fist met David in 1988 when he was attending the University of Texas,” says John T. Baker.

David Polser, Ph.D., was a Bevo handler with UT’s Silver Spurs organization, and played a role in selecting Bevo XIII, the longest-tenured mascot in UT history, who came from Baker’s Sunrise Ranch. “John and I have been friends for a number of years. He is my mentor and adviser,” Polser says.

Polser turned to Baker for career guidance when he was offered a position with a large company. “I explained the merits of this offer, and John said, ‘Well, it sounds like a good deal, but let me give you something else to think about.’”

Polser says the two decided to create a company along the same lines of Baker’s former business of preparing land for construction, only with the goal to be more efficient. The two started Sunrise Vistas earlier this year. “With my previous business, which I ran for 15 years, we historically used skid steer loaders and other equipment to clear lots of large acreage tracks and right-of-ways of what I call ‘environmen
tal parasitic invaders,’ such as cedar trees and other brush,” Baker says.

After much brainstorming and re-searching about making the business more efficient, Baker finally came across “W

“W

Building a team

Robert Cottrell, second from left, and Rocky Mager, far right, started their company with $5,000, bought some tools and went to work! The rest, Mager and his business partner, Rob-

Both Cottrell and Mager agree that Hall has been instrumental in guiding the company to success. Mager says, “Robert and I work in construction – we’re not businessmen!”

Cottrell adds, “That’s right. Until we brought Jennifer in, we just learned the business side as we went along. “We both were superintendents for other companies, and we learned a lot out there. To make this happen, we just

continued on Page 21

Right: Co-owners David Polser and John T. Baker operate Sunrise Vistas on the same ranch that Bevo XIII was born and raised.

continued on Page 21

“The Granite Shoals Municipal Build-
ing sits atop a granite rock and was once considered the diamond of Granite Shoals. Somewhere along the way of this striking building’s existence, however, it became vacant. When the city of Granite Shoals presented the opportunity to bid on the Granite Shoals Municipal Building Up-grade, the team at S&G Contracting Inc. pulled together to procure the job with what would be the winning bid. “This project consists of bringing as-pcts of an already beautiful building up to date, from new roofing, electrical, plumbing mechanical, as well as adding elevator wheelchair lifts and paved drives-

wants,” project manager James Johnson.

“This is a little bit of everything, from as simple as paint to as complex as adding a new elevator to the existing structure with a nice granite veneer.”

L-R: Co-owners David Polser and John T. Baker operate Sunrise Vistas on the same ranch that Bevo XIII was born and raised.

continued on Page 21

Bringing beauty back to life

“The S&G team, including project superintendent Homer Garza, came to-gether to walk through the deserted building and found that their work was cut out for them. “This building was built back in the ‘80s. It has been vacant for so long, and we were finding unforeseen objects and problems daily, like with any other re-model,” Johnson says.

“However, we are accustomed to finding some renovation projects in this state, and we always stay very persistent and mindful of the outcome,” Johnson says S&G founders Mike Stout, president, and Shane Gibson, vice president, are excited to be part of this project. The building houses key players in the city's organizational chain of command, which Johnson says was instru-

mental in bringing the project to-gether.

continued on Page 21
Case was one of the earliest companies in the skid steer business, so we feel that this is a big milestone," says Kirby Carpenter, president, Texana Machinery.

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Case Skid Steer, Texana hosted a Rockin’ Block Party on Oct. 9. There was music, made-to-order burgers, and the opportunity to operate one of Case’s newest skid steers.

“We’ve got a course set up, and it’s fun for these guys to see who the best is,” Carpenter said.

The course, designed with narrow pathways and sharp corners, challenged operators to load a skid steer with barrels or large tires and transport them around the course then back to the starting point without dropping the items and without knocking over the cones bordering the course.

Who was the best? With a time of 2:50, Lorenzo Rodriguez, J Plumbing, was victorious!

The event also raised money for Habitat for Humanity.

Woodworking passion

The smooth surface of a finished product was the end result of a trade that James Burrows, founder, Burrows Cabinets, introduced to his son, Sherman Burrows, years ago. Sherman worked alongside his father and grandfather, Benjamin Burrows, in the cabinetmaking business for many years, eventually taking ownership of the company, and in 2008 he opened a new business called TaylorCraft Cabinet Door Company.

All from the comfort of the small town of Taylor, more than 50 employees and a collection of busy machines take pieces of TaylorCraft to cabinetmakers all over the country, as well as to Taylor’s own Burrows Cabinets. TaylorCraft’s big white building sits on a quiet stretch of highway.

“I’ve been around the woodworking industry all of my life,” Sherman says, “and the majority of our employees have been in the woodworking industry the majority of their lives.”

This common factor, and the fact that the company is family owned and operated, has made the team close-knit. Heide Osborn, marketing, says, "Many of our employees have worked together for a long time and know each other well. We make it a point to celebrate milestones and share our successes with each other.”

Relationships, Sherman says, is what it’s all about. "We believe in long-term relationships, and those are built on trust over years of quality and service.”

Burrows Cabinets manufactures high-end cabinets and is a supplier of closet and cabinet accessories. TaylorCraft Cabinet Door Company is a wholesale cabinet door manufacturer.

L-R: Charles Camp, Thomas Russworm, Freddy Cole and Hardin Camp, Smith Contracting Inc.
Birthday bash

Tables draped in white linen and decorated with fresh floral arrangements were a sharp contrast to the equipment yard background at the Alamo Crane Services Inc. 30th anniversary open house party Oct. 15 at company headquarters in Selma. Behind the tables, extended cranes were flying flags to commemorate the occasion. More than 200 guests were treated to a buffet dinner catered by Black Tie Affairs, while the music of the Metheny Brothers and Fiddlin’ Frenchie Burke played on a stage. Drawings for door prizes included a South Texas hog hunt for two.

"I would like to thank everyone for coming and helping us celebrate the anniversary and the new equipment," said Marvin Ohlenbusch, co-owner of Alamo Crane. "I am sorry in a way our newest machine, the 500-ton, wasn’t here, but thank goodness it’s out working. It is a bittersweet thing."

The 500-ton crane is the newest addition to the fleet of 33 cranes at Alamo. "Over the past two years, we have bought 15 new machines -- seven Link-Belt and eight LIEBERS machines," Ohlenbusch said. -kf

L-R: Allyn Archer, Holt Cat; Marvin Ohlenbusch, Alamo Crane Service Inc.; Joe Collins, Precision Resource Company; Skeeter Collins, Link-Belt Cranes; Scott McDougle, Holt Crane & Equipment. –Photo by Mary C. Haskin, photographer

GUESTS listen for lucky numbers during the door prize drawings. Photo by Mary C. Haskin, photographer

Plumb thankful

With burgers and hot dogs lining the grill, the Economy Supply team was out to show their customers how thankful they are for their business. Michael Louton says, "This is our customer appreciation party, and we try to do this every year." Held Sep. 23 at their Round Rock location, the Economy event served more than 60 guests who, despite the rain, enjoyed outdoor seating along the shipping dock’s walkway.

L-R: Lorene Hill, Peggy Swinford and Mike Williams donned parent company Apex Supply Company aprons while grilling for guests.

Lunch and supplies? One-stop shop for the H&H Plumbing team!

L-R: Jeff Jetner and John Tischler, Mona & Associates representing Bradford White Corporation, introduced the latest in water heater technology.

For those who served

In honor of Veteran’s Day, Construction News salutes all members of the military who have served our country. Here are a few former soldiers who work beside you and shared their photos with Construction News:

Ed Sims, Elgin Butler architectural account manager, served in the Coast Guard from 1969 to 1975, during the Vietnam War and says, "I was proud to serve our country from 1969 to 1975, during the Vietnam War and says, "I was proud to serve our country. Here are a few former soldiers who work beside you and shared their photos with Construction News: "I would like to thank everyone for coming and helping us celebrate the anniversary and the new equipment," said Marvin Ohlenbusch, co-owner of Alamo Crane. "I am sorry in a way our newest machine, the 500-ton, wasn’t here, but thank goodness it’s out working. It is a bittersweet thing."

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W

ith a knack for science and math, Linda Holt, P.E., chose to start her professional career as a pe-
diatric nurse. She went on to receive her degree and spend a decade helping children, and then she decided to take things up a notch: Holt wanted to become a doctor. A move to Texas from Colorado to start medical school seemed to be the perfect plan, but after a heartfelt talk with her father, Jack Holt, Ph.D., P.E., Holt’s career took a major turn in a differ-
ent direction.

