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Chair's Insights

A MESSAGE FROM NPCA CHAIR KEVIN CAMP



Kevin Camp
NPCA Chair of the Board

PRECAST INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO GROW

The precast concrete industry continues to grow and get stronger every day.

We've seen it in the increase of companies seeking NPCA membership. It's reflected in an uptick in attendance at the Annual Convention. And it was on full display in February at The Precast Show in Indianapolis, where exhibit space reached almost 95,000 square feet and more than 5,000 attendees took in the latest technologies and innovations our industry has to offer.

I attended my first precast trade show in 1994 in Nashville. It was one of the defining moments of my career. Since that time, The Precast Show has evolved into the premier event in the world to showcase our industry. It's like Disneyland for precasters, where we get all the thrills and chills of seeing the cutting-edge products our suppliers have created to help us continue to produce products that keep modern civilization moving forward.

It's also where we graduated our largest ever class of Master Precasters. The 94 individuals who earned their golden hard hat this year bring the program's grand total to 527 Master Precasters trained in production, safety, technical processes, quality control and leadership. We couldn't be prouder of them for taking their careers to the next level. Their success is the industry's success.

I can't wait to see how many precasters join their ranks in Kansas City next year. The Precast Show 2026 is already shaping up to be one of the biggest yet.

As we look at the year ahead, the NPCA Board of Directors will be working on a new strategic plan, focusing on marketing our industry and tackling workforce development issues. We'll also be addressing the challenges on the horizon, such as artificial intelligence (AI). It can be a great tool that will benefit our industry in the long run, but it also demands we pay more attention to, among other things, cybersecurity.

It's an exciting time to be part of the #precastlife. Opportunities abound for our industry, and we must be ready to answer the call. Take advantage of what NPCA has to offer so you don't miss out.



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CEO Report

NPCA PRESIDENT & CEO NICK RHOAD LOOKS AHEAD



Nick Rhoad
NPCA President & CEO

A YEAR OF PROGRESS

As I complete my first full year serving as President and CEO of our NPCA, I can honestly say this past year has been one for the books! I'm grateful to each of you for your support, collaboration and dedication to moving our association — and our industry — forward.

A big area of growth for NPCA in the past year has been workforce innovation. You told us that attracting and retaining skilled employees is the biggest challenge you face. In response, we have expanded our education offerings in high-demand areas like employee recruitment and retention and will soon be announcing a year's worth of webinars and online learning tools to meet your needs. We launched our first student mentoring program, pairing 10 enthusiastic students with seasoned NPCA member mentors. We've also begun planning C-suite education, recognizing the importance of strong leadership at every level. Looking ahead, we'll soon announce strategic partnerships with top providers in leadership and workforce education, offering discounted resources exclusively to our members.

We rolled out a new look at the end of 2024, and if you were at TPS you saw our new branding on full display. The change has been met with enthusiasm and many positive comments. Our new, bolder brand is just one step in telling the story of the importance of precast to more people in new ways.

One of those ways is through stronger advocacy efforts. In continued partnership with PCI, we have hired a new lobbyist, and we're increasing our surveillance at the state level to ensure our industry's voice is heard. Meanwhile, our soon-to-launch precastlife.com will educate specifiers, students, legislators and the public about the vital role precast concrete plays in modern life. We hope you will use the site to share with others what you do and why it's so important.

In addition, NPCA has obtained SMarT certification for all its members this past year, giving producer members a credential they can use when bidding on projects that include green initiatives. And there's more to come — this year we'll be piloting a new personnel certification program to further elevate professional standards.

These are just a few of the things NPCA has accomplished with and for its members in the past year. Thank you for an incredible first year. Together, we will continue advancing the precast industry.

NPCA's new, bolder brand is just one step in telling the story of the importance of precast to more people in new ways.

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Industry Insights

UNPACKING THE UNKNOWN

New administration's impact on infrastructure spending to be determined



By Pierre G. Villere

Pierre G. Villere serves as president and senior managing partner of Allen-Villere Partners, an investment banking firm with a national practice in the construction materials industry that specializes in mergers and acquisitions.

As I write this, the new Trump administration is still in its first 30 days and is making big changes. Putting aside our relations with the European Union and the unfolding discussions with Russia to end the war in Ukraine, all the eyes in our industry are focused on how the administration will handle America's commitment to infrastructure spending, which has an immediate impact on the precast industry.

It is therefore instructive to look at the current state of the infrastructure portion of our economy. As has been reported in the popular business press, through four landmark laws — the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) — the federal government has already begun to invest more than \$4 trillion in America's communities, families and businesses.

These laws were designed to address multiple national priorities: accelerating recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, investing in our nation's aging and long-starved infrastructure, supporting advanced domestic manufacturing and accelerating the transition to cleaner energy.

Adjusted for inflation and considered relative to the size of the U.S. economy, the investments of the past four years are roughly comparable in scope and significance to those of the New Deal and Great Society eras in the 1930s and 1960s, respectively, and

in some dimensions, such as physical infrastructure investment, even larger. Now, as President Donald Trump launches his agenda and the new Congress gets to work, the federal policy environment has changed dramatically and rapidly. We must be alert to efforts around these changes, whether they seek to expand on prior efforts or dismantle them.

The reality is that the implementation of these major investments is well underway, with much of the federal funding legally obligated despite the recent efforts of the Trump administration's Office of Management and Budget to pause the disbursement of large swaths of previously appropriated, and now obligated, federal funding. For example, about two-thirds of IIJA funding, totaling \$570 billion, has been awarded

so far, roughly as expected for the five-year law. In response to Trump's recent executive actions, the courts have strongly agreed that the law requires federal agencies to make good on their commitments and unfreeze duly appropriated and obligated funding.

The reality is that effective implementation will need to be sustained for years to come, and the current path of the Trump administration and how it affects this funding is still a big unknown. I wish I could be more reassuring, but my crystal ball has been clouded by what the Trump administration will attempt to do to future funding for our programs.



Yellowstone River Bridge — Another Remarkable Structure

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QUESTIONS FROM THE FIELD IS A SELECTION OF QUESTIONS NPCA TECHNICAL SERVICES ENGINEERS RECEIVED FROM CALLS, EMAILS AND PLANT EVALUATIONS.

If you have a technical question, contact us by calling (800) 366-7731 or visit precast.org/ask.

RICH ASKS:

WHAT LEVEL OF SHOP DRAWING PREPARATION NEEDS A PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER?

NPCA TECHNICAL EXPERTS ANSWER:

Engineering practice is defined in different but similar ways by governing authorities. In general, an engineering work involves performing a service, conducting analysis or creating a design for a public or private entity in connection with a utility or structure. If the process of preparing shop drawings from an approved standard detail includes making any judgment calls about structural elements of the product such as required strength, material properties or structural design, then the shop drawing is instead an engineering work and should be considered as such.

However, if the shop drawing is merely a depiction of an approved standard detail that contains all of the necessary design information, such as maximum placement depth, design live loading, minimum concrete strength, minimum steel size, strength and placement, then the process of transferring those parameters onto a separate drawing that is easier for the plant to use to manufacture the product and easier for the project owner to review for compliance to the standard, arguably does not cause the shop drawing to be an engineering work and it should not require an engineer's seal.

One caveat to this is that the project owner is still within their rights to require a seal on the shop drawing for their assurance, even though the process of converting the depiction of the engineering design to a different format does not inherently change the engineering design.

Getting more technical, the National Society of Professional Engineers' Rules of Practice restrict engineers from sealing any designs "not prepared under their direction and control." This would preclude engineers from sealing work that has already been performed by another in creating an approved design standard. A public or private entity should not use the color of their authority to require someone else take responsibility for a design they



require on their project. However, some entities may assert that, although the signing engineer did not select the design, nor was the design prepared under their direction or control, they are at least responsible for the implementation of the design and therefore must place their own seal on the shop drawing.

Ultimately, the engineer needs to follow the law and ethical standards while working to meet the needs of the project owner. It is important to have a good relationship to have transparent discussions and derive the right solution for each project. The engineer should make it explicitly clear what engineering work he or she is performing.



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Elevating the Industry

NPCA PLANT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM OFFERS MANY BENEFITS TO PLANTS, CUSTOMERS, OWNERS AND THE INDUSTRY



By Mason Nichols, M.A.

Mason Nichols is a Grand Rapids, Mich.-based writer and editor who has covered the precast concrete industry for more than a decade.

Evolution is necessary for advancement. In every industry, achieving success means embracing innovation and possessing an insatiable desire for continual progress.

This can be accomplished in a variety of ways: rigorous training techniques for employees, the adoption and deployment of advanced technology or the rollout of new products and services that solve complex problems.

The precast concrete industry is a prime example of an industry embracing evolution. While the strong, resilient nature of manufactured concrete products has remained consistent through time, the world's most versatile building material has improved over the years thanks to new production techniques, novel admixtures and mix designs, and an increasingly high set of standards.

At the center of many of these advancements is the NPCA Plant Certification program, which delivers myriad benefits to producers, DOTs and the entire precast concrete industry.

SETTING THE STANDARD

In 1987, NPCA launched its Plant Certification program to increase the quality of precast concrete products and offer industry stakeholders a means of verifying that quality.

"Our program offers an independent look at plants," said Phil Cutler, P.E., director of quality assurance programs at NPCA. "It levels the playing field for the industry."

Plants seeking certification submit an application to NPCA, then work with a third-party auditor to schedule an initial audit. During the audit the plant's performance is

assessed on various factors, including product quality, documentation, production procedures, management and more. If the plant obtains an overall score of 80% or higher and at least 75% in the critical sections, certification is awarded. Maintaining certification requires consistent performance at a high level. Plants undergo additional unannounced audits annually.

