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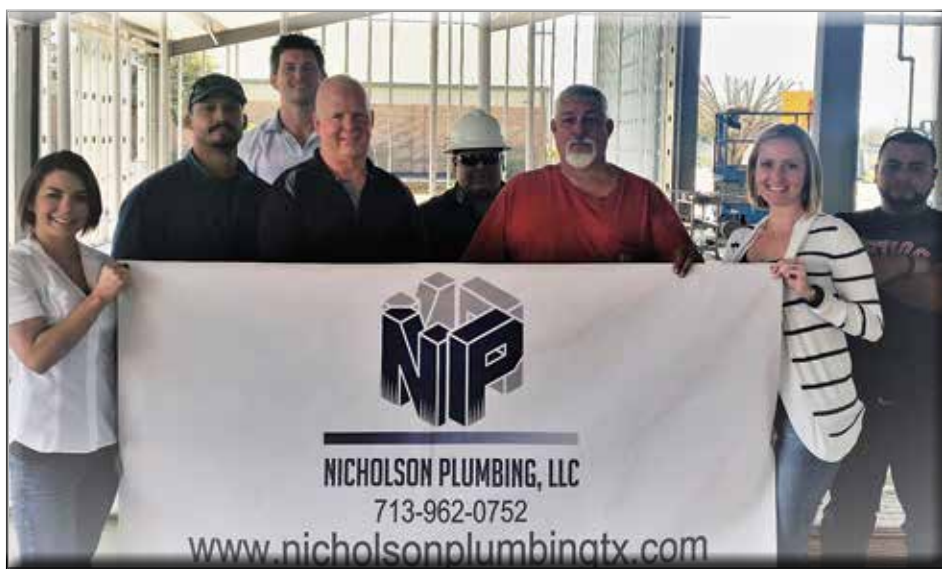
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Plumb quality



The Nicholson family and their staff make quality work a priority at Nicholson Plumbing.

Master Plumber **Danny Nicholson** has been in the plumbing business for 35 years, including stints as a Pasadena plumbing inspector and a contractor for NASA. But he soon realized his real passion was actual plumbing, and in 2014 he started his company **Nicholson Plumbing**.

Successfully helping to run the family business are his son **Bryan**, project manager and lead estimator, along with his wife **Tashia** and sister **Brandy**, who both run the office in Pasadena.

"It's a great hub," says Bryan Nicholson. "We can get on 225 quickly and go anywhere we need to."

Bryan recalls his dad's foray into Nicholson Plumbing.

"When dad got his masters license," he recalls, "it was just a van and himself. His work was changing water heaters and working with various plumbing con-

tractors. I was going to school to be a registered dietician. Dad came to me and said, 'Can you help make my business bigger?' Of course I said yes!"

In the beginning it was just father and son and one helper; now there are six workers. Services range from ground work to setting of the fixtures, plus sewer lines, rain water harvesting, storm sewers and site utility plumbing. Their new project is with Petco, remodeling and updating several Petco locations in the Houston area

Water storage tanks is another service they provide. According to Bryan, there are numerous applications, 'such as fire protection, storm water management, irrigation and environmental educational purposes.

"They range in size from 700 to 700,000 gallons, and we can provide

continued on Page 13

A Houston icon



L-R: Family members, back, L-R: Carol Nedd, Rick Sorsby, Gary Sorsby and Eric Nedd; front, Wanda Sorsby.

For more than 50 years, **Aztec Rental** has served the Houston area as a one-stop shop for equipment rental and equipment sales.

"Our comprehensive range of industry leading equipment and tireless dedication to our customers makes Aztec Rental the best choice to get your job done right," says **Gary Sorsby**, who owns and operates the company, along with family members.

In fact, Sorsby's grandmother, **Wanda Sorsby**, still works at the Houston location six days a week.

"She and our grandfather, **Lester Sorsby**, (who passed away in 1990) started this business in 1966 as the first A to Z franchise in Houston. In 1969 after the franchise disbanded, Lester and Wanda changed the name to Aztec Rental Center Inc. and then changed to Aztec Corp.

