If Jack Corgan could see his architecture firm now, he’d probably marvel that the more things have changed since he founded his business in 1938, the more things have stayed the same.

What began as a two-man undertaking focused on movie theater and drive-in design in the southwest has certainly changed. Corgan now employs a staff of 330 in offices internationally and boasts a diverse range of projects. What has stayed the same, however, is the company’s dedication to helping others in the community, a belief cherished by the founder set a standard for giving back to the communities in which we live and work, David Lind, Corgan chairman and managing principal, says. “Launching 75 Days and 75 Ways,” Corgan’s earliest project, our founder set a standard for giving back to the communities in which we live and work,” David Lind, Corgan chairman and managing principal, says. “Launching 75 different, successful charitable projects in one year will require a major commitment from every employee in every office, but what better way to celebrate our history than to make an even bigger effort to touch people’s lives and improve the communities in which we live and work,”

When the recession hit in 2008—five years after DFW Grating Incorporated President Mike Love started his Dallas-based company—the entrepreneur stared the downturn defiantly in the face, daring it to do its worst. “The recession came along in 2008, and we decided we were not going to participate,” said Love, whose venture has grown steadily and solidly as it reaches its 10th anniversary. Today, Love co-owns a company that operates out of a 50,000-sf facility with aptly named Vice President George Steel. The company provides grating products and services that include bar grating, steel grating, railroad grating and more.

Love and one employee, inside sales manager Ford Smith, started the company in 2003, and never envisioned it growing as big or acquiring the magnitude of contracts it has. “We were just looking for a way to make a living,” Love recalls. “I had worked my way through a company in the automotive business, when it decided in 2003 to shut its Dallas facility down. “George and I talked, and contacted Ford, who had worked at the plant, and we agreed we could do this on our own. We rolled up our sleeves and we got to work.”

Making old perform like new

The exterior of the new Satellite Utility Plant, a major component of SpawGlass’s University of Texas at Dallas utility infrastructure improvements project.

L-R: Vice President George Steel, Owner Mike Love and Director of Sales Ford Smith

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75th Corgan-iversary

A decade and still going

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The Industry’s Newspaper

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Covering the Industry’s News
“Shawn, you’re a very lucky guy.” Shawn Morrow, owner of Swinger Gate Company, paused in the middle of his dinner to consider his friend’s observation. He did have a wildly successful gate and fencing business that he built up from just one used truck and a tractor bought on credit. He was a business owner in one of the strongest economies in history. Morrow didn’t think it was all luck, however. He put in long hours every day and, perhaps most importantly, relied on the guidance of mentors. Between bites, his construction industry friend offered another piece of advice that would eventually save Morrow’s business.

Morrow’s mentor warned that the end of the building industry boom was imminent and advised him to get his financial affairs in order. Morrow, whose business showed no signs of slowing down, could have shrugged off the advice, but instead asked for guidance. His friend counseled him on how to review his cash flow and accounts, minimize debt and prepare himself for the economic drop.

When Morrow reviewed his books, he realized that, for all of the money his business was making, he was actually broke. “I realized I had worked myself to death for five years and had nice things, but I had no money,” he says. It took Morrow five years to correct the situation, and during the second year, the building industry collapsed just as his friend had predicted. Had Morrow not heeded his mentor’s advice, his business would likely have been lost.

“Sometimes small business owners make it seem as if they don’t owe anyone for their success, that it was all their own doing,” he says. “I’m the first one to tell anybody that I’ve had mentors guiding me. It’s up to me to use their advice to succeed.”

Established in 1980, Fort Worth-based Swinger Gate Company specializes in custom gate and fencing design, fabrication and installation. –mjm

Shawn Morrow leaves his gate open for good advice.

Dream come true

Sept. 10, 2001 was the day Ramon Hernandez realized his version of the “American Dream.” The former Navy man had bid a fond farewell to his network administrator job at Exxon Mobile and had just applied for his “Doing Business As” name for his general construction company. Finally, he was going to accomplish what nearly all his male family members had – owning a business. “It was always in my DNA. I always knew that was what I was going to end up doing,” he says.

The tragic events of the next day, Sept. 11, nearly derailed that dream. “As you can imagine, it was pretty eye opening. I questioned myself. It was a change in America, and here I am changing careers,” he says. “But there was no looking back for me. This was something I knew I was built for.”

Hernandez, who now owns Integrity Texas Construction, says it sounds like a bad country song, but he took his “trailer, a financed truck, and a dream,” worked alongside his father-in-law, brother-in-law and another contact, and devoted up to 80 hours a week to start his business. He scored his first major contract within the year. Another boost to his business came when Hernandez began to incorporate energy-conscious facets into his business, basing it on what he had learned during his Exxon days.

Business increased so much that Hernandez was eventually able to hire others to help him run the business and reduce his hours at the office. Hernandez values the time he is able to spend with his wife and family, especially since he’s trying to raise the next generation of business owners.

Based in Haltom City, Integrity Texas Construction offers energy-conscious general construction services. –mjm

Ramon Hernandez believed in his “American Dream” even when America’s future was uncertain.
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Spotlight

Tammie Crooks
President/General Counsel

MetalMan Design/Build Corporation

You did not have any construction experience when you started at Metal-Man?

No, none whatsoever. I learned everything that I learned working at Metal-Man.

Did you feel like you were well suited to do this type of work, or did it take you a while to get acclimated?

It took me a while. By no means am I really good at it, there are a lot of things that I can't do. I really must rely on other people. For the most part, though, it was something that really fascinated and intrigued me. I would much rather be building things than practicing law, I can tell you that.

How has your role in the company changed over the years?

I've had to take a little bit more of a leadership role than normal. Usually, there are three partners in our business. Due to health concerns, J.V., who has been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, has pretty much stepped back. Now, in terms of (being) one in three, I'm one in two, and a lot of responsibilities have lately fallen on my shoulders, which is an added bonus to my learning experience in and out of the learning environment.

