Bexar Electric Co. combines resources

Crane Contracting Group, Ltd. revitalizes office interior

MDN Architects attains 30th year of success

Publicly traded Bexar Electric Company, Ltd., an Integrated Electrical Services (IES) company, is finalizing an in-house merger with Calhoun Electric, which has been a subsidiary of Bexar Electric for a number of years. As vice president and division manager Billy Hill told San Antonio Construction News, combining their resources marks the end of an old era and the beginning of a new era for the independent electrical contracting company.

Founded in 1962 by master electrician Bob Weik, who lived on Bexar St. and operated out of his garage, the history of Bexar Electric is a classic American success story. Forty-one years later, Bob is still the president of the company, which has eight bases of operations and went public five years ago. According to Billy, Bob's business acumen and progressive philosophy has resulted in a workplace abundant in job security and job longevity for its employees and staff.

The decision to phase-out Calhoun Electric, the bulk of whose business was residential tract housing, opened an opportunity to relocate Bexar Electric #2 operations from its Loop 410 at Vance Jackson address to Loop 1604 at Judson Rd., on the north side.

"In the 1990’s, we’ve had to learn how to accept change, and as we move into these years we have to learn how to seek new opportunities," Barry recalled. "When I received my license in 1972, I took over their architectural staff and we designed shopping centers all over this part of the U.S."

By 1973, Barry had developed a lot of prospects on his own and made the decision to move on with his own practice. He dutifully trained his replacement, and then hung up a sign in March 1973. Known as Barry P. Middleman, Architect, the firm completed its first year with a very lucrative $26,000 in architectural fees and moved from a $100-a-month office to a $400-a-month office in the prestigious Century Building on Loop 410.

Under Barry’s leadership, the firm launched its growth with several significant projects, including the corporate offices for the American Can Corporation at the Lone Star Brewery. In 1974, Fox Photo became a prominent client. The firm designed its famous Fox Photo Drive-up Kiosk, retail stores, one-hour labs, and numerous processing plants throughout the U.S.

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pecializing in the interior finish-out business, and experienced in many types of commercial construction, Crane Contracting Group, Ltd., finalized an upscale office remodel for the Argonaut Group, Inc. about one year ago. While retaining some key architectural elements, the scope of the $560,000 Union Square project included selected demolition of the existing suite and construction of the interior remodel. The architectural plans were 80 percent complete at the beginning of construction.

San Antonio Construction News spoke with San Antonio native son and firm partner Pat Crane, who holds a Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering from The University of Texas at Austin. According to Pat, a reduced construction schedule on what began as a five-month project prompted quick action.

"Approximately seven weeks into the 17-week project we were informed that Argonaut would be moving in five weeks ahead of our scheduled completion date," Pat explained. "The key to our success in facing an altered schedule was the direct result of our dedicated employees in the field. Our field crews are experienced, long-term employees, who are committed to producing a high quality product. In addition, we have developed relationships with what we consider to be the best subcontractors in the city."

Once the demolition phase was complete, an intense schedule to complete the interior renovation ensued. The general contractor’s staff includes tradesmen who can complete interior demolition, metal stud and wood framing, drywall installation, ceiling installation, tape, float and painting, trim carpentry, hardware installation, and general carpentry work. The office interior was built using metal studs, sheetrock, 20-in. x 60-in., acoustical ceiling panels, plastic laminate doors, hollow metal frames, lacquered steel, plastic laminate wall panels, and slate and carpet flooring.

General partner and project manager Kevin Muchemore, who has been with the company since 1995, described some of the special design aspects employed on the project.

“We utilized lacquered steel plate, angle and channels as architectural detailing. The wall panels featured plastic laminate on MDF panels with vertical steel channel reveals and horizontal mill finish aluminum bars. Together with the natural illumination provided by clerestory windows, we augmented the lighting with task, indirect and accent fixtures. For use as area dividers, we installed thick, tempered, frosted glass panels accented with lacquered steel angle.”

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MDN Architects attains 30th year of success

Currently licensed to practice architecture in 32 states, Barry P. Middleman, AIA, NCARB, MDN Architects, began his architectural practice 30 years ago as a one-man office. Prior to that time, Barry, a 1965 graduate of the University of Texas at Austin with a Bachelor of Architecture degree, worked as an in-house architect for Roy, L. Martin and Associates, a shopping center developer conducting business throughout the southwestern United States.

"I worked for him for seven years," Barry recalled. "When I received my license in 1972, I took over their architectural staff and we designed shopping centers all over this part of the U.S."

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The Industry’s Newspaper

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Building since 1953, a well-recognized general contracting company has grown significantly from a two-man partnership to a formidable presence in the Central, South, and East Texas commercial construction industry. After five decades of evolution, SpawGlass Holding L.P., a 100 percent employee-owned company formed by SpawGlass Contractors, Inc. and SpawGlass Construction Corp., two legally separate entities that have four regional offices located in San Antonio, Austin, Houston and Harlingen.

San Antonio Construction News spoke with Jack Mulligan, Senior Vice-President for SpawGlass Contractors, Inc. A fourteen-year veteran of the company, Jack said the recent implementation of the company’s management succession plan has left him in charge of the San Antonio region.

“What happens in San Antonio is my responsibility,” Jack explained, “including all facets of the projects from procurement to close-out.” He agrees that business is tough, however, he added, “SpawGlass is extremely fortunate to be busy at this moment. Valero’s Corporate Headquarters, at Loop 1604 and IH-10, is currently our most prominent project. We’re looking for Valero’s completion during the first quarter of next year.”

Jack, who has been in the construction industry throughout his career, said it’s the people who he works within the SpawGlass company who keep him motivated. “Being able to work with and rely on really good people keeps me going. SpawGlass’ level of project supervision, from our superintendent and project manager teams to our carpenters and laborers, makes my job easier. Everyone employee at SpawGlass is a stakeholder and the success of each project is theirs. Our goal has and continues to be this: to be the best general contractor.”

SpawGlass arrives at half-century mark

A s reported in the Wed., June 25th issue of San Antonio Express News, Toyota has negotiated a labor agreement that allows non-union contractors and union contractors to compete equally for construction contracts to build its $800 million truck manufacturing facility. The automaker’s previous U.S. construction projects have been governed by union contracts. It is estimated that 95 percent of construction contractors in San Antonio are non-union.

Associated General Contractors (AGC) executive vice president, Doug McMurry, said, “The industry’s greatest concern was that Toyota not discriminate against non-union contractors. We deeply appreciate Toyota’s interest in the local construction industry. The automaker has listened carefully to our comments. Now, we are eager to work with them to build a world class manufacturing facility here in the Alamo City.”

The wage scale is expected to be set according to an average of prevailing union wages in the five-state region including Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico and Oklahoma. Toyota signed the pact with the Building and Construction Trades Council, which represents numerous construction-related trade unions. More than 2,000 laborers will be on the job site at the peak of construction.

“This is really great news!” said Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) president Steven Schultz. “Emphasis on utilizing the local construction workforce, of which over 95 percent is non-union, will enable non-union contractors to compete for the construction work on the new Toyota manufacturing facility.”
The 22nd Annual South Texas Industrial and Construction Show is back in town for two days this fall. Mark your calendars for Sept. 16th and 17th and plan to attend the large industrial technology indoors, cranes, bulldozers and other heavy equipment will be on display around the coliseum.

Local manufacturing and construction professionals won’t want to miss the 22nd Annual South Texas Industrial and Construction Show, hosted by San Antonio-based SMC Events, and co-sponsored by Labor Ready. For more information, call 210-832-8444 ext. 203 or register online at www.smcevents.com.

Calling All Energy Innovators!

Energy conservation saves money, contributes to air quality. And it’s something everyone can do.

Are you or your company an energy innovator? City Public Service (CPS) wants to recognize your efforts and use your energy-saving equipment or technique as a model for others to emulate.

Must be a CPS gas or electric customer to apply.

Award Categories:
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Commercial Builders

Criteria:
- Energy Savings
- Cost Savings
- Technology and Innovation
- Energy Education
- Transferability

Deadline: July 31, 2003

Application and brochure: www.citypublicservice.com

Questions answered at CPS/PublicInnovationAwards@cityPUBLICService.com.

Winners will be recognized at a special ceremony during Public Power Week in October.

San Antonio Construction News
PO Box 791290
San Antonio, Texas 78279
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(210) 308-5960

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It looks like they’re just going down the line in the company. I can’t wait to see what Ken Major and Fred Mayberry will come up with next to top the list. I am sure though that Fred’s will probably have something to do with a cat.

With that, I’m outa here.

To buy the guys from Hoiles of San Antonio really are a bunch of kissers. Last month, it was Big George, and this month George Jr. shows the entire industry how to “french kiss a fish”.

American Subcontractors Association will head to Port A in July, and word has it that Doug Niznik, Niznik Concrete Contractors, has unsellishly donated himself to guide a boat load of females. What a guy, to make a sacrifice like this. We also heard that wife Cindy has decided she will be first mate on this cruise.

Boy, the guys from Hoiles of San Antonio really are a bunch of kissers. Last month, it was Big George, and this month George Jr. shows the entire industry how to “french kiss a fish”.

“Now open wide”

It looks like they’re just going down the line in the company. I can’t wait to see what Ken Major and Fred Mayberry will come up with next to top the list. I am sure though that Fred’s will probably have something to do with a cat.

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22nd Annual STIC Show coming this fall

The 22nd Annual South Texas Industrial and Construction Show is back in town for two days this fall. Mark your calendars for Sept. 16th and 17th and plan to attend the large scale trade show at the Joe & Harry Freeman Coliseum.

The STIC Show, which will feature over 250 exhibitor booths, is expected to draw thousands of industry and construction-related attendees. Many companies plan their budgets around events of this magnitude.

Open on Tues., Sept. 16th, from 12 pm to 7 pm. On Wed., the show runs from 12 am to 5 pm.

While exhibitors showcase the latest industrial technology indoors, cranes, bulldozers and other heavy equipment will be on display around the coliseum.

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2003 Golden Trowel Awards presented by SAMCA

On Wed., June 25th, the San Antonio Masonry Contractors Association (SAMCA) hosted the prestigious 2003 Golden Trowel Awards competition at the Plaza Club. The Golden Trowel Awards program seeks to exalt outstanding architectural design with masonry, along with the craftsmanship required to translate a superior design into reality.

Qualifying projects were constructed by a SAMCA member, completed within the past two years, and were located in Texas. Awards were presented to the Masonry Contractor for workmanship, the Architect for design, and the Materials Supplier for quality products, which are all key ingredients for a successful project. Congratulations to all of the nominees and the winners!


The Awards program seeks to exalt outstanding architectural design with masonry, along with the craftsmanship required to translate a superior design into reality.
March Construction activates new division

The inspiration to delve into the repair and restoration of property, which is subject to coverage as a result of insurance losses, began with observations made by Jeff Specht, March Construction, Inc., following the great flood event of 1998.

“As a general contractor I thought, if we can build $3 million commercial projects from the ground up, we can repair residences that have damage resulting from fire, rain, flooding, hail, wind, overflowing appliances and other catastrophes,” Jeff recalled. “I wondered how contractors get into that niche of the industry. After doing my research, I discovered there's a need in the insurance repair industry for capable and reputable contractors who will abide by fair standards of practice.”

In April 2003, Jeff established First General Services of San Antonio, a Division of March Construction, Inc. As insurance repair specialists, the company serves the commercial and residential sectors. His greatest challenge today is developing a marketing strategy to reach several large entities, including residential homeowners, business owners, property managers and the insurance companies and adjustors.

“First General Services is a nationwide network of independently-owned insurance restoration contractors,” Jeff explained. “I went to Florida where I received training in the claims documentation and settlement process. Within the network there are over 130 contractor sources to tap, call or email if advice or support is sought. By building this service, we can help property owners who are facing a crisis. I get a lot of satisfaction in helping others.”

In the fast track, “chew 'em up and spit 'em out” world of commercial construction, Jeff said he was looking for an opportunity to diversify and generate another flow of revenue.

“I hit the insurance repair industry at an all-time low,” Jeff speculated, “when homeowners are afraid to turn in claims for water or mold damage for fear their policies will be dropped. The good news is, if you can get established when times are slow, you're in a better position when business picks up and returns to normal. As I see it, we have nowhere to go but up.”
Ms. Heather DeGrella, Lake/Flato Architects, Inc., the featured speaker at the San Antonio Masonry Contractors Association’s (SAMCA) May membership meeting, acquainted her audience with the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and the drive underway to create an alliance with its Austin Chapter.

“One of the reasons we want to form the Balcones Chapter, which would include members from Austin, San Antonio and all parts in between, is to address our Texas-born concerns, including water efficiency, quality and conservation,” Heather explained. “USGBC’s unique perspective and collective power provides its members with enormous opportunity to effect change in the way buildings are designed, built and maintained.”

After pointing out statistics on the impact commercial and residential buildings have on the environment, including millions of tons of construction and demolition waste, Heather defined “green” design, the benefits of “green” building, and the LEED® Green Building Rating System.

A handout she distributed explained that LEED® was created to define “green building” by establishing a common standard of measurement; to promote integrated, whole-building design practices; to recognize environmental leadership in the building industry; to stimulate green competition; raise consumer awareness of green building benefits and transform the building market.

Several masonry contractors and suppliers wanted to know how their industry and companies, which utilize brick, mortar and stone, could contribute to construction projects seeking LEED® points and certification.

“Through building re-use,” she answered, “or maintaining a percentage of shell and non-shell components of a structure. Also, through resource re-use, including salvaged and/or refurbished masonry materials. Products with any recycled content, such as fly ash, also contribute to achieving points. Regarding construction waste management, points are gained when 50 percent or more of demolition and construction materials are recycled or salvaged. The use of local/regional materials manufactured within a 500-mile radius, thus reducing costs associated with transportation, produces points, as does the use of materials extracted or recovered locally.”

The “green” building initiatives that have been so successful in Austin are gaining momentum in San Antonio, propelling its design, engineering and construction community toward the production of a new generation of buildings that deliver high-performance, inside and out.

Why wait all year for an opportunity to thank and appreciate your customers? The staff at Ameri-can Tile Supply hosts a mouth-watering monthly backyard feast for their customers, usually on the second Friday of the month, come rain or shine.

On Fri., June 13th, ATS’s Bert Delgado and Sherri Karam greeted about 75 tile contractors and business associates and invited them to sit under the shade of the big oak tree to enjoy hot-off-the-pit chicken and beef fajitas with all the fixin’s. Chocolate cake was served for dessert and the early arrivals made it disappear as fast as lightening.