"She is now 87 years young and still works more hours than anyone in the company. She sets the bar high for the rest of us."

That hard work ethic and customer service are the foundations for the third generation run business, Sorsby says. Currently, there are ten family members in the business, including Sorsby's two cousins, **Brian** and **Eric Nedd**. Other family members include Sorsby's aunt and Brian and Eric's mother and father, **Carol** and **Allen Nedd**, as well as Sorsby's father, **Rick Sorsby**.

In 2001, the family branched out into a separate party rental business, Any Occasion Tents and Events, located next door to the Houston location, which includes family members such as Sorsby's sister, **Lynne Brace** and her husband

continued on Page 13



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Highlighting your project

Each month we reserve this premium space in our publication to feature a recently completed project by a Houston general contractor.

Our goal is to vary the project and contractor size to afford everyone the opportunity to participate. We feel a small- or medium-sized project constructed by a small- or medium-sized contractor is just as important as the high profile projects that seem to receive all the attention by other media.

Finding those small to medium projects can be difficult at times. Some contractors might think we would not be interested in their project because it may be a modest one.

Some may think because they are not a huge company with a full-time marketing staff they don't have a chance to make the front page of our paper. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Since we began our first paper, the *San Antonio Construction News* in October 1998, we have always reached out to everyone big and small.

continued on Page 13



The Hendley Building, Building Galveston Inc.



Sierra Pines Phase II, EE Reed Construction LP

Submitted to Construction News

Pay it forward



Gilbane Building Company's Houston staff recently took part in ACE Mentor Houston's 5th annual fundraiser event, Build It Forward. The charity event partners ACE students with mentors and industry professionals, building outdoor furniture for donations to local Houston charities. —dh

Submitted to Construction News

And the winner is...



Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) of Greater Houston and Construction & Maintenance Education Foundation (CMEF) announced that Israel Picon Jr. won the gold medal in the structural welding competition at the 30th annual National Craft Championships. Picon was presented with the award at ABC's Careers in Construction Awards Breakfast March 3 at the conclusion of ABC's Workforce Week '17 in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Pictured, L-R: Michael Noschese (last year's gold winner), Ramiro Maldonado and Israel Picon. —cw

WHEN OPPORTUNITY STRIKES

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Working with water everywhere



Scott Hicks and Melany Larenas are heading up Raba Kistner's new coastal and hydraulic engineering services.

With the addition of **Scott Hicks**, PE, and **Melany Larenas**, PG, **Raba Kistner's** environmental group recently added coastal and hydraulic engineering to its services. Hicks and Larenas will continue working as a team at Raba Kistner as they have the past three years before joining the firm.

Working in Texas for most of his career, Hicks is Raba Kistner's new director of coastal engineering. Larenas, a coastal geologist, is the firm's new director of coastal services and has also worked throughout the Gulf Coast.

"Scott and I kind of complement each other in the work that we do, and a lot of the engineering requires some component of geotechnical and geophysical work, and that's where I come into play," says Larenas.

The new service offerings include shoreline protection, beach and wetland restoration, artificial reef design, port and navigation channel design, resiliency studies, marina and boating facilities, bulkhead and seawalls, dredging and sediment disposal and sand search investigations among others.

Concerned with protection from coastal storms and erosion as well as hydrology inland that can cause flooding and water quality issues, they note that the ripples of these environmental waves can have a serious impact.

This is why Hicks and Larenas focus on projects that can help protect the coast and any areas affected by hydraulic issues, because as Hicks explains, with five of the 25 largest ports in the country in Texas, "It's a huge economic driver and national security interest, not only for the region but for the nation."

Based in San Antonio, Raba Kistner Inc. is an engineering consulting firm with Texas offices in Austin, Brownsville, Dallas, Freeport, Houston, Lake Worth, McAllen and New Braunfels. —mh

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And the winners are...