NPCA is dedicated to raising the bar on its certification program. In recent years, the scoring system was changed to reflect this through the concept of continuous improvement, which is defined in the NPCA Quality Control Manual for Certified Precast Plants as "an ongoing effort to improve products, services or processes." Some examples include a documented rearrangement of the production floor based on a new product line or workflow, or improving efficiency through a facility expansion. Currently, plants can only achieve a 100% score during an audit by participating in continuous improvement.

The NPCA Plant Certification program is backed by the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB), having earned accreditation in 2012 to meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065:2012 – Conformity assessment. It is unique in the industry as the only process-focused certification in concrete. As such, it brings tremendous value to participating plants, including enhanced market credibility, improved customer satisfaction and increased revenue.

"Since the program was introduced, it's made the entire industry better," said Jon Ohmes, CEO at Champion Precast of Troy, Missouri, and former NPCA Board Chair. "It's held us all up to a higher standard."



BENEFITING EVERYONE

The wide-reaching nature of the Plant Certification program helps ensure that precast concrete products continue to be manufactured to a high standard across the industry. According to Cutler, more than 400 NPCA producer member plants are certified. This represents approximately 2/3 of the association's producer plant membership. With so many plants involved in producing high-quality products, precast continues to build its competitive advantage over other building materials.

In many cases, precasters obtain NPCA Plant Certification to open the door to certain types of DOT work. Eighty percent of U.S. DOTs recognize the program across an expansive range of products, from reinforced concrete pipe and box culverts to lift stations, manholes and beyond. On DOT-led projects, the certified plant benefits from having the opportunity to secure the work, while the DOT benefits from the guarantee of a building material that will meet and often exceed their needs.

Even on projects where certified products are not required, certification still delivers.

"Plant certification is something that we can point to on all projects," said Drew Wieser, vice president at Wieser Concrete Products and the current chair of the NPCA Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) Committee. "It helps indicate to whoever we are working with that they will receive a high-quality product."

Wieser further explained that obtaining certification can also lead to career development pathways for team members. With a rigorous set of standards to work toward, production

floor employees at certified plants must enhance their level of performance. This ultimately leads to tighter operations along with more career opportunities for your team.

"Adhering to the program offers employees the opportunity for education and professional development not just with us but also within the industry as a whole," Wieser said. "Plus, being certified shows our team members, customers and community that we are committed to operational excellence and quality."

IMPROVING EVERY YEAR

NPCA's Plant Certification Program is constantly evolving. This is because the QA/QC Committee reviews its standards annually to ensure that certification evolves alongside ever-changing technology. Each year, the QA/QC Committee convenes during NPCA Committee Week to discuss how changes within the precast concrete industry affect plant certification.

"When we sit down at Committee Week, we go through every single chapter of the Quality Control Manual," Cutler said. "We break into groups and look at all the requirements to make sure that our language is up to date with current industry standards and technology – that's really the elevator for the program."

One important adjustment has changed how the group conducts their review. In the past, the Committee consisted entirely of producer and associate members. But after the program earned ANAB accreditation, voting and non-voting DOT members were required to be a part of the mix. The result is an even more representative committee that considers adjustments to the program from additional perspectives.

According to Wieser, the QA/QC Committee also considers commentary from the wider NPCA membership – including both certified and non-certified plants – about additional changes that could be made to improve the program. Ohmes noted his appreciation for this.

“NPCA does a fantastic job reviewing the program each year and updating it to address current needs,” he said. “It’s not like they just made the program and are sitting on it. They’re always tweaking it to make it better.”

As Cutler explained, the QA/QC Committee’s philosophy is to “raise the bar on quality for the industry every single year.” By doing so, the NPCA Plant Certification program remains a dynamic force within the industry.

HIGH QUALITY, HIGH PERFORMANCE

Since launching in 1987, the NPCA Plant Certification program has helped make precast concrete the building material of choice in the construction industry. Today, it functions as the linchpin of the industry’s continued evolution and success, providing architects, engineers, precasters and DOTs with the assurance of high-quality products that power high-performing projects.

Thanks to an endless quest for improvement among NPCA,



the QA/QC Committee and the wider membership, the plant certification program is the key to unlocking continued success for all who choose to take advantage of it.

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► View Individual Master Precaster Graduates on Pages 20-22



By Heather Bremer

Heather Bremer is the director of communications at NPCA.

Numbers Don't Lie

MASTER PRECASTER PROGRAM SETS ANOTHER BENCHMARK



A record 94 Master Precaster graduates were honored during the Keynote Luncheon on the opening day of The Precast Show in Indianapolis. In addition to a certificate, the newly anointed Master Precasters receive a highly coveted gold hard hat.

Since its inception in 2012, 527 men and women have received the Master Precaster designation. The program began with one graduate in its first class, with numbers steadily climbing each year. In the past three years, the graduate count has jumped to record heights and is only expected to grow.

The rapid growth is significant because the title of Master Precaster is no easy thing to achieve.

THE PATH TO MASTER PRECASTER

The Master Precaster Program is a precast-specific training program through NPCA's Production & Quality School and includes comprehensive education courses on production, safety, technical, quality control and leadership. It can be completed by taking six courses online and in person.

"It's been built on the needs of the members," said Wilbert Precast's Brandy Rinkle, Chair of NPCA's Education Committee. "It's designed specifically for their employees."

The program typically takes at least two years to complete. The rigorous schedule provides some flexibility with online courses.

A hopeful Master Precaster's path begins with PQS I, now offered online. The course covers the basic body of knowledge that all employees at a precast concrete plant should have. Veterans of the precast concrete industry, including the late Mel Marshall, developed the comprehensive program to address the key fundamentals of quality precasting. It covers each critical step of the production process from start to finish, including batching and mixing, reinforcement, production practices and quality control.

The next step requires participants to complete the PQS II – Safety: Precast Module and have a valid OSHA card. PQS II – Safety examines safety issues associated with the precast production process. Upon completion of the course, participants can identify safety hazards, apply techniques and implement programs to improve safety, lead toolbox talks and develop action plans to address concerns.

PQS II – Production is the first of the required courses to be offered in person. It is held annually for two days ahead of The Precast Show.

The Production course is designed for plant personnel who will benefit from a comprehensive understanding of precast-specific production practices. It goes beyond the fundamentals explored in PQS I to prepare students to become production leaders in their plants. Topics include concrete lean manufacturing, repair procedures and techniques, reinforcement, and lifting and handling.

Participants are engaged in hands-on learning that challenges their knowledge and teamwork skills.

The next course, PQS II – Technical is offered annually as a webinar. Utilizing NPCA's engineers and other industry experts, Technical explores the technical aspects of the manufactured concrete production process. The course focuses on basic mechanics, the basics of design theory for concrete elements, proper lifting of products, reading and understanding blueprints and standards and specifications.

A math prep course is required to complete the five-day webinar course.

PQS II – QA/QC rounds out the Level 2 courses. Offered online, the course stresses the importance of a well-executed QA/QC program to a successful precast operation. It covers aggregate gradation analysis, aggregate moistures and hot- and cold-temperature concrete. Participants learn why the water-to-cement ratio is so critical to concrete properties and the need for frequent testing to assess water absorption and movement in concrete.

The final course to secure your Master Precaster title is PQS III – Leadership. This course will help you reach the next stage of your career, whether you are looking to hone your leadership skills or expand your career opportunities. The course explores current leadership principles to strengthen your management style and skills with traditional and cross-cultural workforces.

The course is offered annually leading up to The Precast Show.

BENEFITS FOR EVERYONE

While some might see the Master Precaster program as intended for those just starting out in the industry, it's designed for everyone, from someone in their first year at a precast facility to those with years of experience looking to improve or move into a new, more challenging role.

"Being raised in precast my whole life, I thought I knew everything about precast," said Allen Lee of Lee's Precast Concrete. "So, I started that program, and I learned a lot. All different aspects of what we do every day are covered in that program."





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LEADS TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES
FOR NPCA MEMBERS



By Emma Quasny

Emma Quasny is NPCA's
Communications Specialist.





When NPCA President and CEO Nick Rhoad was interviewing in 2023, members of the board and the search committee all told him the same thing: Workforce was the single biggest challenge they faced.

What started as a discussion about how to address the workforce challenges within the precast industry has become a new focus for NPCA and resulted in new programs and tools for members to use.

Christina Trexler, NPCA's vice president of Workforce Innovation, has been hard at work over the past year tackling the workforce challenges. Trexler has focused on evaluating the precast industry and determining how to improve workforce education, training and programming.

In Trexler's ongoing efforts to improve workforce training, the NPCA Workforce Initiative (NPCA WFI) has partnered with three companies that all focus on developing and delivering content to provide solutions and growth for the workforce culture. Along with Trexler, Work Institute, The Kevin Eikenberry Group and Fire Starters Inc. will provide educational content and webinars to members, as well as offer opportunities to tailor content for members' specific needs.

"The great part about this quasi-affinity program is if a member has a targeted need or problem at their plant that they want assistance with, they can contact NPCA WFI to discuss their needs — a promise that I made to the NPCA Board of Directors," Trexler said.

In addition to traditional webinars, this content will include topic specific articles, resources, templates, tools, research and data accessible to members at any time. The content will cover a variety of topics such as organizational or strategic alignment, competitive strategies and trends to leadership development, team development, retention strategies, evaluation of incentives or perks, and recruitment strategies.

Each topic presented also will have actionable tools or templates that can be utilized in implementing that specific topic. If a tool or resources doesn't fully align with a member's operations, the member can contact NPCA WFI to discuss how the tool or resource can be customized to fit their operation.

"Work Institute is excited to partner with NPCA's Workforce Innovation group to provide its members with the workforce intelligence needed to retain and engage employees and

build a stronger future," said Danny Nelms, CEO of Work Institute.

Aside from the workforce training provided to NPCA members, members also will receive a discounted price from each partner company should they want to explore additional training or programs. To access this benefit, contact Trexler directly.