Mike Simpson, regional sales rep for AQUAMIX, was the featured vendor.

American Tile Supply’s Jessica Peppler brought the cooking rig and prepared the feast!
Consultant brings expertise to the “kitchen” table

For almost 30 years, Gary Strickland has channeled his talents around food facility design and function. After a six-year tour of duty in the U.S. Air Force, from 1968 to 1974, he attended East Tennessee State University and entered the niche industry as an estimator for a foodservice equipment dealer. Today, he is the owner/president of San Antonio-based Strickland Consulting Company. Specializing in food facility design and layout services, the firm offers complete consulting service dedicated to plans and specifications for architects and owners in addition to assisting contractors and equipment dealers in project programming and installation.

“We are a small business with a professional staff,” Gary began. “Our consulting services are available for all sizes and types of food facilities, including restaurants, convenience facilities, schools, hotels, government institutions, hospitals and assisted living facilities, and business and industry, among others. Proactive and professional relationships on design teams are a vital part of our company’s approach to kitchen design.”

A recent newcomer to our city, Gary and his wife moved to San Antonio in the fall of 2002 in order to be closer to family members. “I like this part of the country and the people are very friendly,” Gary said. “I have been dealing with architects and general contractors who have welcomed me as part of their teams. Sharing my knowledge with their people in the field, keeping everyone’s plans marred to each other’s, can be a huge advantage in the current atmosphere of fast-track construction. There isn’t any kind of food facility that I haven’t worked on during my career.”

In his opinion, Gary believes the food facility design niche is underserved locally, and he said most of the independent consultants who come to San Antonio are from Houston, Austin, or Dallas.

“There are large food facility equipment dealers across the country who offer similar services from in-house consulting staff. I don’t sell equipment, I sell service, to include plans, specifications and 28-years of experience. Recently, the City of San Antonio called for a request for qualifications regarding a feasibility and usability study focused on the restaurant operations at the Tower of the Americas. Looking at the big picture, they want to determine its maximum potential. That is just one type of project where my expertise could be useful.”

From the construction standpoint, Gary has seen aspects of the food facility design business evolve tremendously over his tenure in the industry.

“When I started in the business, the profit margins were larger because the projects took longer to complete. Everything was done methodically and by the book. In the mid-1980’s, when the design/build concept emerged, everybody ran with it. Today,” he concluded, “the plans sometimes aren’t finalized until after they start building. Staying organized is more important than ever!”
After conducting business in San Antonio from a distance, the results of a demographic study compelled the owners of Houston-based Lighting Inc. to open its doors in San Antonio. Founded in 1959 by Herb Bailey, the family-owned company spent eight months renovating an 18,000-sf property located at the intersection of Lockhill Selma and Blanco. Headquartered in Houston, Lighting Inc. also has operations in Austin.

San Antonio Construction News spoke with the company’s general manager, Gabriel Trinidad, who said the new San Antonio showroom/warehouse facility is state-of-the-art. “Since 1959, through today,” Gabriel began, “the most profound lesson we have learned is that customers who have money, even in slower economic times, still have money. Our market niche has always been the medium to large custom homes, as well as light commercial and landscape lighting. We think San Antonio can sustain our type of showroom. Many of Lighting Inc.’s products are one-of-a-kind pieces imported from Europe and the Far East, that people can’t get anywhere else. There is a perceived value when the client knows the pieces he’s buying are not in anyone’s catalog.”

By sharing its showroom space with independently-owned Window Fashions of Texas, two destination points for consumers, designers, architects and builders have been created. Open for business on Fri., June 13th, Lighting Inc. offers a retail operation along with its lighting design services. “An architect or designer will email a set of plans for our review,” Gabriel explained. “We augment and redesign the lighting portion, calculating the recesses and dimming on AutoCAD, then send it back to the design professionals for their approval. We literally become the design team’s best friend. Then, we archive those plans and keep them on file. This enables the customer, who has made a large investment in the lighting systems, to contact us if they have a question about any aspect of the system. It’s a very unique service.”

A tour of the dramatic lighting showroom reveals the amount of thought, time and capital the company invested in its upscale design studio.

“We have real-time examples of recessed, track, and cave lighting, together with dimming systems,” Gabriel concluded. “Our ability to bring clients into the lighting laboratory exposes them to unlimited possibilities.”

Lighting Inc.’s Gabriel Trinidad welcomes design professionals.

 Builders/subs alert for OSHA seminar

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and the NAHB Research Center, through an OSHA-funded grant, has developed a 6-hour seminar to reach all builders, subcontractors, their supervisors and their workers. The seminar, titled “Recognizing the Big Four Safety Hazards for the Home Building Industry,” will be held on July 24th, 25th and 26th at the Greater San Antonio Builders Association (GSABA) offices, 4204 Gardendale, #312.

This training seminar, which focuses on key issues regarding safety and health, will be taught separately in both English and Spanish. Special emphasis will be placed on OSHA’s four most recognized hazards – Falls, Electrocutions, Caught-In’s and Struck-By’s. Participants will learn what it means to be part of an effective company safety and health program and of the management commitment and employee involvement required to maintain a program.

In addition to the 6-hour safety seminar, a four-hour Train-the-Trainer course is offered to individuals who want to prepare themselves as trainers, in order to effectively deliver the safety information to company employees or subcontractors. To register, call Debbie Garcia at 210-696-3800 or dgarcia@sabuilders.com.
D

uring a casual conversation with R.J. Cotter, Cotter Mechanical, Inc., he revealed his passion for genealogy, the study of the history of families and the line of descent from their ancestors. In the mid-1970’s, as the mechanical contractor sat next to his 92-year-old grandfather’s deathbed, he listened to the old stories.

“My grandfather, Francis ‘Frank’ Cotter, was sharp as a tack,” R.J. explained to me, “and when someone at the hospital asked him how he became a brick mason, he mentioned that he had learned the trade from his father, who had learned it from his father.”

R.J.’s great grandfather, William Cotter, emigrated from Ireland to New York, then took a train as far west as he could go. He engaged in fur trapping along the Missouri River with a man named Joseph Robidoux, who established the Blacksnake Hills trading post with the Indians in 1826. Robidoux’s post became the City of St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1843. When the town was forming, Joseph hired R.J.’s great grandfather to build most of the chimneys in the town.

“As he lay dying, my grandfather explained that his father, William, was building chimneys for plantation owners along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers,” R.J. continued, “and he developed a near-fatal fever when he was near New Orleans. He made the comment to the nuns who cared for him that if he lived, he would embrace their religion. He became a Catholic.”

Another ancestor, R.J. discovered, was a French-Canadian fur trapper, Jacques Fostin, who, in circa 1750, sold land to Indians near the Teche. John’s brother Louis is R.J’s direct ancestor.

Great-grandfather William Cotter, R.J. learned, was a small man weighing 132 lbs, who fought for the South during the Civil War. A cavalryman, he lost two horses; one to a cannonball and one to a mountain lion. Even though he fought for the Confederacy, William thought the right side won. Returning to St. Joseph, he met and married an Irish woman named Catharine Gray. They had five sons, the youngest of whom was R.J.’s grandfather Frank Cotter. The five brothers became brick masons, and they traveled to San Antonio to help build the main post office in Alamo Plaza in about 1890. Four of the brothers returned and settled in San Antonio, establishing Cotter Brothers Brick Contractors.

All of the Cotter brothers cussed up a storm,” R.J. confessed, “except for my grandfather, who said his brothers lacked the proficiency of the English language! He never said a cuss word, nor did my dad, Robert Paul ‘R.P.’ Cotter.”

Through the years, R.J. has collected files full of documentation and clues as his research continued. Although he utilized the Mormon’s records, he didn’t find them to be very trustworthy, preferring information avenues provided through the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), Colonial Dames Society, Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT), and the Order of the Magna Carta.

“When I first started my research,” R.J. continued, “I discovered most of my family on my mother’s side was from New Iberia, Louisiana. They were among the first settlers, arriving in the late 1600’s. One of my ancestors, a Frenchman named Prevost, worked in the service of Spain and was rewarded with land in the form of a King’s Grant. Along came the Caney Islanders in the early 1700’s, and my ancestor sold them land along Bayou Teche, which became the downtown area of New Iberia.”

Another ancestor, R.J. discovered, was a French-Canadian fur trapper, Jacques Fostin, who, in circa 1750, sold land to Indian Chief Chicago, near Ft. de Chartres, along the Kaskasia River in what was known as Illinois Country. The fur trapper made his way to New Orleans and became a brewer.

Another branch of R.J.’s family emigrated from England and fought in the Revolutionary War. In 1640, Englishman William Henshaw married Katherine Houghton, and they had two sons,” R.J. recounted. “The blue-blooded Henshaw was beheaded in a siege over his lands, and his wife returned to her people, the Stanleys. She sent her two sons to Boston, where they were to be tutored by Richard Mather, who later founded Harvard University. Once they died shipboard and the remaining son, Joshua Henshaw, arrived in tac. He became wealthy, returned to England in 1648, and conducted a 12-year court battle to reclaim his father’s usurped lands. On the night the case was settled, he died of indigestion, or as one report stated, of poisoning. His sons remained in Pennsylvania and prospered. My ancestor, a descendent of Josh’s, Capt. William Henshaw, fought against the English in the Revolutionary war. His daughter married Virginian Louis Moore, who fought in the same war.”

An educated man, Moore and his family were lured to Louisiana with the promise of free land. They headed west by river, followed the Natches Trace, and were given land. His grandson, John Moore, became a U.S. Senator, and is buried in a plantation graveyard at the Shadows of New Iberia. His son, John’s brother Louis is R.J.’s direct ancestor.

“In 1830,” R.J. noted, “a Frenchman named Patout immigrated to New Orleans. He married Napoleon Fournier, a woman whose family helped finance Napoleon I. After establishing a sugar cane plantation in Louisiana, Mrs. Patout returned to France to collect monies still owed her family from the next ruler of France, Napoleon II. She returned to Louisiana with gold, which she used to purchase more land and plant more cane. Today, a town named Patoutville, just south of New Iberia, is famed for its old sugar mill, which is still operating today. My mother, Chere’s a Patout.”

The stories are never-ending and R.J. knows his research will be for naught if he doesn’t get it organized and compiled in a readable format.

“In talking about it, I’m finding it more than I’m remembering,” R.J. admitted. “There’s a chapter of the Genealogy Society in San Antonio, and those people have been enormously helpful in the search for my ancestors. It’s funny, but when you go back in time, you might find that for every blueblood in your heritage, there are a hundred beggars and slaves. This is a great hobby and it’s neat to pass it down to my kids. I guess I may need to retire one more time if I ever going to finish.”

Contractor tracks lineage to 17th century
By Jane Day Loter

Amateur genealogist R.J. Cotter, Cotter Mechanical, Inc.
Texas architects take trip to historic Italy

By Rachel Jordan, Austin Construction News

In May 2000, members of the Texas Society of Architects (TSA) crossed the Atlantic to visit Italy, one of the last bastions of master building and architecture. In May of this year, TSA boarded 46 of its members and some members of their family on a plane for another tour of Italy. This year’s trip was themed, “Italy, the best of cities, villages and countryside.”

Four years ago, Julius Gribou, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Texas San Antonio, came up with the idea for the trip. He consulted Gayle Pickering, senior director of TSA, and together they developed an itinerary.

“In Italy there is an abundance of architecture and building that has more than stood the test of time,” said Pickering. “I think it is inspiring for architects to see the amount of detail that went into projects. It is also somewhat humbling.”

Again this year, Gribou served as the trip escort and was very excited to expose more architects to a place where people still live and interact daily in places of great history. “The beauty of Italian cities is that you can see how the city has developed around its history,” said Gribou. “The historic public places are alive. That is something that typically doesn’t exist anymore in the United States.”

The architects spent two weeks traveling throughout the country. Starting in Venice, they toured Florence, Tuscany and ended at their final destination, Rome. The group spent six nights in the heart of Florence. Optional day trips included excursions to Assisi, Sienna, Pienza, Montepulciano, San Gimigniano, Cortona and the Chianti region.

“To an extent, we saw the heart of Italy,” said Gribou. “Throughout the trip, we focused on the historical aspects and the layers of history found in almost all areas of the cities,” said Gribou. “Italy has such rich layers and it is absolutely wonderful to see them. I can go there time and time again and always find something new.”

Plaza in Venice, Italy. Photo courtesy of Charles Thompson, Archillume Lighting Design.
Partners establish Enhanced Concrete

A bout three months ago, three partners with diverse talents established Enhanced Concrete, a decorative concrete contracting business. Focused on the residential and light commercial markets, the company is based in New Braunfels and conducts business in cities along the I-35 corridor and in the Hill Country.

The company’s founding partner, Dallas Haupt, who resides in Georgia at this time, enrolled in and attended training courses conducted by Increte, a major concrete supplier headquartered in Florida. Andrew Ulcak, the company’s project manager and field supervisor, received the same training in Dallas.

Rick Hodges is the business manager and marketing director.

San Antonio Construction News spoke with Rick and Andrew, who both agreed that concrete staining and stamping applications are becoming popular among residential builders, interior designers, architects, landscape professionals, commercial developers, and homeowners.

“Our primary targets are new residential construction, new and existing light commercial, and residential or commercial exterior applications,” Rick said.

“Many affluent homeowners are realizing that their overall landscaping can be nicely enhanced with decorative concrete applications. When we have completed a nice residential job, it’s not long before the neighbors start calling us. The curb appeal is irresistible!”

The beauty of concrete staining is measured in many ways, including the fact that each application has its individual identity.

“You cannot duplicate applications with exact precision,” Andrew explained, “because the chemical reaction with the concrete is variable by nature. Surfaces can be finished in smooth, glossy, matte or skid-resistant finishes and, best of all, the floor doesn’t require much maintenance.”

What began as an industry design trend has exploded into a functional flooring option. The secret to its beauty and appeal is all in the preparation, Andrew emphasized.

“That’s why most people shouldn’t do it themselves,” Andrew warned, “unless they are determined to be patient and complete each step of the process. I may be biased, but I encourage folks to rely on professionals for the best results.”

Comfortable within the service industry, Rick and Andrew understand the importance of client satisfaction.

“By utilizing meticulous methods and standing behind our work,” Rick concluded, “clients are going to keep coming back and will refer us to their friends or associates. We’re definitely in this for the long haul!”

CSI honors members and craftsmen

On Tues., June 17th, about 140 members and guests of Construction Specifications Institute – San Antonio Chapter (CSI) gathered at the I-Burn Restaurant for its annual Product Show and Awards Banquet.

