales positions for other precast, prestressed concrete companies, as well as technical director of the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute for a number of years.



Tindall Corp. is a leader in the design and manufacture of precast, prestressed concrete framing systems for mixed-use, educational, commercial,

institutional, industrial and parking structures; modular products for the corrections industry; and utility products.

www.tindallcorp.com

Bonsal American realigns key leadership in response to growth

Bonsal American Inc. has added a new position to its leadership team and has promoted two other members to better handle growth.

Gil Seco has been promoted to senior vice president and

general manager of the construction products division, which includes products sold under the ProSpec brand.

Bill Ashton has been named chief operating officer of the dry mix division, which includes products sold under the Sakrete brand.

Andy Brinkmeier has been named vice president of business development, and Daniel Benigni has been promoted from regional controller to vice president of finance.

"The reorganization of our leadership team is key to positioning Bonsal American for continued growth and market leadership," said David Maske, president of Bonsal American, in a press release.

Bonsal American Inc. is one of the largest producers of packaged building material products in the United States, including cement mixes, concrete repair and restoration products and tile setting products.

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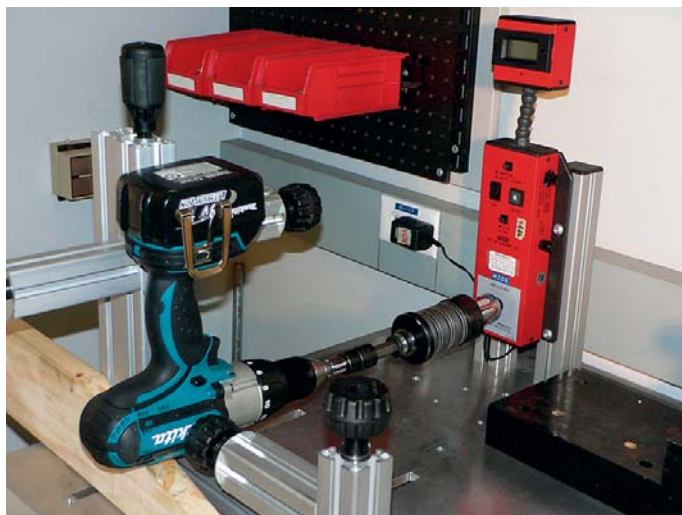
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Makita to adopt new torque testing method

Makita U.S.A. Inc., manufacturer of industrial power tools and accessories and member of the Power Tool Institute, will adopt the new PTI Torque Procedure to measure torque in cordless drills, including driver-drills and hammer driver-drills in driver-drill mode. The new test method, agreed upon by all major power tool companies in the Power Tool Institute, is the industry's first standard for measuring torque in drills.

Prior to PTI's new standard, power tool manufacturers conducted their own torque measurement in-house or with third-party testing labs. The torque numbers were not useful

for comparison since the testing hardware and methodologies were not standard. PTI membership worked together to create a new standard.

www.powertoolinstitute.com

www.makita.com

Blastrac Global gets bigger in Oklahoma

Blastrac Global has announced an expansion and investment in its Oklahoma City manufacturing facility.

As part of the expansion, the company has added two CNC machining centers, a roll press, cranes, and high definition CNC plasma equipment. "By moving key, high quality components in-house, we've increased control of the supply chain and costs," said Mark Haworth, vice president and general manager, in a press release.

In the wake of so much global demand for Blastrac's complete line of products, the Oklahoma City expansion will help move top products to the lowest manufacturing point.

As part of Blastrac's restructuring, Jonn Rippman, currently the national training manager, will add a new Inside Sales and Technical Support group, which will focus on taking care of the customer.

Blastrac equipment is designed for surface preparation of concrete, steel, brick, stone, asphalt and other substrates.

www.blastrac.com

HUD study involves concrete wall systems

A new study released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development shows builders how to improve the durability and energy efficiency of their homes by combining structural insulated panel (SIP) roof systems and concrete wall systems. The connection details and engineering provided in the study give builders a reliable and consistent method for connecting the two systems in one- and two-family dwellings.

The connection systems outlined in "The Prescriptive Method for Connecting Structural Insulated Panel Roofs to Concrete Wall Systems" fulfill the need for standardized connection systems between two increasingly popular materials for residential construction. In most cases, the new prescriptive guidelines will reduce the need for additional engineering during the design phase of projects using the two systems.

The method covers all types of concrete wall systems, including insulating concrete forms, concrete masonry, removable form systems, precast wall panels, and autoclaved aerated concrete products.

www.cement.org

www.sips.org

L. M. Scofield Co. publishes white papers on sustainable construction and decorative concrete

The L. M. Scofield Co. has published the first two in a series of white papers on sustainable construction and decorative concrete.


This new series of white papers will have a focus on environmental stewardship.

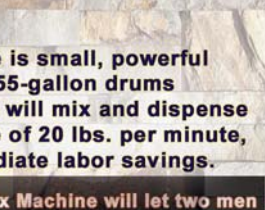
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The first Scofield Report, titled “How Concrete Contributes to Today’s Green Designs,” provides an overview of the green building movement, discusses concrete’s environmental impact, describes how sustainability is documented, explains why achieving certification is important, and details how concrete earns green points in a building or hardscape project.

The second Report, titled “Design and Construction of Pervious Concrete Pavement,” provides an overview of pervious concrete, describes the benefits of pervious concrete, explains pervious concrete’s green value, discusses design, maintenance and construction methods, and provides information on adding color and texture to pervious projects.

www.scofield.com

New location, employee for Hardware Wholesale

Marilynn O’Connor has joined the Hardware Wholesale team, and will be running the company’s new location in Aberdeen, Wash.

O’Connor has 15 years of experience in the concrete industry. The new location will serve all of the Grays Harbor area as well as parts of Lewis, Pacific, Mason and Thurston counties.

www.hardwarewholesale.net



The completed exterior restoration of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City.



From left: Speakers Paul Schwartzbaum, Amanda Thomas-Trienens and Pasquale Zaffaroni, with the Guggenheim’s interim director, Marc Steglitz.

Mapei hosts event at Guggenheim Museum

Mapei, a global manufacturer of concrete restoration products and flooring installation systems, recently hosted an event at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City to celebrate the completion of the building’s exterior restoration. Mapei products were used in the repair and coating of the spiraling concrete exostructure of the famous Frank Lloyd Wright building.

“Helping to conserve the history of an architectural icon like the Guggenheim is tremendously rewarding, and we are delighted that Mapei’s concrete restoration systems were selected for this restoration,” said Rainer Blair, president and CEO of Mapei Americas, in a press release.

At the event, it was also announced that the Mapei Group will be providing the funds to restore the two facades of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice next year.

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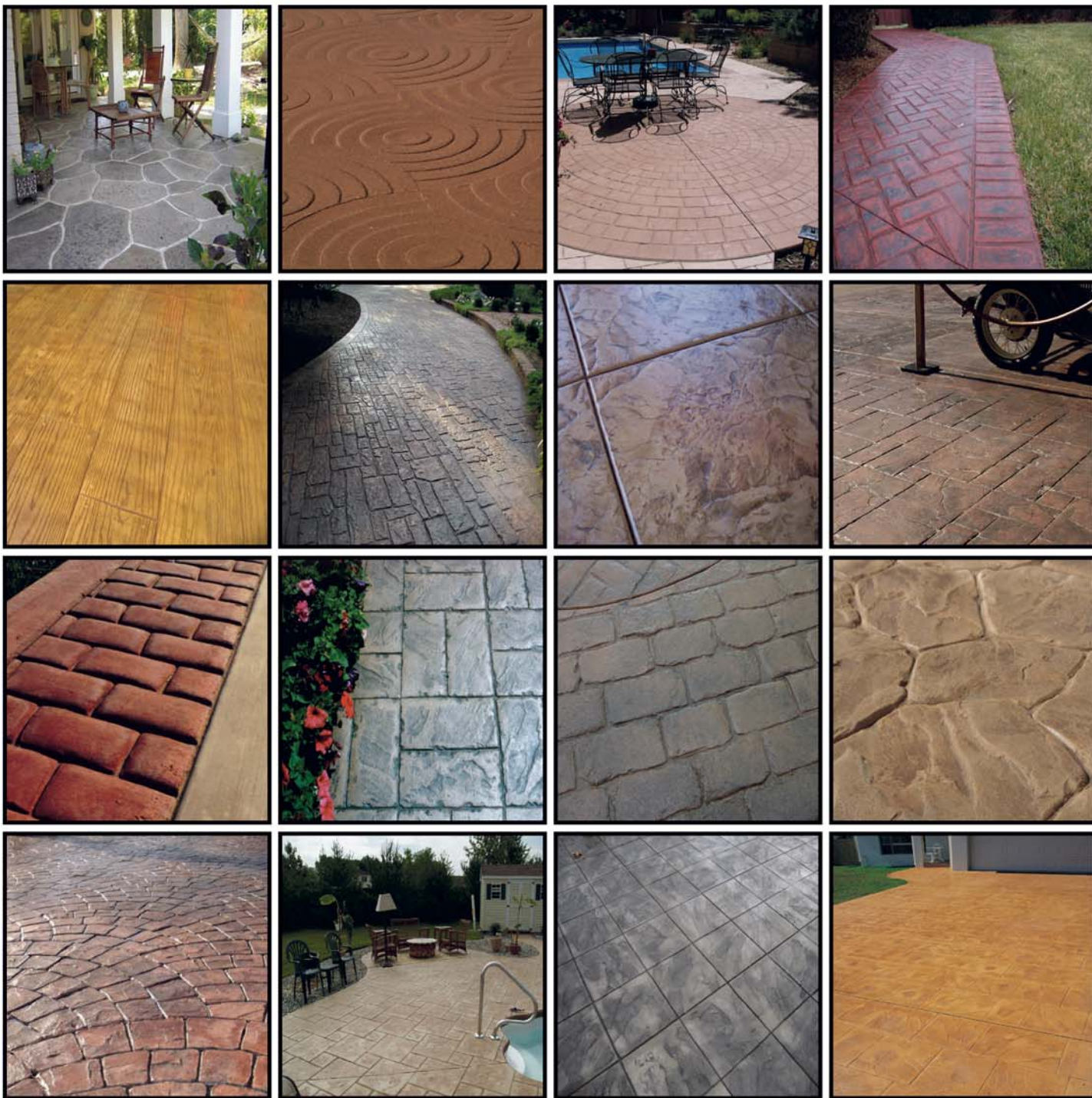
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Concrete impresses guests at dog resort

Decorative concrete is going to the dogs. Or at least that's the impression visitors are getting at Paws by the Lake, a pet boarding facility that opened recently in Avon Lake, Ohio.

Paws owner and licensed veterinarian Jim Haddad hired decorative concrete contractor BodyTek Coatings Group of Valparaiso, Ind., to finish floors indoors and out at the 30,000-square-foot building. The results have given everybody involved something to woof about.

BodyTek used a number of products from Crown Polymers LLC on the job, which included decking out two wings with Bourbon Street and Spanish villa themes.



Photos courtesy of Crown Polymers LLC

Why decorative concrete? First and foremost, because concrete coated with polyurea and epoxy is easy to clean, a big plus at a high-end resort where guests poop on the floor. "Cleanability was a big driving force," says BodyTek sales representative Mark Elijah. His company has installed wall and floor systems at veterinary facilities

throughout the Midwest, he says, which helped it land the Paws by the Lake job.

The color scheme for the building features tans, browns and beiges, says Crown Polymers technical director Floyd Dimmick. The scheme was chosen to help Paws staff with housekeeping and maintenance. "Dirt doesn't show as much," he says. "Also, you can put bright colors on them and they contrast well."

Interior floors at the resort were treated with three different overlays, Dimmick reports. About 11,000 square feet of floor area was overlayed with CrownFlake epoxy and CrownHybrid vinyl flakes. Roughly 700 square feet — the Spanish villa wing — was given a cementitious overlay with a Mediterranean stencil and Venetian pink wash, while in the Bourbon Street area, BodyTek installed a cementitious herringbone brick system. CrownPro 4 clear polyurea was used as a topcoat throughout the building.

The systems that were installed don't absorb moisture or fatty acids, Dimmick notes, which means dog urine washes right off. What's more, each floor



overlay provides a slip-resistant surface profile that's safe for walking.

To hide and protect concrete blocks on the back walls of the kennel, BodyTek sprayed its own TEK Crete to create a textured surface, then applied CrownCote, a two-component Sand Beige epoxy wall coating.

Outside, dogs take dips in three bone-shaped pools, each 8 feet long by 5 feet wide. The concrete pool surfaces were coated with CrownCote white epoxy and CrownCote 6, a polyaspartic wall coating that is UV-resistant. White sand was broadcast into the wet topcoat to suggest the color of bone.

The walking decks surrounding the doggie pools were topped with green CrownQuartz epoxy and pigmented aggregates to help them blend with surrounding field turf. They were then topcoated with UV-resistant CrownPro 4 clear polyurea.




As extra protection against waste matter, wash water, mold and bacteria in some parts of the building, workers turned to CrownCove, a precast polymer wall-to-floor coving system. When the CrownHybrid system was installed vertically on top of CrownCove, the results looked seamless.