We never expected what happened would happen, and we never really prepared for it. We're all so used to being in our little niches, and I have to expand into different areas and be different things that I didn't think I would have to be. It's a learning experience. He still helps me a lot, a advice wise.

What is it like to work with your spouse? Do you bring different qualities to the table?

I have an extremely supportive spouse. He brings for you?

I would like to continue to work at Metal-Man. It was different because I was pretty much learning the construction business from the bottom. I started off as an assistant project manager and was (my husband's) shadow. He taught me how to read blueprints and how to handle subcontractors. It was a different way of dealing with people than the legal way of dealing with them. It was interesting, fun and new.

Did you think you would be funneling laughs and skies. What do you think is the biggest misconception about what you do?

I have a lot of sports memorabilia, mostly hockey because I'm a hockey nut. I have four or five jerseys, a bunch of pucks, lots of pictures, baseball bats and jerseys, and football helmets. It's all autographed and it's in my master bedroom so I can see it every day! J.V.'s not as big a sports fan as I am, but he's okay with it, I think.

I collect watches, mostly fossil watches, and I have 30 or 40 of them, I'm sure. I also have a pen thing; if I see one that I like, I have to have it. I love sock monkeys; I have a lot of those because my friends have figured out that I like them.

J.V. and I have Honda Goldwing Trikes and we go on trips. In October 2011, we took a trip with another couple and for 16 days we went all over the four corners states and even went out to Vegas. We saw the best part of the southeast and west and had a great time. J.V.'s a great photographer, so when we take our trips we take a bunch of photography equipment with us and we both take a ton of pictures.

We like to travel, but other than that, we're pretty much homebodies. I like to read a lot, so I'm usually at home reading whatever catches my fancy. I'm usually reading four or five books at a time. If there was a fire, after grabbing my husband and my pets, the next thing I would save is my Kindle!

Since you are around animals so much at work, I wondered if you had animals at home as well.

Yes, we have Henry, who is our beloved Australian Shepherd; he will be 3 years old in March. He is J.V.'s fourth Australian Shepherd and he's a handful, he thinks he's smarter than we are. He likes to ride on the trike too; he sits on the backseat! I have a cat named Oliver who is kind of fluffy, so we don't talk about him much.

Speaking of animals, I'm just going to take a wild guess here: Did you and J.V. get married at the zoo, by any chance?

Our wedding was at the zoo, in March 2008. We got married in front of the flamingo exhibit and had the reception in the zoo's restaurant. It started out being really cloudy and nasty-looking and ended up being a great day by the time the wedding came around; we got married at about 6:00 and the sun was still out. Our guests loved it because the lion was out and was roaring, and the flamingos were out. The wedding itself was actually really quiet; the animals weren't really talkative at that point. It's not until nighttime that they start talking. It was fun, a great party.

Where did you go on your honeymoon?

We didn't! There was a National Association of Women In Construction (NAWIC) convention, so I went off with my husband J.V. We went to N.C. and South Carolina. I lucked into this – right place, right time. "I learned everything that I learned working at Metal-Man. I lucked into this – right place, right time."
Most contractors know the estimates in a contract are in the key factors affecting the contract price, depending on the actual work completed in the life of the contract. Emphasis is generally placed on tunng up the estimated work to completion for hours. However, an area that should be tuned up as the contract progresses is the contract price to reflect any changes, whether options, additions, change orders or claims.

The day-to-day treatment of adjustments to contracts if often a practical approach to running a business versus a rules based approach from the accounting guidelines. According to the Financial Accounting Standards Board ("FASB"), Accounting Standards Codification ("ASC") 605-35-25-26 "Accounting for change orders depends on the underlying circumstances, which may differ for each change order depending on the customer, the contract, and the nature of the change. Therefore, change orders shall be evaluated according to their characteristics and the circumstances in which they occur." FASB ASC 605-35-25-26 says, "Contract revenue and costs shall be adjusted to reflect change orders approved by the customer and the contractor regarding both the scope price." The FASB ASC goes on to discuss unpriced change orders in section 605-35-25-27, saying, "Accounting for unpriced change orders depends on their characteristics and the circumstances in which they occur. For all unpriced change orders, recovery should be deemed probable if the future event or events necessary for recovery are likely to occur.

In practical language, this means that signed change orders with defined terms of both scope and price should be recorded as adjustments to both the contract price and cost. For unpriced change orders, more judgment is required. Is the change order signed? Is there a defined scope of work with costs that are identifiable and reasonable? Has the historical experience with the customer been favorable in negotiating change orders? If the adjustment to contract price is based on a signed order with a defined adjustment to the scope of work then it can be reasonable to adjust the contract price. However, if the adjustment to the contract price is not reasonably determinable the contract price should not be adjusted until it can be determined.

The last sentence of FASB ASC 605-35-25-28 states, "If change orders are in dispute or are unapproved in regard to both scope and price, they should be evaluated as claims." FASB ASC 605-35-31 states, "Recognition of amounts of additional contract revenue relating to claims is appropriate only if it is probable that the claim will result in additional contract revenue and if the amount can be reliably estimated..." In summary, not only must there be much stronger evidence to record additional revenue from a claim, but the standard also states you can only record the additional revenue relating to costs already incurred, not any future work to perform that is pending resolution of the claim.

These concepts are often confusing and requires discernment by management to determine when and what to record in the company’s books. If ever in doubt, the accounting standards generally lean towards conservatism and definitively seek the advice of accountants and attorneys regarding any significant change orders, disputes or claims that are unclear as to their proper treatment.

Jeremy Maxwell has been in public accounting for seven years with Van Houten & Associates, PC since 2011. He manages the audit practice for VAH with his primary focus on construction-related companies. Jeremy can be reached at jeremy.maxwell@vahtcpa.com or 512-310-9277.