MEET THE PARTNERS

All three partners share the same objective: workforce education.

The goal with this partnership between NPCA WFI and these companies is to continue the workforce initiative discussion but with new benefits for members. Each company has its own unique qualities and approaches to workforce education, giving members access to a multitude of resources for their own workforce initiative discussions.

The first partner, The Kevin Eikenberry Group, is a leadership and learning company aimed at helping leaders, teams and their organizations reach their goals and potential. The company's practical approaches and global perspective help its clients develop new mindsets and different skillsets and assist them in utilizing those skills.

The group focuses on delivering learning for everyone in an organization in a wide range of approaches and mediums, with topics about cultural development, team development and organizational change.

"We at The Kevin Eikenberry Group are excited to partner with NPCA WFI to assist their members in creating cultures and organizations that have strong leadership and pipelines of future leaders, become great places to work and are industry leaders through the strength of their leaders, teams and cultures," Chief Potential Officer Kevin Eikenberry said.

The second partner, Work Institute, specializes in evidence-based intelligence that empowers organizations to retain talent and enhance employee engagement. Their approach identifies actionable insights, helping employers proactively address turnover risks, disengagement and workforce challenges before they become costly.

"We bring customized solutions that will enable members to build stronger, more sustainable workforces in the precast concrete industry," Nelms said.

Aside from analytics, Work Institute also provides human resources counseling and strategic guidance to help organizations

“We bring customized solutions that will enable members to build stronger, more sustainable workforces in the precast concrete industry.”

– **Danny Nelms,**
CEO of Work Institute

implement effective solutions for retention and engagement challenges. Through all these different strategies and workforce intelligence, Work Institute will equip NPCA members with the right tools to foster a high-performing engaged workforce.

“By leveraging our research-backed insights, we can help NPCA members turn workforce challenges into opportunities for long-term success,” Nelms said.

The third partner, Fire Starters Inc. (FSI), focuses on sustainable growth and change through unique and customized training and coaching solutions. These solutions are practical and applicable in real-time to have an immediate impact.

“We start with the core of the person or group and build the training from the ground up in partnership with the client — no out of the box programs here,” Chief Fire Starter Jason Barnaby said.

What makes FSI’s approach stand out is the belief that real growth and change happen outside of the

comfort zone status quo. Clients are challenged to think and do differently ensuring they stay relevant and competitive.

“Fire Starters Inc. is fired up to partner with NPCA WFI to spark and ignite lasting change and development in a fast-paced, quick-change business landscape,” Barnaby said.

SO, WHAT’S NEXT?

While this partnership is still in its development stage, Trexler says the contracts have been signed and it is officially go-time to start thinking of next steps to get the ball rolling.

“I’m focused on bringing the resources that members have asked for and that is exactly what this is,” Trexler said. “I am looking forward to launching this new benefit for our members and I am excited to see how they utilize this tool to continue the workforce education discussion.”

For more information about this initiative, you can reach out to ctrexler@precast.org.

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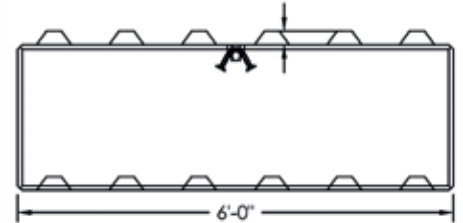
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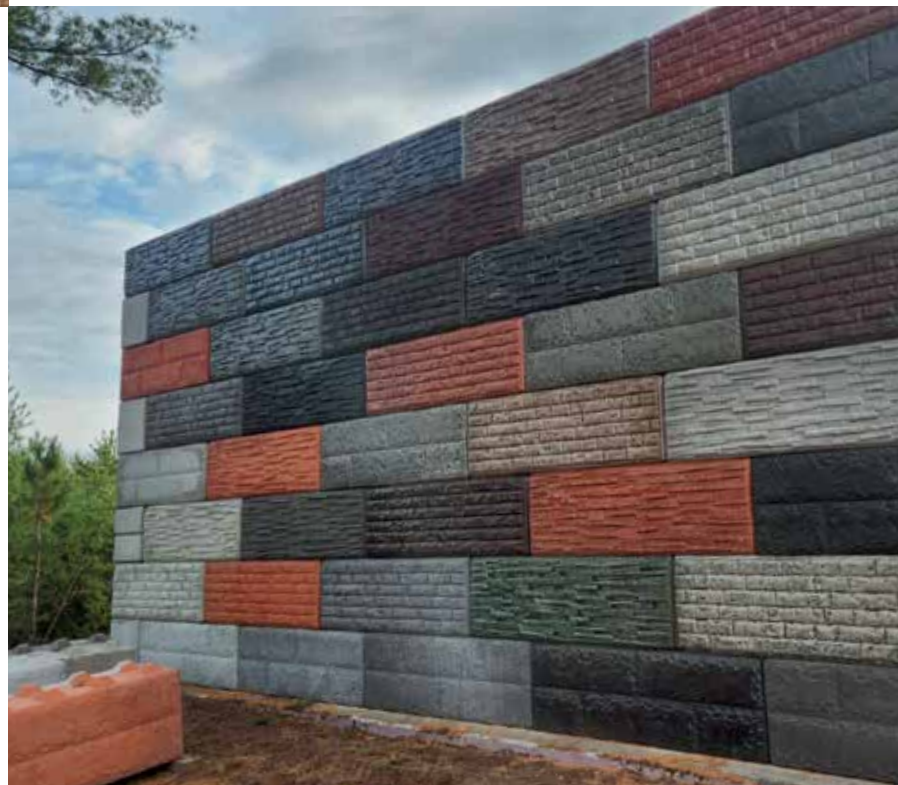
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Confronting Mental Health Challenges

IN THE PRECAST INDUSTRY

AWARENESS, EMPATHY AND SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACE
POLICIES MAKE A DIFFERENCE



By Zach Elliott

Zach Elliott is a DePaul
journalism graduate and
freelance writer.



In today's world, the nature of work has changed dramatically. Even with the rise of remote and alternative forms of labor, people remain at the heart of any industry's success. However, in physically demanding fields like precast manufacturing, mental health often lingers in the background — an unspoken concern that can significantly affect job performance, safety and overall well-being.

Curtis Moore, partner at Fisher-Phillips and a member of the NPCA Safety Committee, sees the reach of mental health challenges in many industries, noting it is especially prevalent in high-risk, labor-intensive roles.

"I think the more you talk about it, you realize it is a common problem across sectors of the industry," Moore said. "And then you talk about, it's not just construction, it's all of these high-risk job profiles that suffer from this."

PHYSICAL WORK AND ITS MENTAL HEALTH TOLL

Heavy labor can be taxing not just on the body but also on the mind. In precast manufacturing, the strain of operating machinery, lifting heavy materials and maintaining intense focus creates an environment where stress and potential injuries can occur. When pain or injury coincides with day-to-day pressures, workers may be more vulnerable to problems like substance abuse — sometimes as a coping mechanism.

A 2024 study by American Addiction Centers found that around 15% of construction workers in the United States have a substance abuse disorder, nearly double the 8.6% national average among adults. For Clint Kilborn, Regional Sales Manager for Equipment and Automation at Afinitas and a member of the NPCA Safety Committee, this is part of a

broader pattern.

"It's the elephant in the room, but it's not uncommon for plant workers to struggle with substance abuse," said Kilborn, who has been working closely with precast plant employees for more than 10 years. "However, in my experience, typically there's a deeper, underlying cause."

IDENTIFYING THE UNDERLYING STRUGGLES

Below the surface of substance use lies a deeper issue: mental health challenges. Awareness of issues like depression, anxiety and stress is more prevalent than ever among working-age adults. Still, many people quietly endure symptoms that may only become obvious when a crisis hits. In 2017, the CDC reported nearly 38,000 deaths by suicide among those aged 16-64. The construction industry saw the second-highest number of cases.

Being mindful of signs that something is "off" with a coworker can be crucial in preventing tragedies. Construction and precast manufacturing are high-stakes environments where concentration is key, so if someone is showing changes in behavior — such as irritability, fatigue, or a lack of focus — it could indicate deeper mental or emotional struggles.

"Obviously, drug or alcohol impairment is a safety issue that must be dealt with immediately," Kilborn said. "But it is important to dig deeper and determine if that individual needs more specialized care to treat an underlying mental health issue."

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Many employers provide support structures for those grappling with substance abuse or mental health difficulties. Human Resources departments often have policies and counseling services to help workers before matters spiral out

of control. Depending on insurance coverage, an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) may also offer direct access to virtual mental health counselors and other in-depth services.

Yet, in Kilborn's experience, the most potent resource is often a supportive, empathetic workplace culture. A listening ear or a simple "How are you holding up?" from a colleague or supervisor can be the catalyst that encourages someone to seek help.

"That's one of the things I love about my company," Kilborn said. "Afinitas kind of wrote the book on great corporate culture and caring about the health and well-being of those in our span of care. One way we do this is through weekly check-ins with team members."

"I think the more you talk about it, you realize it is a common problem across sectors of the industry."

— *Curtis Moore, Partner at Fisher-Phillips and NPCA Safety Committee member*

FOSTERING A HEALTHIER WORK ENVIRONMENT

Beyond professional support, self-awareness is critical. The CDC has guidelines to help individuals recognize the signs of stress or burnout, such as ongoing anger, irritability or exhaustion. If you notice these feelings, it's wise to step back, reflect and determine whether accessing formal resources could help.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in setting the standard. Supervisors and managers who make time to listen when employees express concerns can create an atmosphere where asking for help feels safe rather than risky. In some workplaces, a zero-tolerance policy

“For me personally, it’s like this gigantic weight lifted off your shoulders when you’re able to get stuff out there. At the end of the day, we care. The world is a better place with everybody in it.”