The ritzy floors and walls complement the other flashy features of Paws by the Lake. The building is wired with Web cams that allow owners to communicate with pets. Other pet-pampering options at the resort include minisofas for dogs, televisions tuned to Animal Planet, and a menu from which pet owners can order "room service." 🐾

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Surviving the Game

Some time ago I had a chance to hear football coach Dennis Erickson speak at a local school's athletic fundraiser. I apologize if you have heard this story before, because it is worth repeating. At this time, Dennis had won several national championships in college football and was in transition to coach in the NFL. He was discussing how the game of football had advanced to the point that every play, both offensively and defensively, was filmed and broken down for improvement. Even practices were filmed and examined to cross efficiency and talent. Playbooks looked like phone books, and the sport had reached a level of complexity never seen before. He opened up Q and A at the end of his talk, and I asked what it takes to win at this level. His answer was nothing short of amazing. He said the team that tackles and blocks the best will usually win. Think about that for a second. As complex as the game is, the team that does what Knute Rockne coached years ago will still win with the same basics.

I apologize in advance to my editor, because the rest of this article is not about advances in stains or colors. No new techniques in countertops or polished

floors here. We are going to talk about the Xs and Os of your business and what it will take for you to succeed, or should I say survive.

As I write this article, the Dow Jones Industrial Average has had its worst week since opening nearly 100 years ago. Rescue plans are being formulated in nearly every major country across the world in an attempt to shore up economies. Most of us in the construction industries are asking how this will affect us. I must be honest in saying that I'm not sure, but my gut tells me that as a response, the Dennis Erickson approach is best. This time and this economy will pass, and the home improvement and construction industry will continue to be a major part of this great country's economy.

Our industry, like football, has seen advancements. One visit to the World of Concrete conference will confirm this. But think about this for a second. Every job, whether in Texas or Dubai, has at least one thing in common. Finishing the job still comes down to a human and a shovel. As complex as our industry is, it still comes down to a tool that sits in every work truck across the globe. Something simple like a shovel. I use this analogy only to prove to you that no matter how complex it seems in this age for you and your business to survive, it really is not. If you follow the same fundamentals in today's market



by Doug Carlton

that built your business, you will come through the other side.

I'm not saying that some of us might not have to supplement our incomes with part-time work. We may very well have to stack boxes or load trucks to bring in extra income until the market improves.

What's more, no longer can decorative concrete be simply an option. It must be the most affordable option. "Back to the basics" will make you look over every aspect of a decorative job to find ways to be more efficient and profitable. "Back to the basics" may require you to rent a piece of equipment instead of buying on credit. It may mean calling the contractor in the next town and asking to rent a set of stamp tools for a pattern you don't own. The contractor in the next town will probably enjoy the extra income and you will enjoy the work. Every aspect of the job needs to be carefully examined to see what will create the most profit WITHOUT jeopardizing the quality of work. This is a completely different mindset from what we experienced just a short time ago. It's not about hurrying to finish so you can get to the next job. It's all about squeezing every ounce of profit from every aspect of the job. It's about a man and a shovel. You must create an affordable option for whichever decorative type you specialize in.

I recommend a big move into the maintenance side of our business, because folks will want to protect their decorative investments. Maintenance is high in profit and low in material costs. Please don't underestimate the situation here, fellas, because many areas of the country are forecasting a halt in the new construction industry over the next year. Preparing for this type of slowdown will not hurt and will only increase profit if your local economy stays strong.

These same principles apply not only to contractors but also to every facet of this industry. Manufacturers must help to make contractors aware of products or methods that will assist the bottom line. Suppliers need to move inventory to relieve swollen lines of credit and must pass products to

contractors at a discount. They must let local contractors know about excess inventory and about discounts that are available. We are all in this industry together, and together we will continue to advance and prosper in it. It's not gloom and doom, but duck and protect.

One last thing about your business: The fate of your business is not in the hands of a rescue plan or program.

It is entirely in the hands of the hard work and dedication that you and your family used to build it to this point. Most contractors are struggling with the same things you are, and that has little to do with talent or quality of work. Remember, back to the basics. 🛠️

Doug Carlton operates Doug Carlton Concrete in Visalia, Calif. He can be reached at carltondoug@comcast.net.

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Pricing a Polished Concrete Job

Pricing a polished concrete job is hardly cut and dried. There are many things to consider. There are more obvious factors, such as labor, fuel (diesel will probably be your largest expense next to labor), tooling, and travel expenses. There are also various factors about the floor itself that must be considered. You don't usually want to price the job by the square footage, but rather by the job.



by John Abrahamson

One of the most difficult (if not the most difficult) problems in the industry is edge work. Anyone who has done any concrete polishing will tell you that there is still no good solution for edges. Oftentimes, the edge work will end up being done by hand, and it is an art in itself to learn to blend the edges in with the rest of the floor. Many contractors won't take jobs with relatively small amounts of square footage if there will be a great deal of edge work. You definitely want to take into consideration the amount of time you will spend doing edges in relation to the square footage of the job. Also, make sure the customer understands the nature of the beast with edges, their impact on price, and what to expect as far as aesthetics. Installing epoxy on the edges is often a great alternative to polishing them, but even with epoxy,

you will still have to do some light grinding on the edges and prep them.

Most existing concrete has been abused. Chips will not go away entirely unless you grind away a great deal of concrete at a great deal of expense. Concrete in poor condition will require more labor and will have more flaws. Concrete in poor condition will also be rough on your tools. These flaws won't necessarily look bad. They are what I consider to be part of the natural element in concrete, like the natural elements in a slab of marble or granite. However, the customer needs to know exactly what to expect, and you can't price these jobs too low.

The waviness of the concrete will very much affect the ease of polishing and the outcome of your job. Wavy concrete floors are nothing rare. Some spots will be hard to reach, and your floor will require more work to be finished and will still not have an even look at the end. Unless you have a controlled pour, let the customer know that aggregate will vary a great deal throughout the floor. Expect to see large aggregate pieces in the joints and high spots and smaller aggregate in the rest of the floor. Make sure the customer understands this before you agree to do the job. The higher your high spots, and the more you need to grind them down, the larger the visible aggregate will be in those areas. Steer away from dealing with exposed aggregate on wavy floors.

Laser-leveled concrete is much easier to polish. You can charge less for

stenciled decorative concrete



Stenciled concrete utilizes rolls of heavy paper, called *Stencils*, which are pre-cut into patterns of stone, brick, or tile. Stencils are designed with an overlapping, repeating pattern, much like wallpaper, and are laid out in strips covering the freshly poured concrete.

The coloring agents are typically *Color Hardeners*, a mixture of sand, pigments and Portland cement. This coloring agent is cast over the slab in powder form, then floated into the wet cement, creating a much harder surface than normal concrete.

Texture is applied, typically with a *Texture Roller*, along with a *Release Agent* for contrasting color. Once the concrete has dried the paper stencil is pulled out, revealing a grouted stone appearance.

Advantages of Stencil

Stenciled concrete creates a more uniform and level surface, with greater control over drainage and slope, without sacrificing the natural beauty of stone, tile or brick. This flatter surface is a better choice for high-traffic areas.

The uniform surface is less prone to drainage issues or delamination from freeze/thaw cycles, and is less problematic with snow removal equipment.

Using broadcast coloring techniques, stencils allow the installation of differently colored borders and accent pieces without the need for separate forms. It also eliminates the need to purchase expensive stamp patterns for what might be a one-time use installation.

Stenciled concrete is also one of the speediest methods of installing decorative concrete, allowing the contractor to cover up to 90 sq.ft. per row of stencil.

Versatility of Stencil

Stenciled concrete is often combined with acid stain to achieve even greater color depth and detail. Once the surface has been cleaned, but before it's sealed, take a small brush and apply one or more colors of stain to individual tiles. It's an easy way to make your concrete look more sophisticated.

Stenciling also works great for many types of coatings, including flat and

vertical applications. Some overlayment techniques require one to build out their surface anywhere from 1/2" to 1" or more. But stencils only require a 1/8" base coat and a 1/8" color coat. Stenciled overlay uses less than half the material of other methods! This is enough material to accept a light texture, and gives you the same choices of colorants and patterns as the stenciling for cast-in-place.



Stenciled concrete is often combined with acid stain to achieve even greater color depth and detail.



Stenciled concrete allows differently colored borders or accent pieces without the need for a separate form



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these floors. Most of the new concrete poured for industrial or commercial use now is laser-leveled. It is in renovation work that you are more likely to run into wavy floors.

Some of the concrete floors poured now are also power-troweled to the point of being overtroweled for polished concrete. Some concrete is so overtroweled that it is almost burned, and it is either extremely difficult to polish or cannot be polished. Make sure you don't make a commitment to polish a floor that cannot be polished.

When VCT (vinyl composite tile) is taken up, it often leaves ghost lines. These lines may not go away. Your customer will need to be aware of this ahead of time.

Soft concrete will cost you more to polish than hard concrete. You should perform a hardness test before pricing any job. Soft concrete will require hard metal-bond diamond tooling. That tooling will still wear out faster, so you'll go through more of it — in some cases, a great deal more of it. This holds true for your metal-bond and your resin-bond diamond tooling, adding cost to your job.

If your customer is requesting an exposed aggregate floor, make sure they understand the aggregate will not be evenly exposed. What already lies within the concrete, as it lies there, will be exposed. Also make sure you charge considerably more, as more labor and tooling will be required. If the concrete floor is uneven or wavy, this will become even more of an issue. If it were me, I'd have a customer sign off on such work. In today's environment, it is wise to make sure that everyone is on the same page. You don't want to end up in a lawsuit over unrealistic expectations. It's always better to underpromise and overperform.

Take into consideration dust as well as possible labor expenses for cleaning. Whether a vacuum system can make concrete grinding and polishing 99 percent dust-free is questionable. There will be dust, and quite a bit of it. In a setting such as an airport, retail store, or anywhere else where the public will encounter the dust, you must make sure you minimize this issue. You may have to clean at the end of every day. Understand that the last thing the end user needs is a lawsuit, not to mention the appearance of a very dusty environment. Also make sure your employees have dust masks available to them. Concrete dust can cause silicosis.

These are all good things to keep in mind while you are pricing your first concrete polishing jobs. You will get better and better at it as you gain experience. Just as it is true that concrete polishing is an art that has to be learned with experience, pricing a polished concrete job is also an art that is learned with experience. 🛠️

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. John can be contacted at john_abe@comcast.net.

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A Look Inside Green Buildings



Photo courtesy of CSolutions

Three colors of Lithochrome Tintura Stain, an environmentally friendly water-based stain from L.M. Scofield Co., were used at Holy Innocents' Episcopal School in Georgia.

Are you asking why green matters? To answer that question, this article takes a look at the benefits that are encouraging property owners and designers to choose finished concrete floors instead of other floor coverings.



by Sherry Boyd

Going green saves the green

According to the U.S. Green Building Council, the fastest growing sector in green building is schools and universities. The demand for green schools is being driven by the

climate crisis and the high cost of energy. A green school is typically designed to produce an annual operational cost savings of \$100,000, but the net construction cost of building a green school is most often comparable to conventional building, or very minimally higher. The Web site Buildgreenschools.org reports that in addition to saving facility management and maintenance costs, creating a healthy indoor environment has been proven to reduce respiratory illnesses and absenteeism for students, teachers and school workers.

When Sherwood School District in Oregon hired Dull Olson Weekes Architects Inc. to expand a high school by remodeling the old building and designing a modern addition, the architects specified polished and



Photo courtesy of Kasian Architecture Interior Design and Planning Ltd.

The University of Calgary Child Development Centre is the largest LEED Platinum building in Canada. The LEED Platinum certification is the highest level of LEED certification for environmental sustainability.

colored concrete throughout the facility: in the lobby, entries, classrooms, corridors, commons areas, cafeteria, media rooms and every other feasible location. "During refurbishment old vinyl and carpet were removed to eliminate materials that outgas," says the firm's president, Norm Dull, AIA. "Several reasons were considered. Industrial-strength carpet cleaners and the treatments used in stripping and refurbishing vinyl contain noxious materials harmful to construction workers as well as maintenance crews and building occupants. Floor coverings wear out and require replacement in time, but concrete will last for the life of the building and provide an excellent life cycle cost.


"Our firm specializes in LEED projects, and we enjoy the challenges of designing buildings that are cost- and energy-efficient to reduce the use of natural resources and provide a healthy learning environment," he continues. "Indoor air quality is a very high priority for the Sherwood School District, and polished concrete is a good environmental choice. It also meets our criteria for appearance. We specified three colors in graphic block patterns, plus the light natural concrete color."

Healthy buildings attract health-conscious tenants

The University of Calgary hired Kasian Architecture Interior Design and Planning to design a new four-story, 125,000-square-foot building with a child-care facility, clinic and offices for the Calgary Health Region. The design firm addressed LEED criteria by specifying light-colored polished concrete on the ground floor to increase reflectivity 30 percent in order to reduce lighting costs. They selected durable, abrasion-resistant RetroPlate to create high-performance floors

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with minimal maintenance for the Child Development Center and open-space public areas for events. This contributed to indoor environmental quality by eliminating the need for harsh chemicals and high-pH detergents, because the RetroPlate floor is easy to clean with only damp mopping. Appropriate for a facility dedicated to the well-being of children, the building achieved the

highest LEED level of recognition, LEED Platinum, providing a high-profile symbol of the university's commitment to sustainability.

Selling decorative concrete as a green alternative

A growing number of concrete contractors are addressing the demand for green building by developing

their own educational programs to show architects and interior designers the ways concrete can be finished to provide a healthy building environment with good indoor air quality and low maintenance costs. Some contractors are promoting mixes that contain recycled materials, slag or fly ash that substitute for cement. Some have developed their own proprietary finishes for green building.

For example, Scott Truax of Middle Georgia Concrete Constructors Inc. and CSolutions says: "We do two to three lunchtime presentations per month promoting architectural concrete solutions, specifically surface-seeded concrete flooring. I have just recently been seeking out projects where terrazzo is specified and reached out to the designers to introduce them to our product line and educate them on the value it offers. We have taken it a step further and branded our finishes: Seascapes, Prism, Elements, and Reflections."