OSHA
Fall protection and skylights

A roofing company is installing a skylight that its manufacturer claims is ‘OSHA fall protection compliant.’ The manufacturer states that the skylight is ‘rated to hold 775 pounds.' However, the construction and rigidity of the skylight seem questionable.

Under the requirements in OSHA’s fall protection laws, even such a skylight, if stalled, is it necessary to install a cover, guardrails, or use personal fall protection, or does the skylight meet the applicable fall protection requirements?

Answer: We would like first to point out that OSHA is generally precluded from approving or endorsing specific products, where a manufacturer claims that a product is “OSHA-compliant.” It means only that the manufacturer is making an assertion – it does not mean that OSHA has reviewed the product and determined that it is in compliance with OSHA requirements.

In 29 CFR 1926 Subpart M (Fall Protection), 1926.501(b)(4) addresses homes. (i) Each employee on walking/working surfaces shall be protected from falling through holes (including skylights) more than 6 feet (1.8 m) above lower levels, by personal fall arrest systems, covers, or guardrail systems erected around such holes.

When a cover is used to meet this requirement, it must conform to the criteria in Section 1926.502(i). One of those requirements is in 1926.502(i)(2), which states: Covers shall be capable of supporting, without failure, at least twice the weight of employees, equipment, and materials that may be imposed on the cover at any time.

Under these provisions, employees must be protected with personal fall arrest systems, covers that meet the criteria in 1926.502(i)(2), or guardrails. However, if the skylight itself meets the cover criteria in 1926.502(i)(2), as a matter of enforceable policy, OSHA will treat the skylight itself as a cover.

In the scenario you describe, it is not clear if the manufacturer’s assertion that the skylight is “rated to hold 775 pounds” includes a safety factor, and if so, what safety factor was used. If the asserted capacity does not include a safety factor, and if the capacity rating is accurate, then the maximum weight that would be permitted under 1926.502(i)(2) on the skylight would be 387 pounds. Whether such a skylight is permitted to be used as a cover would depend on whether “the weight of employees, equipment, and materials that may be imposed on the cover at any one time” exceeds 387 pounds.

It is the employer’s responsibility to meet the requirements discussed above. If the skylight manufacturer states that the skylight meets the OSHA requirements, it is the contractor’s job to verify that the manufacturer’s claimed capacity rating may not be accurate, it may be necessary for the em- ployee to obtain additional information about the skylight’s capacity or use a cover (that complies with the required provisions) for a fall protection system, or diligently protect its employees.

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ACCOUNTING

Recognizing revenue for change orders and claims

Jeremy W. Maxwell, CPA
Van Houten & Associates, PC
Round Rock, TX

The uncertainty of additional insured status

Charles E. Comiskey, Vice President
Houston, TX

When it would surprise you to know that there are literally hundreds of different additional insured endorsements in daily use in the construction insurance industry? And that they are far from uniform in the extent to which they provide additional insured coverage.

The Insurance Services Office ("ISO") drafts policy forms and endorsements included in the insurance industry on a nationwide basis. ISO has over the years issued more than 20 different construction-related additional insured endorsements, each new edition progressively more restrictive than its predecessors in the provision of coverage to the party being added as an additional insured.

Not satisfied with the limited scope of coverage provided by ISO additional insured endorsements, many insurance companies draft their own endorsements, usually more limited (sometimes far more limited) in scope of coverage provided than the ISO endorsements.

The term "additional insured" is therefore meaningless without further reference to a specific ISO endorsement or definition of the scope of coverage to be provided. Think of it as current game Under one shell you have an endorsement that covers the additional insured party for its construction and sole negligence applicable to both ongoing and completed operations. Under another the coverage is limited to concurrent negligence associated with ongoing operations only. Yet another provides only coverage for vicarious liability for ongoing operations, and does so on an excess liability basis. And they are all "additional insured" endorsements.

Add to this mix the trend sweeping the nation of anti-indemnity laws, a few of which (as in Texas) also became antiadditional insured laws to the extent pre- scribed by law. The degree to which these laws affect the transferability of liability varies widely from state to state.

In response to these changing laws, ISO is changing every additional insured endorsement effective April, 2011. Five new endorsements provide that the insurance extends to the party being added as an additional insured to its policies in various limited extents permitted by law, (2) the coverage provided will be no broader than that required by contract, and (3) the amount of coverage provided will be no greater than that required by contract.

It is the employer’s responsibility to meet the requirements discussed above. If the skylight manufacturer states that the skylight is ‘rated to hold 775 pounds.' However, if the skylight itself meets the cover criteria in 1926.502(i)(2), as a matter of enforceable policy, OSHA will treat the skylight itself as a cover.

In the scenario you describe, it is not clear if the manufacturer’s assertion that the skylight is “rated to hold 775 pounds” includes a safety factor, and if so, what safety factor was used. If the asserted capacity does not include a safety factor, and if the capacity rating is accurate, then the maximum weight that would be permitted under 1926.502(i)(2) on the skylight would be 387 pounds. Whether such a skylight is permitted to be used as a cover would depend on whether "the weight of employees, equipment, and materials that may be imposed on the cover at any one time" exceeds 387 pounds.

It is the employer’s responsibility to meet the requirements discussed above. If the skylight manufacturer states that the skylight is ‘rated to hold 775 pounds,' it is the contractor’s job to verify that the manufacturer’s claimed capacity rating may not be accurate, it may be necessary for the em- ployee to obtain additional information about the skylight’s capacity or use a cover (that complies with the required provisions) for a fall protection system, or diligently protect its employees.
**LEGAL**

The end is not so near: Notice for contractual retainage claims

West W. Winter, Partner
McNelis + Winter, PLLC
San Antonio, TX

Section 53.057 of the Texas Property Code, as amended by the 82nd Legislative Session in 2011, made significant changes to the notice deadlines for contractual retainage claims in Texas.