– *Clint Kilborn, Regional Sales Manager for Equipment and Automation at Afinitas and NPCA Safety Committee member*

for substance issues is being replaced with more nuanced approaches that emphasize intervention and support.

“Some of the employers I’ve worked with have said, ‘Yeah, we’re not a zero-tolerance policy. It depends on whether you self-report,’” Moore explained. “They’re taking into account that human element a little bit and trying to help people.”

SHIFTING ATTITUDES TOWARD MENTAL HEALTH

Encouragingly, the conversation around mental health is becoming more common, especially in high-stress industries like construction and manufacturing. Employers increasingly seek training on how to identify and address mental health challenges among their teams.

“I think the industry has done a good job over the last five to seven years,” Moore said. “A lot of conferences I went to for different areas of construction and concrete have started inviting speakers on the topic of

mental health and even suicide, because sometimes that’s a big issue in the industry, too. And I think the more you talk about it you realize it is a common problem across sectors of the industry.”

Ultimately, creating a culture of safety and acceptance is the best way to safeguard against the exhaustive nature of demanding work. Seeking assistance should never be a source of shame — taking advantage of resources, both personal and professional, can be a lifesaver.

“For me personally, it’s like this gigantic weight lifted off your shoulders when you’re able to get stuff out there,” Kilborn said. “At the end of the day, we care. The world is a better place with everybody in it.”

In every sense, prioritizing mental health benefits not only workers themselves, but the entire industry. Recognizing signs of distress, offering genuine support and creating strong safety nets can make an immeasurable difference — on and off the job site.

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Viva Las Vegas, Viva La Verde

PRECAST CONCRETE PROVIDES A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR ECO-FRIENDLY CAR WASHES IN THE DESERT CITY



By Bridget McCrea

Bridget McCrea is a freelance writer who covers manufacturing, industry and technology. She is a winner of the Florida Magazine Association's Gold Award for best trade-technical feature statewide.

A vibrant, bustling oasis in the Nevada desert, Las Vegas unfortunately faces fundamental water conservation challenges. The Colorado River, which is the lifeblood of the region, has experienced prolonged drought, climate change and growing demands from other states — all of which add up to dwindling resources.

Put simply, every drop counts in this arid landscape. According to the Las Vegas Valley Water District, the region gets about 90% of its water from the Colorado River, which is currently facing “the worst drought in the river basin’s recorded history.” The water level of Lake Mead, which serves as the source of most of the community’s drinking water, has dropped more than 150 feet since January 2000.

“The Rocky Mountains have had below-average snowfall for several years, decreasing the amount of runoff into the Colorado River,” LVVWD explains. “It would take many years of above-normal runoff in the Rocky Mountains before Lake Mead’s water level returns to the level before the drought began.”

CAR WASH COUPONS ANYONE?

Needless to say, everyday activities that many of us take for granted are treated as decidedly “not-eco-friendly” in the Las Vegas region, where the water district recommends using commercial or self-serve car washes. The Southern Nevada Water Authority even offers residents “car wash coupons” to encourage their use. Many of those car washes have the infrastructure in place to “capture” the used water in a sanitary sewer and/or recycle the water right onsite.

Precast is playing an important role in the construction of these eco-friendly car washes. The material’s inherent strength and durability make it ideal for capturing and storing large volumes of water — both fresh and recycled. Manufactured to precise specifications and produced in controlled environments, the precast tanks and related products provide a watertight seal that prevents leaks and minimizes water loss in an environment where every drop is precious.

Precast’s modular nature also supports rapid construction, reduces the need for onsite labor and minimizes disruption to the surrounding area. Angel Camacho, outside sales representative at Jensen Infrastructure in Las Vegas, says his company is often called upon to produce the tanks and related structures for owners of eco-friendly car washes, of which there are many in the region.

For example, Jensen recently produced four 1,500-gallon precast concrete sand/oil interceptors, a sample box and a few smaller cleanout boxes for a new car wash. The combined system aids in the reclamation and recycling of water to reduce waste. And because they treat wastewater onsite, the tanks effectively reduce the volume of total suspended solids (TSS) that enter the sewer system when people wash their cars in their own driveways.

“The interceptors serve as reclaimed tanks that ensure that pretty much everything gets cleaned up before any water goes to the main sewer,” Camacho said. In this specific customer application, he says the new facility was partially constructed before the tanks were produced and installed. Plastic wasn’t

an option in this case because traffic would be traveling over the underground structures, he said, and precast fit the bill perfectly.

BETTER THAN CAST-IN-PLACE

The fact that the precast tanks could be made offsite and delivered for immediate installation was another selling point for the material in this case and also a winning advantage over any cast-in-place options.

“The building was under construction at the time, and we helped the contractor stick to the project timeline by having the tanks ready to go when they were needed,” Camacho said.

This was much more feasible than carving out the time and resources to cast the tanks in place onsite.

Camacho said the same approach is being used by car wash owners throughout the Las Vegas area, where the project scopes vary based on what the companies are trying to achieve.

“The general layouts are pretty much all the same,” he said, “with some needing higher gallon capacities.”

The average is around 6,000 total gallons, which is usually handled by producing three 2,000-gallon precast tanks.

Other variations include the placement of inlets and outlets, based on the final positioning of the tanks in relation to the building itself. For this particular project, in fact, Jensen designed the same tank twice in preparation for it to be installed on either the right or the left side of the building. This proactive approach is necessary because the precaster “doesn’t always know until the very last minute which side the tanks are going to be connected on,” Camacho explained.

“We basically just have two layouts continuously ready for approval. Once they’re approved, we start producing the tanks,” Camacho said.

The first tank in the layout is usually the “mud tank,” or the one that collects the most dirt and debris when a vehicle is washed in the bay. The other three tanks act as reclaimed sand/oil interceptors. The setup also includes a skimmer flow line and various plumbing fixtures that lead back into the building.

PRECAST MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS

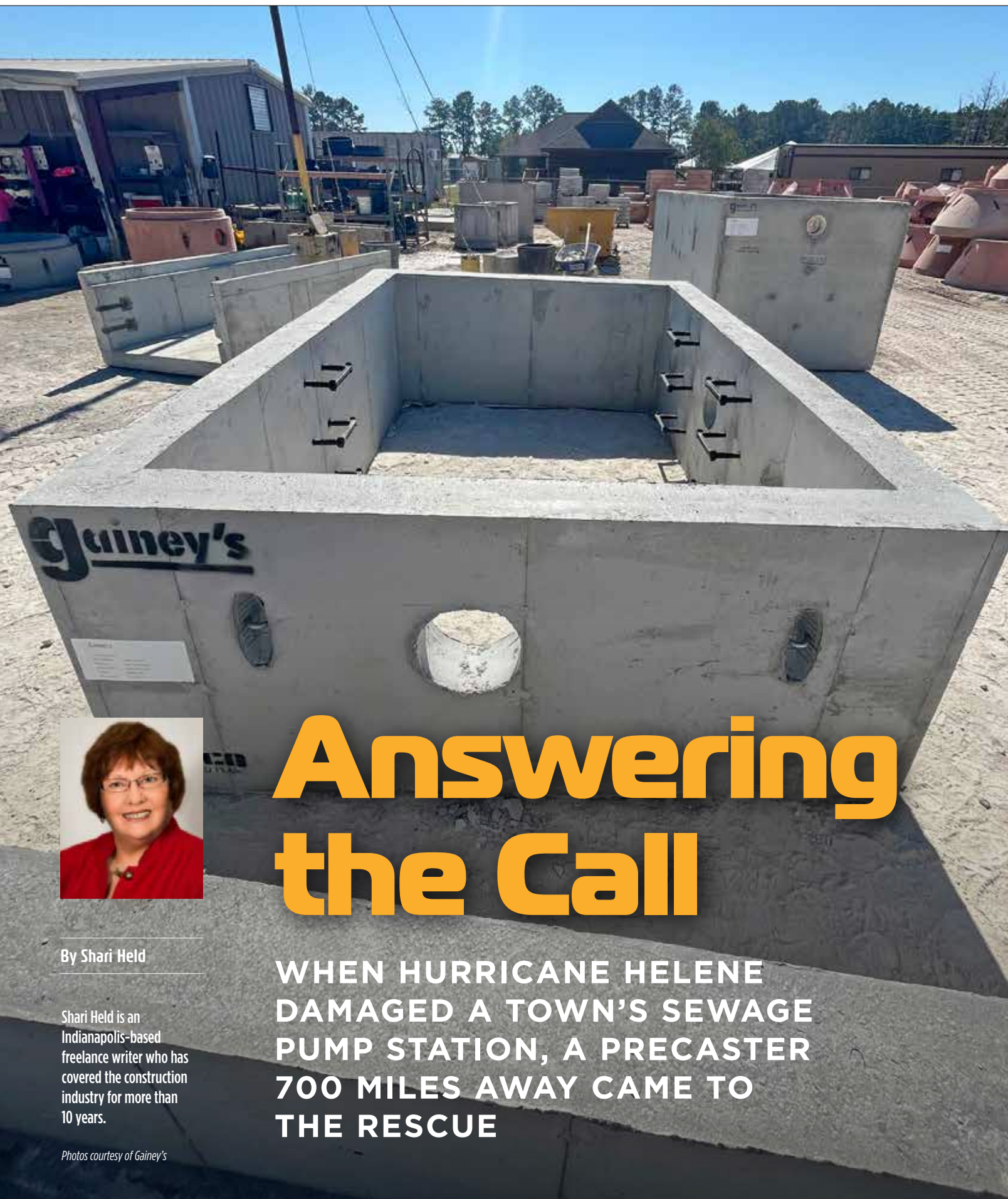
Camacho said car wash owners and developers in the region are very interested in the precast tanks for the numerous value points that they deliver on such projects. They also help vehicle owners clean their cars in a more environmentally friendly manner by not only conserving and reusing water but also by keeping harmful chemicals and other contaminants out of the region’s sewer systems.