The surface-seeded concrete flooring systems are 100 percent custom to each project. "We spend a considerable amount of time and money on sampling," Truax says. "Our new office building that is currently under construction will include a 1,000-square-foot laboratory to accommodate the demand for samples." Clients can see numerous examples of combinations of colored aggregates and glass on display in the CSolutions showroom. The company also produces samples specific to each job.

Why decorative concrete floors?

Concrete provides a healthy alternative to floor coverings because it contains no organic materials that can mold or mildew to contribute to sick building syndrome. Eliminating carpets that can harbor animal dander and dust mites is a good choice for people with asthma or allergies. Synthetic materials such as vinyl, carpet and composite woods outgas, even though low-emitting choices are available. The padding, adhesives and cleaning products associated with floor coverings are often noxious. Concrete has no harmful emissions

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and is produced from plentiful materials. Therefore, concrete offers an environmentally sound, safe, cost-competitive and durable flooring alternative for schools, universities, hospitals, recreation facilities, child-care centers and any place where healthy air quality is the top priority.

Versatility and durability

As an added attraction, decorative concrete offers a wide range of creative choices and colors. Using environmentally sound stains and sealers that have been introduced in the last few years, a skilled applicator can create an almost infinite number of looks, ranging from vivid, brightly colored graphics to earth-toned hues with subtle variations. Even stenciled graphics can be added. Grinding and polishing colored or uncolored concrete can produce a monochromatic appearance that can rival terrazzo and granite when enhanced with aggregates and glass during construction. The long-term durability of polished concrete has been tested and proven in shopping centers and big-box retail locations. Contractors can combine all of the above creatively to produce floors that meet the demands for green building beautifully.

Is green building a fad?

I asked Keith Parker, an architect who is studying to become a LEED Accredited Professional, whether green building is a fad or the direction of the future. "LEED certification is certainly not a fad," he replied. "On the

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contrary, in the commercial sector, it is quickly becoming the norm. Most new commercial construction is LEED precertified, and by the end of the lease for most of our commercial interior clients, basic LEED certification will be commonplace and affordable. Additionally, several current requirements to obtain LEED certification are already transitioning to legislation. As additional LEED-certified requirements are implemented, the construction industry will see mandates become routine."

At Acquilano Leslie Inc., Parker tells clients interested in following LEED criteria to expect a 2 percent to 3 percent increase in initial construction costs, including soft costs. "However, the gain from these upfront costs results in, among other things, lower operating expenses and improved indoor air quality, which directly affects increased productivity and decreased absenteeism," he says. "Ultimately, green building results in a better workplace which, in today's environmentally conscious society, helps to attract employees who are aware of terms like 'carbon footprint' and 'good corporate citizenship.'"

Sherry Boyd of Boydworks Marketing provides public relations and advertising services for building-industry clients. A USGBC member and regular columnist for *Concrete Decor* and *ConcreteNetwork.com*, she gained knowledge of the decorative concrete market from eight years as head of marketing for a leading manufacturer of concrete coloring materials.

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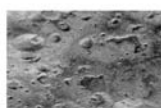
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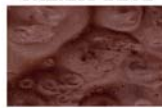
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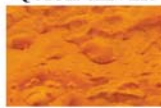
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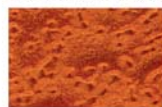
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■ ■ ■ Trowel and Error



Photo by Chris Sullivan

White discoloration is caused when a sealer is applied in temperatures that are too cold.

When Cold Temperatures Affect Sealers

I received a call last week from someone asking why the sealer that had been applied on their stamped concrete a few days earlier was white, powdery, and rubbed off when they wiped their hand across the surface.

I proceeded to ask the standard four questions I use when dealing with any decorative sealer issue:

- What type of sealer was used?
- How was it applied?
- When was it applied?
- What were the environmental conditions (temperature, wind, sun, etc.) when it was applied?

Answers to these four questions



by Chris Sullivan

are critical to understanding why the problem occurred, but better yet, they provide a road map to a fix. In this case it was a water-based acrylic sealer somewhere in the 25-percent solids range. It was applied with a 1/2-inch nap roller in the late afternoon. The temperature was 40 F (8 C), and dropped into the mid-to-low 30s F (2 C) that night. The temperature never rose above 40 F (8 C) in the days after application. The white powder appeared the day after application and had progressively gotten worse.

While the reason the sealer turned white is pretty straightforward, and has everything to do with cold temperatures, let's take a closer look at why.

As we transition from fall to winter, the days get shorter, the leaves fall into the concrete we are trying to finish,

and the temperatures start dropping. The concrete blankets come out and cold-weather concrete practices start to take place. The changes in how concrete is placed should also trigger changes in how sealers are applied. In some areas (mainly northern climates) the onset of cold weather means the ability to seal exterior decorative concrete is greatly reduced, or in some cases totally comes to an end, until the ground defrosts, the snow melts and temperatures rise — think next spring. I personally encourage all applicators that place concrete after October 15 in a hard freeze-thaw climate to postpone sealing their concrete work until the following spring.

Both air and surface temperatures play a role in proper curing when applying sealers in both cold and hot weather, but surface temperature is typically more critical. After application, sealers undergo a chemical reaction that causes them to cure and form a film. Temperature plays a critical role in how fast or even whether this reaction occurs.

The best temperature range for applying sealers is 50 F to 90 F. Temperature can be influenced greatly by sun, wind, and time of day the sealer is applied. This is why monitoring weather conditions and looking at a thermometer should be mandatory before every sealer application. Other factors to consider when sealing in cold-weather conditions are humidity, dew point and whether the temperature is rising or falling. As with most anything in nature, cold temperatures slow things down, sealer cure time included. As the temperature gets closer to the 50 F minimum, the time needed to properly cure increases. Also keep in mind that as humidity (moisture content in the air) increases, it will cause a cooling effect on the surface, similar to how sweat works to cool our skin. Wind blowing across the surface also affects how sealers cure. This is known as the wind-chill factor, and sealers feel the effects of cold air blowing across them as they cure, just like we do.

Drop below the minimum temperature on a surface, and you run the risk that the sealer will never cure.

Every sealer has a minimum film-forming temperature (MFFT). This is the minimum temperature needed for the sealer to properly form its film, cure, and get hard. For most sealers, this temperature is around 45 F. To be safe, most sealer manufacturers specify 50 F to provide a buffer zone. If the temperature is at or slightly below the MFFT, the chemistry of the sealer is affected, the reaction slows

down, and you get partial to no film development. Bottom line: The sealer is weak and will not hold up very long. If the temperature is really cold, film development stops altogether and all you are left with is a white powder on the surface after the carrier (solvent or water) evaporates.

In the case outlined at the start of this article, the temperature never rose above minimum film-forming



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temperature, and all that was left on the concrete surface was the acrylic resin once the carrier (water) evaporated. Classic signs that a sealer did not cure properly due to cold temperatures (and not achieving MFFT) include white powdery residue, similar to powdered sugar, remaining on the surface. This white residue is very easy to remove, and in most cases can actually be removed by scratching a fingernail across the surface. Another common indication of temperature-related sealer failure is when white residue occurs near or in cracks, joints or saw cuts. Remember that water can and will reduce the temperature of concrete. Cracks and saw cuts will hold water, even when the rest of the surface is dry. The water in the cracks and saw cuts will reduce the temperature in those areas, leading to low-temperature sealer failure, indicated by the white powdery scale and residue.

How to respond

The amount of sealer that gets applied is always critical, but it is even more critical when temperatures start dropping. Multiple thin coats are always better than one heavy coat. When temperatures are low, the more sealer on a concrete surface, the longer it takes to cure and the more time available for cold-weather issues to take place. Not that we want to rush the curing process, but when temperatures are cool, we do want to help the sealer cure as efficiently as possible.

Now that we understand why and how these cold-weather sealer issues occur, the logical next question is how to fix them if they happen to you. Since the sealer film never developed due to cold temperatures, there really is no sealer to fix. The good news is that in most cases, the white residue is easily removed with a stiff broom or walk-behind scrubber with a medium pad. If the surface is only exhibiting cold-temperature issues in certain places, spot-treating those areas by removing the white residue and resealing when the temperature is warm enough is a common fix. As a last resort, a chemical stripper or solvent may be needed if scrubbing does not remove the damaged sealer.

When the temperatures start dropping, taking the time to understand the cold-weather limitations of the sealer you are using will save you time, money and headaches. When sealing exterior in the fall, winter and spring, pay attention to what the weather is doing, not just on the day you are sealing, but three to five days after you seal too. 📱

Chris Sullivan is national sales manager for QC Construction Products. He has presented seminars and product demonstrations throughout North and South America, including at the World of Concrete convention. Sullivan is a member of National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA), American Institute of Architects (AIA), American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), American Society of Concrete Contractors (ASCC), and is certified with the American Concrete Institute (ACI). He currently resides in Denver, Colo., with his wife and three children. Contact him with technical questions or issues at trowelanderror@concretedecor.com.

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Collaborating on Great Countertop Design

Great concrete countertop design exists first in the designer's creative mind. It comes to life through the work of many contractors, fabricators and artisans. The process can be synergistic, with all concerned adding their own expertises, making the final result better than the original thought that existed in the designer's mind.

The process can, however, be negative when those involved work against each other toward separate goals. To avoid pitfalls in working with a designer, the concrete countertop artisan might consider a few suggestions.



by MaryJo Camp

Start the conversation early

Take the initiative to meet with the designer, without the client present, as early as possible in the design phase. This meeting is critical to build trust between the designer and the artisan.

Learn enough about the plan to understand the role the countertop plays in the overall design. Is it the intent of the designer and homeowner to have the countertop as the focal point or an elegant

backdrop to another interesting detail?

Educate the designer on the overall performance of the product — discuss the positive and negative attributes. Concrete counters are a relatively new solution, and designers depend on the fabricator's knowledge to make informed choices with their clients.

Inform the designer of your production procedure. Whether the countertop is a standard production piece or a custom creation, let the designer know the process, timeline and up-charge in advance. For example, if you will make a custom color, but require a signed custom sample to be made, provide a time frame for this process that the designer can depend on.

If there is a distinguishing quality of your work, this must be demonstrated to the designer. Whatever your distinctive competency, the designer must understand what makes you the best choice for the client. Since uniqueness is a key reason for installing concrete, demonstrating how unique you can be is a major asset.

Making headway

As the project progresses, options and details become very important.

Working together at this stage is critical for a successful solution.

When the designer is planning an application that is not buildable or will not stand the test of time, it is incumbent on you to educate him or her. Offering other solutions that will endure is a great way to show expertise and keep the designer as a client for life.

If you have standard colors, edge treatments and so on that you are comfortable with using time and again, have those samples readily available for the designer to use while developing an overall design concept. Consider developing a sample kit for the designer to have in his or her studio.

When inlays are to be included in a countertop, make sure it is clear to all parties who will provide the inlays and where they will be positioned. A preview layout with positioning that has been approved by everyone can save much anxiety and disagreement later.

If a problem arises with the production or installation of the countertop, speak with the designer and together determine the options that should be presented to the client. A noncontentious resolution is best for everyone.

When you and your team are on the job site, make sure that you protect the designer's reputation. You never know who can be listening in.

Following up

Continue to communicate after the project is completed. A debriefing at the conclusion of a project can be valuable to both designer and artisan.

Have a conversation about what worked and what could be improved upon in the project. Talk about the countertop itself and about how the procedure worked for all parties — designer, artisan and client. Here is a good time to reiterate your uniqueness and how it can be utilized in future jobs.

Keep in touch with the designers you want to work with again. As you develop new colors and techniques, make samples. Keep the designer's sample kit up to date.

If the project is one that you are particularly proud of, offer to pay a portion of the photographer's fee if a professional is called in to take pictures. Ask for copies to use for promotion of your business. Share these pictures with other designers to encourage more work with the design trade.

When you find a designer who understands your work and is easy to work with, refer him or her to any contractors or clients who might be in need of a designer's talents. The more you network with compatible professionals, the easier your jobs become.

Two sides to every design

Like any relationship, a professional one cannot be one-sided. The design professional also has a responsibility to work well with the artisan. Communication is the key to any collaborative effort. When you understand the priorities of the designer

for a particular space, you can use your expertise to maximize your work's effect on the design. If the designer understands your capabilities and the restrictions of the material, the design will be enhanced.

Great design starts in the creative mind of the designer but doesn't really exist until the project is built. The designer depends on artisans to build the vision. A fabricator brings special talents to the project. With communication and mutual respect, those talents become the cornerstone of great design. 📱

MaryJo Camp, CKD, CBD, CID, is vice president of marketing for Standards of Excellence, Westar and Florida Builder Appliances, appliance and decorative plumbing suppliers to the building trades and their clients. She is a certified kitchen, bathroom and interior designer and can be reached at (415) 585-6017 or mjcamp@soesupply.com.