**A true family atmosphere**

Venus Construction, a site utility contractor in Mansfield in business since 1967, has been in the McAda family for three generations. The company got its start 46 years ago, with Samuel Eugene “Big Mac” McAda opening the doors. When he passed away in 1994, his son Sammy McAda took the reins until he died in 2001. Now, the company is in its third generation and is headed by President Josh McAda, who, along with brothers and partners Sam (vice president) and Jake (estimator), is following in the footsteps of his grandfather and father. 

The company, which employs 70 people, is growing with the Metroplex. “We’re in a growth pattern right now,” Josh McAda said. “We just opened a satellite office in Frisco where a lot of new work is taking place. The entire Frisco corridor is growing, and is really going to work is taking place. The entire Frisco corridor is growing and is really going to...” McAda said.

All three of the brothers have children, and McAda hopes the Venus tradition will continue for a fourth generation. “My 100-percent goal is to keep this a family-run business,” he said. –ms

The prior version of this statute required that notice had to be given by the 15th day of the second month following the first occurrence of delivery of materials or performance of labor by the claimant after the claimant agreed to contractual retainage. Because lien notice deadlines are typically tied to when labor is performed and materials are delivered, subcontractors who failed to give this early notice often found it too late to perfect the bulk of their retainage claim once they completed their work on a given project.

The optional notice of contractual retainage must now be given to the owner or reputed owner not later than the earlier of: (1) the 30th day after the date the claimant’s agreement providing for retainage is completed, terminated, or abandoned; or (2) the 30th day after the date the original contract is terminated or abandoned. If an agreement for contractual retainage is with a subcontractor, the claimant must also give the notice of contractual retainage to the original contractor within this same time period. Be aware that the notice must generally state the existence of a requirement for retainage and contain the name and address of the claimant. If the agreement is with a subcontractor, the notice must also contain the name and address of the subcontractor. Finally, the notice must be sent to the last known business or residence address of the owner or reputed owner. A claimant must also give the notice of contractual retainage to the original owner or reputed owner not later than the earlier of: (1) the 30th day after the date the claimant agreed to service on the project to a timeframe that will typically occur at the completion of the subcontractors’ work.

Another aspect of this revised statute involves the creation of new alternative filing deadlines for perfected a lien claim against an owner’s statutorily mandated 10% retainage. Generally, a claimant has a lien on, and the owner is permitted to retain funds if the claimant: (1) gives the notice described above in accordance with Section 53.057; and (A) complies with subsection E by filing the lien affidavit not later than 30 days after work is completed, the original contract is terminated, or the original contractor abandons performance under the original contract; (B) files, an affidavit claiming a lien not later than the earlier of four newly described deadlines. The notice of the filed affidavit must also be given as required by Section 53.055. While an analysis of all of these deadlines is beyond the scope of this article, it is notable that one of the new deadlines is 30 days after the date the owner provides notice to the claimant demanding that the claimant file an affidavit claiming a lien.

Subcontractors providing labor and/or materials to construction projects should become familiar with these notice provisions and deadlines for retainage claims so that they may avail themselves of the maximum protection afforded by Texas law. All parties providing labor and/or materials to construction projects should also consult with their legal professionals so they may be fully informed about the requirements and procedures for proper and timely perfection of mechanic’s liens and other available claims.

West W. Winter is a partner at McNelis + Winter, PLLC. A LEED Green Associate, West serves on the board of the Construction Law Section of the San Antonio Bar Association and is listed as one of the Best Lawyers in San Antonio for Construction Litigation. His firm aggressively represents owners, developers, general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, and design professionals in all phases of the commercial and residential construction process, from contract formation through dispute resolution, litigation, and collection. West can be reached via email: westw@mcneliswinter.com.

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As I pushed away from the dock and eased the throttle forward to get the Majek up on plane, I couldn’t help but think of a Valentine’s Day trip I had some 10 years ago. The year was 2003 and it was Feb. 14. I had canceled a charter the night before because of a weather forecast that turned out to be wrong (go figure). I phoned a good friend and fishing partner, Ron Shepherd, for a day on the water. We headed straight for the rocks in Baffin. The weather had called for a front to push through the area but it had stalled over central Texas overnight. As we eased over the side of the boat to start our wade, I couldn’t resist the opportunity to throw a topwater lure. With a mere 3-5 mph wind, the bay looked breathtaking. It didn’t take long to figure that soft plastics were the bait to throw. Almost immediately we had several trout 19-22 inches on our stringers. Then, a great surprise, Ron hauled in a fat 26-inch sow that tipped the scale at 8 lbs. Talk about a football. No sooner than he had that fish on his stringer he had whacked another. Standing only 50 yards away I could tell that this trout was definitely bigger. Ron tied the big girl down and landed her like a pro. This trout was a least two pounds heavier and 4-5 inches longer than his previous fish. I couldn’t help but walk over to admire the trophy.

As I eased back away from him to a comfortable distance, I felt a thump on my line. I took up the slack and set the hook. At first I thought I set the hook on one of the famous rock fish in Baffin, but after noticing my line moving quickly across the surface I was relieved. I fought that fish for what seemed like forever before she finally gave up. Comparing her to the fish Ron had just caught, they could have been twins. Both fish measured 30 inches and weighed 9.5 lbs each. As the wind diminished so did the fishing, so we called it a day. The window of opportunity was definitly short, but the memories of two trophies in 15 minutes will last forever. We fished a total of about five hours yielding a nice stringer of trout, and two 9.5 pounders that were released after photos.

With the brown tide conditions we fought last year in the Baffin Bay complex, I can only hope that conditions we’ve experienced this winter continue and get Baffin back to producing trophies. Now booking 2013 season. I can be reached by phone at (361) 813-3716 or by e-mail at 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.