On Friday, Feb. 10, more than 240 individuals gathered to recognize Associated Subcontractors Association (ASA) Houston Chapter companies and individuals who exemplified Excellence In Construction in 2016. Congrats to the winners! –cw



Project Superintendent of the Year: **Tim Alvarez, Vaughn Construction**



Project Manager of the Year: **Todd Hudson, Vaughn Construction**



Project of the Year Between \$5 - \$15 Million: St. Pius X High School New Science Building, **Stewart Builders**



General Contractor of the Year and Safety Award: **Vaughn Construction**



Project of the Year Under \$5 Million: YES Prep Public Schools District Office, **Linbeck Group LLC**



Project of the Year Between \$15 - \$25 Million: Houston Methodist, The Woodlands Medical Office Building 1, **Vaughn Construction**



Architectural/Engineering Firm of the Year: **Gensler**



Project of the Year Over \$25 Million: Phillips 66 Corporate Headquarters Campus, **Gilbane Building Company**

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ACCOUNTING



The real cost savings you should look for in a fixed price environment

**Scott Allen, CPA, Tax and Consulting Partner
Cornwell Jackson**
Plano, TX

Construction companies experience unique accounting structures due to expenses driving revenue as projects move through various stages of completion. By managing a variety of costs, maintaining safety for employees and hiring the right people, owners and project managers can improve cash flow and bid smarter on fixed price contracts.

In my role as the fractional CFO/controller for a rapidly growing construction company earlier in my career, I experienced the tough reality of out-of-control costs in a fixed contract price environment. Costs were out of control partially because the company's rapid growth was surreptitiously changing the company's underlying cost structure and partially because economic conditions had changed. The net result was a squeeze on profit margins and cash flows that placed the company in danger of marching down the primrose path.

The squeeze resulted in a snowball effect on cash management. The accelerated growth had outpaced the company's ability to increase the bank line of credit capacity, which meant that any increased demand for cash had to be satisfied through cash flow generated by the jobs. We had to navigate complicated lien rules in order to collect receivables. We had to re-evaluate billing policies and increase the company's overbilled positions. When bidding new work, we had to be disciplined in the size of projects the company chased or risk the company's bonding capacity. Meanwhile, we saw general liability and worker's compensation insurance rate increases due to changes in the market. We could only hope that materials costs would not follow suit.

Once it became clear that we were dealing with something more systemic than a bad job or two, the owner and I went to work understanding what had happened and trying to correct the underlying issues. Within two years, the company accomplished a true turnaround. Starting with a company that was losing \$400,000 a year, we ended up

with a company that produced a gross profit margin of more than 15 percent annually.

Just one of the interesting lessons learned through this experience was that *few construction companies, if any, spend the necessary time each year to comb through their budgets and question the true costs of each line item.*

Whether it's the company cell phone plan or fuel and maintenance costs for fleet vehicles, no budget item is too small to scrutinize for long-term savings to the bottom line.

If your company exists in a fixed-price contract environment — as most construction companies do — expenses drive revenue. Especially with a Post-Recession mindset, profitable construction companies must have the discipline to look at their work-in-process reports every month and identify any expenses that are trending above budget.

There are, of course, other factors that can impact cash flow and profits in any given year. Let's look at the key drivers for real cost savings in the life of a construction company — both short-term and long-term.

Cornwell Jackson's tax team can provide guidance on reigning in costs by reviewing your profit and loss statements, work in process and general accounting ledgers. Contact our team with your questions.

Look for "Defining True Job Costs for Construction Bids" in the May Construction News publication to learn more on this topic.

Scott Allen, CPA, joined Cornwell Jackson as a tax partner in 2016, bringing his expertise in the construction and oil and gas industries and 25 years of experience in the accounting field. As the partner in charge of the tax practice at Cornwell Jackson, Scott provides proactive tax planning and tax compliance to all Cornwell Jackson tax clients. Contact him at Scott.Allen@cornwelljackson.com or 972-202-8032.