“All of the feedback we’re getting on the tanks has been pretty straightforward and positive,” said Camacho, who adds that project contractors really like the ease of installation and the fact that the tanks arrive onsite ready to install and use.

“The tank layouts themselves are pretty straightforward; it’s really just about the placement of the inverts on the inlets and outlets (e.g., on the length of the wall or the width of the wall),” Camacho said. “As long as we meet those requirements, the owners are pretty content with the final outcome.”



Precast is playing an important role in the construction of eco-friendly car washes in Las Vegas. The material's inherent strength and durability make it ideal for capturing and storing large volumes of water.



By Shari Held

Shari Held is an Indianapolis-based freelance writer who has covered the construction industry for more than 10 years.

Photos courtesy of Guiney's

Answering the Call

WHEN HURRICANE HELENE DAMAGED A TOWN'S SEWAGE PUMP STATION, A PRECASTER 700 MILES AWAY CAME TO THE RESCUE

Lake Lure, a scenic community nestled in the Blue Ridge foothills of North Carolina, is a historic town of about 1,400 residents. It has a reputation for being one of the best mountain getaways in the area and has been the location of several major movies, including “Dirty Dancing” and “The Last of the Mohicans.”

But after Hurricane Helene ripped through the area in late September 2024, the picturesque town became a disaster area. The lake rose above the dam, causing flooding. Landmark bridges were washed out. And the streets and lake were filled with debris from boats, docks, trees and structures.

Boulders slid down the mountain, damaging the town’s sewage system and shearing off the top part of the pump station. Thousands of gallons of untreated sewage emptied into the Rocky Broad River. Lake Lure needed it fixed — and fast.

Brian Houston, P.E., Water/Wastewater Market Leader for LaBella Associates, needed the job completed in four weeks. But local precasters couldn’t promise delivery until early 2025 because of their own recovery efforts..

A mutual client referred precast concrete manufacturer Gainey’s to Houston as a precaster that completed projects quickly and provided quality products. On Oct. 2, Gainey’s received a call for help from Houston.

“I reached out to Brian immediately and told him we were committed to helping him meet his timeline,” said Tim Sander, vice president of operations for Gainey’s, located in Holden, Louisiana. “We’d gone through a disaster like that here, and we empathized with them.”

Over the next few weeks, the Gainey’s team — Sander, estimator Taylor Bordok and project manager Austin Musacchia — determined how they could meet the deadline. Communication with everyone involved was key.

“We had a lot of back and forth with the engineer on what would work on their end versus what we could actually produce,” Bordok said. “We had to find a middle ground.”

Musacchia’s main concern was the timeline.

“It wasn’t just us,” he said. “We were relying on suppliers to get hatches, castings, vent pipes and other items to us in time for us to produce this order when they needed it.”

When the pipe sleeve delivery wasn’t timely, Gainey’s proposed grouting the pipes in place instead, and the suggestion was accepted to keep the project on track.



Gainey’s constructed a replacement for the damaged top and walls of the wet well vault plus two risers and a flat top section, in addition to a vault box and a PRV structure for the community of Lake Lure, North Carolina.

MEETING THE DEADLINE

Given the tight time constraint, the wet conditions and the logistics of getting concrete workers and equipment to the site, precast was a better solution than cast-in-place concrete. Plus, the existing wet well vault needed some repairs before Gainey’s precast could be put in place.

“We could produce it at our facility and not hinder what they were doing at the job site,” Musacchia said. “This project shows what precast is able to do and the issues we can deal with in a controlled environment.”

That doesn’t mean it was easy. The custom job consisted of a replacement for the damaged top and walls of the wet well vault plus two risers and a flat top section, in addition to a vault box and a PRV structure.

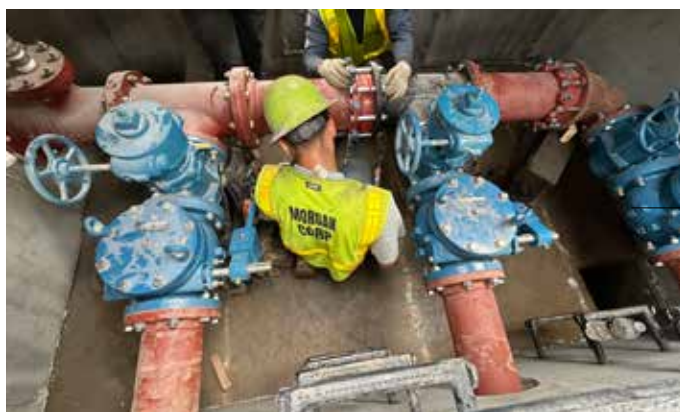
Gainey’s workers used individual panel pieces so they could adjust the dimensions to fit the existing wet well vault. This piece measures 11 feet, 4 inches by 9 feet, 2 inches by 5 feet.

The vault box measures 9 feet by 6 feet by 6 feet. The PRV structure measures 12 feet, 4 inches by 8 feet, 4 inches by 5 feet. The largest of the three structures Gainey’s produced for Lake Lure, the PRV structure, weighs 20,000 pounds.

Gainey’s used its standard self-consolidating concrete, with a design strength of 4,500 to 5,000 psi.

The main piece had to be poured upside down, then flipped. It was challenging to determine where to place the lifting points so it could be turned over safely, with no injuries to workers or product.

“Under our normal timeframe, this project would



The pieces manufactured by Gainey’s were a perfect fit.

have taken two weeks to complete,” Musacchia said. “We put this into production on Monday, Oct. 21, and the last piece was poured on Wednesday, Oct. 23.”

After curing and a quality check, the pieces were loaded on flatbed trucks that Friday.

A BUMP IN THE ROAD

Transportation posed more challenges. One was protecting the precast pieces for the 700-mile journey from Gainey’s to Lake Lure.

“All the shipments were oversized,” Sander said. “We had to get permits through six different states. There was a lot of coordination with the shipping company to ensure we met the regulations for each state.”

Once in transit, Musacchia had to ensure the truck drivers were in constant communication with the job site to help them arrive safely. Many nearby roads were flooded, filled with debris and closed.

Despite the obstacles, the shipments arrived intact at Lake Lure on Monday, Oct. 28, beating the deadline.

A PERFECT FIT

Before the precast pieces arrived, the construction crew repaired the existing part of the wet well.

The big question was: Would the new top fit?

“When the contractor put it in place, there were zero issues,” Houston said. “They just lifted it up and put it on there. The top went on in only one afternoon. We had a very specific thing we had to match, and Gainey’s matched it exactly.”

REWARD FOR A JOB WELL DONE

The story doesn’t end there. On Halloween, the town of Lake Lure discovered Hurricane Helene had destroyed a half mile of sewer on the west side of town, near Chimney Rock Village. This job required building a replacement piece for a damaged vault and creating a new PRV vault. Local precasters couldn’t accommodate the lead time.

Once again, Houston turned to Gainey’s.

“We worked with Gainey’s to figure out the most efficient way to get it from them quickly,” Houston said. “Within a week we had it onsite. If I ever need concrete in a hurry, they’re the guys I’m going to call.”

This was a standard job that used standard molds. The order consisted of a 7-foot-by-7-foot inside diameter catch basin and a 5-foot inside diameter manhole.

This order was delivered on Nov. 28.



The custom precast pieces traveled more than 700 miles to be installed.

Altogether, Gainey’s shipped 90,000 pounds of precast elements to Lake Lure.

Unfortunately, the precast from the second order can’t be installed until the town acquires the property from the property owners. But it is onsite and ready to go as soon as the property issues are resolved.

“In our experience, it takes at least a couple years to get back to normal when a major hurricane makes landfall,” Sander said. “We just wanted to help them get back to some sense of normal as soon as possible.”

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Celebrating the 'Shea Way'

SHEA CONCRETE PRODUCTS BUILDS 75-YEAR LEGACY ON TRUST AND INDUSTRY-LEADING PRODUCT QUALITY AND SERVICE



By Emma Quasny

Emma Quasny is NPCA's Communications Specialist.



During the holiday season, we often associate a red farm truck with hard work and generosity, whether that means bringing home a Christmas tree or delivering gifts to a neighbor.

A certain red delivery truck holds the same meaning within the precast concrete industry.

Shea Concrete Products is a third-generation, family-owned-and-operated precast concrete supplier in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Founded in 1949 by Ernie Shea, Shea Concrete has been serving the industry for 75 years and is often recognized by its red delivery trucks on the road.

Shea's brightly colored trucks may capture the attention of its customers and consumers, but it's what happens inside the walls of Shea that stands out.

A TRUSTED PARTNER

Before Shea Concrete became what it is today, it was strictly a backyard operation with six employees – three of whom were Shea family members – working come rain or shine to get concrete poured and products made and delivered.

Bob Flores, the general manager at Shea for more than 40 years, has been a part of Shea for 57 years and was one of those six employees in the beginning.

"Everything was outside, and we were working year-round on barely any sleep," Flores said. "We had these A-frame stripping trucks that we would strip the molds with, and we were pouring ten yards of concrete with either a ready-mix truck or, on Saturdays, we would pour with our quarter-yard mixer. It was all very primitive."

Shea built a strong reputation over time and began growing when Ed and Judi Shea bought the company from Ed's father in 1983. Their main goal was to help Shea reach its full potential. Under the ownership of Ed and Judi, Shea expanded to different markets and acquired several businesses to get where it is today, but it was not always easy and at times was even risky.

When Ed bought New England Precast, he had to put up everything he owned for collateral to purchase the business. Shortly after, the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, occurred.

"I thought to myself many times that I might lose everything, but things kept going and going," Ed said. "It took a lot of gumption to put everything like that on the line, but it's the best decision, besides getting married, that I ever made."

It was risks like those that grew Shea's reputation even further – something that Ed's father hesitated to do.