Today, she is the president of the geotechnical engineering and materials testing firm her father founded, Holt En-
geineering. She shares her story in going from the medical field to the construc-
tion and engineering industry.

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Florida, but my father was in the Air Force, so we moved around a lot. When I was young, he bought some property out by the Pedernales River in Spicewood.

We always knew he was going to re-
tire here, and I have lots of relatives from around this area. Austin has always felt like home to me.

What was it like to be in a military fam-
ily?

It was great, actually! I have four sib-
lings, so there are five of us: four girls and one younger brother.

We moved around a lot and every year that we got to a new place, all you ever had were your siblings to play with, so it made us very close.

Did you go to more than one high school?

I went to high school all over – I think I counted five different schools!

Nowhere there were so many moves during that time, I was always a good student and picked up stuff very quickly. I was fortunate that changing high schools wasn’t too hard on me.

Do you think moving around affected your “when I grow up” decisions?

I don’t believe it did. I actually went to nursing school and did that for about 10 years. Then I decided that I wanted to go to medical school.

My husband and I were living in Boul-
der, CO, at that time, and the medical school there would make a major turn in a differ-
ent direction.

Today, she is the president of the geotechnical engineering and materials testing firm her father founded, Holt En-
geineering. She shares her story in going from the medical field to the construc-
tion and engineering industry.

When did you start medical school?

I made a different choice. At that time my dad had retired from the Air Force and had opened up his own engi-
neering business. He was a civil engineer in the Air Force, and he started his business as Jack H. Holt and Associates in 1978. He talked me into going into engineering.

Going from medicine to engineering is an extreme change! What was engi-
neering school like for you?

I transferred 146 hours into UT, and only 13 counted towards engineering! So it was like totally starting over. I was 32 when I started and that was back then.

Nursing is mostly science, so I had lots of sciences, but not that much math. I have always been good at math, but en-
geineering involved a whole different level of math.

It was tough: I was older when I start-
ed, and school was predominately male. But I joined the Society of Women En-
geineers at UT and we met once a month or so, and it was very supportive.

How did you determine what field of engineering you would study?

I was influenced by my dad’s firm, which focused on geotechnical engineer-
ing. I worked part time here in the office, and I also worked back in the lab.

What were your early days as an engi-
neer like?

I got out of school in the late ’80s and things were very slow in Austin. That gave me an opportunity to get my feet on the ground.

While I was in school and working with the firm, I did soil testing, concrete testing, and things of that nature, so by the time I got out of school, I had been introduced to several aspects of our com-
pany.

You noted that not many women were in engineering then. Did that present a challenge for you?

There were some lessons I learned in nursing. As a nurse, you work around lots of different people, and you learn to work with people. Being a woman was anything that would upset the way of my career.

What was it like to work with your dad?

It was great! He is easygoing, very smart, and knows many areas of engi-
neering and business. He has a wide range of experience and still provides his expertise to our more technical projects.

What was your transition like before taking on the role of president?

It was a gradual transition for both of us. I had worked here part time for the four years I was in nursing, and then the state board requires you to work another four years before you can get your li-
ence.

I received my engineering license, and Dad started working less and less, and now he is semi-retired. He still has an office here, and we still go to him for con-
sultation. He has his doctorate degree in engineering, so there are still times where we need his expertise on the more tech-
nical projects.

What do you love most about being an engineer?

It is nice driving around town and seeing buildings that you know you helped to get built. You look at an office building and say, ‘Hey! We did the geo-
tech and the testing on that!’

Being a part of a project that is going to be there for the next 50 years is very rewarding.

Are there any particular projects that are memorable for you?

Right now we are working on the Waller Creek Tunnel, which runs through downtown. It is a storm-water tunnel that starts at Waterloo Park and goes all the way to Town Lake. It is there to help con-
trol flooding in the downtown area.

Hopefully at one point we’ll make Waller Creek an area where businesses and restaurants can be developed so that people can be around the Creek.

It’s a huge project and we are fortu-
ate to be a part of it. We’ve been work-
ing on it for two years, so it will definitely be a highlight of some of the projects that we’ve worked on.

What are some changes that you’ve seen over the years in engineering?

As part of the design team, you usu-
ally have the geotechnical, structural, mechanical, environmental engineers – there are lots of different engineering fields that need to get involved, and now I see many more women in each of those fields. That is probably the biggest change that I have seen over my career – there are more women.

I have been in engineering now for 21 years, and it’s great to see that women who I first started with have made up.

We are confident in our fields and have roles in all different kinds of projects. It’s wonderful!

It must be beneficial to have fully lived in two very different career fields – 10 years as a nurse and 21 years as an engi-
neer. How do you feel it has affected your passion for the industry?

Well, I always loved nursing, but the politics of the hospital and the hours were hard on my family and me. There were things that I loved in nursing, and there are things that I love about owning and running a business. As time goes by, you get better at what you do, and your confidence level goes up and you enjoy it more.

In our company, which is small, we’ve got people who have been here a long time, so it’s great going into a business where you are surrounded by very capa-
bile, smart people who are also your friends, and you are all involved in mak-
ing the company better.

Everyone is invested, so it is a joint effort, and it’s nice to be a part of that. We are so lucky to have such wonderful peo-
ple making the company better.

I understand why people go from one field to another. There are nice things about different career fields, and for me this was just the right choice.

What would you say to people who want to make a career change?

A lot of people that I run into are women who stay home and have kids, and now the kids are in school and they are in their early 30s, or even late 30s. It’s never too late to do something that you love. People are living longer, and if you are in something that you aren’t quite happy with, change and do something different. You will be happy that you did.

va
The newest, the biggest and the most powerful in construction equipment were on display during Associated General Contractors of Texas’ 26th Annual Trade and Construction Equipment Show held Oct. 19-20 at the Austin Convention Center. Exhibitors from Texas and beyond shared with show-goers how the various pieces of equipment on display could be used, and how they have become more efficient and earth-friendly.

A grand opening luncheon featuring Speaker of the House Joe Straus III kicked off the two-day event, followed by live and silent auctions, an opening reception, seminars, summits, workshops, and a closing fish fry. –va
Applause was the sound of the evening at the Renaissance Hotel as the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), Central Texas Chapter, held its annual Excellence in Construction (EIC) Awards Banquet. Radio legend Ed Clements, KLBJ, was master of ceremonies, welcoming winners to the stage to accept their plaques and Eagles.

The evening included the awards presentation, a formal dinner and the presentation of a $25,000 donation raised at the Safari Auction and Gala held in September to the West Austin Youth Association.

### On Eagles’ wings

**Commercial $10-25 M**
- Harvey-Cleary Builders
- Seton Administrative Office & Parking Garage
- Architect: Studio 8 Architects

**Institutional $10-25 M**
- Flintco Inc.
- Cedar Park Recreational Center
- Architect: PBS&J Architecture

**Commercial Less than $2 M**
- LASCO Acoustics & Drywall Inc.
- McCoy’s Corporate Headquarters
- Architect: O’Brien and Associates

**Commercial $2-5 M**
- Flynn Construction Inc.
- Austin Children’s Shelter Educational Services Building and Program Services Building
- Architect: LJT Architects Inc.

**Commercial $5-10 M**
- Harvey-Cleary Builders
- UT Golf Club – New Clubhouse
- Architect: CCI Architects

**Commercial $10-25 M**
- Harvey-Cleary Builders
- Seton Administrative Office & Parking Garage
- Architect: Studio 8 Architects

**Institutional $5-10 M**
- Rogers O’Brien Construction Co. Ltd.
- St. Austin Catholic Parking Garage/Retail Facilities
- Architect: The Lawrence Group

**Commercial $20-100 M**
- Rogers O’Brien Construction Co. Ltd.
- Seton Medical Center Women’s Tower Expansion & Renovation
- Architect: STG Design

**Healthcare $25-100 M**
- Rogers O’Brien Construction Co. Ltd.
- St. Austin Catholic Parking Garage/Retail Facilities
- Architect: The Lawrence Group

**Infrastructure: Heavy**
- Journeyman Construction Inc.
- 4th Street Interim Station Installation
- Architect: URS Corp.

**Institutional $25-100 M**
- Bartlett Cocke LP
- Austin ISD Claire Gorgy Middle School
- Architect: Graeber, Simmons & Cowan Inc.