You never know what folks are going to decorate their offices with! Sid Smith, owner of S S Smith and Sons Masonry in Corpus Christi, has this gem hanging from the ceiling in his office. It appears to be a rattlesnake jaw blended with a raccoon tail topped with a cowboy hat. We at Construction News agree this piece is one of a kind, Sid! – ms

Heads or tails?
Submitted to Construction News

I t hasn’t been much of a winter for most of us, with so many days in the 70s and 80s, and just a few short cold snaps in between, we have had it pretty comfortable. I know it has been great weather for construction folks and outdoorsmen alike; because we could get stuff done without bad weather getting in the way.

The lakes and rivers are already warming up enough to get the fish moving and feeding, so they can think about spawning soon. We have heard some good reports of blue catfish on jug-lines, Crappie are moving in and making for great fishing on sunny days, and the bass tournaments are off to a good start.

The white bass spawning run will be interesting this year. The lower water levels in a lot of lakes and rivers will make their usual spawning journey very different from the usual. White bass are tough and determined little critters, and they will do all they can to run upriver to spawn, even if it means skittering along on their sides across shallow mud flats to get there. White bass will make their run no matter what; they can’t help it. You will just have to work harder to find them this year!

Here on Lake Buchanan we are already seeing good stripers and hybrid bass catches coming in and as expected, the average size is better than last year. As long as you can get on the water between these last few cold fronts the fishing is good. The high pressure associated with the cold fronts themselves will usually slow down their feeding for a day or two, but then they bounce back ready to feed hard to make up for it. We are sure enjoying watching the growth of the hybrids that the Lake Buchanan Conservation Corp has stocked for us in the last several years. They are getting large enough now to put up a really nice fight on the end of the line!

We have been lucky to have a few little rain showers here and there. Not enough rain to help water levels much, but at least enough to keep some bluebonnets alive. Bluebonnets sprout in the fall and grow all winter so they can put on their spectacular blooms in early spring. We had a great sprout of them, but may have lost a bunch of them due to the being such a dry winter. There are still quite a few of them holding out for what ever rain they can get. Bluebonnets may be a little late in the Hill Country this year, but if we can get a few more little showers, we will have something to look at after all!

With spring break and Easter holidays around the corner, this might be the time to start making your plans to get out and about. Don’t let the bad press about low river and lake levels scare you away. Your favorite getaways are still there for you to enjoy – they are just a little different this year. Like I always say, a low lake is one that just has fewer places for the fish to hide! The fish are still there and so are we. Come see us!

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Katy, TX 77449

Submitted to Construction News
Heads or tails?

You never know what folks are going to decorate their offices with! Sid Smith, owner of S S Smith and Sons Masonry in Corpus Christi, has this gem hanging from the ceiling in his office. It appears to be a rattlesnake jaw blended with a raccoon tail topped with a cowboy hat. We at Construction News agree this piece is one of a kind, Sid! – ms
Halfway between San Antonio and Laredo is the town of Cotulla in La Salle County. Founded in 1881 by Joseph Cotulla, the area has a rich history of ranching and hunting.

In fact, the Boone and Crockett Club lists La Salle as No. 62 of their Top 125 Trophy Counties in the US with 40 typical whitetail deer in B&C records.

Things have been changing in Cotulla due to the Eagle Ford Shale oil play, but one legend remains unchanged, and that’s Ben’s Western Wear founded in 1946.

Just say “Ben’s” to a person who has hunted or ranched in South Texas and they know exactly what you are talking about. Sixty-six years of taking good care of their customers has a way of creating that kind of recognition.

I stopped in recently and visited with owner Jill Martin, whose late husband, Stewart, was the nephew of Ben Lude-man, a Cotulla rancher and founder of the store. As Jill took me around the store explaining the history, it’s not a surprise it has lasted so many years.

I had been there many years ago and the smell of leather, the trophy bucks hanging on the walls, tons of western wear and of course the Hat Museum brought back a comfortable feeling.

The Hat Museum began sometime in the late 1980s, and features donated hats by a large mix of people including politicians, Texas Rangers and singing stars like George Strait, but most are from cowboys from South Texas.

If you’re down in that part of Texas stop in and take a look around. You will be glad you did. -bd

The sign says it all.

Part of the Hat Museum

Some of the mounts are over 100 years old.
The North Texas Roofing Contractors Association (NTRCA) honored its top companies and professionals in the Metroplex at its annual awards banquet on Feb. 16 at the Ranch of Lonesome Dove. Honorees and their guests enjoyed good food, the company of their colleagues, and a bit of western-themed fun at the event, which included the installation of the 2013 Board of Directors. –ms

Singing from the rooftops

Outstanding Community Service: Mike Huddleston Roofing
L-R: Carroll Plemons and Karen Fox, executive director of NTRCA

Outstanding Commercial Roofing: Texas Roof Management
L-R: Bill Conley, Paul Walden

Outstanding Commercial Roofing: Castro Roofing
L-R: Angel Rodriguez, Jamila Rodriguez

Associate of the Year: Susan Kittrell

Outstanding Commercial Roofing: Supreme Roofing
L-R: Todd Gilmore, Andrea McMillan, Tim McMillan, Liz Ingram, Lawana Ingram, Craig Rainey, Dee Rainey and Tim Rainey

Outstanding Community Service: Frazier Roofing & Guttering
L-R: Patrick McCord, Karen Vermaire Fox, Rich Vermaire, Melissa Westmyer, Scott Shaefler, Juanita Lancaster

The 2013 NTRCA Board of Directors

Not pictured: Outstanding Residential Roofing: Bert Roofing

Outstanding Residential Roofing: Paradigm Roofing
L-R: Matt Peel, Peter Rudderow, Tony Hall, Jessica Cerna, Jennifer Curran, Chris Condon

Outstanding Commercial Roofing: Casto Roofing
L-R: Angel Rodriguez, Jamila Rodriguez

The 2013 NTRCA Board of Directors

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Aging workforce has long been an issue in the construction industry, which has traditionally struggled to bring new blood into the fold. But organizations like the Construction Education Foundation (CEF) are actively working to combat this trend through a combination of educational programs and awareness campaigns.