INSURANCE

Cyber risk in construction

**Jim Zimmermann, CPCU, CIC, Vice President – Construction
MHBT, a Marsh & McLennan Agency LLC**
Dallas, TX



By now, everyone has heard about numerous high profile cyber security incidents over just the past few years. The data breach involving Target is probably the most widely known, but there are plenty of other breaches extremely large in scope like those involving Sony, Anthem and Yahoo.

The problem is we only hear about these huge multi-billion dollar companies, instead of the thousands of breaches involving small-mid sized businesses that can have painful or even crippling consequences, because these everyday incidents aren't newsworthy. However, one cyber security expert says there are two kinds of business owners in this world — the ones that have been hacked and know it, and the ones that have been hacked but don't yet know it — which may be only a slight exaggeration.

So what do any of these incidents have to do with the construction industry? On the surface, nothing, except for Target which was actually breached through an HVAC subcontractor. After all, the perception is the biggest risk falls on medical providers, financial institutions, retailers with customer credit card data, etc., companies that have the largest IT footprint and access to sensitive data. Not only that, clearly none of the companies listed above, and few if any that you may hear about on the news, are contractors. So, once again, why should a contractor be concerned?

Dig a little deeper and the answer is very simple: every contractor with an employee and a computer, every single one, is susceptible to the exact same type of attacks to those that hit the multi-billion companies above, just obviously on a smaller scale. The argument could actually be made that contractors are *more* susceptible since their cyber security procedures are as a general rule, much more relaxed than those other industries. Let's take a look at some real-life Texas construction company examples:

- Through a phishing expedition, several unsuspecting employees clicked on a link and entered password information, thinking (incorrectly) that the request had come from the IT department head. This resulted in not only a large personal data breach, it granted the hackers access to company financial and banking information, bidding programs and strategies, confidential building

designs, and potential access to the systems of other businesses.

- Several general contractors have recently experienced fraud attempts to capture pay estimates on their projects. A letter is sent to the owner on the GC's authentic letterhead, signed by the CFO and with an authentic looking voided check attached, requesting that all future payments be sent to that new bank account. By the time the owner and GC figure it out, the money is gone. While it happened with GCs and owners, it could probably more easily happen between a GC and a subcontractor.

- The president of a tech-savvy GC went to a two-day, out-of-town business conference. While gone and during one of the presentations, the CFO received an apparent request from the president to wire \$42,000 to the bank account of a consultant they had been working with. The email had the president's salutation as well his email "style." Unable to reach the president (the cyber criminals knew this), the CFO checked with the EVP who confirmed that they had been working with that consultant, so he sent the wire and the money was gone.

The thought that a cyber attack only hits big companies, or only hits medical or financial companies, is naïve at best for contractors and potentially catastrophic at worst. Pro-active contractors acknowledge the risk exists, install safeguards that deter attacks and train their employees on cyber security, have preplanned responses if a breach occurs, and have insurance in place to protect themselves on top of the internal procedures. Reactive contractors do not, and are literally a click away from sharing all of their personal and financial data with a cyber criminal.

Jim Zimmermann is vice president of MHBT, specializing exclusively in the insurance and bonding needs of contractors for the past 24 years. He can be reached at jim_zimmermann@mhbt.com or by phone at 972-770-1629.

Baker Triangle



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Submitted to Construction News

Survey says ... new board!



The Texas Society of Professional Surveyors recently swore in its 2017 board of directors. Pictured, back, L-R: Jamie Gillis, director; Mike Hoover, director; Joe Breaux, director; L.A. "Bud" Thompson, director; Doug Turner, president elect; Philip Adams, director; and J.S. "Stan" Piper, director; front, L-R: John Barnard, vice president; Bill O'Hara, secretary/treasurer; Trisha Lund, director; Jerry Lehew, president; Heather Sides, director; and Paul Carey, past president. Not pictured: Robby Christopher, director; David Klotz, director; and J.D. Davis, director. —cw

LEGAL



Is a wall Force Majeure?