**Healthcare Less than $10 M**
- LASCO Acoustics & Drywall Inc.
- Seaton Women’s Tower
- Architect: Susman Tisdale Gayle

**Commercial $10-25 M**
- Flintco Inc.
- City of San Marcos Conference Center
- Architect: Lohmeyer-Russell Professional Corporation

### Healthcare $25-100 M
- Rogers O’Brien Construction Co. Ltd.
- Seton Medical Center Women’s Tower Expansion & Renovation
- Architect: STG Design

### Healthcare $10-25 M
- SpawGlass Contractors Inc.
- McKenna Village at Sundance Continuing Healthcare Facility
- Architect: Graeber, Simmons & Cowan Inc.

### Commercial $10-25 M
- Harvey-Cleary Builders
- Seton Administrative Office & Parking Garage
- Architect: Studio 8 Architects

### Institutional $10-25 M
- Flintco Inc.
- Cedar Park Recreational Center
- Architect: PBS&J Architecture

### Other Construction Less than $2 Million
- Flintco Inc.
- University of Texas Softball Training Facility
- Architect: O’Connell Robertson

### Continued on Page 7
Safety Training Evaluation Program (STEP) Award Winners:

Gold Level
Browning Construction Co.
Flynn Construction
Texas 5th Wall Roofing
Titus Electrical Contracting LP
TruDial Ltd. Austin

Platinum Level
Baird/Williams Construction Ltd.
Baker Drywall Austin Ltd.
Flintco Inc.
Harvey-Cleary Builders
J.R. Schneider Construction
LASCO Acoustics and Drywall
SpawGlass Contractors Inc.

Other Specialty Construction: More than $1 M
Baker Drywall Austin Ltd.
UT LBJ Library Renovation
Architect: Overland Partners

Residential Multi-family Projects and Condominiums
Rogers O’Brien Construction Co. Ltd.
Nueces Street Student Co-Op
Architect: Cotea + Reed Architects

Renovation $4-10 M
Flintco Inc.
Texas State University – San Marcos Baseball/Softball Complex Enhancements Phase I
Architect: O’Connell Robertson

Electrical: Commercial $2-10 M
Titus Electrical Contracting LP
The Ashton – 101 Colorado
Architect: HKS Inc.

Mechanical: Commercial $2-10 M
TD Industries
Embassy Suites Hotel
Architect: Malone Finkle Eckhardt & Collins

EIC Safety Award
Safety Distinction
American Constructors Inc.
American Pan & Engineering
Flynn Construction
Texas 5th Wall Roofing
Safety Excellence
Baker Drywall Austin Ltd.
Baird/Williams Construction
Flintco Inc.
J.R. Schneider Construction
LASCO Acoustics and Drywall
SpawGlass Contractors Inc.

Electrical: Commercial $2-10 M
Titus Electrical Contracting LP
The Ashton – 101 Colorado
Architect: HKS Inc.

TD Industries
Embassy Suites Hotel
Architect: Malone Finkle Eckhardt & Collins

Here’s to 40!

President and former presidents of ASSE.
The national president traveled from St. Louis, MO to attend the event.

“T
turning 40 is a milestone, wheth-
er it is in an individual’s life, or an organization’s life,” says American Society of Safety Engineers’ (ASSE) chapter president Scott Sloan, Service Lloyds Insurance Company.

ASSE observed its 40th anniversary at Steiner Ranch Steakhouse on Oct. 24. Members and guests gathered from all over the area to note the society’s accomplishments, which include dropping inci-
dent rates and creating student sections at Texas A&M and Texas State Technical college. –va

Del Tally, former society president, and his wife, Betty, helped organized the party.

L-R: Kent Haktanir, Lexie Mancuso, Texas A&M; Miriam Joffe, Auburn Engineers; and Kristen Miller, Texas A&M and the editor of the ASSE newsletter
Risk management of your biggest assets...you employees
Jenni Whitaker, Principal
Wortham Insurance & Risk Management
San Antonio, TX

For every 100 employees:
60 are overweight
60 are sedentary
50 have high cholesterol
24 have high blood pressure
25 smoke

Believe it or not, 70 percent of the ill-
esses that employees are being treated for are preventable diseases, meaning that they could have been prevented had they made different lifestyle choices. Smoking, bad eating habits, stress and alcohol abuse are all in-
dividual behaviors that contribute to overall health care costs.

So it is no surprise that many of us have unhealthy employees, but unfortu-
nately that is not our only problem. In add-
tion to our concern for the well-being of our employees, it is productivity that hits us where it hurts. Annual health work-
days due to chronic diseases have a $1 trillion impact on United States produc-
tivity each year.

Health insurance premium increases are greater than overall inflation and/or employee wage increases. Therefore, ev-
everyone is affected by it.

It should be no surprise then that corporations of all sizes are getting brave and im-
novative strategies that attempt to im-
prove the health of their employees. It is the face of “Corporate Wellness” and employers of all shapes and sizes are stepping out of their corporate board-
rooms, putting up posters, walking alongside their large corporate peers, instead of watching the parade march by like they have for years. Great news for unhealthy employees... in a recent study 57 percent of employers indicated that they are considering im-
plementing a wellness program.

We have seen employers exhibiting remarkable commitment levels when it comes to promoting better health for their em-
ployees. Employers now realize that in or-
der to have any chance of lowering premi-
ums, they must have a vested interest in understanding the connection between wellness initiatives and lowering insurer-
ance premiums. It is a risk management through employee education and aggres-
sive disease management. By engaging the employers in their own health and that of their families, it is a joint effort, an effort that will pay off in the long run.

Only do we have a vested interest in the employees who are currently being treat-
ed for disease such as Type II diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol through disease management programs, but equally as important is to help keep our employees who aren’t being treated for any conditions yet, the healthy em-
ployee, in good condition.

In a recent study of a company’s healthcare expenses (both in claim dollars and lost productivity) comes from worker illnesses that have already taken place. It is imperative to determine high-risk individ-
uals who are potentially high-cost claims before they happen,” says Kathy Corder, VP of Personalized Prevention, a San Anto-
nio-based health risk management firm.

Employees need to focus on the underly-
ing causes of healthcare cost increases and have strategies in place to drive im-
provements in employees’ overall health
and wellness. This is how to achieve maxi-
 mum efficiency and value:

Wellness comes in many packages, from Biggest Loser weight-loss challeng-
es to robust wellness programs to include Health Risk Assessments, Disease Man-
agement, Employee Seminars and Pre-
dictive Modeling. Wellness Programs are offered through most insurance carriers through their websites or you may opt for a more tailored program that may re-
quire the hiring of a wellness consultant.

In either case, your insurance agent is the best place to start your search for knowl-
edge about this subject.

Typical results once a wellness pro-
gram is implemented:
• Decreased sick leave absenteeism by an average of 28 percent
• Decreased workers comp and dis-
ability costs by an average of 30 percent
• Overall increased job satisfaction

The good news is that while there is an initial employee cost, ex. 5% per em-
ployee per month, the return on invest-
ment and the long-term payoff is ex-
traordinary. It is evident that taking care of ourselves not only brings better quality of life, it also improves everyone’s bot-
tom line.

Healthy Employees = Happy Employees

Jenni Whitaker is a principal with Wortham Insurance & Risk Management. She specializes in employee benefits and may be reached at 210-249-2346 or jwhitaker@wortham.com.

FIN 48: Accounting for uncertainty in income taxes
Eric D. Abati, CPA, Senior Manager
BKD
San Antonio, TX

In July 2006, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) issued Interpretation No. 48 (FIN 48), Accounting for Uncertainty in Income Taxes: An interpretation of FASB Statement No. 109, which may significantly change the way you evaluate your tax positions for recognition in your financial statements.

FIN 48 was effective for fiscal years beginning after Dec. 15, 2006. However, for certain nonpublic enterprises, there have been several deferrals, the most recent being FSP FIN 48-3, delay-
ing the effective date until years be-
ginning Dec. 15, 2008 (FSP FIN 48-3).

Please consult with your independent auditor (CPA) to determine what the cor-
rect adoption date is for your company.

The accounting for all material posi-
tions taken (or expected to be taken) on any income tax return is governed by FIN 48. Income tax returns include those that were filed or that should have been filed with local, state, federal and international taxing authorities.

FIN 48 applies to positions such as:
1) excluding income streams that might be deemed taxable by the taxing author-
ities,
2) asserting that a particular equity restructuring is tax-free when that posi-
tion might be uncertain,
3) the decision not to file a tax return in a particular jurisdic-
tion for which such a return might be required, or
4) positions that have only time-related consequences such as positions involving depreciation.

Recognition
In applying FIN 48, companies will need to determine and assess all material positions taken in any income tax return as of the date they adopt FIN 48, includ-
ing all significant uncertain positions.