CEF Executive Director Jane Hanna visited with Construction News about what her organization is doing to help ensure the industry’s future.

**Awareness campaigns, education programs help youth tune into construction**

**Jane Hanna, Executive Director**

**Construction Education Foundation**

Dallas, TX

An aging workforce has long been an issue in the construction industry, which has traditionally struggled to bring new blood into the fold. But organizations like the Construction Education Foundation (CEF) are actively working to combat this trend through a combination of educational programs and awareness campaigns.

CEF Executive Director Jane Hanna visited with Construction News about what her organization is doing to help ensure the industry’s future.

**Why has it traditionally been difficult to attract the young to the construction industry?**

One of the major issues is they are out in the elements. It can be hot, cold and dirty. Some younger people are looking for jobs they consider glitzy and high tech.

**Out of 250 occupations that interest students, we were often 248th or 249th. We were thrilled when we got above fishmonger and cowboy!**

We know in our industry how high tech it really is. Plus, this is one of the few industries where you can start as an entry-level employee and go on to own a company.

They want to be an architect, an accountant, a designer, or a mechanical engineer, and all of those things feed into our industry.

What are we trying to do now and have been trying to do for last several years is make sure people in high school and their early 20s know what opportunities there are, including being a CAD operator or a designer.

I think the image is beginning to change, though.

**Teach your technicians well**

Shaun Manning, Technical Training Director

HOLT CAT

Irving, TX

Some kids grow up with toy excavators, dump trucks, and bulldozers, dreaming of working with the real thing someday.

But Shaun Manning, the technical training director for HOLT’s ProTech technician training program, says that the company is having trouble finding enough of the right people to work on those heavy-duty, multi-million-dollar pieces of machinery.

“We can find technicians,” Manning clarifies. “We just can’t find technicians with the particular skill set that we’re looking for.”

Manning notes that this seems to be a common issue for HOLT and similar construction equipment companies.

“I think most companies that are in our industry are realizing that in this day and age, many members of our workforce are getting older,” he says. With a significant amount of employees preparing for retirement within the next 10 years, the solution is obvious: educate and train the next generation to be the kind of technicians that are in short supply and high demand.

To this end, in Texas, HOLT has partnered with nine high schools and colleges across the state to encourage educational programs that include mechanical skills in their curricula.

Manning observes that the emphasis of these institutions is often placed on business, liberal arts, and other fields of study that veer away from technical training and mechanics.

He points out that the academic road map is guided by STAR or TAKS tests, which do not include a mechanical aptitude portion, so the knowledge is lacking, and information about pursuing a career as a technician gets lost in the imbalance.

“Most career counselors in large cities don’t consider those career paths, or if they do, it’s difficult to interest a lot of kids, because most media really doesn’t focus on jobs that are necessarily in our industry,” he believes. “I think with the Barnett Shale operations – the Barnett Shale up here in the north or the Eagle Ford Shale – there’s more of those jobs in the public’s eye.”

This points to a need to get students involved, interested, and engaged, so they can dedicate themselves to the training necessary to operate, sell, and maintain machinery such as the Caterpillar equipment HOLT deals in and trains technicians at their ProTech facilities in Dallas and San Antonio to work and service.

The school programs that contribute to the required knowledge base and skill set include mechanical, electrical, hydraulic, and even HVAC, or automotive and diesel courses, or aeronautical equipment.

“Good technicians, how we can grow the technicians who have some gaps in areas,” he explains. “That’s what ProTech is. As new products are introduced by Caterpillar, then we are ensuring that the curriculum is helping support those new products.”

**What is the CEF doing to work to actively impress upon students how cool construction really is?**

We do a big career day in October. This was the second year for the event done in coordination with the National Center for Construction and Education Research, and it doubled in size from 400 to 800 students in attendance. It’s part of a big nationwide “Build Your Future” campaign. It brings awareness to what our industry really is.

This big event is our main push right now. It’s an event that takes a good six months out of the year to plan. There were 40 different school districts in attendance last year.

The contractors are the hosts of the day. They take the students on a tour of the exhibits. We do a craft apprentice championship so they can see our night-time students who are already working in the industry. The suppliers and vendors set up booths. They bring in heavy equipment, welding simulators, crane simulators, and hold CAD and BIM demonstrations. There’s a job site trailer so they can understand what one looks like. We focus on this event because it can bring a lot of people in from different high schools at the same time.

You also hold a fairly impressive graduation ceremony, too, right? Every year, we recognize our tradesmen, craft apprentices after completion of three or four years of their trade. We bring in about 800 people to the event. We recognize top graduates from each trade, a top graduate out of those graduates, and the companies they work for.

“This is a career path where you can get training, get an education, and make money at the same time. You can have a lucrative career.

That’s one of the selling points that we use when we are talking to high school students to let them know this is a great career path.

Our industry is beginning to figure it out. We’re starting to get some traction on the high school level with administers and counselors, which is good. They’re starting to tell students that this is a viable industry and career path.

We feel we are making some huge headway in exposing the value of a career in our industry.”

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April 2013

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• San Antonio

• Austin

• Dallas/Ft. Worth

• Houston

• Specialty Contractors

• Nov: Architecture & Engineering

• Next: Construction Equipment

**2013 Schedule**

Jan: Construction Forecast

Feb: Construction Safety

Mar: Construction Education

Apr: Women in Construction

May: Concrete Industry

Jun: HVAC & Plumbing

July: Electrical Industry

Aug: Service Providers

Sep: Green Building Trends
Margo Dover, executive director at Skillpoint Alliance, says construction education is incredibly important. Dover believes it is a tremendous option for people who have skills that lead them in a direction toward construction.

"Students are very smart, they are very able and they know they want to do specific jobs such as plumbing, electrical and HVAC and many other areas of construction," Dover said. "I think we should respect that interest and do everything we can to make construction training available to people who want it and want to work hard."