Mike Cortez, Shareholder
Andrews Myers P.C.
Houston, TX

That is the strange question a client asked me recently in the midst of a protracted contract negotiation. At first, I was perplexed, and then I realized, after additional follow up questions, that he was referring to the proposed US-Mexico border wall. **First, let me say that this is not a political article or opinion.** My intent is to inform contractors on the potential impact on labor, and language in construction contracts that impact any potential relief.

A common construction industry headline or seminar topic over the past few years has centered on the seemingly persistent issue of a labor shortage in the construction industry. During her congressional testimony on Feb. 15, Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen stated that labor-force growth has been slowing in the United States and that immigration has been a source of labor-force growth.

Both sides of the political spectrum can agree that immigrants, whether legal or not, make up a large portion of the lower-skilled construction industry labor force. Some estimates state that as much as 50% of immigrants work in the construction industry, and of that portion, 20% are unauthorized workers.

With that said, back to the question of whether the impact of a border wall might be a *force majeure* or relief from performing contractual duties under Texas law. First, what is a *force majeure*? The most basic form of a *force majeure* clause allows a party's performance to be excused if it is prevented or delayed by reasons not within the reasonable control of the party claiming excuse and which were not foreseeable at the time of contracting.

Texas law will not imply terms or conditions for *force majeure* events. It is controlled by the language in the contract. In Texas, absent a *force majeure* clause, the obligation to perform is absolute and cannot be excused even though performance may be impossible due to causes beyond the party's control.

In most contracts that I review and negotiate, only labor strikes or disputes are sometimes (not always) listed as a *force majeure*. However, a party could draft a provision that allows its performance to be excused if it simply becomes uneconomical, unprofitable or perhaps merely less profitable to perform such as the case in the event of an extreme labor shortage. Although most *force majeure* clauses are drafted to specifically exclude financial or economic reasons for non-performance, a party with superior bar-

gaining power might be successful in negotiating such a favorable provision.

Overall, there is not much research as to the potential impact of a border wall on the Texas construction industry, as of yet, however most industry experts agree that reducing the immigrant work force will increase costs and potentially delay construction projects.

So, in general, the answer is no, the impact to the construction industry due to the proposed border wall will not permit relief under Texas law, whether it be extended time to perform or increased costs due to replacing lower-skill unauthorized workers with higher-skilled, higher-cost, authorized workers.

In addition, under most construction contract language, if there are delays on the project, the owner or the general contractor has the contractual right to accelerate the work at the contractor's (or subcontractor's) cost absent specific contractual relief. If there is a well-drafted *force majeure* or other clause that can be drafted in to the contract, then it is possible to get relief.

The *force majeure* clause is often deemed "boilerplate" and not carefully reviewed (unless you are a lawyer, of course). The lesson is that in a jurisdiction that allows parties to exercise the maximum freedom of contract in crafting a *force majeure* clause, like Texas, it is unwise to rely on boilerplate or fail to actively negotiate the *force majeure* clause or the contract as a whole in order to address potential risks.

Mike Cortez's practice is focused on construction related transactions, including large complex energy procurement and construction projects, design and construction contracts, project risk management and lien and bond claims. Mike has significant experience representing clients in drafting and negotiating complex construction contracts under multiple project delivery systems. He graduated from Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law, and Texas A&M University. He can be reached at mcortez@andrewsmyers.com.

Texas winners

At the American Subcontractors Association (ASA) award ceremony during the national convention SUBExcel 2017 held in Denver, CO., ASA-Houston Chapter won Chapter of the Year and Houston Chapter Executive Director Brianna Wright received Executive Director of the Year.



ASA-HC members accepting Chapter of the Year award.



Shannon MacArthur, MEMCO, awards ceremony co-emcee; Carol Floco, ASA of Arizona, and Brianna F. E. Wright, ASA-Houston Chapter, accepting their Executive Director of the Year awards; Robert Abney, F.L. Crane, ASA national president.

Brand reconstruction



L-R: Gregory Cokinos and Marc Young

A local construction and real estate law firm is getting a new look. **Cokinos | Young**, formerly known as Cokinos, Bosien & Young, not only has a new name but has rolled out a new logo and website. It's a fresh image for the 28-year-old firm, which has grown from a single Houston office to employ more than 60 attorneys in additional Austin, Dallas and San Antonio locations.