FIN 48 addresses the recognition and measurement of income tax positions us-
ing a “more-likely-than-not” threshold. The MLTN threshold means that:
• A benefit related to an uncertain tax position may not be recognized in the in-
come statements unless it is MLTN the position will be sustained based on its technical merits
• There must be more than a 50 per-
cent likelihood the position would be sustained if challenged and considered by the highest court in the relevant juris-
diction.

Measurement
The tax benefit of a qualifying posi-
tion is the largest amount of tax benefit that is more than 50 percent likely to be realized upon ultimate settlement with a taxing authority that has full knowledge of all relevant information. This poses potentially significant challenges in evalu-
ating tax positions in various state, local and foreign jurisdictions.

Interest and penalties
A taxpayer is required to accrue inter-
est and penalties on any income tax posi-
tion, the taxpayer would incur if the uncer-
tainty tax position ultimately were not sus-
tained. Accordingly, under FIN 48, inter-
est would start to accrue for financial statement purposes in the period in which it would begin accruing under the rele-
vant tax law, and the amount of interest expense to be recognized would be com-
puted by applying the applicable statu-
tory rate of interest to the difference be-
tween the tax position recognized in ac-
cordance with FIN 48 and the amount previously taken or expected to be taken in a tax return. Penalties would be ac-
crushed in the first period in which the posi-
tion was taken (or is expected to be taken) on a tax return that would give rise to the penalties. How a company classifies inter-
est and penalties in the income statement is an accounting policy decision.

Common potential uncertain tax posi-
tions
Following are some general exam-
ple of potentially uncertain tax positions as defined in FIN 48:
• State income tax filing requirements
• Research credit computations
• International tranfer pricing methodology
• Inventory methodology, e.g., LIFO
• Accounting methods, e.g., improper tim-
ing of accrual of income or expenses
• Sophisticated tax reduction strategies
• Unintentional termination of 5 corporation elec-
tion

How will FIN 48 affect you?
To determine the effect FIN 48 will have on your company’s finan-
cial statements is to go through the exer-
cise of identifying your uncertain tax po-
sitions and applying the recognition and measurement criteria. Some companies will see little, if any, impact, while others may record significant liabilities. Consult with your CPA to quantify the impact FIN 48 will have on your company’s annual financial statements.

Eric D. Abati is a senior manager in the BKD National Construction & Real Estate and Nat-for-Profit & Government group. He can be reached at eabati@bkd.com.
Assessing past session of Texas Legislature
Shalla Santos, Associate
Allensworth & Porter, LLP
Austin, TX

Getting paid and securing payment: Perhaps the two most important bills in these economic times dealt with issues of how to get paid for work performed, and the method of securing payment. The Legislature modified the methods for holding and disbursing construction trust funds, including clarifications of when owners may be considered trustees (HB 1926.759(b)). General contractors holding these funds and subcontractors seeking payment are strongly encouraged to review this bill.

The Legislature also offered some help to contractors filing last-minute liens, noting that there would be no liability for filing a construction lien containing defective or incorrect information, until the lien was marked with the intent to defraud others (HB 669). Additionally, the Legislature let small business owners keep a little more money in their own pocket by increasing the small business exemption from the state’s margin tax from $3,000,000 to $7 million in 2010 (HB 3612).

Public contracts: In the last 12 months, bidding on public works contracts has become significantly more competitive. The Legislature enacted several changes to state and local government entity purchasing statutes related to public works construction projects. Currently, a local government can award a contract to a local bidder even if he or she is 5 percent over the lowest bid. In the future, this provision will apply only to contracts of $100,000 or less (HB 2089).

Contractors seeking to recover damages from public entities for breach of a construction contract will now be allowed to recover their attorneys’ fees, as well as other recoverable damages (HB 987).

Finally, all unsuccessful bidders, rather than only local bidders, may file an injunction to prevent the award of a public work contract that violates a competitive bidding law (HB 3668).

Regulation of registered and licensed construction trades: The Legislature continues its oversight of the construction profession. New educational requirements were added for plumbers and licensed electrical apprentices (HB 1578 and SB 470), and electricians face new testing requirements related to residential pools (HB 2089). SB 1354 imposed a number of changes to the requirements for a plumbing license and the ability of plumbers to perform work inside counties.

All license holders regulated by the Texas Commerce Licensing and Regulation, which oversees a number of construction occupations, should be aware that the agency has received increased authority to take immediate action to suspend licenses or certifications, and to issue emergency cease-and-desist orders in cases involving health and safety violations (HB 2310).

Stimulus funds: Finally, the most recent state budget authorizes a number of state agencies to spend a large amount of federal stimulus funds for “shovel-ready” highway projects, water and wastewater infrastructure projects, and weatherization projects. TxDOT’s authority to bid projects was increased from $2.7 billion to $4 billion.

What to watch for: It will be two years until the next legislative session, but a number of industry-related matters will arise in the interim.

The largest unresolved issue is the fate of the Texas Department of Transportation, which will undergo further sunset review in the next session. All areas of TxDOT’s operation, including its contracting methods, will face ongoing scrutiny.

Additionally, contractors should watch for proposals on “anti-indemnity” clauses, and discussions of when it is appropriate to require contractors to sign broad indemnity provisions, or comply with additional insured requirements in construction agreements. The foregoing is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended to provide legal advice, or to serve as an alternative to seeking legal counsel.

Shalla Santos is an associate with Allensworth & Porter, LLP. In Austin, TX. She represents general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, architects and engineers, and can be reached at ss@aplaw.com.

OSHA revises enforcement policies for fall protection during steel erection
Joann Natarajan, compliance assistance specialist
OSHA
Austin, TX

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration recently revised the steel erection compliance directive the agency’s Steel Erection Standard to change two enforcement policies related to tripping hazards and installation of nets or floors during steel erection.

One of the revised policies addresses the standard’s requirement that employers install a floor or net within two stories or 30 feet, whichever is less. Section 1926.754(b)(3) allows an employer to choose among two options for complying with the provision: install either a (fall protection) net or a floor within two stories or 30 feet (whichever is less). These options provide different safety benefits.

A net provides effective fall protection for workers engaged in certain steel erection activities (initial connecting and decking) who, under 1926.760(b)(3) and (c), are permitted to work without using fall protection. It also provides fall protection in the event of non-compliance with the fall protection requirements in 1926.760.

Although a floor in this context does not provide effective fall protection, it limits the fall distance. Also, unlike a net, a floor can be used as a staging area for an emergency rescue.” (see volume 66 of the Federal Register, January 18, 2001, at page 52133). Finally, another provision of 1926.759(b), requires falling object protection if other construction processes are permitted to work below steel erection activities.

The installation of a floor provides such protection and therefore can serve as a means of complying with 1926.759(b).

The other policy states that employers must comply with the requirement that, for projects involving structural steel, such as from falling from structural steel. While it is not a comprehensive method of protecting workers from falls, it is a means of reducing the risk of a fall occurring.

“Falls are the leading cause of death among construction workers,” said Acting Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA, Joba Barad. “We are intent on reducing the number of injuries and fatalities in the construction industry and believe these policy revisions will help us attain that goal.”

Bureau of Labor Statistics 2007 data show that 1,204 fatalities occurred in the construction industry, 447 of which resulted from falling. The steel erection standard sets forth requirements to protect workers from the hazards associated with steel erection activities when constructing, altering and repairing single and multi-story buildings, bridges, and other structures where steel erection occurs.


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We get the work from our owners, but the subs are the ones who help us to do a good job, and we appreciate them,” says Pat Williams, president, Austin region, SpawGlass Contractors.

Formerly known as Swamp Bash, this year’s appreciation event was dubbed SpawGlass City Limits. Held on Oct. 1, the eve of Austin City Limits (ACL), Casey Cowman, marketing manager, says that pushing the annual event to October instead of its usual summer date made for comfortable mingling.

Guests experienced music from bands scheduled to play at ACL, prizes, take-home goodies, “VIP” passes and a lot of appreciation. – va

Running into industry counterparts is just part of the fun for Becky Rahn, Keith Mills, Millard Drywall & Acoustical Construction, and Joe “Coach” Padilla, Gill Reprographics.

The folks with Western States Fire Protection and Velocity Credit Union listened to live music from bands that were scheduled to perform at Austin City Limits the very next day.

The Spaw’s the limit

The SpawGlass team welcomed clients to a night of Austin-style appreciation, music and all!

The RSC Equipment Rental team don their “Very Important People” passes.

Stephen Levy, Architects ClaytonLevyLittle, far left, and the KONE Inc. team enjoy a cold beverage.