A social hour preceded dinner, allowing time for several vendors to casually discuss their products and services with members. They included: Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ); Berridge Manufacturing Co.; City Public Service; Dupont Tyvek; Southwest Concrete Products; Versa-Lock; The Green Connection; Munters; and A.D. Willis Co., Inc.

CSI is the association that developed the project manual for all architects. They established the format for architectural and construction specification guidelines, which is under constant review and subject to revision.

According to Dan Donihoo, CSI, CDT, Dupont Tyvek, every set of plans has a format outline, which was developed by the CSI. The organization also offers continuing education courses for architects at local meetings, national and regional trade shows.

“Decades ago,” Dan explained, “the CSI set standards. Today everyone is playing with the same rules and game plan. Our members include architects, project architects, and design team specifiers, among others. Many large firms have a specialist whose function is to write specifications. Also, there are freelance specification companies who write for multiple firms.”

Chapter president Tom Kita, General Supply Co., welcomed everyone and presented local chapter awards to committee and board members for their efforts and contributions to the association. After dinner, George J. Muyres, CSI, CDT, GJM Consulting, Inc., joined Tom in presenting two Craftsmanship Awards in recognition of the abilities displayed by craftsmen to execute the architects’ design and vision.

Terry Willis, president of Austin-based A.D. Willis Company, Inc., accepted the CSI Craftsmanship Award for his company’s work on Hemisfair Plaza’s Insti- tuto Cultural Mexicano exterior wall, which features decorative sheet metal.

Nominated by architectural firm Overland Partners for his ornate metalwork at the Hyatt Hill Country Resort Wildflower Spa, artist and master metal craftsman Daniel Baumann accepted a CSI Craftsmanship Award.

In conclusion, the 2003-2004 CSI officers and board members were announced.

One of the outstanding features of the River Walk is the Arneson River Theater, completed in 1981 and named after the project’s first consulting engineer, Mr. E.P. Arneson, who died in 1938 before construction began. The American Society of Civil Engineers has designated the River Walk and Flood Control project as a National Historical Civil Engineer- ing Landmark.

Engineering in San Antonio’s History

By H. Douglas Steadman, P.E.
family-owned and operated for almost 50 years, The Koehler Company, a Seguin-based millwork and general contractor, has named Marty Garza as its new vice president of operations. The Texas A&M graduate, who began his new job in June, brings 20 years of construction industry experience to the position. In recent years, Marty served as assistant director of construction for Texas A&M University and as vice president of operations for Centex Construction Company.

CEO Charles L. Koehler is joined by his two sons; Steve, president of the construction division, and Gregg, vice president of the millwork operations, in the ownership of the company. San Antonio Construction News asked Marty how his relationship with the Koehler’s evolved?

He said he’s known Gregg for 20 years. “Gregg and I met in 1981.” Marty began, “when I first got into the general contracting side of construction and he was a supplier of millwork. I met Steve two years ago when we were both pursuing a hospital project. We constantly discussed ways in which the general contractor I worked for could help The Koehler Company through various partnering mechanisms.”

In his new position, Marty will manage and oversee all of the construction operations for The Koehler Company, which specializes in high-end, custom residential projects, including estates, manors and ranches. As a board member, Marty will be the outside eyes, so to speak, reviewing and analyzing the company’s current processes in the mill as well as in construction operations. “The Koehler Company has been around almost 50 years,” Marty explained, “and the entire operation has been run by family members, none of whom have ever worked anywhere outside of the company.”

The Koehler Company’s revenues this year will almost double from last year, and its principals are determined to manage its spiraling growth in a responsible manner. “They were looking for someone from the outside, who is familiar with larger companies, to help them grow efficiently and profitably,” Marty confirmed.

Faced with an immense learning curve, Marty feels driven to fulfill his goal of helping The Koehler Company. “I’m excited to be here,” he concluded. “The Koehler Company has a solid reputation for honesty and integrity, and the quality of work the firm produces speaks for itself. It’s my goal to help Charles, Steve and Gregg in the strategic growth and development of the company, taking it to the next level of prosperity.”

CFMA delivers $15K in scholarships

Congratulations to CFMA’s 2003 Cindy P. Dennis Scholarship recipients.

The Construction Financial Management Association San Antonio Chapter (CFMA) held true to its annual tradition of delivering college scholarships to support students majoring in construction and/or business fields. On Fri., May 30th, The Club at Sonterra hosted the CFMA’s 7th Annual Cindy P. Dennis Scholarship Presentation, Officer Installation and Las Vegas Night, at which $15,000 in scholarships were awarded.

“Too date,” said immediate past-president Bill Gehhausen, Bartlett Cocke, LP “CFMA’s Cindy P. Dennis Scholarship Fund has awarded over $58,000 in scholarships. Thanks to the generosity of our members and contributing sponsors, we were able to award another $15,000, the most we have ever raised in one year, to deserving students tonight.”

The scholarship is named for the CFMA San Antonio Chapter founder, Cindy P. Dennis, who also helped establish the scholarship fund in 1997, two years before her untimely death in 1999.

Donna Stafford, Jeers General Contractors, Ltd., organized the coat-and-tie affair, which was attended by over 100 members and their guests.

After dinner, scholarship committee co-chairs William Dawley, HCDT Insurance Agency and David Waddell, Padgett, Strattman & Co., LLP, presented fifteen scholarships to the following qualified recipients: Pamela Cooney, SWTSU; Elizabeth Darden, UT-Austin; Russell Harder, Texas A&M; Erik Haussmann, Texas A&M University; Amy Nicole Jordan, UIW; Robbie J. Klekar, Texas A&M; Bernadette Labar, UTSA; Kristine Logan, Northwood University; Jacob McBride, Texas A&M; John Mengel, Baylor University; Ross Onedruek, UIW; John Poettgen, St. Mary’s University; Michael Polka, UT-Austin; Joshua Wise, SWTSU; and Kimberly Wise, SWTSU.

CFMA, dedicated to serving construction financial professionals, is a nationwide organization. The San Antonio Chapter is a group of local individuals that share common ideas, perspectives, and experiences in the construction industry. The chapter provides networking, scholarships, educational seminars, personal growth and community support. Over the last six years, the chapter has awarded 74 scholarships to students in the area.

Got poop? That’s getting straight to the point! Written on the windshield of the newest addition to PitStop Portable Restroom’s fleet of service vehicles, in this case, pottery talk is good for business.
ARCHITECTURAL ACCESSIBILITY IN TEXAS

FOCUS ON ACCESSIBILITY LAWS & STANDARDS
The Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS) ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS
Texas Civil Statutes, Article 9102
Common Design and Construction Errors

TAS 4.4-Protruding Objects.

4.4.1 General. "Objects projecting from walls (for example telephones) with their leading edges between 27 inches and 80 inches above the finished floor shall protrude no more than 4” into walks, halls, corridors, passageways, or aisles."

Requirements in 4.4 are based on standard cane techniques used by people with vision impairments. There are two principal techniques: the touch technique and the diagonal technique. People are often trained to use both. The touch technique involves arching the cane side-to-side to detect points beyond both shoulders and is often used in uncontrolled areas. The diagonal technique involves holding the cane in a stationary position diagonally across the body with the bottom tip at the ground beyond one shoulder and the grip extending beyond the other shoulder. This technique is generally used in certain controlled and familiar environments. The standard sweep of the canes allows detection of objects with leading edges up to 27 inches from the floor.

Requirements for protruding objects apply to all circulation routes, including both accessible and inaccessible routes and include corridors, walks, courtyards, stairways, and areas of circulation. Typical protruding object violations include telephones, high side of drinking fountains, and fire extinguishers.

Wage survey requires your prompt response

In keeping with a cyclical tradition, Associated General Contractors is organizing an industry-wide wage survey as requested by two local school districts; namely Northside ISD and San Antonio ISD. As required by state statutes, public entities such as school districts have to have a current wage survey, the results of which are used in their specifications.

Other trade associations, including Mechanical Contractors Association (MCA-SIMACNA), American Subcontractors Association (ASA), National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA), Air Conditioning Contractors Association – San Antonio (ACCA-SA), and Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC), are participating by distributing the survey to their respective member shops.

"It’s imperative that we cast the net far and wide, bringing in as many participants as possible for the most accurate results,” said AGC, executive vice president Doug McMurry. “The survey presents an accurate representation of how much money hourliy wage earners are receiving, including painters, air conditioning technicians, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, ironworkers, and others."

The survey, which is conducted approximately every three years, costs about $13,000 to produce and can be sold to any number of school districts.

As with previous surveys,” Doug continued, “we have commissioned account-
firm Padgett, Stratemann and Co. to audit and compile the information. They know the Department of Labor methodology and have unique insight into the construction industry. By providing them the appropriate databases, PSC &C staffers will send out the survey, follow-up, and remind people to return the completed surveys. Results should be published in mid-August.

The survey, which is sent to business owners/managers who complete it on behalf of their wage-earning employees, has historically revealed slight increases in wages.

"It’s absolutely crucial that we have sold responses from the people in all of the trades,” Doug concluded. “In previous years, we have presented the results to, for example, the Spurs, when the SBC Center arena was under development. I wouldn’t be surprised to see this survey make its way into the hands of Toyota."

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This insurance contract is with an insurer not licensed to transact insurance in this state and is issued and delivered as a surplus line coverage pursuant to the Texas insurance statutes. The State Board of Insurance does not audit the finances or review the solvency of the surplus lines insurer providing this coverage, and this insurer is not a member of the property and casualty insurance guaranty association created under Article 21.28-C Insurance Code. Article 114.2-Insurance Code, requires payment of 4.85 percent tax on gross premium.

What exactly is a surplus lines (non-admitted) company and what is the purpose of the Guaranty Fund?

In Texas, a non-admitted (surplus lines) company has no Guaranty Fund protection and has unregulated forms and rates with oversight provided by the Texas Stamping Office.

On the other hand, an admitted (or standard market) company has a certificate of authority from the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI), it is regulated by TDI and its policyholders are protected by the Guaranty Fund. The Texas Property and Casualty Insurance Guaranty Association (TPCIGA) was created by the Texas Legislature in 1971. It was created to provide a way to pay covered property and casualty claims and to avoid financial loss to claimants because of the impairment of insurers.

The Guaranty Fund covers all kinds of property and casualty insurance, including workers compensation, written by stock and mutual companies, county of property and casualty insurance, in addition to the surplus lines insurer providing this coverage, and this insurer is not a member of the property and casualty insurance guaranty association created under Article 21.28-C Insurance Code. Article 114.2-Insurance Code, requires payment of 4.85 percent tax on gross premium.

This article specifically addresses a general contractor’s rights when the owner fails to make progress payments for work on a construction project administered by the architect. Many of the general principals set forth in this article may also apply to subcontractors.

This clause typically requires the architect within so many days after receiving the contractor’s application for payment to either issue a Certificate for Payment or notify the owner and contractor in writing of the reasons for withholding certification.

In the event the owner fails to timely pay the Certificate of Payment issued, the contractor must determine the next move. Rapid communication is vital.

All proceedings pending in a Texas court in which the impaired insurer is a party or is obligated to defend a party is raised on appeal from the date of impairment.

For further information, please contact your agent or TPCIGA at (800) 856-0298.

By Walter Benson

Ferguson Enterprises, Inc. is opening a satellite location on the northbound access road of IH-35 N at Thousand Oaks. This move matches with the opening of the seventh Ferguson Enterprises operation in the territory it serves, which includes San Antonio in Karnes and in one in New Braunfels.

Targeting an August 1st opening date, the general contractor is busy making final preparations as the interior remodel approaches completion and ample inventory is delivered to stack the shelves.

San Antonio Construction News spoke with company controller, Chris McRae, who said the new branch would stock the same product breadth as other Ferguson Enterprises location. Ferguson Enterprises, Inc. is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"We’re going to stock everything that we carry -- as good as we can. If customers need to do work each day," Chris said. "By positioning ourselves in the area that is more convenient for our customers, it will be easier for them to do business with us."
The Section 179 expensing changes are effective for tax years beginning after 2003. If your business has a calendar year end, then this benefit can take effect January 1, 2003. The maximum annual Sec. 179 expense amount for 2003 is now $100,000 (it was previously not allowed as a deduction). The maximum annual Sec. 179 expense amount can be reduced if the amount of the total cost of all tangible personal property placed in service during the tax year exceeds $400,000 (previously it was $200,000). The dollar amounts above will be inflation-indexed for tax years beginning after 2003.

**Bonus first-year depreciation:** If your business purchases tangible personal property after May 5, 2003 and before 2005 and places the property in service before 2005, then a 50% special bonus first-year depreciation (or not to claim the bonus first-year depreciation or elect to claim the 30 percent bonus first-year depreciation instead of the 50 percent bonus depreciation or to elect out of it entirely) would be (1) if the business is not operating losses that are about to expire, or (2) the business anticipates being in a higher tax bracket in future years.

**Corporate Estimated Tax Payments for 2003:** A calendar year corporation’s estimated tax payments must be made no later than April 15, June 15, Sept. 15 and Dec. 15. With the new tax act, 25 percent of the Sept. 15th estimated tax payment is due Oct. 1, 2003. You are still required to pay in 75% of the estimated tax payment on Sept 15th. The due dates for all other estimated tax payments are not changed by this act.

The 25% change in the Sept 15th estimated tax payment to October 1, 2003 affects corporations using a calendar year end of 2003 (third payment would be due Sept. 15, 2003), a fiscal year ending March 31, 2004 (second payment would be due Sept. 15, 2003), a fiscal year ending June 30, 2004 (first payment would be due Sept. 15, 2003) and a fiscal year ending September 30, 2003 (last payment would be due Sept. 15, 2003). This provision allows you as a business owner the option to claim the 30 percent bonus first-year depreciation or to elect out of it entirely or to elect the 50 percent bonus depreciation.

The Florida Scramble tournament will include silent auction, raffle, door prizes, entertainment, and your choice of AM/PM flights. For more information on sponsorship or playing, call Steve Mechter, Mechter & Associates, at 210-545-0085, or Jeff May at 210-336-6623. 
On Wed., June 18th, Rental Service Corporation (RSC) opened its spacious yard on E. Houston St. to shoppers who came to make a deal on used equipment. The annual yard sale, intended to move out the used equipment to make room for the new, stimulated interest from many factions of the construction industry, including equipment wholesalers.