The change comes as longtime partner **Brian Bosien** scales back and shifts from private practice work to in-house counseling, as **Gregory Cokinos** and **Marc Young** remain as the firm's leadership. With law firm branding trending toward logo recognition and multiple-name firms using one name, it was perfect timing to rebrand the firm.

"We went with a one-name brand – 'Cokinos.' It makes it easier for recognition," Cokinos says. "It's made it fresh and interesting, and we've gotten a lot of great feedback from our clients. We went live on Mar. 1, which we did a day before the construction law conference the state

bar puts on; the timing was purposeful."

While the brand has changed, the firm's national reach as a fully vertically integrated construction and real estate law firm remains the same. Both Cokinos and Young have built strong reputations in their field since the firm's establishment. Cokinos, who manages the firm, was the first Houston attorney inducted into the American College of Construction Lawyers. He founded the *Construction Law Journal* in 2002 and serves as its editor. He also is a Thomson Reuters-ranked Top 100 Super Lawyer in the State of Texas and is AV rated by Martindale-Hubbell. Young left Houston in 2007 to help local principal Stephanie O'Rourke establish the firm's San Antonio office and grew it into one of the area's largest law firms, especially in the concentration on construction law. Young now manages the firm's Austin office and is board certified in personal injury trial law by the Texas board of legal specialization.

Cokinos | Young offers legal services for public and private sector clients. –mjm

Construction News JOB SIGHT

New grill gets boost



L-R: Joel Cuevas and Mariol Monroy, of LC Electric in Stafford are busy building Rose Bar and Grill. –dh



Garrett Hart President

Hart Plumbing Southwest

When you look around Garrett Hart's office, it's easy to see why his company, Hart Plumbing has been successful for three generations.

Hart says he combines a strong work ethic along with a dedication to service and promoting a positive culture both in the office and in the field. His employees reflect the same work/play ethic. The hardworking crew receives bonuses, work closely together as a family, and know how to have fun.

A sports fan – and comic book fan – Hart's office walls include a jersey from JJ Watt, an autographed poster from the Astrodome days, signed by Nolan Ryan, and comic book covers signed by Stan Lee, plus a photo of Hart riding in the BP MS 150 from Houston to Austin. There's also an impressive speckled trout.

Hart, a Baylor grad, is married to his college sweetheart and has two small children under the age of 5.

Tell me a little about your background. Where did you go to school?

I went to Baylor and got a degree in finance and real estate. I also own my own real estate company, Garrett Hart Properties. I went to St. Thomas Episcopal in Meyerland. When summertime came, I was out in the ground digging and putting in underground plumbing.

What did you learn in college that helped you in your career at Hart Plumbing?

A lot was learned at Baylor. Looking at financial statements and seeing what looks wrong, what looks good, how to effect and change the business just by looking at the numbers.

When your dad asked if you could run the company with him, what was your first thought?

I said NO! I really wanted to go to school. I had worked every summer in the field since I was 13. He actually wanted me to join him right after high school. But I wanted to go off to college.

What are your earliest memories about the family business?

Figuring out how to dig trenches in 110-degree heat. I worked in the Woodlands and all over Houston. Dad was a plumber and mom owned a title company called Gulf Land Title. My aunt is still in title business in Sugar Land.

What was your first job?

My first job working for Dad. I really never had another job. After college, I applied for a position as a financial advisor and received an offer. After some thinking, I declined the offer, and decided instead to go to grad school and work for my dad part time. Pretty much to figure out if I really wanted to work at the family business. Dad said to give Hart Plumbing six months, and if you don't like it, then you can do your own thing, be a stock broker or trader. I attended the University of Houston two-year grad school program. After graduating, I started working for my dad full time.

Now that you're at the company, what is the culture like?