Dover says she has worked with Skillpoint Alliance in Austin, TX for almost eight years.

"When I first started, the trend was redesigning high schools and every kid goes to college," she said. "Now I see a much more open understanding of the value of training every person regardless if they are coming to us out of high school, as transitioning Veterans, former offenders, homeless and people who have just been out of work for a while. I think this is a good thing!"

Dover says the most rewarding part about what she does today is seeing how hard students work and overcome odds.

"I see students show amazing determination and tenacity to train without pay for 10 weeks," she said. "These folks make a commitment to change their lives and the lives of their families."

"I think education is power and a basic need. I think construction education is included in that and I am honored to be part of an organization that serves people who are willing to work so hard. I also love what I do because I work with a staff of colleagues who are equally committed."

Casey Smith, director of Gateway Programs at Skillpoint Alliance, says she thinks more young people are beginning to think about working in construction.

"There is a huge focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) training for youth," she said. "I think organizations are beginning realize that STEM training includes construction. There is a lot of science, technology and math that goes into working in the construction field, no matter what the specialty is."

Smith says in her opinion, there is a buzz in the community that people are realizing that many master electricians, plumbers and HVAC technicians are very knowledgeable about their fields and they are retiring very quickly.

"I think there is awareness in the community to make sure we are filling that pipeline to be able to sustain the lifestyle we have as citizens in Texas."

Smith says she loves her job and the most rewarding thing about working at Skillpoint Alliance is seeing how students realize the skills and education they have after they graduate from the program and how they understand they are incredibly valuable and needed in the community.

"This is a wonderful chance to observe," she said. "The training program is very intense and it is not for everyone. There is a clear difference in the students self worth and how much they feel like they can make an impact. It is like a light has clicked on."

"I think it is vital we get industry feedback. This is how we have managed so many years at being effective at what we do. We ask companies what they would want if they could have the ideal entry-level employee. This is how our curriculum has developed and evolved and has become such a strong program it is today."

Skillpoint Alliance is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that builds partnerships among industry, education and the community, leading to college and career success for Central Texans, while meeting employers' needs for a qualified workforce. -ab.
Trouble in construction city

Which starts with T, and that rhymes with C, and that stands for Capitol – as in the Walk on the Capitol.

Every other year, the Texas Construction Association-Political Action Committee (TCA-PAC) makes a united effort to reach out to Texas legislators and be heard. On Jan. 29, this year’s TCA-PAC Walk on the Capitol drew over 120 representatives from chapters of industry associations across the state.

“We had our members come in, and they set up their own appointments with their legislators,” says Mike White, vice-president of governmental affairs for the Subcontractors Assn. of the Metroplex. “They went in as constituents to talk with the legislators who represent the issues we are having on them.”

For example, White cites Lender Notice of Default as one of the issues that we are addressing this session, and to legislators, and to talk about the issues they are facing; he was the drummer in the band for the evening.

This kind of event along with the meetings during the day allow the TCA-PAC members to put their faces on the issues while addressing them face-to-face with the legislators who represent and may be able to help them.

The event gave representatives a chance to meet with leaders like State Rep. Larry Phillips.

Members of ASA North Texas made the trip to Austin for the TCA-PAC Walk on the Capitol, which drew over 120 representatives from industry associations across the state.
I feel an obligation to my employees to be out working, so as far as (going out to eat lunch), I don’t often do that. What means more to me than going somewhere to eat is if someone calls me and says, “Hey, if you have 10 or 15 minutes, swing by the house and we’ll eat a sandwich.” That means more to me than going somewhere to a restaurant.

Shawn Morrow
Swinger Gate Company

Cotton Patch Café. I love their chicken enchiladas. I’ve only had them one time, but they made such an impression on me, I’m going to call them my favorite!

Bobby Tutor, Tutor Electric

You know, I love Dickey’s Barbecue Pit. When I worked at Lockheed, I worked by the best location ever. It was just this little hole in the wall. We have a different one here by my office, but it’s not as good as that one was. My favorite thing to get is their sliced beef sandwich. I pour the barbecue sauce over the top of the entire thing and just eat the entire thing with a fork. It’s messy, but I love barbecue sauce.

Eric Lesch, PCL

I like Babe’s Chicken. We had our company Christmas party there. When it comes down to dark meat or white meat, I definitely lean toward white meat.

Josh McAda, Venus Construction

My favorite place to eat lunch. Other than the cheese crackers in my desk? I have several places I like to go. For instance, we bring in Chick-Fil-A all the time. I really love P.F. Chang’s. I love their shrimp—that orange shrimp. I love that, and I love their lettuce wraps. If you want to get lettuce wraps, I’m cool with that.

Jane Hanna, Construction Education Foundation

Let’s see. Today, I ate lunch at Jonathan’s. It’s a place that has a great cheeseburger. You know, I’ve never had anything bad there. Some of their stuff is a little off the wall, but that cheeseburger is tops on my list!

Mike Love, DFW Grating

I’ll say Fish City. It’s a restaurant at Preston and Royal in Dallas. It’s got wonderful jalapeno cream soup, fish tacos and oyster nachos—just great fish! It has the feel of “Cheers,” because if you go there often enough, everybody knows your name, and it was kind of scary, because they’d see my husband and I walk in and have our drinks ready before we even sat down. My favorite is the jalapeno cream soup, followed by the oyster nachos!

Susan Thompson, MBBT

What’s your favorite lunchtime restaurant?

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The interior

continued from Page 1 — Making old perform like new

The growing company is now up to 32 employees and has served as a sub-contractor on multiple noteworthy projects, including Cowboys Stadium, where there is a lot of grating in the catwalks that provides access to video cameras and lighting.

Another recent project that involved a lot of grating was a job at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport that is used to train firefighters.

“They set planes on fire, and firefighters try to put them out,” Love said. Love said that the company’s 10-year anniversary would not be the only milestone celebrated this year.