San Antonio Construction News

spoke with general manager Carlos Osuna, who said the yard sale started at 7 am and would remain open until closing time. "We are selling big, booms, small booms, extended-reach forklifts, backhoes, air compressors, small excavators, trenchers, light towers, generators, welders, assorted hand tools and much more," he said. "We're trying to reduce our older inventory to make room for newer models coming in, and we expect about 100 folks to come by." With used equipment neatly arranged according to descending order of sizes, the yard still had ample space for a large, shady tent, tables and chairs. To reward its shoppers and buyers, RSC provided a catered Texas-style lunch, courtesy of Snogas BBQ.

In addition to used equipment, several vendors set up new equipment and tool displays for interested customers. They included Target, Multi-Quip; Stihl; and The Lawless Group.

Wayne Benton III and Mitch Scott are district managers for Target. RSC is one of the concrete-cutting equipment manufacturer's largest customers in the country.

The largest concentration of bats in the world is found in Bracken Cave near San Antonio, home to some 20 million Mexican free-tailed bats.

The Statement of Administration Policy (SAP) companion class, titled "Construction Contracts & Law," will offer methodologies about how builders can protect themselves from expensive misunderstandings. Attendees will learn about mandatory and optional provisions in building and remodeling contracts, discuss when and how to seek legal help, and discover state and local resources. Special emphasis is given to interpreting contracts and detecting unfavorable provisions, which is targeted for any small volume builder and remodeling contractor without a large staff.

Both classes are scheduled from 9 am to 4 pm, with lunch provided. Cost is $185, and more information may be obtained by contacting GSABA.
A s my canoe glides silently across the still pool, I can hear river music. The muffled sound of water passing recklessly over rocks. Somewhere up ahead, probably around the next bend, is a narrow place where the river necks down and passes through a shallow and constricted chute. It's the kind of place that most river adventurers long for. It's where the novice is separated from the experienced. But it's often where both are separated from boat and gear. Look below each set of rapids and you are apt to find everything from unopened beer cans to cameras.

I think about that as I drift. I sure don't want to lose my tackle. A new Abu Garcia Cardinal on one rod and a Mitchell 300X on a Berkley Pro Series Lightning Rod are two things a fisherman would cry over if he lost. I know. In 1984, we celebrated our first wedding anniversary by canoeing the Guadalupe one cold, clammy Tuesday afternoon in February. As we went over the falls, the bow of our canoe knifed into water fed by frigid February, bringing the icy Spring in around us. We wouldn't have made it in the chilling water, otherful that we had put our life jackets on before the falls. We walked away from the wreck and back up river to our car late that afternoon, still shivering, but thankful.

The scene knowing what they had done. At least on the scene knowing what they had done. At least on the Ouchita canoe, only 12 inches of it were sticking straight ahead, probably around the next bend, is a narrow place where the river necks down and passes through a shallow and constricted chute. It's the kind of place that most river adventurers long for. It's where the novice is separated from the experienced. But it's often where both are separated from boat and gear. Look below each set of rapids and you are apt to find everything from unopened beer cans to cameras.

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The first of these boating murders took the life of a school graduation. The third took the life of a recent Texas Tech grad on Lake LBJ. All three homicides remain unsolved. Game wardens are still looking for a blue boat and a white boat with a red stripe in the last two cases. Both boats have damaged hulls. Both operators have blood on their hands.

So give me a stream this summer. Even the Guadalupe, with its myriad tubers, can be floated and fished if you hit the water before the onslaught of cavorters. There are small-mouths above and below Canyon Dam, and good large-mouths, perch and catfish above and below Seguin. The Llano, if there's enough water, is nice in places. The Colorado, though, below Austin, may offer the best shot at peaceful fishing.

It's still, but still has current on its way to the coast. Overhanging trees provide a little shade during midday. The fishing can be fine.

River bass don't usually get very large, but they are so under fished that the action is superb. Catfish, perch and gaspergou also help put protein on your plate, and so under fished that the action is superb. Catfish, perch and gaspergou also help put protein on your plate, and so under fished that the action is superb. Catfish, perch and gaspergou also help put protein on your plate, and so under fished that the action is superb. Catfish, perch and gaspergou also help put protein on your plate, and so under fished that the action is superb. Catfish, perch and gaspergou also help put protein on your plate, and so under fished that the action is superb. Catfish, perch and gaspergou also help put protein on your plate, and so under fished that the action is superb. Catfish, perch and gaspergou also help put protein on your plate, and so under fished that the action is superb.

While still in the calm of the placid pool, I secure my rod and reel and camera (in its water-proof case, tied in to the gunwales) before venturing toward the rapids. I love the excitement of a swift river. But I thrive on slow water solitude, as well. In Central Texas, we are blessed with a number of floatable streams. Most of them are a drift fisherman's dream.

As I think back on the boating tragedies of the past few years, to float a stream too narrow, too shallow in places and way too rocky for big boats sounds like safe harbor in a storm of idocy. Three young boaters have been struck and killed by hit and run skippers who left the scene knowing what they had done. At least on the river, I usually just have to worry about my own recklessness.

The first of these boating murders took the life of a new father on Lake Austin. The second killed a kid who wanted to go to A&M and become a game warden and who was fishing at night on Lake Buchanan with his girlfriend and another friend two weeks before his high school graduation. The third took the life of a recent Texas Tech grad on Lake LBJ. All three homicides remain unsolved. Game wardens are still looking for a blue boat and a white boat with a red stripe in the last two cases. Both boats have damaged hulls. Both operators have blood on their hands.

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With each charter over the past three to four weeks, we have seen a definite improvement in fish patterns and bait activity on coastal waters. Speckled trout are making the transition early in the morning from shallow water to deeper holes and channels seeking cooler water temperatures. Cooler water means higher oxygen content for the dog days of summer when tides are low and water movement is minimal. Deep water in July and August is the equivalent to shade in coastal waters of South Texas.

I’d like to go over a few tips in helping you find fish and stay on them longer to improve your catch ratio. Hopefully, these suggestions will make you a better and smarter fisherman during harsh summer conditions. The first and probably the most important key to catching fish during the heat of the summer is live bait. Croakers and piggy perch are the choice of 90 percent of the area guides when water temperatures reach the 90-degree mark. Keeping this expensive bait alive and running through the pumps for several minutes before going belly-up is to disinfect your system to fish. Not to worry, you have an alternative plan, right?

Most people know that you can set up one or two fishing holes to go every time they go out. Most of the time, they catch fish and have a good day. It’s the days when there is someone already there, or the fish have moved to another area, that they struggle. These are the times you should explore different areas of the bay system to fish when summertime crowds get hectic.

Don’t underestimate the power of a healthy golden croaker on the end of your line to help you locate fish. Among the larger areas to try is the Kenedy Ranch Shoreline from Rock Slough to Penascal Point. This shoreline is a vast area to fish and can hold both redfish and speckled trout during the summer. Other great places to try include the south shore of Baffin Bay from Los Corrales to White Bluff, and don’t forget about the Tide Gauge Bar when the winds allow you to anchor on the outside. All of these areas can accommodate many boats and can be accessed without running over other fisherman getting there.

Now that you know where to fish, don’t ruin it by blowing in with your 200-hp motor and launching the anchor as far as you can, catching it splash and hoping it is going to hold. Use your trolling motor or a push pole to position your boat into the area and ease the anchor over the side to leave you between 40 to 80 yards from the structure or area you want to fish. Remember, you can always get closer, but once you have crowded your spot, it’s probably too late.

Whether you fish with a guide or fish on your own, croaker fishing can be a sure way of replenishing fillets in your freezer. After all, fish can be a lot more fun when you’re catching. Capt. Steve Schultz can be contacted toll-free at 888-724-FISH for a fishing trip, or at www.baffinbaycharters.com. Several good dates are still available for August and September.

Good luck and good fishing.
Texas hunting, fishing, boat fees to increase

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Commission voted unanimously on May 29th to increase most hunting and fishing licenses and boat registration fees. The cost of senior and youth license types will not increase.

Hunting and fishing license changes will take effect when new season licenses go on sale on Aug 15th. Boat fee increases will take effect Sept 1st, which means boat owners who get renewal notices with August expirations will see the higher fee schedule.

For the past two months, the department has sought public input about the fee proposal. All told, 61 people commented about boat fees and 158 commented about hunting/fishing fees.

"Public comment about the fee proposal was surprisingly light in my view and, to me, that affirms what I've said since we began this process — hunters, anglers and boaters get a good deal from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department," said Katharine Armstrong, TPWD commission chairman. "It's been seven years since our last fee increase, and we need this one to keep providing the basic services that our state needs and our customers expect. I think most people understand and support that."

The boat registration fee increase is expected to generate an additional $3.6 million per year. Hunting and fishing fee increases are projected to bring in an additional $10.2 million per year. This money will allow the agency to keep providing basic services.

A complete list of fee increases is on the TPWD web site: www.tpwd.state.tx.us/involved/pubhear/proposals/proposed_fees.phtml.

Ed Pape, Sendero Partners, Ltd., with two Rio Grande turkeys and an 80 lb. wild pig on opening weekend of the spring turkey season at the Briscoe Ranch, Cotulla, TX.
Reserve Sat., Aug. 9th, from 8 am to 2 pm, for the 14th Annual San Antonio Youth Centers Charity Fun Shoot. Known in previous years as the Downtown Youth Center Charity Fun Shoot, the event’s repeated success has enabled organizers to broaden its scope to include two more youth centers, including the Laurel Heights Youth Center and the St. Paul Youth Center.

These centers provide at-risk youth with transportation to-and-from the site, a hot meal and snack, homework assistance, tutoring, recreation, computer workshops, field trips, arts and crafts activities, music lessons, social and life skills lessons, prevention workshops, supervised drug-free parties, holiday family events, and sleep-overs at no cost to the youngsters or their families.

Last year, the Charity Fun Shoot raised $90,000, and remains one of the largest charities supported by the construction industry.

San Antonio Construction News spoke with Doug Niznik, Niznik Concrete Contractors, who said he’s optimistic that the August 2003 event will meet or exceed last year’s numbers.

“For the first time in the history of the Fun Shoot,” Doug explained, “three youth centers will benefit from the generosity of the attendees, most of whom represent, but are not limited to, the construction industry and related professions.”

Approximately 300 sporting clays shooters can be accommodated and a variety of event categories/divisions may be entered, to include teams, individuals, women and youth. Beginning with breakfast, food and beverages will be offered throughout the day and bidders are invited to participate in the Silent Auction until its designated cut-off time. At 3 pm the action-packed Live Auction will begin.

As in past years, the fun shoot will be held at the National Gun Club, 5391 Roft Rd., in San Antonio. Prepare to dig into your pockets to help the young people of our community. The three Youth Centers foster development of San Antonio youths so they will make responsible decisions and positive contributions to society.
L
ocal surveyor, Keith Jimenez, Sur-
veysAA, and his wife Nancy Parker, ran a small school on a farm outside of Cocos-
olan, South Africa, since Parker's sister visited the school in 1994, the year apart-
heid ended and Nelson Mandela became president. As a result of their efforts, the school qualified its first student, Teko Stephen Hlapo, for college, or tertiary school as it is referred to in South Africa. Teko was in the fourth grade when Parker's sister visited his school. It's one teacher possessed one book. "My sister was appalled by the condi-
tions of the Wallap School," Parker said. "It didn't have chalk, pencils, pens, paper, electricity, running water or bathrooms. We have been collecting and shipping books to the school since she returned and told us about its conditions."

Thanks in part to a local fundraising effort, "SA to SA," a festival produced by local PrimaDonna Productions, the Ji-
mez-Parker family sorted, packed and shipped 24 boxes of books in May 2003. The family also started raising funds for Teko's college education. After polling among the top 15 percent of students in South Africa, including both black and white students, Teko now attends Techn-
ikon of the Free State. He is majoring in electrical engineering.

From the original effort benefiting one school in 1995, the Jimenez-Parker family now regularly ships books to over 70 schools and three township libraries in the region.

"Education shouldn't have to be a gift," said Jimenez. "But in farm communi-
ties and other rural parts of South Africa, it is. I hope that others will follow in Teko's footsteps, which is why we spend so much time on this project. It's not just for Teko, it's for anyone else who will be encou-
gaged to continue their education."

Teko will be meeting his San Antonio mentors this summer when he arrives in the Alamo City on June 22nd, courtesy of the Jimenez's company, SurveysAA, ad agency owner Kenneth Thompson, Thompson Agency and the San Antonio Northeast Rotary.

"Seeing what my wife's family has been able to do for the area of Africa, and for Teko, is remarkable," Jimenez added. "According to the Ministry of Education, our book mobile project has 'thrown a spotlight' on the school. The government can't believe how high the school's test scores have risen. I don't think it's that dif-
ficult to figure out; you teach a child to read and he or she can achieve any goal, even becoming an engineer. Here's the opportunity and ability to read, and he can't become anything."

I
EC honors 2003 apprenticeship graduates

The Independent Electrical Contrac-
tors (IEC) of San Antonio held its An-
prenticeship and Training Commit-
tee's graduation ceremony on June 18th, at the Barn Door Restaurant. The Apprenticeship & Training Com-
mitee scheduled the evening celebra-
tion to recognize the accomplishments of both its 4th-year regular and 2nd-year residential apprentices.

Dallas-based electrical contractor Keith Bell, INDEX Electrical Contractors, Inc., past-president of the IEC of Texas and current chairman of the IEC of Texas Legisla-
tive Committee, delivered the commence-
tment address. He reminded the apprentices of the meaning of their commitment to the apprenticeship program.

On the eve of the passage of the Texas Electrical Licensing Bill, which would enable licensed electricians to work in any municipality in Texas, Keith recalled that the struggle to establish state licensing began in 1959.

"This is the first time we've been able to get the electrical licensing bill through the legislature in the State of Texas. Passed on May 28th, it went to the Gover-
or on June 2nd, who has the power to veto any bill that's passed. Over the last two weeks we've been trying to prevent it from being vetoed and I think our ef-
forts have worked. At 5 pm today, I found out that the Governor committed to the legislative sponsor that he would sign the Bill. The wait is over! It's a great time for our industry and our association."

Following the commencement speech, IEC president Bud Wilkins and Thomas Monaco presented each appren-
tice a Certificate of Graduation. The Pres-
ident's Awards for Excellence were pre-
sented to Joseph Rudd and Ernest Ricketts for having the highest four-year grade point averages.

Journeyman Electrician Graduates: Eric Benites, Ismael Esparza, Jacob Es-
quile, Elisa Galbreath, Vanheet Gal-
breath, Neal Renninger, Ryan Land-
acre, Antonio Reyna, Ernest Ricketts, Rudy Rios, Joseph Rudd, Shane Squires, Barry Vallery, Wesley Wied-
ing, and Walter Wilson.