"My father wouldn't have taken as many chances as I have, but it's just a different regime today," Ed said.

Just like Ed put his trust in the industry, business and economy, people started putting their trust in Ed.

"Ed is the type of person that you can trust with a handshake," said Greg Stratis, president of Shea. "He's a person that's got great authority that everybody respects, and I try to do the same as he did."

Stratis worked a few summers at Shea while attending college. He then went on to work as an electrical engineer at Raytheon for six years. He later returned to Shea, where he first started in production, and has been with the company for 31 years since he started working full time. He worked his way up to president of the company in 2017. He tries to maintain the same trust and company culture that Ed and his wife created.

Ed's reputation as trustworthy helped Shea acquire several companies that have become the multiple Shea facility locations today. When the owners of those companies were looking to sell, Ed was the first person they reached out to.

"They respected Ed and knew that Ed would take care of their employees and their customers the way that they wanted them to be taken care of," Flores said.

Flores explains it first happened in the early 1980s with a company called Septic Tank Inc.



Family-owned and operated since 1949, Shea Concrete is one of New England's largest suppliers of precast products.

“Ray Greenwood was the gentleman’s name that owned it, and he and Ed had a great relationship,” Flores said. “And he approached Ed, and he said, ‘You know, Ed, thinking of retiring, and I’d like to sell the business ... would you be interested?’ Of course, Ed jumped at the opportunity.”

Ed was able to grow the business, increasing sales and customers, and that’s when other businesses looking to sell started to reach out, such as Utility Precast, which Shea purchased in 2010.

Respect for Shea goes beyond Ed and extends to the entire company.

Concrete Sealants Inc. (ConSeal) and Shea have been working together for more than 20 years, buying sealant and collaborating on training exercises. Both companies share some of the same values and have developed a strong relationship over time.

Their biggest collaboration has been the geothermal system at Gillette Stadium in Massachusetts. The system was installed underneath the field and then sealed using sealant from ConSeal.

“Let’s say if there’s a failure in the field that could make national news ... so there is a certain level of trust there that I think has been built over those 20 plus years,” said Jesse Wingert, president of ConSeal. “That mutual respect just drives a stronger relationship.”

It is relationships built on trust and respect that helped Shea grow into what it is today.

INVESTING BACK INTO SHEA

Shea currently has four locations across the New England area: Amesbury; Wilmington and Rochester, Massachusetts; and Nottingham, New Hampshire.

The diversification of Shea not only allowed the company to grow significantly, from a single location to its four current locations, but it has been a key driver of the company’s expansion over the past couple of decades.

“Diversification has definitely been a big change since I’ve been here,” Stratis said. “We’ve done a lot of investing in the company

over the years, and we’ve grown quite a bit ... in Amesbury we added a brand-new production facility and a brand-new office headquarters.”

Diversification has been a strategic priority for Shea to expand its capabilities and market reach all while maintaining the optimization of its existing operations and product lines. Shea is in the process of adding a brand-new production facility at their Nottingham location, which is scheduled to be completed in 2025.

“You know, it took a lot to build a company the way we have,” Flores said. “It certainly didn’t happen overnight.”

Along with Shea’s diversification, the company’s expansion brought on a larger customer base, which only made Shea stronger. When Shea acquired companies, it also acquired more customers and more opportunity.

“We aim to maintain personal relationship with customers, even as the business has grown significantly,” Stratis said.

Customers have always complimented Shea on its continuous efforts to improve customer service and its commitment to providing quality service and products.

Stratis says Shea’s red delivery trucks act as billboards in a way, reminding people that Shea is a top precaster in the industry.

“We take pride in our ride,” Stratis said. “Customers will reach out on social media and compliment the truck on its cleanliness and how well it’s maintained. Our goal is that the cleanliness of these trucks represents the company in a way.”

Another investment back into the company is employee training. Shea values education, whether it is hosting seminars for their customers or providing leadership training for their employees.

Aside from hosting its own educational events and training, ConSeal provides Shea with training in leadership, best practices and general training on products in the precast industry and how they are best used.

“[Shea] has a core value of education and continuous improvement and continuous education, and that is a core value

that we share,” Wingert said. “And so being able to help support them where we can, and they’re continuing to educate their employees, their customer base, their specifier base ... we enjoy partnering alongside them to educate the industry on best practices and best management style.”

A BIG MILESTONE

Shea Concrete Products turned 75 last year — a milestone that many don’t hit.

“I never thought I’d be here for all of this, but to see all the changes and to see



Shea has expanded its manufacturing facility by 20,000 square feet with its headquarters in Amesbury, Massachusetts.

how this company has grown and the reputation that it has and the culture that Ed and Judi have developed here,” Flores said. “I’m just proud of it.”

The company may have grown and changed within those 75 years, but one thing that has stayed consistent is the company culture.

When Ed bought Shea, not only was it his intention to expand, but it was also his intention to create an atmosphere where employees and customers felt at home.

Stratis notes how the family feel never left the company, even as Shea started to expand and change. Shea recognizes its employees’ anniversaries publicly on social media and gives out awards to each individual. Shea cares for its employees as much as they do for their customers.

“Not many companies make it this long. You know, you have to have the right people in charge as you grow, and a lot of people miss the boat there, but we’ve been very lucky, and I’m very pleased that we have the family involved and probably more to come,” Ed said. “It’s been a great legacy.”



Shea is committed to producing the highest-quality precast products.

So, what’s next?

Shea will continue to expand and grow with their facilities, employees and customer base, but the company is hopeful for the next (fourth) generation to take over.

“Hopefully the next generation will still be Shea family,” Stratis said. “Hopefully, they will be interested in taking over and running the operations here. I know Ed Shea would like to see that, you know, keep it in the family.”

Stratis emphasizes the importance of training the next generation to ensure that the company’s values and culture are passed down.

By continuing to invest back into the company, Shea has opportunity to reach new heights and possibilities. Ed acknowledges all the hard work and grit it took to get to the place the company is today and is proud of all they have accomplished.

“In reality our secret weapon has always been our team members,” Ed said. “We have been fortunate to always have the right people in the right positions all these years.”

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The Precast Show 2025

RACING TO SUCCESS

PRECAST PEOPLE MAKE CONCRETE CONNECTIONS AT THE PRECAST SHOW IN INDIANAPOLIS



By Heather Bremer

Heather Bremer is the director of communications at NPCA.

Photos by Richard Sittler

The Precast Show returned to the Crossroads of America in 2025, spending three chilly but productive days in Indianapolis, where the strength of the precast industry was on full display.

More than 5,300 manufactured concrete industry professionals gathered for the Grand Opening on Wednesday, Feb. 5. The Show schedule shifted to Wednesday through Friday in 2025 to allow attendees to return home for the weekend.

Attendees walked nearly 95,000 square feet of exhibits on the Show floor with 385 booths, including 51 first-time exhibitors. It took most of

the three Show days to get from one end of the floor to the other.

The latest technologies were on display for attendees to see and, in some cases, experience through virtual reality. Attendees also were able to build relationships with vendors who help fuel the precast concrete industry. In addition to engaging displays, attendees were treated to T-shirt printing, interactive experiences and unique giveaways.

Here is a rundown of some of the key moments and events at The Precast Show 2025:



Check out all of The Precast Show 2025 photos at NPCA's Flickr account: [Flickr.com/photos/nationalprecast.](https://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalprecast/)



KEYNOTE LUNCHEON

Nearly 800 people attended Wednesday's Keynote Luncheon to celebrate the accomplishments of association members and kick off The Precast Show 2025.

A record 94 men and women received their golden hard hat and certificate as they graduated from the NPCA Master Precaster program. The signature NPCA education program includes two years of study covering precast basics, safety, production, technical, quality control and leadership.

This year's class brings the total number of Master Precaster graduates to 527. Grads past and present celebrated Thursday night at The Bash at Speedway Indoor Karting. Attendees raced

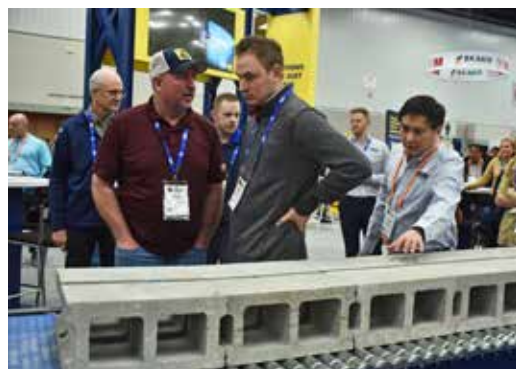
Clockwise from top: The Precast Show trade show floor was packed with a record number of exhibitors; the Best Practices awards were presented during the Keynote Luncheon; and attendees took the opportunity to talk with exhibitors about new products.

on two indoor tracks and enjoyed a buffet of pizza, wings and pasta.

The luncheon also included celebrations of the Leadership NPCA cohort, NPCA plant certification anniversaries, Safety Awards winners and Best Practices Awards winners. The keynote address was delivered by David Atkins, who spent 22 years as a New York State Police captain and urged attendees to rise and chase their dreams.

PLANT TOURS

Nearly 700 people woke early Wednesday morning to catch buses to The Precast Show Plant Tours. The first group visited McCreary Concrete Products in Tipton, Indiana. The second explored the Buzzi Unicem cement plant in Greencastle. The third and fourth tours to depart went to Coreslab Structures, which has produced precast elements for many notable Indianapolis landmarks.



Clockwise from top left: The Master Precaster Class of 2025 received their golden hard hats at the Keynote Luncheon; attendees left the show floor with a reminder about next year's show; attendees discuss new products with exhibitors; and the show floor featured heavy machinery.





Clockwise from top left: Attendees talk with an exhibitor; visitors to the Show floor explore some of the new tools available; Keynote speaker David Atkins gets the crowd pumped up; and attendees listen to presenters during an education course.