The SpawGlass team welcomed clients to a night of Austin-style appreciation, music and all!
Use the weather and moon to your advantage

by Capt. Steve Schultz

Sponsored by:

The weather and moon have a huge impact in the activity level of fish, and knowing how this works can be a big advantage to you as an angler, and it's not necessary to become a meteorologist or astronomer either. The basic information of how these two forces of Mother Nature impact fishing trips is all that is necessary. The information can be learned in a few minutes of study, and will pay dividends for many years to come. In this article, I'm going to outline some tips and techniques to help you catch more fish using the weather and moon phases.

Every fisherman knows that the best fishing times are when the fish are feeding. This tends to be during dawn and dusk, but what often goes unnoticed are the two periods elsewhere in the day, moonrise and moonset. Because the moon has an effect on a variety of factors surrounding the fish, including the bait fish they hunt, these periods, combined with the moon's phases, are what trigger feeding. By understanding this and choosing times when sunrise/sunset and moonrise/moonset coincide with new or full moon phases, you'll increase your chance of a good fishing catch. Assuming there are fish in the area, of course.

There's really is nothing complicated about this at all: it's just a matter of knowing ahead of time exactly when the sun and moon will rise and set. Fish are most active during 90-minute windows surrounding each of these four daily events; that's 45 minutes before and after these four daily points. Fishing during these four periods will help increase your fishing catch, but if you plan wisely so as to ensure you're at the water's edge on the days of new or full moon, you can use these windows to reel in a catch like you've never done before. If you have to choose between sunrise/set and moonrise/set, always go with the moon as the moon is the stronger influence.

Hunters have always known that fish and game are most active at dawn and dusk or sunrise and sunset, but their activity surrounding moonrise and moonset is less noticeable because these events are likely to occur without affecting any change in the perceived light. The rise and set of a new moon are invisible anyway, and overcast weather often hides the moon. Without prior knowledge of setting and rising times, two of the best fishing times will be missed every day!

When planning your fishing by moon phase you need to consider other factors that should also be considered.

Weather: Severe weather changes have an impact on the way fish feed. When a storm's brewing, or just after one has passed, is a good time. If this happens while you're in place, you'll be in for a treat! However, if there's a cold front approaching, the fish are likely to move deeper into the water and become inactive.


Jody Swann, Urban Concrete Contractors, landed this 42-in. redfish on Oct. 14 fishing with Steve Schultz Outdoors. Swann released the fish to fight another day.

Season: Most fish are more likely to bite willingly during seasonal transitions with the transition from winter to spring and summer to fall being the two best fishing times.

Now that you know that moon phase fishing really works, there's no reason why you shouldn't utilize this knowledge to increase your own fishing catch by being at the ready with your rod during the best fishing times available. It's easy and it works!

For information in booking your next fishing trip, give Capt. Steve Schultz a call at 361-949-7359 or visit Baffinbaycharters.com. Also please make note of Steve's new email address: SteveSchultzOutdoors@gmail.com. Good Luck and Good Fishing.
Ken Milam’s Fishing Line
Sponsored by Tropical Marine and Honda Marine

My name is Ken Milam and, for the past 26 years, I have been guiding fishing trips for striped bass on Lake Buchanan in the Texas Hill Country. Over the years, I’ve had the opportunity of getting to know a good many folks in the construction trade.

Ah...it finally started raining and cooling off! I think this whole part of the world is breathing a sigh of relief and contentment. The countryside is back from the brown cracklies of the dusty drought. Now everywhere you look there is every shade of green.

Although we have had enough rain to bring us some relief and in some places even enough to do some flooding, the watershed for the Highland Lakes hasn’t caught enough water yet to help with much where the levels are low. The ground is plenty damp, though. Nowadays a passing shower leaves puddles and swelling creeks, so the earth around here has drunk its fill. It is just a matter of time until the right storm system does come to rest over the watershed and the lakes do begin to refill. So far we have come up a little better than a foot on Lake Buchanan.

We still have plenty of fish to be caught, and only 40 percent of the lake to catch of them in, so we look forward to some great fall and winter fishing trips. The only trouble is, a lot of our fishermen are more interested in hunting this time of year.

Now for the good part...We now offer deer hunting packages, too! You can hunt along the Concho River near Paint Rock. We offer management or trophy hunts, high fence or low fence.

One package we offer is $1,595 for one 8 point buck under 130 Boone and Crockett points, plus two does. This is a 2 1/2-day hunt with meals and accommodations provided. This is a management hunt using MLD tags, so you don’t even have to use your deer tags. All you need to do is bring your gun and your clothes and ice chest. Deer processing is available for an additional charge.

This is a beautiful place to hunt. Besides deer, there are ducks and you can even fish on a damned-up part of the Concho River for catfish, crappie or whatever else will take your bait. You could even get a combined package of Lake Buchanan striper fishing and West Texas deer hunting if you like. Just contact me at 325-379-2051 or email me at kmilam@verizon.net for more details.

Whatever you do, I hope you find the time to get outside and enjoy some of the best weather we have had all year!

Even with the drought, Fall Creek on Lake Buchanan still flows and keeps its little pool of water. Picture taken at the worst of the drought.
Bruce Bonnet, Lone Star Materials Inc., recalls that he bought his first bow in 1984 out of a Cabela’s catalog. Bonnet says he taught himself how to shoot, and today has an estimated 50 shoulder mounts in his game room.

“My wife is very understanding!” he says, noting that his most recent harvest, a whitetail buck, will be the next to join his collection.

Bonnet used a Mathews Switchback LD bow, MFX carbon arrows and Spitfire 100-grain Broadhead to take the whitetail. It was a 20-yard double-lung shot, with a 65-yard recovery.

“The buck was 6 years old and had 13 points that added up to a Pope & Young gross score of 159 inches.”

Bonnet has been hunting on the 2,500-acre low-fence archery-only ranch where the whitetail was taken for six years. Bonnet has found that a favorite hunting environment for him is mountainous terrain.

“I’ve been lucky enough to have taken elk, whitetail deer, mule deer, caribou, black bear, mountain lion, pronghorn antelope and turkey with my bow, plus some other small game animals over the years.

“I was raised in the country and still live on 140 acres, therefore I love the quietness and beauty of the outdoors. Being a bow hunter, you have to get close and personal with the game you’re after. Because of this, I have learned a lot about the sounds and behavior of different game animals.”

Sue Johnson, Construction News, took this photo in downtown Seattle. It caught her eye because of the unique boat shape to the buildings’ profile.
**Perfect time for play**

If you’ve been to a Jamail & Smith Construction jobsite, chances are you met Stanley, whose job is to greet jobsite visitors and get them signed in, and then bid them farewell when they leave. Made of nuts, bolts, washers and a couple of embed plates, Stanley was built by some of the creative folks with the commercial general contractor. If you visit a jobsite on Stanley’s watch, make sure you’ve got your hardhat and safety glasses on, and don’t forget to sign in!

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**Celebrating Rick Schmidt**

Manor Foster, Manor Foster Construction, was able to get away Oct. 1-5 to visit the waters of Alcova, WY, for fishing. Foster flew to Denver, CO, met up with longtime friend Kirk Kauffman, and the two road-tripped it for the North Platte River. “This is the first time I’ve visited Wyoming. My favorite part was catching the biggest trout of my life.”

The North Platte River is regulated by the federal government so everything is catch and release. Even though this regulation prevented him from bringing home any of his catches, he did come home with one thing: “Memories!”

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**Ahh vacation! Even if it was only a weekend away**

Toni Osberry, Associated General Contractors (AGC), and her family packed their bags and hit the road for the Texas coast in October. She says the days started off cool, but highs in the upper 70s made for comfortable beach walks.

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**Statewide Materials Transport takes the prize for Best All Around.**

If you’ve been to a Jamail & Smith Construction jobsite, chances are you met Stanley, whose job is to greet jobsite visitors and get them signed in, and then bid them farewell when they leave. Made of nuts, bolts, washers and a couple of embed plates, Stanley was built by some of the creative folks with the commercial general contractor. If you visit a jobsite on Stanley’s watch, make sure you’ve got your hardhat and safety glasses on, and don’t forget to sign in!
When Mike Nieft and Brian Riebe, founders-owners, IE2 Construction Inc., and Jerry Doyle, owner, ERT Lighting and Sales, decided to have customer appreciation parties, two factors made determining a party date a breeze: location and customers. "We work with a lot of the same customers: contractors, distributors, architects, engineers. It just made sense to have our parties together," Doyle says, whose company has been in business for 20 years. Nieft and Riebe have both worked in the construction industry for a number of years as well, and after starting their general construction company earlier this year, the party also served as a celebration of their new company and their recently remodeled office.