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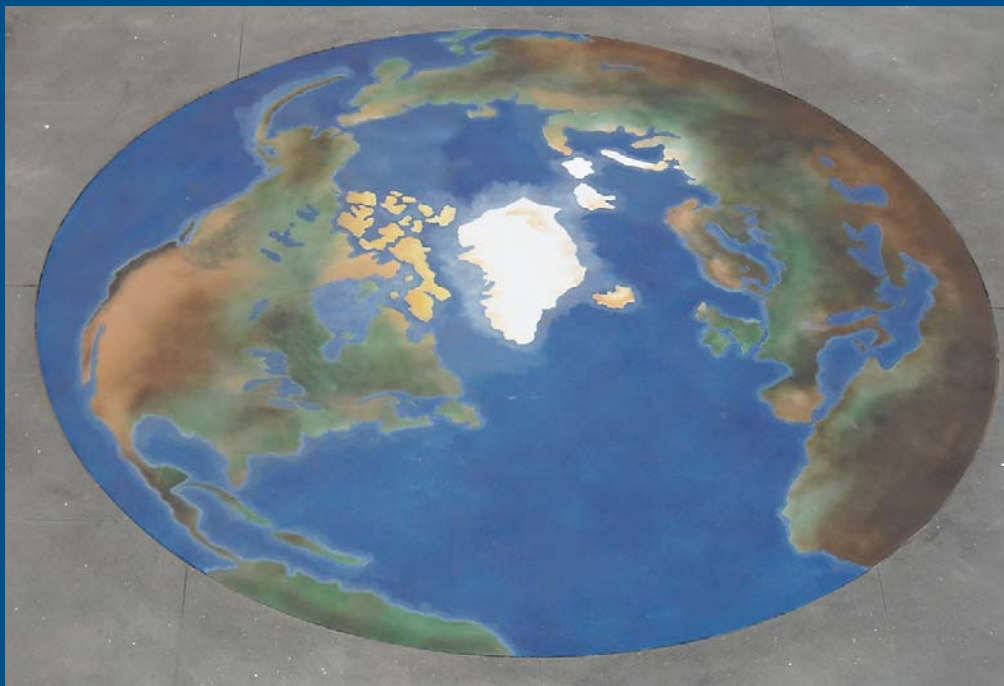


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by David Searls

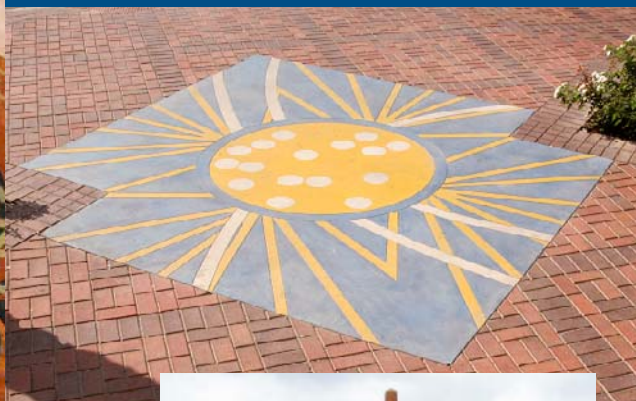
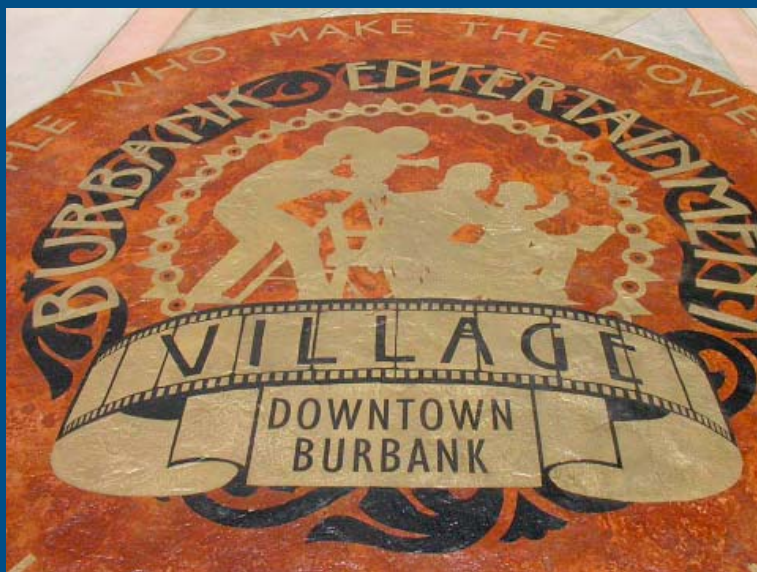
Houses with multimillion-dollar price tags and generous budgets for architectural concrete flatwork just aren't popping up as much as they used to, even in Southern California. Fortunately, that realization hit the decision-makers at PBC Companies sooner than it did a lot of the nation's leading economists.

"We used to be about 80 percent involved in high-end residential, but we started slowly shifting our emphasis to commercial clients as early as 2000," says Bill Larson, director of quality assurance and field development for PBC, one of the largest regional decorative concrete subcontractors in the country. "As a result,

we've got 80 foremen at work today, while our residential competitors have two or three."

With some 700 total employees and four offices in Southern California, PBC covers a territory anchored by Ventura County to the north and the Mexican border to the south. Recently, the company added an office in the Phoenix area at the invitation of a landscaping firm that is a satisfied customer.

At every location, PBC offers a portfolio of services in architectural concrete, masonry and interlocking pavers. "We can run all three trades at each site, and we usually handle at least two out of three wherever we go," says Larson.



That wasn't always true. PBC, which also does business as Peterson Brothers Construction, was an all-concrete contractor for its first decade in business. It was founded in 1983 by brothers Elden and Kerry Peterson, both of whom still hold top management positions. "We'd do exterior flatwork for (luxury home) models, and that was a good deal of our business until 1994, when we started working with interlocking pavers," says Larson. "That look had been very popular in northern California, and we wanted to introduce it down here."

It was also during this time that PBC began to offer masonry. Today, a full complement of services is available to a client base that includes shopping centers, luxury

hotels, multiunit apartment complexes, high-end housing developments, corporate campuses, retail centers and even a couple of well-known theme parks.

But the company's emphasis is still on stamping, staining, polishing, pervious concrete and other decorative concrete specialties. "That's 50 to 60 percent of the work we do," says Larson, who explains that the company doesn't have as much competition in decorative concrete as it does in masonry and pavers. "There just aren't as many people doing it, and that's a good thing for us."

Teaching quality

PBC places such an emphasis on

craftsmanship — its competitive edge — that it launched a sort of university of quality construction 12 years ago. One of Larson's principal responsibilities is to teach. He heads up "about 99 percent of the classes," he says. He uses formal classrooms, PowerPoint presentation materials and white boards, and his students are motivated. "They'll ask me if they can study anything for the tests, and I tell them all they have to do is bring their construction I.Q. Either you've got it or you don't."

Larson runs a full curriculum of courses for his foremen, supervisors, laborers and apprentices. Subjects range from blueprint reading to job management. He offers certification programs in porch



and swimming pool construction and even teaches a course on defensive driving, a topic no doubt inspired by the challenges of living and working in a region of the country notorious for its widespread geography and congested freeway-based transportation system.

PBC has also taken an interest in training in green construction. The company has joined the United States Green Building Council and its employees are learning about recyclable building materials and sustainable, Earth-friendly construction techniques.

Take pervious concrete, for instance. The highly porous building material allows rainwater to soak through “like a sponge,” says Larson. “It penetrates to a rock subgrade and into the water table rather than running off to the ocean.”

The only drawback to pervious, says Larson, is that, in its natural, gray state, it “looks like crappy asphalt.” So PBC artisans have taken to brightening its appearance with unique coloring techniques and coating enhancements. Another “green” trick Larson and his students have picked up along the way is the use of white concrete for its light-

reflective quality. It doesn’t retain the sun’s heat like black concrete, potentially reducing summer energy costs, particularly in hot and perpetually sunny Arizona.

Luxury driveways

While PBC Companies has reconfigured its residential-to-commercial project mix over the last eight years, the home segment of the market has hardly been abandoned. The Rancho Santa Fe project is a San Diego development featuring 10-acre to 15-acre parcels. “More was spent on some of the driveways than most people can afford to



pay for their entire homes,” Larson says.

So what do you get for a \$200,000 driveway? Interlocking pavers. A lot of pavers. “Some of those driveways are more like streets,” he says.

Another noteworthy example is the firm’s work at the exclusive Pelican Hill in Newport Beach. “We put in the sidewalks, wall caps in the public areas and the curbs and gutters,” says Larson.

Colored with an acid-washed stain, these curbs and gutters look a lot nicer than those on most streets. Which is what you’d expect in a development where one castle

currently available for sale comes with nine bedrooms, 20 bathrooms and a price tag of \$21,995,000. And it’s not even the most expensive property in the neighborhood.


Thinking ahead

So what does the future hold for PBC Companies? Larson thinks that the popularity of eco-friendly pervious concrete will grow over the next half decade, and that will, in turn, expand the need and opportunity for training.

This teacher would seem to have his work cut out for him for the next

several years.

“You can get all kinds of effects in staining pervious, because stain doesn’t cover like paint,” he says. “Every surface imperfection comes through. That can be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on the look you’re after. You have to remember to patch first what you don’t want to see once it’s stained. It’s a matter of knowing what you’re doing.”

 www.pbc-online.com

Project Profile



1013 Enslen Ave., Modesto, Calif.

Contractor: Flying Turtle Cast Concrete

by Christina Camara

Like an artist painting on a blank canvas, Mat Rogers of Flying Turtle Cast Concrete has created a showcase home that demonstrates his experience in design and his ability to use concrete in unexpected ways.

After two years of work, the spectacular result — his own home, at 1013 Enslen Ave. in Modesto, Calif. — is a two-floor, 4,400-square-foot showplace that cost about \$1.3 million to create over a 1,700-square-foot home that had been largely torn down. Decorative concrete plays a starring role indoors and out. It's featured not only in concrete floors, countertops, sinks and fireplace surrounds, but also in three tables

and the bed frame and end tables in the master bedroom.

"It was an opportunity to come full circle and integrate all the ideas and skills I had learned and honed with concrete over the last 10 years," Rogers says.

Rogers had worked as a design-build contractor for a dozen years prior to founding Modesto-based Flying Turtle. His aim at the Enslen house was to show that concrete could look modern, yet warm and inviting at the same time. Architects and designers who have toured the home don't even realize some of his creations are made of concrete, he says.



Photos by Matthew J. Visser



"The front view of the house is quite stunning," he says. "The color palette is subtle, and the combination of the stone, the stucco walls, and knotty cedar eaves give the steep stone buttress design a welcoming warmth."

Exterior concrete at the home includes an in-ground pool, large patio and outdoor shower. Three large second-story decks are outfitted with hand-forged metal rails. Integrated concrete planters and a floating bench can be found in the backyard. The pool deck was detailed without the use of rounded joint cutters. "We ended up with an effect of a smooth carpet," Rogers says. "We poured 2-foot strips of concrete, left the edge sharp and poured against that, infilled the grid and then went back with the saw blade. So it's not a deep cut — it's a more refined and smooth look."

Concrete throughout

Other features of the house incorporated decorative concrete as well.

Living room/dining room fireplace and coffee table:

The double fireplace was one of the most challenging projects in the entire house. The dining room side is an artistic mixture of concrete, walnut columns and glass panels. The living room side is simpler, with large square grids of concrete



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Photo by Matthew J. Visser



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surrounding a black frame around the firebox. Visitors can enjoy the fire and put their feet up on a glass-topped, cast-concrete coffee table, which was ground to reveal sand and fossils. The coffee table features two panels that appear to be falling away from each other in a V shape, connected by an antique chain embedded in the slabs.

Kitchen: The concrete island features a band of walnut color, which was made by leaning the mold and pouring black, then walnut brown, then more black concrete into it, letting it set up for about half hour between pours. Rogers says the three different layers gave him the depth of color he was looking for.

Once the slab came out of the mold, he used a diamond grinder to expose sand and add an extra layer of interest. Two inlaid fossils were glued into the mold at the color shift between brown and black.

The island appears to be floating, and it's one of the many "wow" attractions in the home.

Rogers also made a breakfast buffet table in a Frank Lloyd Wright style, integrating concrete and solid walnut planks.

Dining-room wet bar: Rogers says the bar was designed to be a bit playful. It's the only curve in the house. Behind the dark concrete countertop with integral sink are two large, convex concrete panels the color of burgundy wine, intended to suggest to visitors the feeling of looking into a barrel of wine. Three different coloring techniques were used — an integral color, an aniline dye and an acid stain — creating a

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Flying Turtle Cast Concrete installed decorative concrete upstairs and down, indoors and out, in its showcase home, even in the bathrooms.



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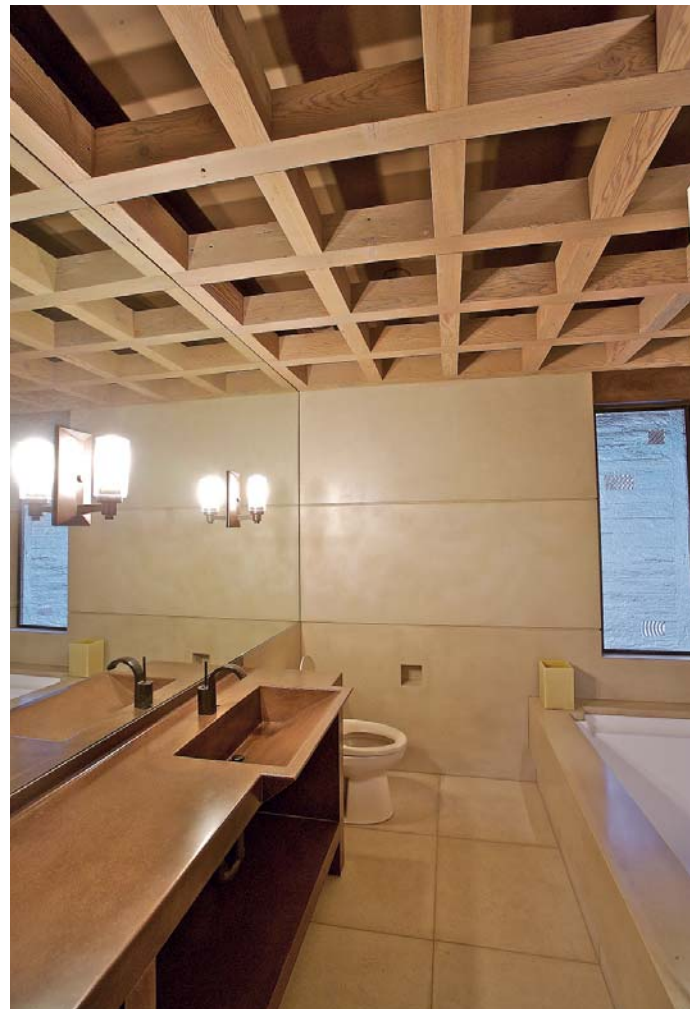
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deep, intense color that is brighter in the middle and muted at the outer edges.