Residential Electrical Specialist Graduates: John Alvarado, Manuel Gonzalez, Trinidad Leon, Javier Palencia, Robert Perez, and Raul Urrabazo.

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ing, and Walter Wilson.

Residential Electrical Specialist Graduates: John Alvarado, Manuel Gonzalez, Trinidad Leon, Javier Palencia, Robert Perez, and Raul Urrabazo.
Employed as an electrical distribution representative for most of his career, Roland Rodriguez recognized a need within the industry and spent three years developing and refining a valuable solution. His entrepreneurial endeavor resulted in AKNAK, an electrical, energy and data communications e-commerce marketplace.

San Antonio Construction News asked AKNAK’s president/owner to explain the website and its function. Roland said the accumulation of data has been intense. “There’s a lot of work involved, not only on a creative level, but with marketing and research. The site has been streamlined, through feedback from electrical industry contractors, distributors and manufacturers, to make it navigable and productive.”

Accessing AKNAK’s online catalog and surplus sales website, an end-user would find direct links to manufacturers’ new products and specifications for those items. In the case of surplus, AKNAK creates online stores for individual contractors who want to buy/sell surplus materials or equipment.

“We have partnered with Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC) to create online eStores for any contractor or distributor member. Members can post up to twelve items online, and a portion of that revenue is returned to that local organization’s chapter and apprentice program. Any member could post new, used, surplus, overstocked products, used vehicles, extra fixtures, or anything they want to unload.”

Non-IEC contractor and distributor members can certainly shop the online catalog, and if they want to open their own store, a small fee is charged. The newest feature to be introduced is AkNakIE, a customized toolbar that drives traffic to a member’s Website.

Looking toward the long-term, Roland envisions the online catalog expanding into other industry segments that involve any type of contractor.

“The benefit to the small contractor is the ability to search the site for direct pricing, accessing small and large manufacturers and/or distributors for equipment specials.”

Explore www.aknak.com to navigate the online catalog and surplus sales catalog where you’ll find information from every electrical, energy and datacom manufacturer and distributor imaginable. You might even run into a competitor with a Contractor eStore worth investigating.

ECS, Ltd. makes ENR’s Top 500 list

Engineering News Record (ENR) listed Engineering Consulting Services, Ltd. as #138 out of the Top 500 Engineering Design Firms in the United States for 2002.

ECS has three offices within Texas: San Antonio, Austin and Dallas. Currently, the San Antonio office has 32 personnel who practice Construction Materials Testing, Geotechnical Engineering, Environmental and Asbestos Consulting Services.

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HVAC: The industry that changed our built environment

In Focus this month, San Antonio Construction News spoke with several local HVAC contractors to discuss the current economic climate, their scope of work, trends emerging towards energy-efficient consciousness, and the rewards that keep them motivated.

According to president and mechanical engineer Matt Freund, the company performs the majority of its work in San Antonio, Bexar County and surrounding counties. The full-service HVAC contractor concentrates on commercial and residential new construction systems, replacement systems, and offers 24-hour service to both sectors.

“Our customers typically include homeowners, building owners, property managers, general contractors, and architects,” Matt explained. A mechanical engineer, Matt will typically design HVAC systems on design/build projects and continue to “consulting engineers design a plan-and-spec job, which we will bid and execute the installation.”

From a economic climate, the company has emphasized greater focus on the service side of the market to a large degree, but not exclusively. Employing 40 people, the company recognizes that service = cause more owners are looking at repairs rather than HVAC equipment replacement,” he added. “With the understanding that this is a customer-driven issue, by providing service contracts for ongoing maintenance we can extend the life of the equipment, which is often the best value for the owner.”

Commenting on the State of Texas’ adoption of the new IECC energy code, which places more stringent requirements on HVAC systems, Matt said higher efficiency equipment and installations are required for new construction and replacement projects. “Guiding by the energy code drives up our direct costs,” he noted, and “this is sometimes difficult for our owner to understand. However, efficient air conditioning is not a luxury anymore, it’s a necessity.”

Active in the local ASHRAE chapter, Matt said he relies on that organization and other professional affiliations to remain knowledgeable about the flow of new technological information.

In his opinion, the greatest challenge facing the local HVAC industry today is the increased level of competition. “I’m seeing a greater number of bidders on every project than we’re accustomed to seeing. With less work on the horizon, some firms appear to be cutting their profit just to maintain the cash flow. HVAC companies from outside of town are also entering the local market because San Antonio is doing better than their local economy. It’s cyclical, one that industry professionals prepare for.”

Despite the challenges, Matt said his personal rewards are centered on the people in the industry. “I get to work with all types of professionals, owners, and general contractors, as well as our own employees. I visit job sites frequently, and as project manager on design/build projects. If I design a job, the satisfaction of seeing it function as designed is gratifying,” he concluded. “It’s the challenge of delivering the product I promised is a great reward.”

Richard C. Flores Air-Stream Heating and Air Conditioning, Inc.

Executive vice-president Richard C. Flores, Air-Stream Heating and Air Conditioning, Inc., shares the ownership of the mechanical contracting company with his wife, Rebecca Flores, who is president. The HUB-zoned, minority, woman-owned business has been in continuous operation for 29 years, maintains a corporate office in San Antonio and a satellite office at Brooks City Base. Employing 40 personnel, Air-Stream HVAC performs the bulk of its business in San Antonio and Bexar County.

San Antonio Construction News spoke with Richard, who said the company’s capabilities stretch far beyond HVAC installations and service. “For example,” Richard explained, “we have a contract with Brooks City Base to maintain the infrastructure, which includes plumbing, HVAC, electrical, and general construction. Our subsidiary, Air-Stream General Construction, Inc., enables us to do negotiated work for light commercial and commercial new construction and remodels. There aren’t many companies that establish themselves as a full mechanical contractor and have the ability to do the work of a general contractor.”

On the residential side, Air-Stream services long-established customers and new referrals. Although it doesn’t solicit residential work, Richard said his plate is full with referrals. Fully-certified, Air-Stream has been able to bid certain contracts that HUB-zone requirements, either as a general contractor or as a subcontractor.

Richard has already begun the lengthy certification processes required by Tuya, in hopes his company will be selected as a part of the process.

“We’ve developed that niche, which put a lot of feathers in our cap and opened opportunities that we might not otherwise had tapped,” he added. “Customers include county, city, state, federal, and university entities that have special requirements.

On the heels of CPS’ announcement that utility rates are rising by 30 percent, Richard said the pan is over. “I see this rate increase as the first stage of deregulation,” he explained, “and I foresee more companies offering net metering. In other words, when customers see it going out the door, they will more likely start looking into energy conservation equipment. It’s the job of the HVAC contractor to let them know what their options are with regards to energy efficient equipment, knowing their payback will be more substantial. We have recently partnered with a local company that handles a full line of solar products and net metering. Some of the solar products we’re bringing to our customers include ones that can operate attic fans, water pumps, gates and total power supply for their home or business. Renewable energy is going to be the wave of the future.”

Richard agrees that the most challenging aspect haunting the local HVAC industry is its ready workforce. He solicits qualified, NATE-certified technicians from across the country, in hopes of luring them to San Antonio. “We’ve dried up the local market, and the HVAC industry’s consciousness of offering ample training and recruitment, the problem will only get worse.”

While facing first-hand the evolution of the HVAC industry, the emergence of renewable resources and applications, Richard maintained everyday.

San Antonio Construction News: “What’s the cup of change,” Richard concluded, “and the new technologies give our industry reason to search for opportunity, as old ideas become outdated and rebates will help propel our community towards achieving a better energy balance. Air conditioning as we know it today remains the greatest drain on our energy resources.”

continued on Page 24
Lee Hahn  
County Wide Service Co., Inc.

Quality spring specials longer than we normally would,” Lee today’s economic climate, County Wide Service adjusting in the light commercial category.”

"We’re doing a lot of little things that we would nor- mally charge extra for, such as complimentary duct inspec- tions or duct wrapping with an equipment installa- tion. We want the customer to let us be their HVAC con- tractor of choice. Right now the market’s pretty com- petitve, and people are watching their pennies. We’re offering more value for the same price,” Lee pointed out that the recent 33 percent increase in utility costs is resulting in confusion among custom- ers that are having higher-efficiency units installed. “The customers aren’t seeing their anticipated savings on utilities, because the price for energy has gone up. In fact, it isn’t until they examine their kilowatt-hour usage they realize they are using less energy.”

As a contractor member of the Air Conditioning Contractors Association (ACCA), Lee and his colleagues are exposed to the latest and greatest equipment and break-through technologies. “We cautiously review new technologies to evaluate how it will interface with what we’re doing,” he contin- ued. “New technology comes with inflated prices until after its been tested tried and true. By staying with what got us here, providing good service and performance at a reasonable price, our customers’ base remains loyal. They depend on us to do what’s right, keeping their best interests in the forefront, if you will.”

Lee agrees that the local HVAC workforce is in dire short-stakeness. Contractors face the dilemma of not having enough people to replenish the older technicians who are retiring from the field. “If we run an ad in the paper for a technician or installer, we get thirty-something’s coming in to apply for the position, not young people just graduating from high school. I’m hopeful supply and demand will remedy the situation. When the workforce is underrepresented it will cost the consumer more money for a service call. Perhaps the lure of higher income will generate an inter- est in people to enter the trade. As it stands, the whole industry struggles to find people who are qualified.”

Molding, shaping and forming an inexperienced employee into a worthy representative of the company is a huge reward for Lee. “We’ve trained and transformed young men into seasoned technicians and installers. Even if they move on after five years, it’s rewarding to know you had a part in the growth of that individual and created a good technician that will serve the greater industry.”
Summertime...and the living is HOT!

By Scott A. Smith

Since the signing of the Clean Air Act (CAA) in 1990, the Air Conditioning Contractors of America (ACCA) has worked with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the entire heating, ventilating, air conditioning, and refrigeration (HVAC&R) industry in regulations for section 608 and 609 that would lead to a safer environment.

The regulations that have been enacted have allowed contractors to bring to society environmentally-safer refrigerants for their refrigeration and air conditioning needs without serious economic impact. But, the job is not done.

In 2010, the CAA will phase out new equipment using ozone-depleting hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) with non-ozone depleting refrigerants. R-410A, a hydrofluorocarbon (HC) has become the leading candidate as the replacement for residential and light commercial air conditioning. With the totally redesigned systems that will withstand 60 percent higher pressures and scroll compressor technology, six manufacturers have over 350,000 systems in operation today that work well.

The challenge for HFC R-410A are that these systems operate at 60 percent higher pressures than the refrigerant they replace, largely the HCFC R-22. When an R-22 system has 260 pounds per square inch gauge (psig), the new equipment operates at about 47 psig. The oil used with R-410A will be an ester based, be hygroscopic, and of a much higher grade than used in the older systems. Different tools and equipment are also required.

The industry, and ACCA, has embarked upon numerous voluntary educational and training programs to prepare technicians for this transition, and this will help. But, there are other problems. If we do not keep the new refrigerants (R-410A and other alternates) out of the hands of non-skilled, non-trained, and non-certified (608 and 609 EPA Technician Certifications) consumers, people will be injured and systems will be ruined.

Another by-product of mishandling will be the mixing of refrigerants in the same system so that the refrigerant will become useless. Mixed refrigerants cannot be reclaimed and must be disposed. This not only costs money and wastes resources, but increases the likelihood that the refrigerant will be illegally vented to the atmosphere.

This creates another problem. Unregulated HCFCs are considered a greenhouse gas. They have a higher Global Warming Potential than HFCs, which are regulated.

ACCA encourages that those handling HCFCs should be certified, just as those who work with CFCs and HCFCs. Since 1995, ACCA with the support of other organizations has urged the EPA to extend the sales prohibition of alternate refrigerants to certified technicians. They have not acted on this request. The “handy” homeowner who can and is buying 124a over the counter now to charge into his aftermarket automobile A/C and refrigeration, will have the same opportunity to purchase R-410A to charge into his home air conditioner. And, the dangers of injury and non-certified individuals to make the mistakes, outlined above, as we transition to the higher pressure HFC-based refrigerants.

Finally, technological advancement in the industry has also brought instructions and equipment that will analyze refrigerant mixtures and purity levels, field recycle these refrigerants, and document their purity levels. ACCA feels “stay” (Hamilton Case), which allows non-certified individuals to purchase pre-charged split air conditioners. The “stay” not only runs counter to the goals of 608 regulations, it allows non-qualified, non-trained, non-certified individuals to make the mistakes, outlined above, as we transition to the higher pressure HFC-based refrigerants.

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Energy Innovator Awards competition

City Public Service (CPS) invites individuals and companies that are consciously looking for ways to operate with more energy efficiency to enter the new CPS Energy Innovator Awards competition.

Award categories include those for residential, commercial and industrial customers and commercial builders for both gas and electric service. The call for entries began June 3rd and closes July 31st. CPS will recognize the Energy Innovator Award winners in a ceremony Tuesday, Oct. 7th, during Public Power Week.

To participate, applicants must be CPS customers in good standing. Entries must exhibit theoretical or real-life energy/demand savings and/or promote energy awareness. Real-life or theoretical energy/demand savings must cover a 12-month period. Devices, equipment and energy-efficiency modifications must have been installed prior to May 1, 2003. Environmental benefits will add merit to an entry.

Criteria include energy and cost savings; innovation and technology; educational value; and transferability.

“CPS is interested in energy-saving equipment or techniques that can serve as a model for others to emulate,” said Paula Miles, vice president of retail energy. “From a consumer standpoint, less usage means lower utility bills and more economic activity in our community. Therefore, it is advantageous for every CPS customer to control energy costs.”

Residential energy-efficiency examples include planting shade trees; installing energy-efficient windows and appliances, high-efficiency air conditioning, insulation, ductwork and programmable thermostats; or utilizing solar energy.

Other energy-saving ideas that commercial and industrial customers can implement include replacing motors with higher-efficiency ones; utilizing thermal storage; upgrading cooling or heating systems; using distributed generation and leading-edge technologies; purchasing wind-powered electricity; using renewable energy; utilizing heat recovery systems; or converting to energy-efficient lighting.

For an entry form, customers can log on to www.citypublicservice.com.

Ancient tradition observed

SpawGlass Contractors, Inc. parked a cedar tree atop an east-side construction project, signaling the point in construction when the highest point has been reached. Over 200 people attended the Topping-Out celebration for the new Belgium Rd. warehouse and offices of San Antonio-based Convention Decorating Service, on Thursday, May 29th, from 11:30 am to 1 pm.

Owners Alan and Willa Sheppard, who with their family of employees, decorate conventions all over the country, complimented the general contractors’ project management.