The City Electric guys enjoyed the fall weather outside the ERT Lighting and Sales office.

L-R: Tom Mrable, Steven Hesch, Jason Richards, Mike Nieft, Brian Riebe and Mark Bailey, IE2 Construction, welcome guests into their newly remodeled office.

There’s a party next door...

L-R: Suzy Tompkins, Scott Douglass and Danny Leger, ERT Lighting and Sales.

The Alpha Insulation and Waterproofing guys fill up on burgers, links and chicken.

Dave Pennington cooks for the party.

"Rising Above Your Expectations"

Hurry!

Bonus Depreciation and Section 179 increases can mean BIG SAVINGS for 2009 equipment buyers. Purchase By Dec. 31, 2009

Ah, the calmness of being on the golf course – a perfect way to kick off fall! The annual CenTex IEC Fall Golf Tournament was held Sep. 30 at Avery Ranch Golf Club. The day included a putting contest, two longest drive contests and four nearest the pin. After dinner and prize drawings, the players learned that Hill Country Electric Supply, pictured, took first place.

Submitted to Construction News
Fall on the green

Rain outside, appreciation inside

There are some days when “rain or shine parties” are completely worth it. With a combination of raffling off a custom motorcycle and being served burgers and hotdogs by the Sun Bru Bikini Team on one of October’s rainiest days made Silicone Specialties Inc. (SSI) partygoers think “What rain!”

Mark Petrikat, SSI, says appreciation parties were held at all of their locations, and Silicone Sally and her Big Dog Mastiff Motorcycle were touring each one. Celebrating their 40th anniversary this year, SSI is donating the money they raise to Wishes for Wings, and the drawing will be held on Dec. 9.

A side note of information: Silicone Sally actually works with SSI guiding customers on the website, and providing product and company information while customers hold on the phone lines.

The Restek Inc. duo, nice and dry!
Randall Larson has joined Millard Drywall & Acoustical Construction Inc. as estimator and project manager. He received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and has worked on elementary schools, churches, fire stations and custom homes in Las Vegas.

Intertech Flooring announces:

Carl Schneider is promoted to chief financial officer. Schneider joined the company in 1994 as controller and has served as vice president of finance since 2006. He assisted in the company’s recent acquisition of RWA Associates.

Terry Bessire is promoted to vice president of operations for the Austin office. He will also have project management responsibilities in Austin.

Dixon Matlock is promoted to vice president of corporate services based in the Austin office. He will also have project management responsibilities in Austin.
What is your observation about the construction slowdown? It has become extremely challenging. We have noticed through our bidding process that construction prices have dropped on the average about 30 percent, which is in line with our revenues for engineering services.

How do those price drops affect the building process? I recall that about two years ago we bid a project and the average bids came in close to our estimate, but there were two bidders who were 25 percent lower. When I see that it makes me nervous as an engineer. I think, “How was the contractor able to get his numbers so low?” Was there something in the plans that he overlooked? Were our plans clear?

Our concern for our clients is that they have an unqualified or desperate contractor on board. Sometimes clients think that when they open the bid and the average number is $1 million and the low bid is $600,000, they are saving $400,000.

We are happy if our client can save $400,000, but we need to take a step back and make sure that the low bidder is qualified to do the work. You don’t want to be 60 percent complete and have the contractor walk away.

How has the downturn affected your firm? It has affected our company in a couple of ways. We provide construction staking here in Austin, and we also provide construction observation. Not in Austin, but in our other offices we provide full-time, on-site inspection.

Construction staking and inspection revenue is a fraction of what it once was.

How are you protecting your clients’ and contractors’ interests? We’ve tightened up our bidding practices and our pre-qualification practices. While I can’t begrudge someone who is looking for a way to put food on his table, there is too much at stake for our project to be subject to a new company’s learning curve.
What is your perspective on the current state of the Houston construction industry?
From what I see and where I have been, it appears the recession is not hurting us right now. I think the climate is good for construction in Houston.

What types of changes have you seen in engineering?
There are now areas the licensing people are going into. For instance, they now license software engineers, which is entirely different from what we used to do. The licensing board has now added construction management to the civil engineering licenses. Those people who are out doing construction management can now use that experience in gaining their professional license.

I remember working at Houston engineering firm in 1978. The company had well over 100 engineers. We had two or three computers in the office. It took the next 10 to 12 years before every engineer had a computer on his or her desk. Who knows what will be next. We may have computers the same size of an iPod.

Do you think more young people are getting involved in engineering?
Not enough. I am a member of Texas Society of Professional Engineers (TSPE) and we do all we can to encourage young people to come into the profession. I am involved in two programs called Future Cities and MathCounts. The programs are for middle schoolers. We are trying to get the kids involved before high school. If we wait to encourage the kids when they are juniors and seniors, they will miss some of the prerequisities they are going to need in college.

What are the challenges in engineering?
About five years ago, I talked to the dean of engineering at Rice University. He said at the time that they had no idea what to teach civil engineers because by the time they graduated, most of what they have been taught was obsolete and they were into something different already.

This is an example of what is happening all over the profession. We are progressing in the amount of knowledge we have and the way we work, that it is almost impossible to teach it at school.

What does it take to be a good engineer?
First of all, it takes brainpower. You have to study and know what you are doing. You have to know how to treat other people. You have to be a leader and express leadership qualities.

In my opinion, you must have an outstanding ethics and moral background. The profession changes so fast that sometimes we do things without having total knowledge of the result. For example, I worked on the Sam Houston Toll Road project. In many cases, we would have to make changes on the spot because of the drainage situation or bridge beams. The engineer in the construction area has to be ready to accept change.

Why is the profession rewarding?
We are tasked with the health, safety and welfare of the public. If we can do that, then we have done a good job on this Earth as human beings.

Othon Inc. is a consulting engineering firm specializing in civil and structural engineering, transportation and construction management.

Accepting change in engineering
Elbert “Bert” Link, P.E.
Othon Inc.
Houston, TX

Politics affects planning
Rod Booze, Principal
Ascension Group Architects LLP
Arlington, TX

How would you describe the state of the construction industry in general terms?
The industry is adjusting and experiencing a contraction relative to the overall conditions of the economy. We have seen and felt a slowdown generally. Specifically, many projects cannot materialize because of the uncertainty.

What factors are driving this slowdown?
Uncertainty in Obama’s health plan has resulted in significant risk within all players in the healthcare community and financing has been a significant challenge in tandem with this uncertainty.

How has this slowdown affected your company and how you conduct business?
We have tightened our belt as you would expect, and we have heightened our responsiveness to existing clientele and enhanced our marketing efforts.

What are the “hot button” issues in your industry?
All issues affecting costs, i.e., seed to line – the industry will value and pay attention to. Deliver a better product. Enhance level of service.

What do you see on the horizon?
Changes in technology, changes in codes, ordinances or laws, other?
Change is inevitable in technology, codes, ordinances, etc. We fully expect that healthcare environments will continue to be the most complex and highly regulated environments in the building industry for the right reasons. The healthcare industry can heal no one except the tools and protective be in place to provide the care required.

What are the rewards of the industry?
Our buildings give back and support the efforts of the medical industry to provide compassionate care to our communities.

What are keys to being successful?
Expertise, intelligence and responsiveness.

Located in Arlington, TX, Ascension Group Architects LLP is an award-winning architecture/planning/interior design firm, specializing in healthcare, science and institutional facilities. - mjm

Baker Triangle
Our people make the difference.

For 35 years it has been the people at BakerTriangle who have made the difference. It has been the individuals working in the field and in the office who have shown up each day to make BakerTriangle what it is. And for that we salute them.
What have been the positive changes in architecture and construction in the past year?
The economy has put a lot of focus on economical, sustainable, recycled and energy-efficient products and construction methods. Builders are starting to look more closely at energy pay-backs and more sustainable materials in order to make their projects a better overall investment.

What is everyone talking about?
Green building and sustainable design is a big topic from the manufacturing process all the way to the construction equipment being used.

It’s not just about selecting a sustainable material. The real bang for our buck and the construction means are now a factor.

BIM (Building Information Modeling) has really taken off lately, with govern-ment entities and facility management groups now starting to require deliver-ables in BIM format for their use in post-construction management.

Manufacturers have also embraced BIM and are providing a wide range of their products as components for download and use in model files, which helps at the design-process level. There are also some great products coming out that allow us, as designers, to perform energy analysis, green building compliance and interference checking, by just running the software on the BIM file, making adjustments and running again to see if problems were ironed out.