Lower bath: The bathroom features wall panels of tan concrete that support a grid of 4-by-6 sandblasted fir timbers. The beige colors contrast with the wood tones in the concrete sink and backsplash.

Master bathroom: The fireplace, which incorporates concrete, walnut and metal, includes two metal band inlays that align with the walnut shelving and remind Rogers of a railroad track, an image that is reinforced when he hears trains go by at night.

The team at Flying Turtle used several forms of concrete throughout the house, including concrete and wire mesh in most of the wall panels, straight concrete for smaller countertops, such as those in the bathrooms, and glass-fiber reinforced concrete for some larger countertops. The large living room-dining room fireplace is a combination of straight concrete and GFRC pieces. The team occasionally troweled fiber





Project Profile



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Photo by Matthew J. Visser

into the back mix of concrete pieces for extra reinforcement.

"We use pea gravel in our face mix so we don't lose the look of concrete," Rogers notes. "We just like the depth and textural color variation aggregate helps to provide."

While designing and building the house, Rogers learned that mixing stone with concrete was a money saver for exteriors. The stonework in front looks very high-end, and the job was far less expensive than doing it completely in concrete would have been. He also

learned to ask other experts. "It's always a good idea to have your ideas critiqued and reviewed by design professionals and friends," he says. "I made some excellent adjustments based on outside input."

Opening the house for tours has generated a lot of business for Flying Turtle. It's also on the market, for \$1.795 million. Rogers admits he'll miss it. However, he says, he's already moving on. "I'm looking forward to doing the next one!" 🚗

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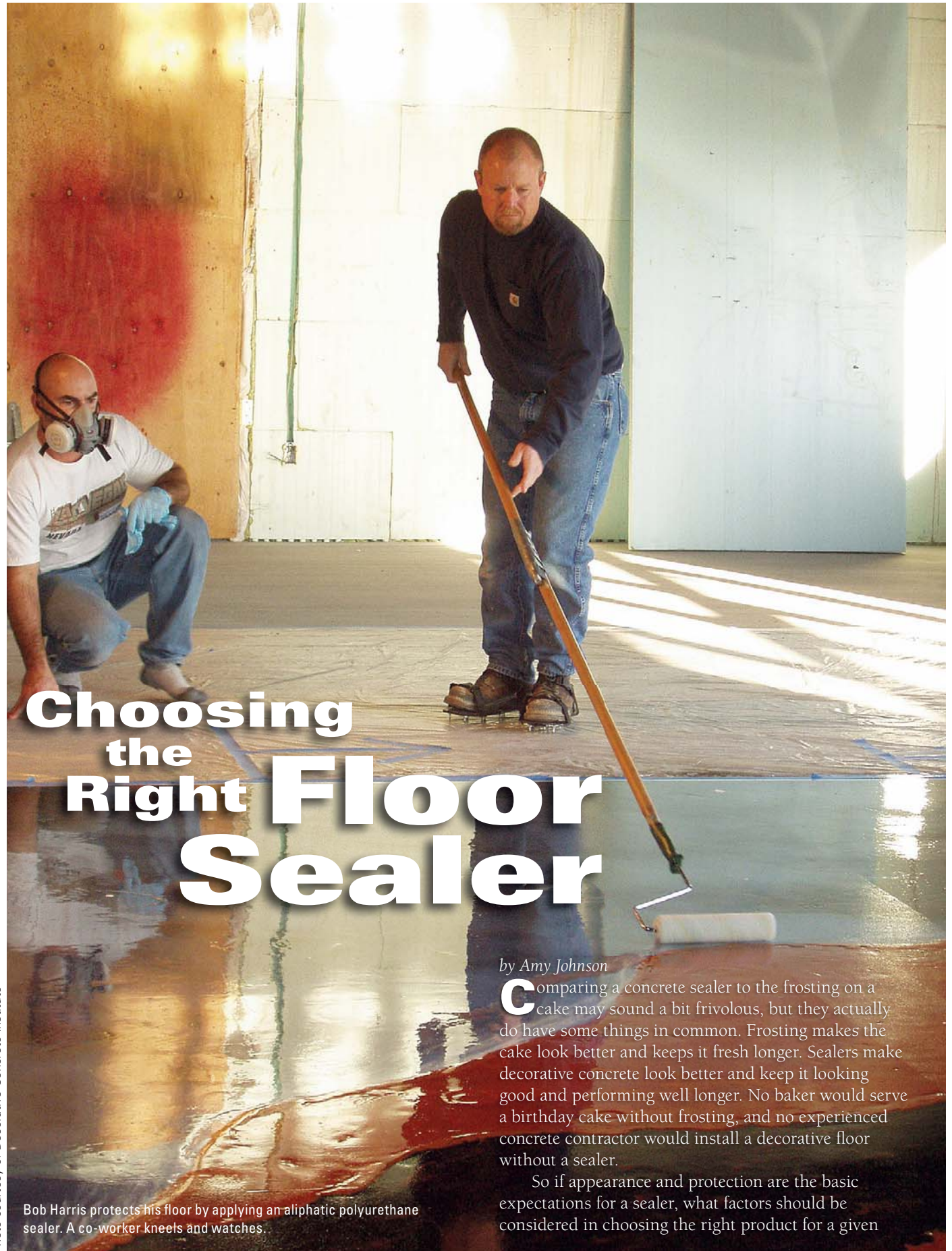
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Choosing the Right Floor Sealer

by Amy Johnson

Comparing a concrete sealer to the frosting on a cake may sound a bit frivolous, but they actually do have some things in common. Frosting makes the cake look better and keeps it fresh longer. Sealers make decorative concrete look better and keep it looking good and performing well longer. No baker would serve a birthday cake without frosting, and no experienced concrete contractor would install a decorative floor without a sealer.

So if appearance and protection are the basic expectations for a sealer, what factors should be considered in choosing the right product for a given

Bob Harris protects his floor by applying an aliphatic polyurethane sealer. A co-worker kneels and watches.

application? Clifford Platt, vice president of Vexcon Chemicals Inc., names three basic ones. First, environment. He recommends asking: "What environment will the sealer be asked to perform in? Indoors or outdoors? Wet or dry? What part of the country?" Second, traffic. "Vehicle traffic is going to cause the coating to wear sooner than foot traffic," he says. "And will there be chemical exposure such as gas or oil?" Third, maintenance. "Are they going to be able to recoat every few years to keep the sealer looking good and protect the decorative concrete?"

Bob Harris, president of the Decorative Concrete Institute, names several considerations specific to contractors and application requirements. "Cost, dry times, availability and whether the product is solvent- or water-based are important factors," he says.

Shellie Rigsby, owner of ConcreteStainDesigns.com, says the level of slip resistance required is a factor in choosing a sealer. "Different areas and projects have different code requirements," she says. "Make sure the product you install meets or exceeds code."

One factor that is often overlooked when sealing decorative concrete floors is humidity mitigation, according to Mike Hernandez, owner of ReUse Concrete Sealing Specialists LLC, based in Overland Park, Kan. "We have seen beautiful decorative floors ruined in a matter of months because of moisture coming up through the substrate," he says. This moisture can come when concrete is colored and sealed too soon or in below-grade applications where moisture from the underlying soil is continually transmitted. He recommends testing for humidity and acidity in order to select a sealer with the right pH balance and vapor transmission capabilities for avoiding trapping moisture between the colored surface and the sealer.

Penetrating or film-forming?

Most sealers fall into one of two broad categories — penetrating or film-forming. Penetrating sealers are primarily silicone solids suspended in

a fluid carrier that penetrates concrete pores and deposits the silicone into them, leaving virtually no film build. However, they typically will not repel stubborn oil or grease stains as well as film-forming sealers do.

"For regular concrete, we recommend a penetrating, chemically reactive silicate sealer," Hernandez says. "These sealers are the top of the line in our opinion. Silicate sealers

react with the lime in the concrete to create a bond and fill the open pores. They glassify the surface anywhere from 1 mil to 4 mils deep to protect against moisture penetration. Penetrating sealers are especially effective protecting against damage in areas that are prone to freeze-thaw cycles."

Hernandez does not use penetrating sealers for colored concrete floors. "Penetrating sealers last longer than



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film-forming, but leave the surface vulnerable to stains, as all of the sealer is inside the concrete,” he says. “These sealers are primarily intended for outdoor concrete such as driveways and sidewalks.”

Generally, film-forming sealers are preferred for decorative concrete. “For stamped concrete, a film-forming sealer is a must,” Platt says. “Otherwise the antique look will begin to degrade immediately. In addition, a film-forming

sealer enhances the colors below it far better than penetrating sealers. Stained concrete can be sealed with either type, but film-forming sealers do a better job of bringing out the depth of the colors in acid stains, dyes and colored concrete.”

Another significant distinction is between water-borne and solvent-borne sealers. Odor is the major argument against using solvent-based sealers indoors, according to Hernandez. “Solvent-based acrylic sealers create

an odor inside that is absolutely unbearable,” he says. “Many people have to move out of their homes while they are being applied because the fumes can create headaches, nausea, shortness of breath and other symptoms. Also, the fumes are highly flammable and even a spark can ignite them.”

With little or no emissions of volatile organic compounds, water-based sealers are preferred in regions with stringent VOC regulations and by customers and contractors who want a “green” product. “Depending on the project, an architect may be looking for products eligible for LEED points,” Platt says. “The contractor will have to be careful that the manufacturer’s product meets these requirements and can provide the supporting paperwork required.”

Solvent-based sealers offer some advantages of their own. “We have used solvent-based as well as water-based acrylic sealers,” Hernandez says, “and the solvent-based sealers appear to be more durable when used on outside concrete.” They also tend to have a more dramatic impact on the color of decorative concrete and can be used to achieve varied decorative effects.

Rigsby adds one other caution when using a solvent-based sealer outside. “As a solvent-based sealer cures, it releases oils that rise to the top, which can make the concrete slippery when wet,” she says. “Customers need to watch for this and clean it off with a hose and broom. This is not usually a long-term issue.”

Compatibility with finishes

“As a general rule, it is a good idea to try and stick with a certain manufacturer’s complete system,” Harris recommends. “If this can’t be done because the manufacturer does not have a certain product, it is a good idea to call them to make sure there are no compatibility issues. Also, find out what kind of preparation the floor needs prior to applying the sealer or coating.”

Most sealers work on acid-stained floors. “I let the environment and the client dictate what sealer to use,” Harris says. “For example, if it is the interior of their own home and odor is an issue, water-based acrylic sealer

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The choice of sealer for stamped

Rigsby cautions that the dye one chooses must be UV-stable, as the UV inhibitor in a sealer will not be enough to protect the color of the dye. Also,



Two different sealers were used on this driveway.

A sealer primer

Acrylics, epoxies, cure-and-seals and more

Sealers are made from a variety of materials, each with different application and performance characteristics.

For example, acrylics typically have a lower material cost, are easy to apply and dry relatively quickly, all factors that make them cost effective, according to Bob Harris of the Decorative Concrete Institute.

However, he says they are not as durable or resistant to chemical and general wear as epoxies and urethanes. "Epoxies provide a good film, typically a minimum of 80 mils to 10 mils, forming good protection for the concrete substrate," he says. "They can enhance the color dramatically."

Epoxies have longer dry times and are less breathable than acrylics. "Epoxies also bring out the color and provide the shine that people who have decorative concrete prefer," says Mike Hernandez of ReUse Concrete Sealing Specialists LLC. "Epoxies and polyurethanes work well for decorative concrete, although many people don't want to use them because they are more expensive and more difficult to apply."

Silane and siloxane penetrating sealers are easy to apply, breathable and offer good water resistance. Some resist stains, but generally even those do not resist aggressive oil stains. These materials do not enhance or alter the color of concrete.

Whatever the material, Hernandez says, "the higher percentage of solids in the sealer, the more durable it is." He also believes durability is improved by applying the sealer in two thin coats 12 hours apart rather than in one heavy coat.

Another category of sealer is called "cure-and-seal." Clifford Platt of Vexcon Chemicals Inc. explains: "Cure-and-seals meet specific ASTM specifications for curing concrete. Also, because these products breathe, they will not trap moisture, so they can be applied to damp surfaces. This is an advantage over nonbreathable sealers, because typically there is going to be moisture in a slab of concrete, either in vapor form or from surface prep. The contractor does not have to wait until the slab is



Photos courtesy of ReUse Concrete Sealing Specialists

Mike Hernandez used water-based stains and an epoxy coating on the ReUse Concrete Sealing Specialists showroom floor in Overland Park, Kan.

bone dry to apply these products, which saves time and money."