“Working with Jack Mulligan, project manager Gina Chapa Fuentes, and project superintendent Pete Hernandez has been great!” Alan said. “All of the SpawGlass team and their subcontractors have stepped up to the plate.”

San Antonio Construction News spoke with project manager Gina Chapa Fuentes, who said the completion date is scheduled for late July.

“This tiltwall structure features a 55,000-sf concrete slab, and what will make it very special is the interior finish-out planned for the office area by the design team.”

According to Kimberly A. Marks, ASID, IIDA, president/owner of The Marks Design Group, the project is running smoothly.

“As the Grady’s Bar-B-Q staff finalized preparations for the lunch buffet, SpawGlass executive vice president Jack Mulligan said the symbolic Topping-Out event is an opportunity to thank all of the people involved in the project for their hard work and diligence.

“This is an ancient tradition which SpawGlass chooses to observe. We’re told to celebrate all of the opportunities we can, and here we are!”

AG&M’s showroom on solid foundation

L-R: San Antonio couple discusses flooring and counter top options with AG&M’s GM, Cathy Vickery.

Austin-based Architectural Granite & Marble, Inc., better known as AG&M, has had a San Antonio branch for over four years. As the branch grew and prospered it became clear that its “start-up” facility would have to be replaced. A lease was signed and the company now occupies a three-acre parcel on Nakoma, which includes offices, a showroom and ample warehouse space.

San Antonio Construction News spoke with general manager Cathy Vickery, who said the new showroom features a full working kitchen and other amenities to showcase granite and marble applications.

“We’ve fabricated and installed three shower stalls, lavatory backspalshes, and have created a display of floor tile patterns,” Cathy explained. “Our marble is protected from the sun in our warehouse, which is where we store our inventory of granite, travertine, marble and tumbled travertine tile. It’s so wonderful to be able to showcase our products in the right manner, to give people a sense of what it will look like in their home or business.”

Since moving into its new offices, AG&M has increased its staff, which now numbers fourteen. The granite and marble wholesaler does not engage in fabrication activities.

“We sell directly to the fabricators, with the exception of our floating tiles, which we sell to builders, designers or end-users,” Cathy added. “Typically, a fabricator will send its customers to us to select their stone. Or, a customer may come in here and fall in love with one of our selections. We give them an alphabetical list of our fabricator customers and they make their own contacts.”

According to Cathy, business is booming!

“I think the low interest rates are stimulating activity in the residential sector,” she continued. “Granite and marble are great products, and there are so many different colors from which to choose. Although we do carry a few granites that are native to this continent, most of our stones are imported from Brazil and India. It’s very important to pick the slab, and not try to select granite from a sample because there is so much variation between lots. That’s why we’re here…so people can say ‘that’s the piece I want.’”

Fajita Fiesta a neighborly gesture

On Saturday, June 21st, Southwest Exteriors’ president Scott Barr was busy serving lunch to about 50 residents of the secluded Idlewood Condominium community, on San Antonio’s north side.

“We’re celebrating the successful completion of the 6-month exterior siding renovation, which included the removal of all old siding and replacement with new MardiFlank siding. Today’s Fajita Fiesta and Pool Party is our way of showing our appreciation to the many residents who patiently accepted the disruption of their quiet lifestyle as we provided a long-term solution for the exterior of their homes. As with any large project there are always difficulties, but the residents were understanding and patient with us.”

Southwest Exteriors’ production manager Deborah Nolen, client relationship manager Ted Rigdon, senior project manager Mark Belto, installer Juan Garza, and others joined Scott for the 11:30 am to 1:30 pm event. Served at the poolside patio, the lunch fare included mouth-watering chicken and beef fajitas, desserts and beverages. Esteban Alvarez, who also brought Nina’s Pride Hot Sauce, his family’s private recipe, cooked the fajitas.
Leadership in Ener... before heading off to root for the home spectacular picnic, from 5:30 to 7 pm, contractor customers, spouses and children of game? On Thurs., May 22nd, the employing them to a minor league baseball W... coming out of college.

San Antonio Construction News • July 2003

Pintura Paint Store played host to over 200 at their 3rd Annual Customer Appreciation Night. General manager, Christine Rodri-... paints, what keeps the building up. By working at Persyn Consulting Engineers, I’m getting a better understanding of the architecture, engineer, and contractor rela-... thank all of our loyal customers. We want them to know how much we appreciate their business!

Will Toyota “green” our South Side?

The largest “green” building com-plex in the United States officially opened its doors for business at the California-based headquarters of Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A., Inc. The project received a Gold Level Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) Green Building rating system. The complex, the largest ever to receive a LEED™ Gold rating, has 624,000 sf of office space and will initially house about 2,000 Toyota associates.

“Office buildings have a significant impact on the environment, using about one-third of the electricity and 12 percent of the drinking water in the U.S.,” said Christine Ervin, USGBC President & CEO. “Fortunately, there are ways to reduce the environmental impact buildings have, while also en-...ing office complex does not have to be limited to small or unique projects - or ones with inflated budgets.” Some of the keys to earning “Gold” certification include:

*The widespread use of materials with recycled content. The project achieved a 95 percent recycled content, based on LEED™ calculations, in-cluding more than 250 miles of reinforced steel used throughout the com-plex –- made up primarily of recycled automobiles.

*One of the largest commercial solar electric systems in North Ameri-ca. The system generates enough elec-tricity during the day to power more than 500 homes and greatly reduces the complex’s demand on the local utility grid load during peak hours.

*The installation of a special pipe-line to supply recycled water to the complex for cooling, landscaping and restroom flushing. Combined with other efforts to reduce potable water consumption, the complex is expected to conserve more than 11 million gal-lons of drinking water a year, enough to supply about 68 homes annually.

*Energy-efficiency features such as direct-indirect lighting, high-effi-ciency insulation, and thermally-insul-at-ed glass, help the complex exceed State of California energy efficiency targets by more than 20 percent.

The question is, will Toyota bring their “green” ideas to San Antonio when they construct the new South Side plant?

L-R: Kirk Hall(seated), David Wonder and Steve Persyn

Engineering intern exposed to the “big picture”

n an effort to provide a positive work experience for graduates of San Anto-nio area high schools who are inter-ested in the structural engineering field, the Structural Engineers Association of Texas (SEAoT) has developed a summer employment program for its scholarship recipients.

Smithson Valley High School gradu-ate Kirk G. Hall, the organization’s 2002 scholarship recipient, worked for Steve G. Persyn, P.E. Consulting Engineers Inc. last summer, during winter break, and has begun work for the 19-year-old firm this summer. Kirk has completed his first year of studies at the University of Texas at Austin, where he is majoring in architectural engineering.

San Antonio Construction News spoke with Kirk’s mentors, structural engineers Steve G. Persyn, P.E. and David R. Won-der, P.E., to inquire about the benefits of the SEAoT program. Steve said members of the organization feel this type of expo-sure will provide a more experienced student going into college, which in turn will produce a better-prepared engineer coming out of college.

“We’re exposing Kirk to the general aspects of a professional structural engi-neering office environment,” Steve ex-plained. “One task he’s been doing is uti-lizing the drawings within our computer and plotter to make half-sized plots for all of our jobs. We actually saved this work for him, because we knew he was coming back this summer.”

According to David, who has been with the firm for 12 years, Kirk is a bright young man and he said, “We’re not ap-proaching this with the intent of getting a lot of production from Kirk, as much as de-veloping a working relationship. In years to come, if we’re all agreeable, perhaps he will consider coming back to our firm. We’re nurturing a potential engineer.”

Kirk said his aptitude for math and science led him to research engineering majors at UT-Austin. I selected the discipline that was more closely related to buildings them-selves. I’m interested in the structural as-pects, what keeps the building up. By working at Persyn Consulting Engineers, I’m getting a better understanding of the architect, engineer, and contractor rela-...tionships. I’m grateful to have this opportu-nity.”

Pintura Paint hosts 3rd Annual Picnic

What better way to spend an eve-ning than sharing a picnic with your loyal customers and treat-ing them to a minor league baseball game? On Thurs., May 22nd, the employ-ees of Pintura Paint Store played host to over 200 at their 3rd Annual Customer Appreciation Night. General manager, Christine Rodri-guez, said Pintura Paint Store’s painting contractor customers, spouses and chil-dren enjoyed perfect weather and a spectacular picnic, from 5:30 to 7 pm, before heading off to root for the home team at the Nelson Wolff Stadium, where the San Antonio Missions hosted the Round Rock Express.

“Our vendors donated some won-derful door prizes,” Christine said, “and we gave away a paint spraying rig, lots of hats, ice chests, T-shirts, family 4-packs to the zoo, gift certificates for haircuts, food gift certificates for families, and more! We’re continuing a new tradition, and this is our way of saying thanks to all of our loyal customers. We want them to know how much we appreciate their business!”

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Editor's note: Penny Kinder is the president of Project Design Group, Inc. Her love of art and design, which she considers her natural gifts, has driven this independent-thinking woman on a remarkable career journey spanning four decades and two continents. She is a Professional Member of both the American Institute of Building Design and the Texas Institute of Building Design, and remains a Licensed Home Improvement Contractor for the City of San Antonio.

SACN: Penny, where were you born and raised?
PSK: I was born in Galveston, TX, to Winifred J. and Colton P. Smith. My father was a career officer in the United States Air Force. The first move I remember was to Manila, Philippines Island. We were stationed there until my dad was Chief Air Inspector at Kelly Field. During WWII, he was responsible for aircraft engine repair and maintenance operations on all equipment sent stateside from the China Burma Theater. In his off-time, he invented water fuel injection, which turned out to be a great donation to the U.S. Government. Dad retired in 1945.

SACN: Are either of your parents living?
PSK: My mother is living and recently celebrated her 99th birthday.

SACN: Do you have brothers or sisters?
PSK: I had a brother who was six years older, and on my father’s side, my grandmother was a Miss America Academy at West Point and was killed about one and a half years later. He was stationed in Albuquerque, NM where, during WWII, they were testing atomic bomb delivery methods. His aircraft had a mechanical problem, and his entire crew was lost.

SACN: Did your family’s loss compel your father to retire?
PSK: Yes, I think so.

SACN: Where did you go to high school?
PSK: I attended Jefferson High School. When I was almost sixteen, I left school and married a pilot, Gerardo Danieli, who was from Buenos Aires, Argentina, training at Kelly Field as part of a South American exchange program. Before Christmas Eve wedding, my father accompanied Gerardo, who was ten years older than me, to court when he was naturalized as an American citizen.

SACN: Was he in the American Armed Services?
PSK: Yes, he was in the U.S. Air Force and we moved to Washington D.C., where he served at the Pentagon as aide-de-camp to a general officer. He was educated in London, England and spoke German, English, and Spanish. In Buenos Aires, where my dad was Chief Air Inspector at Kelly Field. During WWII, he was responsible for aircraft engine repair and maintenance operations on all equipment sent stateside from the China Burma Theater. In his off-time, he invented water fuel injection, which turned out to be a great donation to the U.S. Government. Dad retired in 1945.

SACN: Was he exposed to those languages from an early age?
PSK: We retired to Spain after two assignments in Panama. Gerardo was an aircraft accident at Kelly Field. They carried a wheel and the runways. His injuries precipitated his retirement from the military. I thought he might be comfortable going back to Europe, so we moved to Spain and lived comfortably on his retirement income.

SACN: When did you live in Madrid?
PSK: We lived in Malaga, where there was a strong encampment of Americans. It was a time of constant parties, good fishing, bull fights, JaiAlai, golf, swimming, and fun in the sun—a real holiday! We lived there for almost three years before our divorce.

SACN: What happened to the beautiful home you were building in Madrid?
PSK: I was appointed by Elizabeth Arden to manage its salon and boutique in Madrid, and you were to divorce in order to have that position. I placed Debbie in a parochial school in Madrid.

SACN: Had you worked before?
PSK: No, it was my first job ever. I also managed Hotel Guadalmina, a resort in Marbella on the Mediterranean coast. We had an Olympic-sized pool for guests and so many other amenities. Generalissimo Franco and a couple of his in-laws were frequent visitors. There was a constant flux of diplomatic dignitaries, film stars and titled Europeans. The 1950’s were so bust times in Spain. Regardless of your station in life, if you were charming and intelligent, you were accepted.

SACN: When did you return to the U.S.?
PSK: My daughter and I came back to San Antonio in 1964, and we’re still in withdrawal. I went to work in the new interior design department for Sears, in downtown San Antonio. I spoke fluent Spanish and had knowledge of European trends in fashion and merchandising, which was an asset. That job was my formal introduction to the world of design.

SACN: Where did you meet your husband, Mike Kinder?
PSK: I went on an appointment to meet two architects working at the office on a commission basis, because I wanted to go after more commercial construction projects. It was like a studio atmosphere, where I felt I was sparked with ideas back and forth. It was wonderful!

SACN: Typically, who are your clients?
PSK: Most of my clients are repeat customers, people I’ve been working with over a number of years. Residential design and construction is my first love, but commercial design and construction represents the most challenge. Some clients are repeat clients, I’ve done work for Heart and Hall Hospital and the South Texas Blood and Tissue Center, as well as restaurants, contractors, retail, new residential and remodels.

SACN: It must be satisfying to channel your love for art into a successful career. Did you have formal training?
PSK: I have been drawing since I was a little girl. I attended the University of Madrid for two years, but my education as a space and building designer, and as a construction manager has been on-the-job training. When you’re raising a child and trying to make a living, it doesn’t leave much time to go to projects. My innate talents have led me on this path.

SACN: How do you approach the resident-client whenembarking on a project?
PSK: It’s exciting by the way. You just think like they do. It’s all about communication and leaving personal preferences at the door. I don’t believe in the big ego, and I don’t try to impose my tastes on them.

SACN: Did you design your own home?
PSK: No, because I was in school and our home reflects design aspects that are practical and individual to our lifestyle. I prefer an open concept and lots of windows, with space for a home office for Mike, and a suite for my 99-year-old mother.

SACN: Do you find that your global travels have influenced your work?
PSK: Yes, but I also accept other bids.

SACN: Do you ever ask your husband for advice?
PSK: Occasionally I will seek his advice but, typically, I’m very independent when it comes to design.

SACN: What keeps you motivated?
PSK: I’m very fortunate to be able to do what I love. The money has helped, but the gratification of seeing a project from its conception to completion is very rewarding. Every project stands alone on its own merits.