EDUCATION

Industry experts led two days of education classes, drawing attendees for discussions on concrete production and repair, leadership and management, and quality control. This year's show also included a track focused on workforce innovation, aiming to help attendees address workforce challenges and take advantage of opportunities.

Among the 1,619 attendees were an incredible number of individuals attending PQS classes, including 110 in PQS II – Production and 70 in PQS III – Leadership. These students took steps toward becoming Master Precasters by completing one of the six required courses.

PRIZE GIVEAWAYS

Spending time on the Show floor paid off in a big way for 10 lucky attendees. The Precast Show gave away more than \$10,000 in prizes to randomly selected attendees, who were entered simply by walking through the doors.

Winners had 15 minutes after their name was called to meet the Prize Patrol Cart and claim their prize, which ranged from a wine chiller to the \$5,000 grand prize, which was taken home by Garret Brown of H2 Precast in East Wenatchee, Washington.



STUDENT COMPETITION

The Texas State University was crowned champion of the NPCA Foundation Student Competition, delivering the winning presentation on stage at The Precast Show. Cal State – Chico and Illinois Institute of Technology also presented as finalists.

Texas State earned \$10,000 in prize money, divided among participating students and the school's Concrete Industry Management program.

SILENT AUCTION

The Silent Auction, a joint venture by the NPCA Foundation, ICPI Foundation and NCMA Foundation, raised more than \$100,000 to advance the precast concrete industry through academic grants, scholarships and curricula development.

Big ticket items this year included tickets to the Kansas City Chiefs and Green Bay Packers, top-of-the-line electronics, food packages and more.

FINAL EVENT

On Friday night, attendees got a taste of Hoosier Hysteria at the Crane Bay Event Center with a basketball-themed “Friday Night Fever” final event.

Visitors were entertained by a live band as they played Pop-A-Shot, grabbed a custom T-shirt and enjoyed a delicious buffet that included Indiana's signature sandwich, the breaded tenderloin. Attendees also had the opportunity to try custom beverages designed for the event, the Concrete Collins and Precast Punch.

Members danced the night away on the hardwood floor and celebrated another successful week at The Precast Show.



Clockwise from top left: Texas State celebrates its Student Competition win; Christina Trexler and Bill Bundschuh chat at the Final Event; members of the Pacemates were on hand at the Final Event; and attendees participate in Pop-A-Shot.

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Meet the Future of Precast

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS SET SIGHTS ON INDUSTRY CAREERS



By Emma Quasny

Emma Quasny is NPCA's Communications Specialist.

NPCA awarded 10 undergraduate students with an NPCA Foundation scholarship to help them reach their educational goals and begin building a future in the precast concrete industry. In this issue, NPCA features the final four student recipients. You can read profiles of the other six recipients at precast.org/precasttoday.



Jarrett Castillo

JARRET CASTILLO

Tyler, Texas
Texas State University

Jarrett Castillo is a freshman at Texas State University studying concrete industry management, a program that teaches students to manage people and systems and promote products or services related to the concrete industry. Castillo has always had an interest in construction, building and city development. Since concrete is at the center of the construction industry, he knew he needed to get

involved in it. Texas State University is one of five schools that offers a CIM program, and Castillo thought it was the right program from him.

Castillo's interest in this industry grew stronger the more he learned about it. When he started college, he discovered the mother of a friend does workshops for a construction company where she teaches others about what goes into a construction business. Aside from getting all A's, Castillo hopes to get more involved on campus, specifically in the school's concrete lab and become a part of the American Concrete Institute. His goal is to learn as much as possible and gain experience within the industry. He eventually hopes to build affordable housing for those in need.

Castillo is very grateful to receive a scholarship from NPCA and glad to know there are people in the precast industry that can help him learn and support him throughout his journey in the industry. Outside of school, Castillo enjoys hanging out with friends, playing basketball, watching movies and exploring new places.

WILLIAM GRUBER

Durand, Wisconsin
Milwaukee School of Engineering

William Gruber attributes his love of precast to his dad. Gruber's dad has been working in the precast concrete industry for 25 years and is now a plant manager at a local facility in Wisconsin. As soon as he was old enough, Gruber started working production and is still working there four years later. In his production jobs, he has helped pour and strip concrete as well as helped set up for new projects, whether that be state, city or private projects.



Gruber enjoys working with precast because of how it has evolved. He thinks it is interesting all the different things that concrete can be used for and how far it has come. Gruber is amazed at how he is always learning a new way that concrete is applied into the world. He is a freshman at the Milwaukee School of Engineering with a tentative major in mechanical engineering. His biggest educational goals are to graduate early while being debt-free. Gruber says that his post-graduate plans and goals are still up in the air, but he knows that this summer he would like to continue his internship at Wieser Concrete.

In his free time, Gruber likes going to the gym, fishing and hunting. His family is also big on snowmobiling in the winter.

CALEB HAUPTMAN

Henniker, New Hampshire
Roger Williams University

Caleb Hauptman is a freshman at Roger Williams University with a major in construction management and minor in business. For Hauptman, his mom's ownership of a concrete company sparked his interest in the industry. A family-owned company, Michie Concrete products was owned by Hauptman's grandparents before his mother took over.



He has been around precast concrete his whole life and eventually started working with it. When he was old enough, Hauptman started working and learning all the intricate details that go into a concrete plant, how the concrete is made and different ways it can be used. One of his favorite things about the industry is how versatile concrete can be and its many different applications from barriers on the side of the highway to the foundation of a house.

This summer, Hauptman plans to get his certification in testing concrete, which he says is a skill that will help him in school, where they do a lot of concrete testing. He also hopes to be on the Dean's List during his time at school. After he graduates, he expects to stay involved in the precast industry, whether that's working at his family company or branching out. Specifically, he is looking to manage production or be a project manager. Outside of school and work, Hauptman likes doing outdoor

activities like fishing and swimming, and he enjoys wrestling.

ADELE SEVERSON

Central Point, Oregon
Brigham Young University

Adele Severson is a freshman at Brigham Young University studying to be a civil engineer. She discovered the precast concrete industry when she was looking for scholarships. She took an interest in precast because of its sustainability factor. Severson's long-term goal is to help the environment and that is exactly what she plans to do through her civil engineering degree. She wants to help create solutions that benefit the environment for future generations.

Severson believes that helping the environment goes hand-in-hand with helping humanity because we, as a society, have to work with the resources we have while still saving some for future generations. Severson has always loved math and learning, so she is excited to have courses related to math and sustainability during her college career. She plans to use concrete to make cities more environmentally friendly. Severson says some examples could be implementing bike paths with solar panels or even using more precast concrete for wastewater management and storm water drainage.

Outside of school and thinking about ways to improve the environment, Severson likes to read, be outdoors, play violin and figure skate.





WORKING *for* YOU



NEW WEBSITE PROMOTES PRECAST TO GENERAL AUDIENCE

You live the #precastlife each and every day, but how many times have you had to explain what your company makes and how it affects people's daily lives?

NPCA is developing a new, industry-focused website, precastlife.com, to ease those conversations with the general public, government officials and your potential workforce.

A video explaining how precast is the foundation of modern civilization made its debut at the 59th Annual Convention. An "Under Construction" landing page will launch soon at precastlife.com, where you will be able to watch the video and sign up for updates on the site and its debut in spring 2025.

NPCA ON THE ROAD

NPCA staff members have been working for you at several events



throughout the winter. Some of these events include:

ACI CONCRETE CONVENTION FALL 2024 • Philadelphia – Nov. 3 – 7, 2024

Hugh Martin, P.E., Ron Naumann, P.E., and Claude Goguen, P.E., attended the ACI Fall 2024 Convention where they attended committee meetings and represented the precast concrete industry.

ASTM COMMITTEE MEETINGS • Orlando, Fla. – Dec. 10 – 11, 2024

Martin and Naumann traveled to attend and participate in the annual meeting of ASTM Committee C27 on Precast Concrete Products and Committee C09 on Concrete and Aggregates. They both represented the precast industry at each of the C27 subcommittee meetings, interacting with about 25 other ASTM members in the precast industry. Martin currently serves as the vice chair of Committee C27, and Naumann is chair of Subcommittee C27.30 on Water and Wastewater Structures.



NPCA's Brad Chinery, Chris Frederick and Chrisy Denault attended Word of Concrete in Las Vegas.



NPCA awarded scholarships to eight universities competing in the the American Society of Civil Engineers Concrete Canoe National Competition to help the teams offset construction and travel costs.

#PRECASTLIFE

WHAT IS THE #PRECASTLIFE?

It's a new campaign from NPCA to promote the precast concrete industry to the general public. It's a tool to share with government officials and specifiers how precast makes modern civilization possible. And it's a movement to attract the next generation of employees and leaders to the industry.

Coming this spring, precastlife.com will showcase precast concrete in a more tangible way for those who don't live the #precastlife every day.



NPCA EPIC

NPCA's EPIC Community on the Higher Logic Platform, a communications tool and membership benefit, is creating some epic conversations within the NPCA community, and you don't want to miss it!

Still need to join NPCA's EPIC platform? Members should have received an email with instructions to make an account. Not seeing the email? Reach out to marcomm@precast.org.

CONCRETE CANOE SCHOLARSHIPS

The NPCA Foundation sponsors the American Society of Civil Engineers Concrete Canoe National Competition annually, while NPCA provides scholarships to help teams offset the construction and travel costs. This year NPCA received 47 applications and the top eight schools will each receive a \$1,000 scholarship. Teams from the following schools were awarded scholarships for 2025:

NPCA awarded \$1,000 scholarships to:

- ▶ Colorado School of Mines - Golden, Colo.
- ▶ Lipscomb University - Nashville, Tenn.
- ▶ West Virginia Institute of Technology - Beckley, W.Va.
- ▶ McNeese State University - Lake Charles, La.
- ▶ Gonzaga University - Spokane, Wash.
- ▶ Kansas State University - Manhattan, Kan.
- ▶ Michigan Technological University - Houghton, Mich.
- ▶ University of Virginia - Charlottesville, Va.