While they do act as sealers, their primary function is to modify the cure. Contractors should not count on them to deliver long-term protection. "Cure-and-seals are basically coatings that are designed to keep the water from evaporating too quickly from freshly poured concrete," Hernandez says. "They are almost always topical and short-lived. They burn off with exposure to the weather. The biggest problem is that homeowners hear the word 'seal' and believe that their concrete is truly sealed, which it isn't. Cure-and-seals usually have lower solids than regular topical sealers and thus have a shorter life."

Harris sums up: "A cure-and-seal is a curing agent for fresh concrete that conforms to a certain ASTM standard depending on the solid content. As a general rule, cure-and-seals are styrene acrylics, while sealers are just acrylics. They facilitate the cure while at the same time sealing. Typically after 30 days or so of curing you come back and apply another coat as a seal coat."

a pigment must be suspended in the sealer in order to get a translucent depth effect.

Hernandez advises contractors to be cautious in general when experimenting. "Adding pigments to sealers is not always effective because the pigments tend to float and rise to the top, and the color is left unprotected," he says. "Only pigments that were designed to go in the sealer should be used."

Protecting the concrete investment

In order for the sealer to provide the best appearance and long-lasting protection, it must be applied properly and maintained regularly.

Many problems arise with improper sealer application, says Hernandez. One can etch the concrete by using too small of a tip, too much water pressure, or being too close to the concrete when cleaning it to prepare it for sealing. Other problems include spraying on acrylic sealers too heavily and creating wave patterns or stained areas in the concrete, putting two different types of sealer on the same driveway and



This blotchy, uneven look comes from spraying an acrylic sealer on too heavily, creating wave patterns.

creating two different looks, and putting a water-based sealer over a solvent-based product and having the sealer peel off. Sometimes sealers remain tacky or discolor the floor below if the wrong sealer is applied for the moisture level of

the concrete, he adds.

"Overapplication and applying on very hot days and in direct sunlight are the most common problems we see," Platt says. These and other poor techniques, such as improper surface preparation or inadequate curing, result in delamination, turning white, air bubbles, cloudiness and cracking, notes Harris.

Even when applied properly, sealers must be maintained and surfaces resealed. "Most of the time customers think the color is fading on their decorative concrete, when all that is happening is that the sealer is breaking down and needs to be redone," Hernandez says.

"If the project is outside, then the final sealer coat is the wear coat, the sacrificial coat," Rigsby advises. "Plan to inspect the sealer every six months and reapply each year. Just think, it's time to plant the flowers and seal the driveway." Indoors, she recommends applying a floor finish or wax on top of the sealer. Again, this final topcoat is the sacrificial coat. "There is no such thing as a maintenance-free floor," she says. "Sealers are no exception."

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Concrete in **COLD WEATHER**



Photos courtesy of PermaCrete

by Emily Panter

Concrete Decor asked artisans around the country about their experiences installing projects during cold weather. They faced freezing temperatures, snowy weather, and even challenges indoors during cold spells. Each artisan found his own solution for handling work during the winter months.

Saved by a sealer

I-85 underpass, Columbus, Ga.

When PermaCrete/Quality Systems Inc. was called upon to resurface a concrete area under an Interstate 85 exit in Columbus, Ga., they had no idea what Mother Nature had in store.

"The sudden drop in temperature and the snowstorm came as a big surprise, but we just had to live with it," says George Henderson, president and CEO of the company.

The November weather brought temperatures that dipped as low as 19 degrees Fahrenheit. Add blowing snow on the last day while installing the final sealer coat, and you've got quite a challenge.

"Set times, dry times and cure times were all greatly extended by the temperatures as well as the precipitation," Henderson says. "We even tried to speed up some of the processes by using big fans and heat blowers.

"Fortunately back then, we also

had xylene-based sealers in addition to water-based sealers on the job site, and since xylene is impervious to temperatures below freezing, we used the xylene sealers and it worked out fine. As soon as the xylene evaporated from the applied sealer within 20 to 30 minutes, the sealer coat was set and unaffected by the weather."

Henderson quickly added that it was still a difficult job even with the increased set times.

The cold weather didn't have too much of a long-term effect on the concrete. Henderson says it looks virtually the same today as when it was completed eight years ago.

Shocked by snow

Garage floor, Aspen, Colo.

Sean Shiers, owner of Global Garage Flooring & Design in Denver, knows that you have to be prepared for cold weather if you plan on doing work during the winter months.

However, he and business partner David Schneider were still caught off-guard when repairing and resurfacing a garage floor in Aspen, Colo., during the winter of 2007.

"The temperature was zero degrees with a small amount of snow in the air," he says. "We were prepared for the cold weather but not the snow."

To keep the snow out of the garage, Shiers and his crew had to construct a small cover over the garage's opening. Once that was complete, Shiers said the only other thing the weather affected was the length of the cure time. The temperatures added about 25 minutes to each step.

Because of Colorado's harsh winters, Shiers uses Flexmar's Polyaspartic Polyurea. "It's the only product on the market that will cure at low temperatures and provide the chemical and abrasion resistance needed for the garage floor," he says.

Thanks to the product's fast cure time, Shiers says the residents were able to drive their cars into the garage the next day.

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Watching for warmth

Patio, Frederick, Colo.

For Rob Sonders, owner of Sonders Enterprises, planning is key to decorative concrete projects during the Colorado winters. By watching weather forecasts and waiting for a warm front, Sonders was able to successfully time the creation of an exterior concrete patio in December 2005.

"We picked a warm, sunny day," Sonders says. Warm for a Colorado winter, that is. "Pour day was about 35 to 40 degrees. I remember being cold that morning."

Despite the warmer temperatures, Sonders still faced common winter challenges. "One of the challenges once we excavate is keeping the frost out of the ground," he says. "(To avoid frost) we excavate and replace with dry road



Photos courtesy of Sonders Enterprises

base or recycled concrete material. Then we keep the area dry with two layers of plastic until the appropriate pour day arrives."

For this particular project, Sonders utilized 4,000-psi concrete and nonchloride accelerator. He also placed blankets on the evening to help protect the concrete from chilly nights.

"There's a little bit of a challenge," he says. "There's a lot of work to be done even after hours. We come back at 9 or 10 at night just to make sure the concrete is hard enough to put our blankets down."

This process was done for four

nights, with power washing occurring on the fifth day after it was set. Temperatures were still crucial.

"We've got to make sure that fifth day is above freezing," he says. "We like to be above 40 degrees. That's really our magic temperature."

Freezing freight

Countertop, Ancramdale, N.Y.

Although Mike Karmody and his crew at Stone Soup Concrete cast most of their projects in their Florence, Mass., shop, they still face wintertime challenges.

Transporting the 3-inch-thick countertop and backsplash pictured here to its final location during February was no small task. “The site conditions were cold and quite windy,” says Karmody, who owns the business along with Mike Paulsen.

However, the crew lucked out and there was no precipitation during installation. Temperatures were above the freezing mark inside the house.

When Karmody transports a project to its destination, cold temperatures are a behavior-changing factor. This is partially because of the safety of those in the vehicle, and partially because of the product itself.

“If it’s below freezing we have to make sure there’s no moisture still in the sealer,” he says. “In order to transport the piece we load it at the last possible moment into the truck. Sometimes we put a heater in the truck.”

The cold temperatures actually helped Karmody with this project. The truck had to drive through a field, and the ground was hard enough to allow workers to get closer to the house. If it had been warmer, the field would have been a muddy mess, he says.

“The cold was a factor, but we got it in. Nobody slipped, nobody hurt themselves, and that’s what is important.” 🚚



Photos courtesy of Stone Soup Concrete





At the Bishop Gadsden Church in Charleston, S.C., artisans used tilt-up panels with a tabby finish and detailed quoins to match historic details on the existing church structure. They avoided the expense of hand-laid masonry and oyster shell stucco.

Below: A close-up of the tabby-style finish.



by Kelly O'Brien

For most people, the first thing they think of when someone mentions tilt-up concrete is big warehouses and retail box stores. While those buildings, not known for their inspired design, are certainly still being built, more and more tilt-up contractors are incorporating some of the many decorative products and techniques that can elevate their building beyond the big gray box.

Fortunately for today's tilt-up contractors, advances in technology have put at their fingertips more design elements than ever before.

Take formliners, for example. Concrete formliners — whether elastomeric, plastic, fiberglass or urethane — are the bread and butter of tilt-up design. Basically gigantic concrete jello molds, formliners can be used to create patterns and textures in relief on the surfaces of tilt-up panels. Murals, logos, patterns, textures, you name it.

Innovative Brick Systems' Mark Scott and Jeff Tucker not only see a lot of work being done with their company's line of concrete formliners, but also an increasingly high demand for custom designs. And with their computer-driven equipment, custom designs are a snap, they say. "It doesn't cost any more for us to make a custom mold than

a standard one," says Tucker. "It's a great way to put extra design into a project without adding any cost."

Tim Cahalane, a project director for Texas-based American Constructors, has definitely taken advantage of these recent advances. "Formliners have really progressed over the last few years," says Cahalane. "Anything you can come up with in a graphic, you can print."

Jim Baty, technical director for the Tilt-Up Concrete Association, says that Cahalane is not alone. "Graphics is something that a lot of contractors are either pushing and marketing or wanting someone to come along and say, 'Hey, can you do this?'" he says.

Another central design element for tilt-up contractors is inlays, or embeddings. Most typically, these consist of thin brick — literally slices of brick about a half-inch thick — that give the (convincing) illusion of masonry construction.

"Our thin brick is packaged face down into individual plastic holders that snap together on the pour surface," says Mario Gutierrez of Scott System Inc., a formliner and brick inlay manufacturer. After the concrete is poured over the bricks and the panel is finished, they are erected and the plastic holders are removed from the face. It's a very quick and economical way to get a good-looking brick facade, Gutierrez says.

But thin bricks are only the tip of the iceberg. There are inlays not only for different masonry effects, such as

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arches, herringbone and soldier courses, but also for many kinds of stone and even tile.

For example, Scott and Tucker at Innovative are particularly excited about a new embedded tile product they're getting involved with. Operating on the same principle as thin brick, the tile inlay is about 3/8 inch thick, and according to Scott and Tucker, it works great as an architectural accent in combination with other embedments. Scott says these technological advances are "really helping the tilt-up guys raise the bar."

In addition to these two methods, there is a whole slew of decorative techniques that can be used with tilt-up — many of which ought to sound familiar.

For example, Baty of the Tilt-Up Concrete Association says his group sees a lot of integral color in today's tilt-up landscape. Lots of contractors are using surface treatments such as coatings and stains, and a few people are even trying to figure out how to do high-gloss diamond polishing with tilt-up panels.

Project director Alan Nations, with San Diego-based



Photos by American Constructors Inc.

Left: A mock-up panel of window and brick work for an American Constructors Inc. project. It shows two different mix designs and sandblasting. Above: The installation of reveals, brick liner and formwork at the American Constructors project.

Architects Delawie Wilkes Rodrigues Barker, says that tilt-up is a great vehicle for elastomeric coatings that require a very even substrate. "It's a very smooth palette to work on," says Nations, who is actually a newcomer to tilt-up. "I've personally been surprised with what we could do with tilt-up."

Different aggregates, exposed to different degrees, also play a part in tilt-up design, just as in decorative work. Cahalane says that although "you've got a certain performance criteria you have to meet," when it comes to choosing an aggregate, your options when it comes to tilt-up are really only limited by your imagination.

Baty can testify to that. He recalls one project in particular, done by a contractor in South Africa, for which the architect had specced out a panel that was a royal blue color with polka dots in an accent color. After scratching his head for a bit, the contractor went down to a hobby store and bought a huge batch of fist-sized foam balls. He cut them in half, affixed them to his form in an even pattern, and poured. The resulting panel had embedded, precast polka dots that were easy to paint in the accent color after the fact.

"That's what's most impressive to me about the industry right now," says Baty. "The return of the concept of building as a craftsman even though we're dealing with what many people still view as an industrial product."

A veteran of the decorative concrete industry, Ken Tucker of Pattern-Crete Inc. definitely ascribes to the craftsman school of thought. Driving around the Chicago area where his company operates, Tucker saw a lot of big box tilt-up projects that were, in a word, ugly. There was a lot of paint, and what with the inhospitable Midwest winters, it looked terrible. "Within two years you'd see the paint starting to peel off," Tucker says. With his background in decorative concrete, Tucker says his first thought was, "Why don't they stamp those things?" So, he decided to see for himself what could result from applying

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Photos courtesy of Tilt-Up Concrete Association

The Sibaya Casino in Durban, South Africa, is a vivid example of the extreme levels of craftsmanship that can be delivered by today's tilt-up contractor.

traditional decorative concrete methods to a tilt-up construction project.

The Villa Park, Ill., building, which would become the new Pattern-Crete headquarters, was a year in the planning, says Tucker. Although the casting process didn't differ much from traditional tilt-up projects, the fact that it was a face-up process, instead of face down, required a lot of careful planning.



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The walls of the Pattern-Crete headquarters building in Villa Park, Ill., were cast face up.

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In particular, care had to be taken to make sure the lifting hardware was placed so it wouldn't interfere with the finished design. "Pattern-Crete is the only company I know of that's tried the face-up method," says Baty. "Decorative concrete is so well-known and so well-accepted in floors, but it's a medium that doesn't move — tilting it up adds a new challenge."

As excited as Tucker is about the success of the Pattern-Crete headquarters (which is three and a half years old now and still looks great), he hasn't found the opportunity to do another project like it, or persuade anyone else to give it a go. Part of that has to do with the preconception that tilt-up is only good for large-scale or warehouse-type applications.

"For an 800,000-square-foot warehouse, (my approach is) not realistic," Tucker says. "There is a market for it — small restaurants, maybe even housing. It's just not the big box."