“We gave out big screen TVs to employees that reached their five-year anniversary, and we’ve given out 17 of those now,” Love laughed. “We’re going to have to figure out what to do for people celebrating 10 years, because on April 1, our first employee reaches the 10-year milestone!”

continued from Page 1 — A decade and still going

The interior

continued from Page 1 — 75th Corgan-iversary

Fighters try to put out the fire, but they made such an impression on me, I’m going to call them my favorite!

Bobby Tutor, Tutor Electric

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The interior

continued from Page 1 — Making old perform like new

speed chillers which have the ability to increase, or decrease chilled water supply to meet campus demand.

“You can have a project that is designed to run as the primary chilled water generating facility with the existing Central Energy Plant contributing chilled water during peak demand.”

“To enable this new type of demand flow system to work, modifications were made to the 11 different campus buildings so that the air handlers in those buildings would use the chilled water more efficiently.”

“The combination of the new Satellite Utility Plant and the replacement of control valves throughout campus led to a significant increase in efficiency.”

To increase the amount of steam available, a new boiler was added at the existing Central Energy Plant after removing a nonfunctional chiller.

“This project is unique in the fact that it implemented cutting edge technology to increase the capacity and efficiency of an aging infrastructure,” Young said. “These changes were made without significant impact to campus activities and research.”

“The project also implemented new technology in the project turnover utilizing a tablet computer with a barcode scanner that contained a 3D model of the Satellite Utility Plant; copies of the drawings, and all of the operations and maintenance data.”

“All of the equipment was given a barcode that the tablet can scan, which will populate the maintenance data for each piece of equipment.”

William “Bubba” Lowry, Spawglass, was project superintendent. Owner’s representatives were Vincent Tash, Hank Wilke and Raymond Howey, and LEA consulting engineer was Dodd Schmidt.

Subcontractors included David Harper, Charles Sommerfield and Billy Coler, FSG Electric; Lee Wills and Robert Fahey, FSG Electric; and Ronny Fitzgerald, Siemens Industry. —ms
PUTZ AROUND TOWN

JC Putz here . . .

Walking by our publisher’s office one day I heard this whining sound. Curious, I peeked in and there in all her glory was our San Antonio editor, Mary Paul, begging the old man to grant her just one wish.

“I want to get on an excavator so I can dig a hole,” she said. “And then cover it back up.”

Well he looked at her and said, “Ok Jersey, I’ll see,” which usually means forget it.

Little did she know he placed a call to our friends at Olmos Equipment to ask if they could help.

“Yep, bring her on out to our yard,” said Jack Janicke.

Instructions from Angel

Off they went to meet Angel who was working on the hill in a Cat 345C. They say her eyes got really big with excitement when she saw the machine.

Guess Angel taught her to dig that hole, then put it back again.

FINALLY after they got her off the excavator a proud Jersey Girl let everyone know the goal was complete.

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with that, I’m out’a here.
Southern Botanical

President/CEO

Jason Craven started the Dallas-based company in 1995, when he was still in high school mowing lawns to earn money. Then called J.C. Services, the business incorporated in 1998 under its current name, and today offers complete hardscaping and landscaping services to high-end residential and premier commercial properties.

"Landscaping is something I do because I love it," said Craven. "Crafting what I love to do into a successful and growing business is an incredibly rewarding experience."

Chief Operating Officer

James Cali said Southern Botanical’s quality team of professionals keeps the arrow pointed in the right direction.

“We have a motivated team who continually challenges the status quo of our industry—mediocrity is a bad word on our team," Cali said. "They regularly suggest and implement changes that better the client experience first, and make our teams more efficient second."

Technology and a proven method have helped the company continue to thrive, Cali said. "In the beginning, we executed like other landscapers but with extreme attention to detail—since then, we have introduced a precise execution methodology that has taken our client service to a benchmark level," Cali said. "Client compliments are received regularly because our service model is unlike any in our industry."

The early days of the company in the 1990s are significantly different from now, but the team’s determination and drive is the same as it’s been from Day 1, he noted.

"We didn’t have a copy machine—and we had plenty of file cabinets full of paper," Cali said of the early days. "These days, everything, and I mean everything, is electronic.

“Our team has worked hard to bring the landscape industry up to meet our client’s current expectations. Everything is now available at our fingertips—client info to specific job execution criteria—and that’s what our clients demand.” –ms

Prime Controls’ Heather McNiel feels fortunate to work with her family.

Prime Control’s Heather McNiel loves the family feel of the business of which she is a part. McNiel, who is involved in Prime Controls’ business development, works with her brother (and company president) Jace McNiel and also with their dad, Gary McNiel, who serves as vice-president of sales and marketing. Hers is not the only family she has the privilege to work with however.

"Not only are we family, but we hire so many employees’ family members, I think that the root of our company is family, and that’s what it’s all about.”

Bill Bivens, manager of sales and business development agrees, saying, "Our social calendar is based around three pretty important events that are orchestrated around the employees and for the employees and their families." McNiel says the company enjoys “family time” in various ways. Every year, the manager treats the team to an employee appreciation event that often features fishing, hunting, clay shooting, and even airplane rides. Every summer the company also invites employees and their families to enjoy a picnic at a locale such as a water park that the company rents for the entire day.

"The third event we do annually is the Christmas party," she says. "The next thing about it is that we bring all of our employees and their spouses in from all of our branch offices so that we are all there [together]. We put them up in a hotel, make them comfortable and have a great evening!"

And the Prime Controls family is quite extended – the company boasts 285 employees working in offices in Amarillo, Dallas, Houston, New Braunfels, and New Orleans.

Headquartered in Lewisville, Prime Controls LP is a systems integration and I&C construction firm that serves industrial automation and control needs. – mjm

Prime Controls’ Heather McNiel feels fortunate to work with her family.

Relatively speaking