SACN: Penny, what would you say to our construction industry readers given the opportunity to work on a commission-based, FBI project?
PSK: I would encourage them to embrace their dreams despite any obstacles, and to do what they enjoy. I believe in your choices, explore and enjoy them. I could have quit a long time ago, but I don’t think I’ll ever give up work is so gratifying and it makes me who I am. If problems arise I figure out what to do. I have faith in myself and always maintain honor and integrity in my work.

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SACN: Indeed you have a successful career, did you have formal training?
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Parrish & Co. hosts NARI Deck Awards

O n Thurs., June 19th, about 50 members of the National Associ-
ation of Remodeling Industry gathered under the shade trees at Parrish & Company, Inc, for an after-
hours networking event. The scent of grilled fajitas, chicken wings and Boliner's sausage beckoned the hungry attendees. After savoring their food, they arrived to network and vote for the winner of the NARI 2003 Deck of the Year. A spacious tent shaded diners as they enjoyed the culinary offerings provided by the Parrish & Co.'s cook-staff.

In the outdoor fenced courtyard adjacent to Parrish's home product and appliance showroom, three prominent deck-builders erected and displayed a sample of their workmanship. NARI-member Dan Parrish told San Antonio Construction News the backyard decks would remain on display through August. According to Rudy Nino, GGR, SA Building & Remodeling, the purpose of the deck-building competition is to promote NARI and the remodeling industry in San Antonio.

"It's important for people to be able to select a contractor who belongs to a trade association that is driven by a code of ethics," Rudy emphasized. "These decks were erected in early April by Deck-nique, Archadeck, and J.R.'s Custom Decks. The redwood and composite materials for the decks, which included redwood, cedarwood and composite products, were supplied by Jerry Dobbs, Braundera Yard & Hardware, Inc. and the decking contractors provided the labor. Robert Krist, Alamo Custom Fence, was the principal sponsor, together with Parrish & Co."

Certificates of Recognition were presented to Rudy Guerrero, City Public Service, City Public Service Home and Lifestyle Show; Dan Parrish, Parrish & Co.; Robert Krist, Alamo Custom Fence; Jerry Dobbs, Braundera Yard & Hardware; and David Lauer, DACON Roofing.

"The best deck is a well-planned outdoor living space where families reserve space in the Texas Home & Garden Show, presented a check to NARI in the sum of $621.38. When NARI members reserve space in the Texas Home & Garden Show, they receive a discount for their booth space. The discount is then returned by lay to the organization.

At long last, it was time to choose the winning deck. By popular vote and a show of hands, NARI president Michael Eckman, SolarMasters, presented the NARI 2003 Deck of the Year Award to Jose Reyna, J.R. Custom Decks. Competitors John Howard, Decknique, and Andy Sowa, Archadeck, each received Certificates of Recognition.

L-R: The Parrish & Co. cook-staff included James "Woody" Nance, Rene Leal, Joe Aguilar, Jonathan Pearson, Dan Parrish, "Big Red" Myers and Brette Parrish.

Engineers take peek at SwRI's high-profile projects

I f there was a Top 10 list of places that every engineer should visit to talk about engineering on the cutting edge, there's a good chance that the Southwest Research Institute (SwRI) in San Antonio, Texas, would make the list. The institute specializes in the fields of mechanical and materials engineering, space science and engineering, engine and vehicle research, and chemical engineering, among many others.

At the mid-July National Society of Professional Engineers 2003 Annual Convention & Expo in San Antonio, attendees will have the rare opportunity to take a behind-the-scenes tour of the institute, where 2,700 employees work on projects involving the creation and transfer of technology in engineering and the physical sciences.

The July 11th tour will include the institute's state-of-the-art fire technology facility, vehicle emissions labs, earth-quake simulation facility, and marine and aircraft structural test facilities. Today, engineers at SwRI are playing an important role in the investigation into the cause of the Columbia space shuttle disaster.

Another high-profile project for SwRI is the mission to Pluto, recently approved by NASA. Homeland security is also an area where SwRI's engineering expertise has been put to use. A recent project aims to improve video surveillance systems to significantly reduce the amount of data monitored by operators and automatically sound an alarm when it detects an incident. The system also is able to filter out motions normal to a scenario such as moving foliage, passing cloud shadows, or passing headlights.

Another unique development from SwRI engineers could be useful in riots, protests, and enforcement situations. To stop or deter threats without resorting to the use of deadly force, the engineers have developed a non-hazardous chemical spray system that spreads a highly slippery, viscous gel that inhibits the movement of people and vehicles.

At the convention in San Antonio, Southwest Research Institute engineers will discuss the "Mobility Dermal System" and developments in "Emergency Research for Homeland Security" on Sat., July 12th.

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Cypress Springs picnic cools staff

W ith temperatures approaching 100 degrees on Sat., May 31st, South-
est Exteriors employees still managed to stay cool at their company's family picnic. The annual event was held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m at Cypress Springs Park on the Guadalupe, a private and secluded park where the river's refreshing waters offered an escape from the sweltering Texas heat.

"We do a quarterly get-together with all of our employees, their spouses and children," said president Scott Barr. "This picnic was our spring event." Over 100 happy adults and children enjoyed an afternoon of good food, fishing, swimming, ping-pong, and a highly spirited, albeit gen-

eral demeanor. Esteban Alvarez, G.W. Mitchell, who moonlights as a Bar-B-Que pro when he's not on the job, catered lunch.

"Esteban also markets his own hot sauce, called Nina's Pride, which is unbe-

lievably delicious," Scott added. "His company is called Esteban's Tejano Style Bar-B-Que and Car-
tering, and he and his team did a great job!"

In spite of the heat, Scott reported there was a great breeze that washed through the park and across the shaded pavilion where folks gathered.

On Sat., June 14th, the Republic Electric Golf Course hosted a tournament that was sponsored by the Republic Electric Golf Association. The Republic Golf Course presented the 2003 NARI Deck of the Year Award to Jose Reyna of J.R. Custom Decks. Competitors John Howard, Decknique, and Andy Sowa, Archadeck, each received Certificates of Recognition.


L-R: The Parrish & Co. cook-staff included James "Woody" Nance, Rene Leal, Joe Aguilar, Jonathan Pearson, Dan Parrish, "Big Red" Myers and Brette Parrish.

Energy Road Show a success!

B
uilders, architects, engineers and City Public Service (CPS) custom-
ers learned from the experts about fuel cells, solar energy and energy-effi-
cient technologies for power produc-
tion at the Department of Energy (DOE) Distributed Energy (DER) Resource Road Show Workshop on Mon., June 2nd, at Brooks City-Base. Sponsors were the U.S. Department of Energy, Texas State Energy Conservation Office, Texas Ener-
y integration, Brooks Energy and Sus-
tainability Lab (BESL) and CPS.

DER, also known as distributed generation (DG), encompasses on-site power production with the use of re-
novative energy sources. Renewable energy includes generation directly or indi-
caly, moving water (waves and tides), wind, geothermal sources, hydroelectric facilities or biomass and/or biomass-
based waste products (including landfill gas) and other fuels such as natural gas and hydrogen.

San Antonio was chosen as the site of this workshop because of the inte-
grated approach by federal, state and local governments to find new energy solutions through an extensive range of energy awareness programs and alter-
native energy research and demonstra-
tion projects.

Locally, CPS is the only utility in Texas to have a rate that enables cus-
tomers with DG equipment to put ex-
cess electricity back into the electric grid. The San Antonio City Council passed the DG rate in April 2002.

Tim Callahan of San Antonio-
based SWRI's Engine Division discussed advanced clean-burning, natural gas engine generators developed locally. Caterpillar, Cummins, Waukesha Pierce and DOE funded the develop-
ment of the state-of-the-art engine technology. Air emissions from the en-
gine generator are the lowest in its class.

Dr. Valerie Harris, CPS strategic planner for research and development, explained combined heat and power (CHP) applications -- technologies that utilize waste heat from power genera-
tion and convert it into useful heating and cooling for commercial buildings.

John Quebe, San Antonio clean air coordinator for the Alamo Area Council of Governments, focused on Central Texas air quality and regulatory issues, while Alan Montemayor, SWRI project manager and principal engineer, dis-
cussed the use of hydrogen in fuel cells and explained the Brooks City-Base resi-
dential base housing fuel cell project.

Dominick Dina, Solar San Antonio executive director, conducted a work-
shop on the economic development implications of solar power for Central/
South Texas. Presently, San Antonio has a number of projects utilizing solar power, such as 20 homes in the Historic Gardens subdivision near the Alamo-
dome, the CPS Northside Customer Ser-
vice Center, Bexar County Jail, Santa Rosa Hospital and others.

T
he Texas Society of Professional Surveyors (TSPS) is dedicated to of-
fering educational opportunities and support for surveying professionals in Texas. TSPS recently adopted the NSPS Certified Survey Technician (CST) pro-
gram as part of the Professional Develop-
ment Program.

CST is a program designed for the paraprofessional. The program is linked to foundation and fundamental level training courses and offers an effective tool to gauge an employee's progress. Certificates are awarded for four catego-
ries of competency and are awarded after the successful completion of an exam. The paraprofessional is guided along a path of education, utilizing certification as milestones, learning the important as-
psects of surveying along their journey.

The NSPS CST Program is a national-
ly-recognized program that enables sur-
vey technicians and employers alike to evaluate and establish various levels of competency through proper testing of appropriate knowledge elements.

TSPS incorporated this program by working with TSPS chapters to establish testing sites around the state. If you are interested in taking the exam, the next testing will be on Nov. 15th. For more in-
formation, contact Phil Hampton at 210-
581-1111 or visit the TSPS web site at www.tspsg.org.

continued from Page 15 - Accounting

owner to hold onto your money a little while longer!

Reduction in individual income tax rates This act also includes individual income tax rates that will help small busi-
ess owners, including an immediate re-
duction in the marginal tax brackets appli-
cable to all taxpayers. Under the new act, the tax rates for 2003 and thereafter are 15%, 25%, 28%, 33% and 35% (previ-
ously the rates were 15%, 27%, 30%, 35%, and 38.6%). These new tax rates are supposed to remain in effect until 2010. The IRS has published new withhold-
ing tables that incorporate these lower tax rates. Employers should use the new tables to figure the federal income tax to withhold from employees as soon as they can be worked into your payroll system but no later than July 1, 2003.

The passage of this new act benefits so many of us. The intent of this new act is to stimulate the economy by saving you taxes. Please consult your tax advisor if you have any questions or need help planning for 2003.

Marcia Fredericks, CPA is a tax partner with Guerra, Guerra & Fredericks, L.L.P. Phone: 210-344-5211 or email: mf Fredericks@tgpglobal.net.
continued from Page 1 -  MDN Architects attains 30th year of success

“...Iparalleled a lot of my experience, gained through my retail connections when I was at Roy L. Martin & Associates, into a lot of tenant finish-out portion of the business, said one aspect of the interior finish-out was unfamiliar to his in-house crew.

The walls and ceiling featured lacquered steel components for detail ele- ments. The crew had to learn to fabricate and install these steel components in conjunction with the construction. They were up to the task, and the results were outstanding!”

Cranes Contracting Group’s custom- ers are typically from the private sector and the majority of its work is either nego- tiated or invited bid. San Antonio Construction News asked Kevin to comment on his working relationship with the project’s owner and the architect. He said architect John Gutzler’s creative designs and skills “are not only enhanced the project architecturally, but also made it a more challenging and fulfilling construc- tion process.”

“...The tenant’s representative, Harold Sinclair, is very knowledgeable of con- struction and his ability to give or get answers in a timely fashion was invaluable in the completion of the project. We would never have had the time to do this cut five weeks from the schedule without him.”

The Union Square building, at 1001 Reunion Place, is owned and managed by Equity Property Trusts. Ac- cording to Kevin, their in-house con- struction manager, Austinite Bill Lind- strum, made bi-weekly visits to the project.

“...It had the unenviable job of coor- dinating the tenant, architect, contractor, and property management into a smooth-operating team. He was a valu- able asset to the project.”

Construction team subcontractors included: Tower Electric; Westly States Fire Protection; Mechanical Mainte- nance Of Texas; Campbell Painting; Circle C “Millwork; Firep WITH Harold’s Plumbing and Texas Wilson.

Design professionals included: John Gutzler, Ford, Powell & Carson.

Pat Crane and Bill Lester founded the general contracting company in feb- ruary 1990. The company was originally named Crane & Lester General Con- tractors. Bill Lester left the company in May 2001 in an amicable buyout and the compa- nny’s name was officially changed to Crane Contracting Group, Ltd. on Jan. 1st, 2001. In business for 13 years, the company op- erates from one San Antonio location.

Pat and Kevin are joined by other key employees of Crane Contracting Group, Ltd., including project superintendent Gene Adams; interior finish-out supernumerary Eddie Rodriguez, and office manager Julie Gee.

Cranes Contracting Group’s portfolio of finish-out and ground-up construc- tion projects includes restaurants, corpo- rate call centers, corporate and profes- sional office spaces, the Republic Golf Club, office-warehouses, mini-storage facilities, and multi-family apartments, among others.

continued from Page 1 - Crane Contracting Group, Ltd. revitalizes office interior

L-R: Barry, Jorge, John, and Oscar

The Hays Street Bridge on San Antonio’s east side is unique in that it combines two spans, a Pratt Through Truss and a Whipple Phoenix Truss. Only five such double-plate bridges are known to exist in Texas. Adding to the beauty of the bridge, ornate scrollwork is woven into the corners of the iron trusses.

Engineering in San Antonio’s History

By H. Douglas Steadman, P. E.
Round-Up

Frank Wisdom, formerly of Joersi General Contractors, joined The Struthoff Company as Estimator/Manager in late May 2003. Frank, who brings 22 years of construction-related estimating experience to the position, will also be responsible for new business development and professional relationship building.

Randy Oliver, president, Hollywood-Crawford Door Company, San Antonio, was elected to a second, three-year term as a director of the International Door Association. In addition, he was elected to serve as the organization’s Treasurer. Mr. Oliver officially took office during an induction ceremony conducted in San Antonio on April 25, 2003. Mr. Oliver serves on several of the association’s operating committees.

Daba-Kistner is proud to announce that Kevin Wooster and Rick Klar have received letters from the Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists with their approval for certification as Professional Geoscientists in the State of Texas. Licensing places a degree of legal accountability on those who engage in the practice of geoscience. Firms or corporations who engage in the practice of geoscience must have their geoscientific work performed by or under the supervision of a licensed geoscientist who is responsible for such work.

Kevin Wooster, Rick Klar

Tim Bentley, project manager for Browning Construction Company, has been named executive vice president and chief operating officer of the San Antonio-based, 72-year old general contracting company. Tim holds a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from the U.S. Air Force Academy and a master’s degree in construction engineering and project management from the University of Texas at Austin.