Despite the scarcity of interest, not to mention the current economic environment, the torch is still burning. "We're very interested in doing more projects," Tucker says, "but it's been a hard year, so it's been difficult to promote it." Give it another couple of years, though, and you might just see your friendly neighborhood tilt-up contractor trying out a new set of stamps. 🖨️

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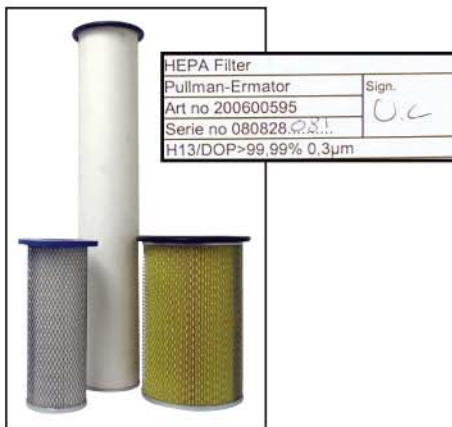
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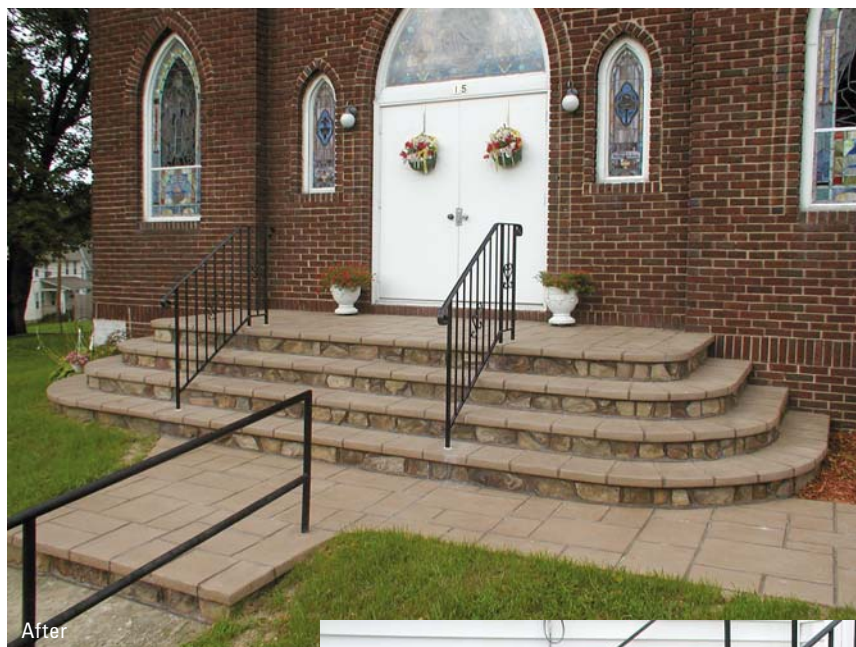
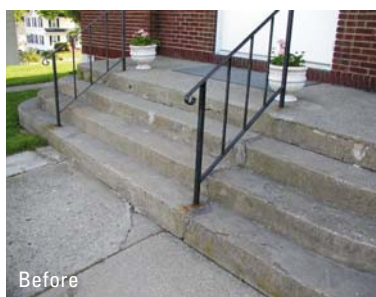
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First Place, Exterior

Unique Concrete, West Milford, N.J.
Project: Hamburg Church, Hamburg, N.J.

The artisan says: This project began with a proposal to a church for work on a large set of steps at the main entrance that were in need of a facelift.

The steps had several cracks, areas that had spalled, and some sections that had been repaired with thin laminations of concrete. Also, the top platform was capped in such a way as to create excessive pitch.

Our estimate was half that of a competitive bid. Our approach was to use the existing steps as a base and then cover it with a heavily reinforced unbonded and decorative concrete overlay. The reinforcement was achieved with galvanized wire lath, wire mesh, 1/2-inch rod and structural synthetic fibers. This overlay was designed to react independently of the base steps to allow for shrinkage and the effects of the freeze-thaw cycles.

All of the vertical surfaces were finished with cultured stone. The concrete was integrally colored, and impressions were made with "cookie-cutter" stamps and hand chisels. All of the impressions were deep in order to act as control joints



and arrest shrinkage. These impressions were grouted to create the realistic appearance of custom masonry.

The church elders were pleased with the results. Due to their cost savings, they decided to allow us to resurface another set of steps, a sidewalk and a bell tower.

This method of resurfacing with the unbonded concrete overlay allows us to isolate cracked and spalled areas so that they do not transfer through the finished product. The concrete for this project had a minimum thickness of 1 1/2 inches.

Materials used included: Forte and Nycon synthetic fibers, Bayferrox integral color, QC Construction Materials sealers, Anti-Hydro and Owens Corning Cultured Stone.

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First Place, Interior

Abstract Concrete, Rochester Hills, Mich. Project: Detroit Water Board Building, Detroit, Mich.

The artisan says: The Art Deco-styled Detroit Water Board Building has been a familiar part of Detroit's skyline since October 1928. The completed building reflects the trend toward simplification of forms typical of the Jazz Age. Standing 23 stories, it is comprised of a five-story base, a 15-story shaft, and a three-story penthouse. Beyond the first floor lobby, the customer service center is awash in cream-colored marble on the walls and pillars that frame the inner entrance.

The historic Detroit Water Board Building customer service center was undergoing a major restoration to return it to its former glory when Abstract Concrete was called to the task of restoring the floor. Originally, the floor consisted of a limestone common to the era, but over the years it had seen various floor coverings, the latest being an unattractive VCT tile. Replacing the flooring with the original limestone was not an option because this replicate stone would be difficult to locate as well as cost-prohibitive.

Our task was to install a floor that would compliment the decor of the marble walls. For this we would use a troweled overlay that we would scribe the pattern into and stain. But

first, we had to tackle the issues with the substrate. Once the existing floor, layers of mastic, and patch materials were removed, we found a substrate with a maze of cracks unlike we had ever seen. The concrete slab of the era was a floating slab, and the construction technology was not as refined as it is today. To deal with this problem, and to prevent further flooring problems in the future, a special micro-doweling polyurea-urethane hybrid was used to mend the cracks. While this solution is not foolproof, it is the best technology available today to deal with the problem. The special crack filler penetrates deep into the concrete and remains flexible to inhibit further crack formation or re-cracking.

The most complicated task of the project involved reconstructing the entrance with the addition of a wheelchair ramp to bring the building into compliance with ADA standards. This was done, and the installed flooring was seamlessly integrated.

The flooring consisted of the troweled concrete overlay with a scribed pattern. It was stained to compliment the existing marble, in keeping with the Art Deco appearance of the customer service center. A clear UV-stable epoxy topcoat finished the surface. 🛠️

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Product Profile



Photos by Jim Glessner

Ekocrete from Ekocrete Inc.

by Emily Panter

Living up to its eco-theme name, Ekocrete, a new concrete mix, is made from 85 percent recycled concrete.

The material has crushed recycled concrete for aggregate and fly ash waste from coal mills for the base. Other industrial byproducts provide nanofibers for crack reduction and nanoparticles for surface density to reduce water penetration.

Chief among Ekocrete's benefits is that it offers an alternative to portland cement. "The cement industry is really not being honest about the negatives of cement production," says Jim Glessner, president of Ekocrete Inc. "And we are running out of raw aggregate. We're trying to eliminate both of those problems."

Ekocrete was created after Glessner and his friends in the concrete industry began talking about how large

companies were pushing green products that are in fact not eco-friendly. Together they decided to develop a concrete product that was actually green.

"What we are trying to do is reduce as much as possible the amount of cement," Glessner says. "We are working with a company in the Bay Area that is developing a cement process that doesn't have any carbon dioxide emission."

Although fly ash is used in lieu of portland cement, Glessner assures Ekocrete performs the same as its traditional competition. "There's not a single caveat with decorative concrete," he says. "There is no character change."

Decorative concrete contractors should note one exception to that rule: Glessner says that because Ekocrete contains so much fly ash, its color is slightly darker than concrete with traditional portland cement.



The first commercial project using Ekocrete is a recently completed building in Berkeley, Calif. Rachel Hamilton of Hamilton & Company Architecture was considering using conventional concrete, but was sold on Ekocrete after talking to Glessner. "We were trying to go with as green of a product as we could, throughout everything we were doing," she says.

Although it's still too early to tell, so far Hamilton is very happy with the results.

Ekocrete is currently available as a ready-mix product, and a bag mix sold as Ekocrete by Buddy Rhodes will enter the market in Spring 2009, starting in California. However, the bag mix will only be sold as a high-strength or fence-post mix. The ready-mix version offers compressive strengths ranging from 2,000 psi to 10,000 psi.

Although green products typically come with a large markup, Glessner says Ekocrete will be priced at only 5 to 10 percent more than traditional cement.

"We don't want to make this huge margin," he says. "Ultimately I'm in it to do something great for the world."

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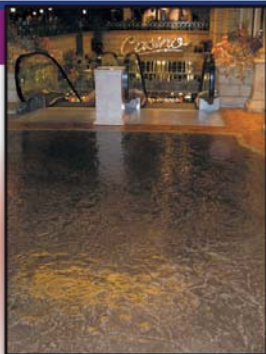
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The newly designed blast wheel features high-quality Allen-Bradley electrical components and an advanced air wash system. Traveling at speeds of up to 100 feet per minute, it has production capacity of 350 square feet to 1,950 square feet per hour. The BP-15 Super is sold with the BP 9-54 dust collector to keep work areas clean and dust-free. The machine is suitable for use on medium to large projects, including warehouse floors, parking garages and industrial plants.

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Blastrac — 1-8DPS

The Blastrac 1-8DPS portable shot-blasting machine is an economical unit that is self-propelled with forward and reverse settings, and it offers a travel speed of 2 to 75 feet per minute.

The 4-horsepower blast motor creates an 8-inch cleaning path, delivering a production rate of up to 430 square feet per hour. With abrasive consumption of less than 9 pounds per hour, the self-propelled shot-blasting process saves labor and time, and it provides a more consistent surface pattern, or profile, for coatings or overlays.

This portable unit from Blastrac is perfect for decorative concrete applications such as overlays, as well as concrete preparation prior to wood floor or other overlayment installations. The 1-8DPS requires no drying time, unlike chemical or acid-etching methods.

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Sakrete U.S. Cold Patch is available in 50-pound bags and 3,000-pound bulk bags. The Sakrete brand is owned and managed by Sakrete of North America, a division of Bonsal American/Oldcastle.

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New angle grinder from Metabo

Metabo Corp. has introduced the new Stone Master WE14-125VS 5-inch angle grinder, which is built with Metabo's VTC (Vario Tacho Constamatic) electronic speed stabilization, making the grinder ideal for grinding, cutting and finishing granite, marble or concrete countertops.

Metabo's VTC electronics enhance productivity by constantly monitoring the rpm of the motor and adding voltage as the load increases, enabling the grinder to maintain the same rpm from no load to full-rated load. A soft-start feature extends longevity of both the motor windings and gears. The WE14-125VS also incorporates Metabo's CoolFlow technology, with repositioned carbon brushes for unrestricted airflow and a fan that pulls more air through the tool to keep it running cooler during operation. In addition, the grinder features aluminum die-cast housing to help with heat dissipation and provide increased durability.

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Metabo Corp. has introduced the MHE 96 SDS-Max Demolition Hammer, a demolition hammer that combines a powerful 15-amp motor with Metabo VibraTech technology. MVT reduces vibration and user fatigue due to its integrated damping system incorporated into the main and side handles.

The MHE 96's 15-amp motor provides up to 1,950 bpm and 27 joules of single-blow energy. Metabo's Vario Tacho Constamatic electronic speed control enables the tool to maintain a virtually constant number of blows per minute between load and no-load, maximizing the productivity of the operator. The large D-type rear handle is vibration-dampened, and the antivibration side handle can be mounted in three different positions for maximum comfort. The oversized function switch enables the operator to easily position the chisel face in 16 different positions, and a lockable switch enables comfortable operation for long periods. Other integral features that increase the tool's durability include tough aluminum die-cast gearbox housing, a protected service display, a safety clutch, and auto-stop carbon brushes. The MHE 96 measures 27 3/4 inches in length and weighs 26.5 pounds.

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Allmand Bros. Inc. has upgraded its Maxi-Heat portable heater with higher static pressure.

Incorporating a new fan-motor combination and increasing the static pressure from 0.5 wg to 1.5 wg, the upgraded Maxi-Heat is able to accommodate up to 110 feet of 16-inch ducting, as opposed to 40 feet with the

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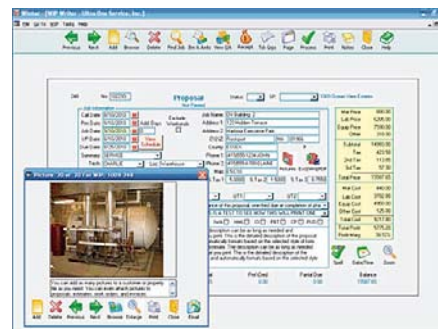
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Intac releases updated software for contractors

Intac International Inc., maker of the best-selling Wintac Pro service management software for contractors, has released Wintac Pro 2009.

This latest release expands upon Wintac Pro's all-inclusive design by combining the functionality of several programs into one integrated system.



Functions cover customer relationship management, field service management, contact management, vehicle management and complete accounting.