We can see other areas where BIM analysis tools could really help the process of information modeling to be more efficient in the future – Building Code checking, product material compatibility issues, utility grouping/stacking, just to name a few.

What are your “hot button” issues?

Design and construction industry buzz is about building information modeling and sustainable design and construction. Technology is finally catch-ing up to the dreams and aspirations of architects and engineers whereas smarter documentation, analysis and evaluation can be done for a design project much earlier and much easier than ever before.

Going hand in hand with this is the emphasis and demand for more energy-efficient buildings and eco-friendly building products. The real bang for our buck is merging energy analysis, sustainable design and building lifecycle manage-ment within the available toolset offered by BIM.

Additionally, we adopted two soft-ware applications to offer energy analysis and decision-making tools – one for con-ceptual design and the other for our final design documentation. Most intriguing about these tools is at the conceptual design phase. We offer a service to analyze sites, building and energy data at the con-ceptual design phase to give building owners better information earlier in the process to determine whether their build-ing project should or should not be built.

What are recent major changes relating to your work?

Business operational costs have risen dramatically over the last several years making it very challenging for building owners to remain competitive without raising billing rates. Insurance costs for employers and project liability insurance continue to rise. Additionally, contractors are faced with rising insurance coverage requirements that impact how competitively they can bid their projects.

Perhaps the most rewarding industry change that impacts the work we do is with the technology advancements of BIM. We can do 25 to 50 percent more work, more accurately, with better results through our use of BIM over CAD. We have used BIM in our design process for many years, but what it allows us to do is to be better collaborate with our partners and assist other companies in the use of this technology.

What changes do you see on the horizon?

The key change in this industry is the use of BIM. It is changing contractual rela-tionships, legal responsibilities and the delivery methods for the project team.

Many have heard of Integrated Project Delivery (IPD), which is a project de-livery process that integrates people, sys-tems and business practices into a col-laboration to optimize project results and value to the owner.

IPD at its core is not a new approach, it just happens to have the technology behind it to make it more possible than ever before. The manufacturing industry adopted concurrent engineering prac-tices coupled with digital prototyping years ago. This is achieved now in the building industry with the use of BIM to virtually design and construct a building. The im-pact of this will be felt throughout the industry and should ultimately prove to increase efficiencies, reduce costs and re-duce risk. This is a change that has very little downside to it.

What is the most significant challenge your industry faces?

Keeping a steady project development backlog during the economic change. We have managed to stay busy over the past year. However we have not had the project backlog that we typically have had in the past.

What is on the horizon for your industry?

Sustainable design and green building has become much more attainable without a great deal of additional project cost. This has made the length of time to payback on investment shorter for owners, making sustainable design more viable for projects with tight budgets.

Many manufacturers are building sustainability and recycling into their process, which by default builds it into the design and construction process. In the near future, sustainability will be part of the project because it’s a more economic choice.

BIM industry’s “key change”

Jeff Fry, Principal

The VDC Group and Legacy Architecture

Dallas, TX

How was the recession affected your com-pany and how you conduct business?

Our focus took a major shift in late 2008. We found that one of our most valuable commodities is our knowledge of and experience using Building Information Modeling (BIM) technologies. We have been a leader, and in fact an early adopter, of 3-D BIM in our design work.

Therefore, it was a natural extension of our core business to offer that experi-ence to our partners such as general con-tractors, subcontractors, owners and de-velopers.

What are your “hot button” issues?

The design and construction industry is buzzing about building information modeling and sustainable design and construction. Technology is finally catch-
Rainy fall weather calls for warm, meaty chili! Or soupy chili... or spicy chili... or... well, whatever kind of chili!

The Roofing Contractors Association of Texas held its second annual Chili Cook-Off on Oct. 21, and with plenty of entries and ABC Supply’s warehouse full of hungry guests, calling a winner wasn’t the easiest of tasks!

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After presenting Meals on Wheels with a donation of $2,000, Pioneer Roof Systems’ Mark Millikan introduced the winners of the day’s events. –va

Cheers to 70 years

Exhibitors showed architects from across the state the newest technologies, systems and materials at the Texas Society of Architects (TSA) 70th Annual Convention Oct. 22-24.

The convention and the Design, Products & Ideas Expo took place at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston.

On the last day, TSA presented the 2009 Design Awards to recognize outstanding projects and architectural firms. –ab

Here are the winners:

- Elements by Buchanan Architecture, Dallas
- House in the Garden by Cunningham Architects, Dallas
- ImageNet by Elliott + Associate Architects, Houston
- International Terminal D, DFW Airport by HKS, Corgan Associates and HNTB, Dallas
- Lenora & Walter F. Brown Asian Art Wing by Overland Partners Architects, San Antonio
- Light & Sie Art Gallery by Laguarda Low Architects, Dallas
- Linda Pace Foundation Offices by Potete Architects, San Antonio
- Long Gallery Carport & Parking Plaza by Dillon Kyle Architecture, Houston
- Museo Alameda by Jackson & Ryan Architects, San Antonio
- 1400 South Congress by Dick Clark Architecture, Austin
- University of Texas Center for Brain Health by HKS, Dallas
- Wolfe Den by MJ Neal Architects, Austin

Accepting 1st Place for Jim Walker, Bradco Supply Team, are Chunky and Sue Harwell.

Not only did the SP Roofing Systems team prepare 6th place chili, they also brought along their smoker for hotdogs!

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New home sweet new home

Jesse Beckett, Beckett Electrical Services, says that even in a down economy his electrical contracting company has managed to grow, resulting in a need for a bigger space. In March a new space on Metric Boulevard was purchased, and by October, the team moved in. They now have double the office space and triple the warehouse space than in their previous location.

Maureen Beckett says, “We renovated it and turned it into a very professional space. Our new home reflects the way we want our company to be represented.” –va

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what they needed to do their job in, as Polser refers to it, one fell swoop: a grinder.

"Now we are able to do our job with one machine, as well as create a usable product that has some value when we are done," Baker says.

That material is mulch, which Baker says adds to the “green factor” in that it is not a material that needs to be discarded, hauled off or burned later.

Baker and Polser have brought Jason Ruyle onto the team to operate the grinder. The three and their team of five crewmembers have stayed busy “blazing the trail,” as Baker says, for development to proceed.

"John had a long, successful track record of doing this on a different scale with different equipment, so we felt very confident going into it," Polser says.

It is a neat opportunity to help people realize their visions, which is why we named the business ‘Vistas.’ Whether it’s a house or a large commercial structure, it’s personally rewarding to help someone achieve a goal. We enjoy being a part of that!"

Sunrise Vistas is a commercial and residential site preparation company.

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The city provided us with some of the best decision-makers and inspectors: Doug Cloud, Ken Francis, the city manager and more. They have been beside us through all aspects of production."

Johnson adds that on-site architect-engineer Robert Kinkel, Freese & Nichols, has shown the S&G team new ways of communication and diligence when it comes to the administrative side of the project.

So what has it taken to bring this building back to life? According to Johnson, the primary materials could not be found in any supply house!

"It’s taken great teamwork, a little bit of laughter and a hell of a lot of sweat!"

Mike Stout, president, and Shane Gibson, vice president, started S&G Contracting Inc. in 2001. Originally a restoration company, the S&G team has grown to offer general contracting, government procurement, construction management and design-build services for private and public entities.

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The Granite Shoal Municipal Building showcases the city’s greatest natural asset: granite.