QuadTech Engineering, Inc., an MEP consulting engineering firm, would like to honor Samuel D. Rodriguez, P.E., for receiving his Engineer/Professional Engineer’s license in the State of Texas. He joined QuadTech in 1998, is currently a Senior Associate with the firm, and received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering from Texas A&M University in 1997. He began his career in engineering over 9 years ago and is currently the Project Manager for several of the firm’s engineering projects throughout the state.

An Antonio area employers are optimistic about the hiring pace for the third quarter of 2003, according to the Manpower Employment Outlook Survey released on Tuesday, June 17th. From July to Sept., 32 percent of the companies interviewed plan to hire more employees while three percent intend to reduce their workforce. Another 52 percent expect to maintain their current staff levels and 13 percent are not certain of their hiring plans.

For the coming quarter, hiring is expected in construction, durable goods manufacturing, wholesale/retail trades, services and public administration. A mix of job gains and losses is predicted in finance/insurance/real estate, and other sectors expect to maintain current staffing levels.

The national results of the Manpower Employment Outlook Survey reveal that U.S. employers remain cautious in their hiring intentions for the third quarter, while nearly 52 percent expect a decrease in job prospects. A solid 65 percent of the companies surveyed expect no change in hiring, and six percent are uncertain of their employment plans.

The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is conducted quarterly to measure employers’ intentions to increase or decrease the number of employees in their workforce during the next quarter. It is the only forward-looking survey of its kind, has been running for more than 40 years, and is one of the most trusted surveys of employment activity in the world. The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey in the U.S. is based on interviews with nearly 16,000 public and private employers in 470 markets across the country and is considered a highly respected economic indicator.

The mission of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s multi-media criminal enforcement program is to identify, apprehend, and assist prosecutors in successfully convicting those who are responsible for the most significant and egregious violations of environmental law that pose substantial risks to human health and the environment.

The EPA’s criminal enforcement program was established in 1982. Recognizing the growing need to combat environmental crime, Congress granted EPA full law enforcement authority in 1988 and greatly expanded the program with the enactment of the 1990 Pollution Prosecution Act.

The criminal enforcement program has successfully prosecuted significant violations across all major environmental statutes, including: data fraud cases (e.g., private laboratories submitting false environmental data to state and federal environmental agencies); indiscriminate hazardous waste dumping that resulted in serious injuries and death; industry-wide ocean dumping by cruise ships; oil spills that caused significant damage to waterways, wetlands and beaches; international smuggling of CFC refrigerants that damage the ozone layer and increase skin cancer risk; and illegal handling of hazardous substances such as pesticides and asbestos that exposed children, the poor and other especially vulnerable groups to potentially serious illness.

The criminal enforcement program is made up of well trained, fully designated federal law enforcement agents, environmental forensic scientists and engineers, attorneys and training specialists. With more than 40 regional and area offices nationwide, and supported by the EPA’s basic laboratory in Denver, Colorado and its training facilities in Washington, D.C., Denver, Colorado and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynnco, Georgia, the program works closely with other federal, state, tribal and local law enforcement authorities, both to investigate and successfully prosecute criminal violations and to build the criminal enforcement capacity of other units of government.
ASSOCIATION NEWS

ABC

October 30-31: Associated Builders and Contractors Trenching & Shoring Competent Person Training six and a half (two nights) certification program. Cost $75 per ABC/BTX member or $95 per non-member.

August 7: 17th Annual Sporting Clay Shoot & 3rd Annual BBQ Cook-off at the San Antonio Gun Club. Shooting cost is $60 per shooter; registrants limited to the first 200. BBQ cook-off entry fee is $100; registrants limited to the first 15 teams.

August 12: CPR Certification Training at the ABC Offices, 10408 Gulftide. Cost is $20 per ABC/BTX member or $30 per non-member.

August 14: First Aid Certification Training at the ABC Offices. Cost is $20 per ABC/BTX member or $30 per non-member.

August 27: ABC’s Great Outdoors Expo at Alamo Crane Service from 4 pm to 8 pm. Entry fee is $5 for unlimited food and beer. Raffle tickets for $20/book of ten.

For more information about all of the events, call the ABC offices at 210-342-9994.

AGC

September 13: Greater San Antonio Builders Association’s new Board Members take office.

July 1: American Subcontractors Association’s new Board Members take office.

July 15: Members meeting. 6 pm, Barn Door Restaurant. Topic is “What Makes a Good Subcontractor…From the GC’s Perspective?” Panelists include Shane Davis, T.M. Davis Construction; Gary Joeris, Joeris, Ltd.; Doug Nunnelly, F.A. Nunnelly Construction; and Michael Malone, Vaughn Construction.

July 18-19: 2nd Annual Fishing Tournament at Port Aransas.


AGC/ASA

July 16-20: Mechanical Contractors Association Texas Annual Conference, Hyatt Hill Country Resort.

July 17: San Antonio Night, Rio Rio Restaurant, at 7 pm.


SEPTEMBER

September 24: Annual Hunters Symposium, Bexar Community Shooting Range, at 1 pm. Luncheon provided, and cost is $185.

NARI

July 2: The National Association of the Remodeling Industry—San Antonio Chapter’s monthly meeting at Workhorses, Hwy. 281 at Bitters, from 8 am to 9:30 am. RSVP to 210-499-5760.

September 29: 1st Annual Golf Tournament, Olympia Hills Golf Club, 1 pm shotgun. For information, call Dusty at 210-731-9400.

August 19: 3rd Annual BBQ Cook-off at the San Antonio Construction News • July 2003

Construction

The Construction Financial Management Association announced its slate of 2003 Officers and Board Members on Fri., May 30th. L-R: Dallas Cloud, Moore Escrow Co., LP, Nancy Robinson, Metropolitan Contracting Co.; Martin Polka, Todd-Ford, Inc.; Donna Stafford, Joeris Contractors, Inc.; Secretary Kelly Dawley, Bartlett Cocke, LP; Doug Nunnelly, F.A. Nunnelly Construction; and board members were announced at its June membership meeting and awards banquet on Tues., June 17th. They are: L-R: President Tom Kita, General Supply; President-elect Dan Donohoo, DuPont TYVEK; Vice-president Becky Wynne, Benridge Manufacturing; Treasurer Pam Scribner, Texas Wilson Flooring; Program Director Tom Harmon, Ellis Harmon Attorneys and Counselors; Scholarship Chairman Deborah Drums, AIA, ERO International; Calling Committee Chair Dick Kistner, P.E. (Class of ’65 Texas A&M University, Raba Kistner Consultants; and University Committee Chair Manny Ramos, Southwest Concrete Products.

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Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) San Antonio Chapter 2003-2004 officers and board members were announced at its June membership meeting and awards banquet on Tues., June 17th. They are: L-R: President Tom Kita, General Supply; President-elect Dan Donohoo, DuPont TYVEK; Vice-president Becky Wynne, Benridge Manufacturing; Treasurer Pam Scribner, Texas Wilson Flooring; Program Director Tom Harmon, Ellis Harmon Attorneys and Counselors; Scholarship Chairman Deborah Drums, AIA, ERO International; Calling Committee Chair Dick Kistner, P.E. (Class of ’65 Texas A&M University, Raba Kistner Consultants; and University Committee Chair Manny Ramos, Southwest Concrete Products.
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Frederick Olmstead, famed landscape architect of New York City’s Central Park, passed through Seguin, TX in 1854 and noted, “a number of buildings are made of concrete – thick walls of gravel and lime.” One of these, Col. Joshua W. Young’s house (completed in 1856) is maintained as the Sebastopol State Historic Site. By the end of the 19th century as many as 90 limecrete buildings existed in Seguin. Many still exist.

In 1851, nuns started San Antonio’s first school for girls, Ursuline Convent, in a stucco house on the river. Later, when the main building was built, the clock tower wasn’t provided with a clock on the north side, because they thought the city would never develop any farther to the north.

As the Editor was leaving the AIA/ASLA golf tournament at Silverhorn Golf Club last month, this foursome, who optimistically boasted they would be the 1st place winners of the event, engaged her attention. Lo and behold, they were! Bragging rights for 1st Place Net 57 went to George Campbell, Joe Trinidad, Jake Trinidad, and Dan Newberry (not necessarily in that order).
The Majestic Theater, located at 226 East Houston Street in downtown San Antonio, is part of the rich and colorful history that makes our city an interesting place to live. Founded in 1929, the Majestic was originally a movie theater. During the late 1970s, the building was closed and shuttered. In 1988, the grand old theater was refurbished and reopened by the Casas Foundation, with the help of architectural firm JDI. It is currently the home of the San Antonio Symphony. The Majestic has also played host to many Broadway Hits, to include Cats, Titanic, and Stomp.

The Sweet Grapes Alcove, built to house the "Sweet Grapes" statue sculpted by Harriet Frishmuth, was destroyed in the 1950s to make way for a concession stand. Recently, "Sweet Grapes" was brought out of mothballs, resurrected by the owner and will once again take its rightful place in the lobby of this magnifi cent theater.

Tom Batterby, Batterbys Ormamental, formed and molded the beautiful plaster facades. Painters Willie Trejo and Manuel Acevedo, L.E. Travis & Sons, Inc., prepared and primed the undercoating. Restorative artist Pam Ross er, Restoration Associates, is completing the artistic work for this alcove, which consists of a recessed area to house the statue and surrounding arches and columns. All of these surfaces will be gild ed and/or painted. According to Ms. Rouser, the colors will match the muted colors as seen at the ceiling area throughout the lobby of the theater.

Manuel Acevedo helps recreate a memorable piece of Majestic's history.

licensing offers opportunities for Texas electricians

During his June 18th commencement speech at the Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC) Apprenticeship Graduation, electrical contractor Keith Bell, INTEX, predicted passage of HB 1487, Texas Electrical Safety and Licensing Act.

On Fri., June 20th, Gov. Rick Perry signed HB 1487 into law. Administered by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, the new licensing law takes effect Sept. 1, 2003. The bill provides portability for electricians throughout the State of Texas; allows for enforcement of the National Electrical Code as the minimum standard for all installations; and makes it a criminal penalty to do work without a license.

"It comes down to what is right for the owners and stakeholders of Texas and what's going to protect individuals and their assets," Keith said. "Of our electrician officials, 179 out of 181 supported this legislation and we appreciate the Governor, Speaker Tom Craddick, House sponsor Joe Driver, and Senate sponsor Ken Armbruster for their efforts and commitment to the electrical industry and the stakeholders of Texas." Who must be licensed? Persons who perform electrical work, including electricians, electricians sign contractors, master electricians, master sign electricians, journeyman electricians, journeyman sign electricians, residential examiners, maintenance electricians and electrical apprentices. Exemptions to the requirement for licensure are clearly defined.

All persons performing electrical work and electrical contractors must be licensed beginning Sept. 1, 2004. The license requirements include a completed application, payment of fees, and meeting specific criteria for each type of license. Regarding "grandfather" provisions, if an applicant meets certain requirements, he or she can obtain a license without taking and passing an examination. However, there are no other "grandfather" provisions and after Sept. 1, 2004, everyone performing non-exempt electrical work must have a state-issued license. To obtain a license without passing the examination for a specified class of license, a completed application must be filed before June 1, 2004 and specific criteria must be met.

The electrical license will allow licensed electricians to practice their trade anywhere in Texas, including all municipalities. Electricians in all unincorporated areas must be licensed.

San Antonio Construction News spoke with San Antonio's IEC executive director Mike Benke, who said once an electrician has a state license, no city in the state could deny him access.

“The members of the City of San Antonio Electrical Board,” Mike added, "are preparing to move forward on their local ordinance with this law in mind, and they're embracing it to a great extent. A city can still have stricter requirements than the National Electrical Code, conduct inspections and require permits within their jurisdiction.”

City of San Antonio Chief Electrical Inspector Patrick Poloskey agreed that the new licensing act would protect more citizens across Texas and offer more mobility to electricians.

“They can move around between cities and potentially between states, if we enter into reciprocal agreements with other states,” Chief Poloskey said. “It also puts less of a burden on the local licensing entity to wade through people's credentials. I suspect that locally, we will get out of the testing business and that responsibility will fall on the State. Because of the mobility factor, I anticipate everyone would take advantage of the one-year window of opportunity to transfer current licenses from local into state.”

San Antonio Construction News sought another perspective from the president of Nathan Alterman Electric Co., Jerry Kolnik, who supports the overall concept.

“I don't see this as a union or non-union issue; if it's good for the industry, it's good for both parties,” Jerry explained. “I believe the electrician's have needed a systematic licensing procedure in Texas for a long time. There are some details that will have to be determined, such as fees and administrative activities. It has the potential to benefit the industry and the people of Texas, by requiring every electrician to hold a license, to continue their education, regardless of where they work.”

As the electrical community of Texas adjusts to the Texas Electrical Safety and Licensing Act, there is hopeful optimism that the industry will be improved.
A flood of subcontractors and suppliers blazed a bright trail in their most colorful aloha shirts, muumuu, and grass skirts when they arrived for an action-packed beach party and luau at SpawGlass Contractors, Inc., on Thurs., June 5th, from 4 pm to 8 pm.

The general contractor’s 6th Annual Subcontractor and Supplier Appreciation Party featured heavy Hawaiian puu puu’s, including everyone’s favorites: savory roasted luau pig, tropical fruits drizzled with warm chocolate sauce, and assorted canapés, courtesy of catering company Leave It To Us. Seated amid island-themed decorations, including a smoking volcano, indoor diners savored every morsel.

Meanwhile, out on the beach, surfers tested their skills and form on the Hang Ten mechanical surfboard as SpawGlass’ John Duvaney spearheaded several lively competitions. Prizes were awarded to winners of the Limbo contest, hula-hoop contest, and for the most outrageous Hawaiian attire. Winners of the “Most Outrageous Hawaiian Attire” are Steve Turbeville, Midco Sling and Averill Tope, R.R. Cauble Lath & Plaster, Inc.

Aloha spirit reigned at contractor’s beach party!

SpawGlass’ estimator Bryan Kent can balance more than just numbers!

L-R: Charles Young and Robert Kenney of Hilti are bird-dogging the fruit as Laurie Dralle, SpawGlass, smiles for the camera!

He didn’t win the prize, but he gave it his best shot!

SpawGlass’ Selma neighbors included Selma Police Chief Sid Hall, Rebecca Tschoepe, SPD; Rebecca Del Toro, SPD; Liz Ardon, Greene Tweed, and Richard Gonzales, SPD.