🌐 www.intacinternational.com

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Media News

On the Web

Free online education at ArchitectCES.com

W. R. Meadows Inc. is offering free and easily accessible AIA/CSI approved training at ArchitectCES.com.

W. R. Meadows' program, "Controlling Moisture Movement In Buildings: The Complete Air & Vapor Barrier Approach," is approximately one hour long and will earn participants one learning unit credit upon successful completion. The course provides an overview of the benefits and advantages of air, vapor and moisture barriers designed to protect buildings. It also includes a discussion on moisture sources and travel and their negative impact upon the building.

ArchitectCES.com is an American Institute of Architects Continuing Education Services (AIA/CES) provider.

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Correction

The phone number for QC Construction Products is (800) 453-8213. QC recently released the Renew by QC line of water-based stains.



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Concrete Sawing and Drilling Association

Training dates for 2009 announced

The Concrete Sawing and Drilling Association continues to expand its training program offerings and has announced its training dates for 2009.

Classes have been scheduled for both the spring and fall of 2009, and offer training for varying levels of knowledge and experience. The first courses will take place in February 2009 in Clearwater, Fla., and are scheduled as follows: CSDA Cutting Edge Training, Feb. 19-20; OSHA Construction Safety, Feb. 21; CSDA Estimating Training, Feb. 23-24; and CSDA Wall Sawing 101 Training, Feb. 23-25.

Besides these hands-on and classroom courses, CSDA's new online training Web site was introduced earlier this year. It offers 21 new online training courses.

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 www.csda.org

Portland Cement Association

Adverse economic and credit conditions hurt industry

The weak economy and tight credit conditions, coupled with severe job losses and the resulting decline in state government revenues, will translate into significant weakness for the construction industry through

2010, according to the Portland Cement Association, leading the group to again adjust its cement consumption forecast.

The latest PCA forecast of cement, concrete and construction predicts a 12.8 percent decline in cement consumption in 2008, followed by 11.9 percent and 2.1 percent declines in 2009 and 2010, respectively.

The PCA report cites the continued drop in residential starts and the erosion of the strong fundamentals supporting nonresidential construction as major factors leading to reduced cement consumption. The weak economy also has affected the public construction sector.

PCA expects cement consumption in residential jobs to decline 31.7 percent in 2008 and 16.9 percent in 2009, but a rebound of the market in the second half of 2010 is predicted to lead to a 12.1 percent increase in consumption in that year. Consumption in the nonresidential sector is expected to decline 22.2 percent in 2009 and the public sector will see 6.6 percent declines in 2009 and 2010.

PCA predicts a recovery to begin in 2011, with a 10.3 percent increase compared to 2010 consumption, and a return to near-record consumption levels by 2013.

 www.cement.org

Training courses set for 2009

Portland Cement Association's Education and Training Department's 2009 course schedule is now available.

Scheduled courses are: Kiln Process, Design & Control of Concrete Mixes, Mill Grinding, Troubleshooting: Solutions to Concrete Field Problems, Cement & Concrete Overview, and Cement Manufacturing for Process Engineers. Registration is available online or by phone. All courses are held at PCA headquarters in Skokie, Ill.

 www.cement.org

Association announces Sustainable Leadership Award winners

The Portland Cement Association has announced Sustainable Leadership Award winners for 2008. The awards identified local leaders in eight cities across the nation who enacted policies or completed projects that promoted sustainable development through the use of concrete and other cement-based products.



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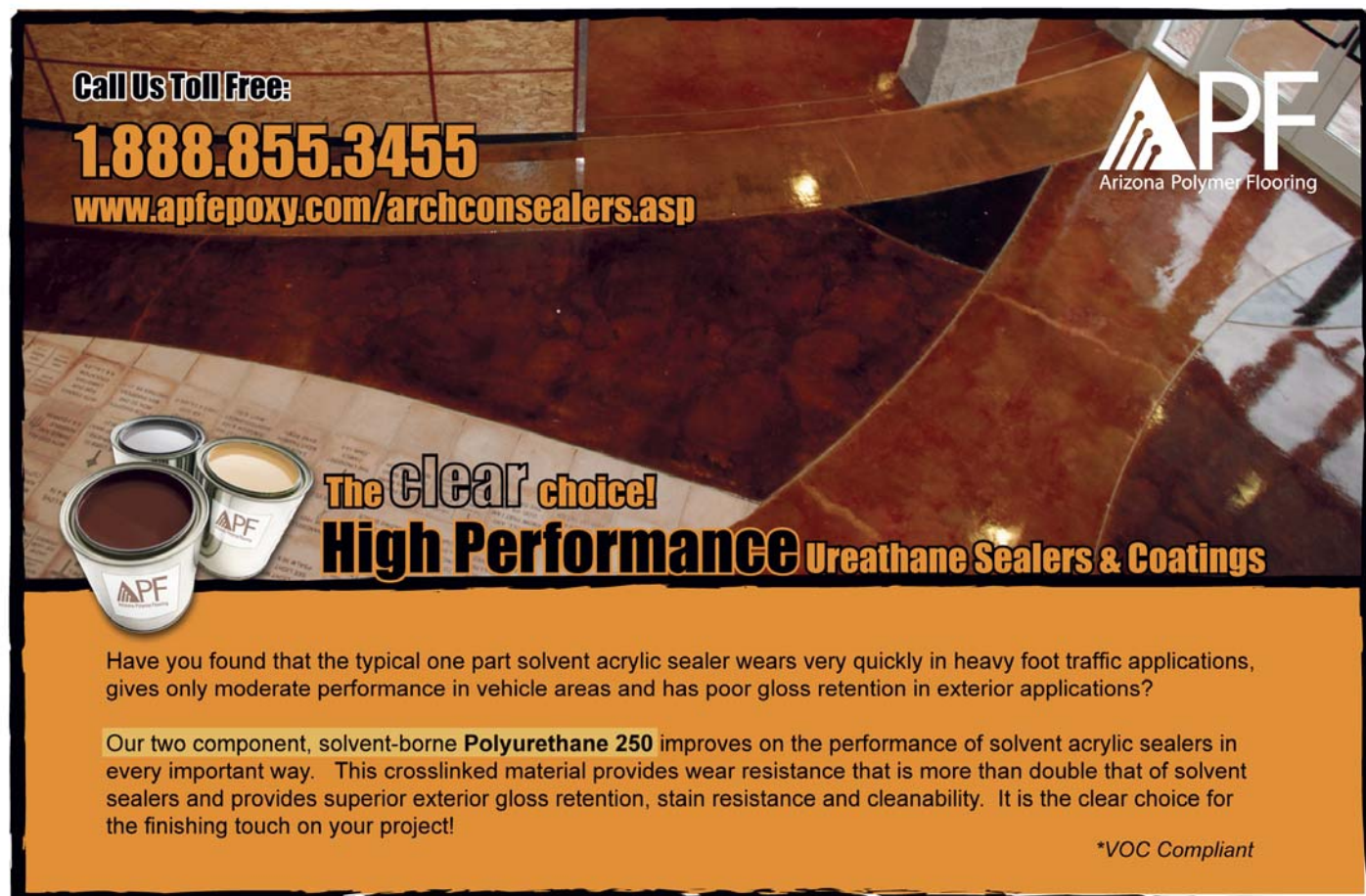
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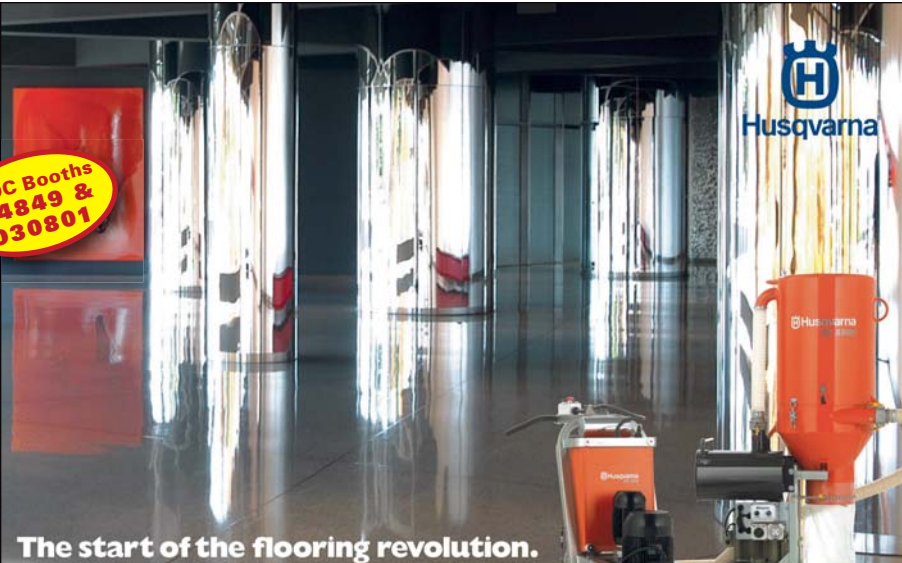
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The winners are: Richard J. Daley, mayor, and Sadhu Aufochs Johnston, chief environmental officer, mayor's office, City of Chicago, Ill.; Department of Street Services, City of Dallas, Texas; Brad Reed, inspection coordinator, City of Lubbock, Texas; Dennis C. Kilfoil, executive director, Marion County Housing Authority, Salem, Ore.; Najib Fares, PE, infrastructure manager, Transportation & Public Works Department, City of Fort Worth, Texas; Peggy J. Dunn, mayor, and Joe C. Johnson, director of public works, Leawood, Kan.; Kurtis J. Grassett, director of public works, Hancock, N.H.; and Elaine M. Scruggs, mayor, Horatio Skeete, deputy city manager, and Cathy Colbath, transit administrator, City of Glendale, Ariz. 🚚

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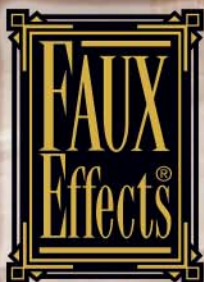
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January 22 - 23 Polished Concrete with Coloring Systems (Temple, GA)	March 12 - 13 Chemical Staining & Specialty Techniques (Temple, GA)	April 21 - 24 Getting Started in the Field of Decorative Concrete (Temple, GA)

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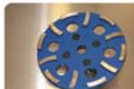
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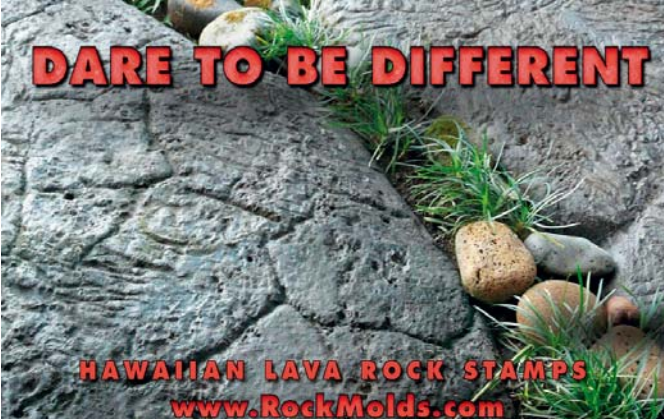
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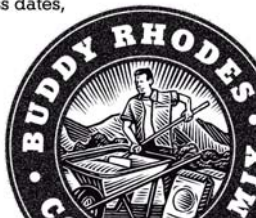


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Final Pour

Photos courtesy of J&M Lifestyles



Wood You Believe It?

Jeff Kudrick, product manager at J&M Lifestyles LLC, is always looking for innovative illusions to create in concrete. His latest endeavor was coming up with more traditional designs for vanities and countertops, as those make up the bulk of J&M's sales. One solution? Concrete that looks nearly identical to wood.

"It started with a highly distressed wood-plank vanity top that displays in our showroom — a customer came in and had to have it for her kitchen," Kudrick says. "We hadn't even started thinking about the details of a larger mold system for the countertops. Once we had that little push everything started snowballing."

The result was a product that looks so similar to wood that when cabinetmakers visit J&M's showroom they sometimes need to take a look underneath to be convinced it is actually concrete.

"It looked and felt so real that unless it was pointed out that it was concrete and not wood, it was overlooked completely, because the customers didn't even think it was an

option — they were here for concrete," says Michelle Radley, managing partner at J&M. "However, wood with the durability of concrete opened up a lot of doors for our customers."

The first "wood" countertop was placed in a New Jersey country kitchen. "The kitchen has a lot of large timbers and varying treatments of cabinets," Kudrick says. "The concrete wood detail in the counter tied the varying elements of the kitchen together and blended in perfectly."

In keeping with the rustic theme, Kudrick's team incorporated hand-hammered nails and iron strapping. They even used actual horseshoes for trivets. "We had to make voids to go into the mold that would be an exact match for the trivet horseshoes," Kudrick says.

In total, the team created six countertops for the kitchen project. "Everyone who has seen it wants it," he says. "Many projects are in the making."

For an island countertop, Kudrick wanted to break up the wood look with a unique sink designed to look like rock. Fitting the boulder sink, a J&M signature concept, into a gap in

the "wood" countertop was one of the biggest challenges of the project.

Another challenge was matching the colors in the countertops to the pre-existing windowsill. "We had to create the countertops after the fact, and we were able to match them exactly," Kudrick says.

Now that their first "wooden" concrete countertop project is complete, J&M is busy working on automating the process to teach it to other industry professionals. Their Infinicrete mix allows for pouring the molds with no fill, which would interfere with the wood grain. They also used Pro-Seal Ultra Shield II-A, a penetrating sealer that is very stain-resistant without compromising the feel of the "wood."

"This is not a process for the impatient or faint of heart. Any mistake in the many steps of concrete would renders the slab useless," says Radley. "Repairs are not an option. But the rewards far outweigh the costs."

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