People & Products

PEOPLE & PRODUCTS IS A FORUM WHERE NPCA MEMBERS AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS CAN SHARE INFORMATION ON NEW PRODUCTS, PERSONNEL PROMOTIONS, ACQUISITIONS OR SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS CONCERNING THE PRECAST CONCRETE INDUSTRY.

For possible inclusion, send your press release to equasny@precast.org.

ALCRETE COMPLETES ACQUISITION OF BENTON PRECAST

ALCRETE™

Alcrete LLC has acquired Benton Precast LLC in Conway, South Carolina, which includes

Benton's production operations and 17-acre manufacturing site. This acquisition will allow Alcrete to expand its reach and serve new geographic areas with Benton's production facilities and equipment.

obsessed culture and operations," said CarbonCure founder and CEO Robert Niven. "With Dave Donaldson's extensive experience inside the concrete industry, he already has strong relationships with most CarbonCure customers, and he brings a track record of success in domestic and international engagement with concrete businesses of all sizes."

CARBONCURE ADDS VETERAN, ELEVATES EXECUTIVE



Dave Donaldson

CarbonCure Technologies has hired **Dave Donaldson** as its new senior vice president of sales and marketing and added **Brad Vickers** to CarbonCure's leadership team as the low-carbon concrete company's inaugural vice president of customer success.

Donaldson is an accomplished sales and marketing executive with more than 24 years of experience driving strategic growth and connecting the ready-mix concrete industry to high-return software and hardware solutions.

Vickers will maximize the value of CarbonCure's software and hardware products for its concrete industry partners and champion customers across all organizational levels. Vickers has been with the company for more than a decade, developing, operationalizing and scaling CarbonCure's technologies in prior roles.

"I am thrilled to share these customer-focused additions to our leadership team, reflecting our commitment to a customer-

JESSE WINGERT APPOINTED CONSEAL PRESIDENT



Jesse Wingert

Howard Wingert, owner of Concrete Sealants, recently announced the appointment of **Jesse Wingert** as the new president of the company.

"It is an honor to bring Concrete Sealants into a third generation of family leadership and ownership," Jesse Wingert said in a statement. "Being a part of our company's family legacy is a reverent responsibility which I joyfully accept as

incoming company president. I look forward to building upon the solid foundation established by my grandfather and my father, Bob Haman and Howard Wingert.

"I am beholden to many whose counsel helped mold me and gives me confidence to step into this new role, the foremost being my father. His wisdom has guided me both in business and in life, and I am thankful that he will remain with ConSeal as Business Advisor. My father, Sam Lines and — until his retirement — Darryl Cloud have been daily mentors at ConSeal; and I've been further blessed with many friends inside and outside our industry who've been guideposts in my life for whom I'm forever grateful."

HAARUP ANNOUNCES INTERNAL CAREER TRANSITION



Diego Fletes

Diego Fletes has transitioned from the mechanical field service team to join the equipment sales team at Haarup North America.

Fletes has been an invaluable part of the mechanical field service team, ensuring that concrete batching and mixing equipment is running smoothly and efficiently on job sites. His deep knowledge of Haarup's products, hands-on experience and dedication to providing exceptional customer service have made him a trusted resource for clients.

As Fletes moves into the equipment sales role, he will bring his comprehensive technical expertise and firsthand understanding of the equipment to better serve Haarup customers.

MAPEI INTRODUCES NEW SYNTHETIC FIBER

MAPEI Corporation has expanded its portfolio of high-performance admixtures with the introduction of Mapefibre ST 50 Twisted, a state-of-the-art macro-synthetic fiber designed to enhance the durability, strength and performance of conventional concrete, precast concrete and shotcrete applications.

Composed of a specialized blend of polypropylene and polyethylene resins, Mapefibre ST 50 Twisted provides superior reinforcement by increasing concrete's ductility, tensile strength and residual strength – ensuring long-term durability even in the most demanding environments.

Mapefibre ST 50 Twisted meets industry standards, including ASTM C1116-03, ASTM D7508/D7508M20 and ACI 360 R-10. This makes it suitable for a wide range of applications.



Mapefibre ST 50 Twisted

SOLOMON COLORS EXPANDS WITH NEW PLANT



Solomon Colors has announced the expansion of its granular pigment

production capabilities with the construction of a new state-of-the-art manufacturing plant in Rialto, California.

This strategic move underscores Solomon Colors' commitment to ensure it has the production capacity to supply granular pigment to the North American market. The new facility, set to be operational by February 2025, will increase Solomon Colors' granular pigment production capacity by 40 million pounds annually, enabling the company to better serve its customers with quality-controlled U.S. produced granular pigments.

"We are thrilled to expand our operations with the addition of our new granular manufacturing plant in Rialto," said Richard Solomon, CEO and chairman of Solomon Colors. "This investment reflects our ongoing commitment to providing our customers with the best products and services in the industry."

AFINITAS NAMES TAOUR CFO



Aziz Taour

Afinitas announced **Aziz Taour** as its new Chief Financial Officer as of Feb. 7. Taour is an accomplished finance executive with more than 15 years of experience in strategic financial management, including competitive intelligence, pricing, capacity modeling and global financial planning and analysis (FP&A).

Taour also has held a variety of impactful leadership positions at other major financial institutions, including Scottrade Financial Services (TD Ameritrade and now Schwab), Wachovia Securities and Citigroup.

OTB MATERIALS EARNS TECHCEMENT EPD

OTB Materials Corp. has announced the verification of their Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for OTB TechCement, showcasing an unprecedented reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. This innovative product achieves just 99kg of CO₂e per metric ton, compared to the 850kg of CO₂e per metric ton typically produced by traditional Portland cement, a reduction of 90%.

OTB TechCement is now commercially available and actively sold to precast, on-site ready-mix and volumetric contractors. Its formulation requires one-third to one-half the water used in conventional methods.

"We are thrilled at OTB that our years of hard work and dedication to the development and production of TechCement have been realized with the issuance of a verified EPD for our TechCement RC100. This represents a seismic shift in the concrete and cement industries, providing a truly unique solution to carbon emissions found in traditional cement manufacturing," said Brian Harrington, CEO of OTB Materials.

Calendar of Events



MAY 19-21, 2025
NPCA COMMITTEE WEEK

*The Conrad
Indianapolis*



OCT. 2-4, 2025
NPCA 60th ANNUAL CONVENTION

*Amway Grand Plaza
Grand Rapids, Mich.*



FEB. 4-6, 2026
THE PRECAST SHOW 2026

*The Kansas City Marriott Downtown
Kansas City, Mo.*



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Cost Comparison Example for 20 Users		
Cost Type	Local Server (Annual)	Cloud (Annual)
Software Updates & Support	\$14,000	\$35,000
SQL Server Software Licensing	\$800 (\$4,000 over 5 years)	\$0
Remote Access Server Licensing	\$640 (\$3,200 over 5 years)	\$0
Hardware Costs	\$4,000 (\$20,000 over 5 years)	\$0
Power & Cooling	\$5,000	\$0
IT Staffing	\$40,000	\$0
Maintenance & Upgrades	\$5,000	\$0
Security Investments	\$5,000	\$0
Total	\$74,440	\$35,000

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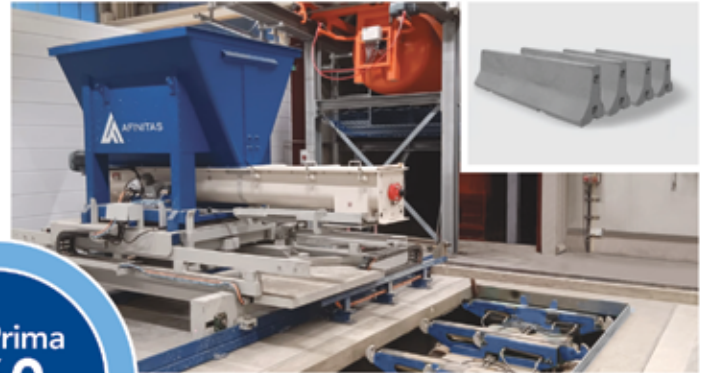
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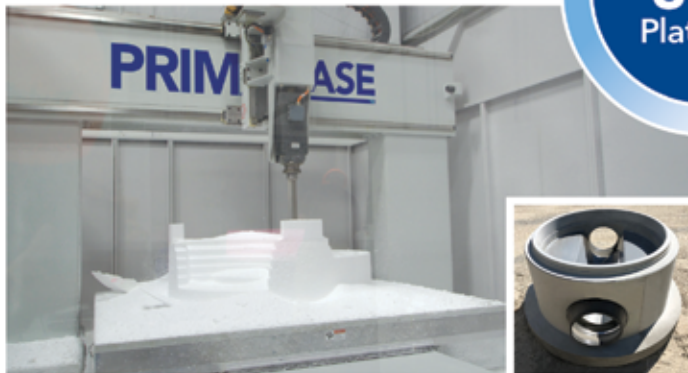


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Platform



Prima Base

Maximize production efficiency, range and consistency of monolithic manhole bases.



Prima Scape

Experience the beauty and precision of concrete slab and veneer production automation.

Prima 360 is our innovative family of wetcast equipment and automation systems. Prima leverages a wide range of technologies we've developed internally to bring you the power to get wetcast products to market faster and with the utmost quality. No matter the size of your operation or range of products you make, we have a Prima to meet your needs and budget. With Prima you'll enhance productivity, reduce labor issues, increase throughput, and, ultimately, win more business.

Learn more at afinitas.com/prima



Intelligent Infrastructure Solutions

Afinitas is a global, comprehensive and customer-oriented equipment, automation, forming and accessories platform for precast concrete and infrastructural products.

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