...for supplies! As a wholesale distributor of materials and tools for the roofing industry, the ABC Supply team has the materials to raise the roof, re-roof the roof, build up a roof or meet any other roofing needs!
### Association Calendar

**Content submitted by Associations to Construction News**

#### ABC
- Associated Builders & Contractors
  - Nov. 10-12: Training: OSHA 2264: Confined Spaces, 8am-5pm
  - Nov. 13: Training: OSHA 10
  - Nov. 17: Chapter Dinner meeting
  - Nov. 20: Training: OSHA 10
  - Nov. 26-27: Office closed for Thanksgiving holiday
  - For more info call 512-719-5273 or visit www.abccentraltx.org

#### ACCA
- Air Conditioning Contractors of America
  - Nov. 3: Monthly meeting, Springhill Restaurant in Pflugerville
  - For more info call 512-897-8290 or visit www.accaustin.org

#### ACEA
- Austin Contractors & Engineers Assn
  - Nov. 5: Thirsty Thursday, 4-7pm, Third Street Bar & Grill
  - Nov. 9: COTE Meeting, 12-1pm
  - Nov. 10: Emerging Professionals Committee meeting, 4:30-6pm
  - Nov. 11: ARE Study Group, 6-8pm
  - Nov. 12: Professional Development Committee meeting, 5-6pm
  - Nov. 14: CANstruction Build Day, Judging and CanCan Party, Barton Creek Square Mall
  - For more info call 512-836-3140 or visit www.acexct.com

#### AIA
- Associated General Contractors
  - *Unless otherwise noted, events are held at the AIA Austin office*
  - Nov. 4: OSHA 10 in SPANISH, 9am
  - Dec. 1: OSHA 10 in SPANISH, 8am
  - For more info call 512-442-7887 or visit www.aiaaustin.org

#### APHCC
- Associated Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors
  - *Unless otherwise noted, events are held at the Buda APHCC office*
  - Nov. 7: Plumbing CE, 8:00am-3:30pm
  - Nov. 14: HVAC CE, 8am
  - Nov. 20: Green Plumbers Accreditation: Climate Care, 8am-5pm
  - Nov. 21: Plumbing CE, 8:00am-3:30pm Journeyman/Tradesman Test Prep Course, 8am
  - For more info call 1-800-831-9313 or visit www.phcc-tx.org

#### CTMCA
- Central Texas Masonry Contractors Assn
  - Nov. 5: Board Member meeting, time and location TBD
  - Nov. 19: General meeting, 6pm, Scholz’s Garten
  - For more information call Elizabeth Beber, 254-386-8975 ext. 2

#### CSA
- Central Texas Subcontractors Association
  - Nov. 10: Monthly meeting, Travis Brown: Subcontractor’s Bid Issues: What Every Subcontractor Needs to Know, 8:30am-9:30pm
  - For more info call 512-255-6373 or email wendy@ctsaonline.org

#### IEC
- International Electrical Contractors
  - Nov. 18: General Membership Luncheon, Annual Business meeting with Elections, IEC Training Center
  - For more info call 512-832-1333 or visit www.centexiec.com

#### NARI
- National Assn of the Remodeling Industry
  - Nov. 11: CE: TRCC
  - Nov. 12: Board of Directors meeting
  - Dec. 4: General Membership meeting
  - Board of Directors meeting
  - For more info call 512-708-0637 or visit www.austinnari.org

#### NAWIC
- National Assn of Women in Construction
  - Nov. 5: Monthly meeting with Educational Program: The Future of Blueprint Storage, 5:30pm, Rio Grande Restaurant Downtown
  - Nov. 12: Informational Networking Luncheon, 11:45am, Cannoli Joe’s
  - Dec. 4: Annual Holiday Party and Toy Drive, Rio Grande Mexican Restaurant Downtown
  - For more info email Kasey Delz at kdelz@austin-ind.com

#### NECA
- National Electrical Contractors Assn
  - Nov. 25: Central Texas Chapter meeting, Austin Division
  - For more info call 512-249-0001 or visit www.centralexc.com

#### TSPE
- Texas Society of Professional Engineers
  - Nov. 18-19: Board & Committee meetings
  - For more info call 512-472-9286 visit www.tspe.org

#### TSPS
- Texas Society of Professional Surveyors
  - Nov. 18: CE: Professional Ethics for the Land Surveyor; CE: Effective Marketing of Professional Services for Engineers and Surveyors
  - Dec. 5: CE: GNSS, Geodesy & Map Projections for TX Land Surveyors seminar; CE Advanced Survey Technology
  - For more info visit www.tspso.org

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**Job Sights**

The Armadillo Granite & Marble crew, along with Armadillo president Mario Villarreal, far right, installs granite pieces into a star shape at the entryway of IBC Bank’s Administrative Office and Bank Branch. Marshall Company is the general contractor for this project, and Joe Russell is the superintendent.

Ronnie Raney, Foulkrod Custom Drywall, handles the drywall installation for a Microtel in southeast Austin. The general contractor for this project is Global General Construction Services LLC, and the superintendent is David Flannigan.

L-R: Jamail & Smith Construction’s Richard Darden and commercial plumbing contractor Ray Sosa, P G Sosa Plumbing discuss connection details for the controls for the automatic flush valves in the City of Austin Twin Oaks Branch Library. Jamail & Smith Construction is the general contractor for this project, and Darden is the superintendent.

Working with the Austin Clean Water Program – Waller/Pedernales Wastewater Improvements Project, the Oscar Renda Contracting crew restores a downtown commercial lot to its original state by smoothing out the driveway’s concrete. The City of Austin is the project owner with public works construction inspector Freddy Alonzo overseeing the progress.

For the second year in a row, the Harvey-Cleary Builders team participated in the annual Start! Heart Walk, and, dog-friendly city that Austin is, walkers were encouraged to bring along their furry four-legged pals. The ‘Top Dog’ House Design Challenge, coined by Harvey-Cleary, joined architect and general contractor together to raise money for the walk. The Bommarito Group, CTA Architects & Engineers, and Gensler designed unique doghouses, Harvey-Cleary built them, and each house was set out for auction. Each one went for more than $300.

Pooches welcome

With their Pet Hydration Station set up on Congress Avenue, Team Harvey-Cleary and their pooches have a perfect view of the Capitol.

The Bommarito Group’s doghouse features sliding glass doors and an adjustable roof to control airflow.

L-R: Jamail & Smith Construction’s Richard Darden and commercial plumbing contractor Ray Sosa, P G Sosa Plumbing discuss connection details for the controls for the automatic flush valves in the City of Austin Twin Oaks Branch Library. Jamail & Smith Construction is the general contractor for this project, and Darden is the superintendent.

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For the past six months Ccino (as in Cappuccino) has waited patiently for my little white truck to come up the driveway at the end of each day. As I near the house I can hear his soulful cry, so glad I am finally home.

Not long ago Ccino stood wait in a similar way for a soldier, Sgt. Clay Bowen, his owner, to come home. Clay planned to visit Ccino in September and take him home with him in January, when his deployment ended. Ccino was his baby. But he is not coming home. Clay lost his life in Afghanistan in August.

Ccino needs a home. I have fostered the amazing dog and his stepsister, Coco, since April. I have loved every minute of it. Just months ago, Clay asked if I would keep Coco. I would love to keep both dogs, but I feel I can only do one dog justice. Coco suits my lifestyle and is content just being outside, chasing squirrels and looking for deer. She doesn’t mind if I have to attend an event in the evening and come home late.

Ccino just wants to be loved. He really wants to be a lap dog or your shadow. He is an 18-month-old AKC registered pit bull and weighs about 65lbs., but he is not the aggressive, dog-fighting kind of pit bull. He might lick you to death, though, or accidentally hit you with his wagging tail.

He is crate-trained and neutered. He loves to fetch anything and play. The amazing thing about Ccino is his personality. He will carry on a conversation with you. He will carry on a conversation with you. You have the recordings to prove it! He is very smart, but he is also very funny. Sometimes I just sit in the den and watch him on the deck doing silly things, like putting pieces of carpet on Coco’s head to entice her to play. If you throw a stick, the two dogs retrieve it in tandem.

Ccino would make a wonderful companion dog. He is the most affectionate and loyal dog I have ever known. Help me find him a new, loving owner who can appreciate him the way Clay and I do.

-Kathie Fox, San Antonio Editor

We’ve been to several concerts, I went to Austin City Limits, we’ve been out on the lakes, and we’ve had plenty of Tex-Mex!”

Yes, Meg Arnold, co-owner, Fast Wrap Austin, says she and her husband and business partner, Rob Arnold, co-owner, are very excited to be living in Austin. The couple started their business in July. Meg explains why they chose Austin as the base for their business, and for their home.”We lived in Arizona, but here in Texas, there was still construction going on, as opposed to the rest of the country. Texas is just the best place to live if you still want to work and have a business or a job.”

Rob says that since he and Meg opened the doors to their containment company, they have found many uses for their large-scale shrink-wrapping franchise. Though it wasn’t a project the Arnolds worked on, Meg shares her favorite Fast Wrap application.

“There was a casino under construction, and because it was unsightly in its condition, the casino next door paid to have it wrapped. There were also a lot of materials in there, so the wrap served as a good security measure as well.”

Meg says her and Rob’s main focus was to get their business involved in construction industry. However, she says they have wrapped many other things, such as boats, to make sure that they stay practicing, and to get things “up and running.”

The Arnolds say they have embraced the Austin way of life. Meg says next on her list is getting burnt orange shrink-wrap produced and sent to Austin!

Fast Wrap Austin is a woman-owned business that uses shrink-wrap to perform containment, asset protection and weatherization services for construction and residential entities.

--va

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