I have to say we are a very tight knit group of people. We have 55 employees. A half a dozen people in the office and the rest of my guys are out in the field all around the city. We have a couple of workers up in Dallas and Fort Worth, too. I try and keep in touch with all of them all the time. I go out and tour the jobsites regularly and hang out with them as much as I can.

Do you do any special shindigs for the employees?

We do fishing trips. Hackberry, LA and Bay Flats in Corpus. Mostly redfish and trout. We do a NASCAR trip twice a year to the Ft. Worth motor speedway, and have season tickets. My main foreman, Billy, who has been with the company for over 40 years, takes three of our employees with him. Sometimes foreman and journeyman plumbers, and he rotates so that everybody gets a chance to go. I usually go once a year. It's always fun with a few celebrities around. ZZ Top performed there to kick off the races. Duck Commanders and Richard Rawlings are usually there, too.

What is your philosophy regarding customers?

We take them to lunch, we visit them. We establish one on one relationships with everyone – which is always good.

What's the most valuable thing you've learned in your business?

How to treat your employees well. You take care of them and they'll take good care of you. And take good care of your customers at the same time. We work with our vendors on a lot of trips and outings too and they also have a good relationship with our employees.



Garrett Hart in front of original company sign

This type of work is all about safety. How do you train your workers?

We hold safety meetings at job sites once a week, covering important points like wear your hard hats and safety vests. Important topics.

When hiring new employees, what do you look for? What's the tactic for hiring?

We look for experience in plumbing of course. Sometimes you have to take a chance and hire them and see what they can do and watch them.

Any personality traits stand out when hiring new employees?

Depends on the job. Hardworking. Being able to withstand the Houston summers. Honesty is also an important trait.

What's your advice for someone interested in starting a new business?

It takes a lot of capital that's for sure. Just to get going. Building good relationships with the supply house. Make sure you have a good group of guys in the field that you can trust. And a couple of key people in the office – like a good estimator. Very important. You can't make any mistakes.

When not working, where in Texas would you be relaxing?

We have a place in Galveston where we can get away to on the weekends. My kids love fishing. And they love the beach, too. Movies. Love comedies. My most recent movie was Lego Batman. Our house has the movie Trolls on repeat all the time. Along with the movie, Moana. I think our family watches the movie every day, pretty much. And the soundtrack is on repeat in the house so there's a lot of dancing from my daughter in the kitchen.

Do your kids show any interest in plumbing or what dad does?

I hope so! Then I can retire!

What is a hobby you have that is a big stress reliever after a long day?

Days are long. We open at 7am and close at 4pm. Emails and phone calls can last longer. I live down the street so I don't have far to go. But usually to get away from the office I head out to the golf course or go fishing.

What famous person would you like to sit and talk to if you could?

Jimmy Kimmel would be good. I'd like to ask him what's your day like? What do you do when you are not making people laugh!

Have you traveled anywhere special? Either for vacation or business?

We've recently been to Costa Rica with Pfister Faucets. We did a volcano tour with hot springs, rode in an ATV through the jungle. There's a giant hot springs resort at the bottom of this active volcano. And there are about 25 natural hot springs all around. We took the four-hour ATV ride through the jungle. The halfway point is a giant waterfall, where you can jump in, then drive on about another hour to a restaurant in the middle of basically nowhere, with a beautiful view of the rain forest. The



Garrett Hart riding in the BP MS 150 from Houston to Austin.

restaurant was a tiny place. I kept thinking, how did the employees get to work? How did they get food all the way up here? It was amazing. Middle of really nowhere.

Any other locations?

I've also been fly fishing in Wyoming. We stayed at the lodge on the North Platte River for three days. We got on a boat called ClackaCraft Drift Boat, where you have a fisherman in the front, a fisherman in the back and the guide is in the middle with two oars. So there's no motorized anything. They drop you on the river and you fish for maybe eight hours and float 15 miles down the river and catch rainbow trout all day. But it's catch and release. We took lots of pictures that day! The lodge hosts are very protective of the fish, and have a lease on a certain part of the river. It's possible to catch 40 fish a day per person.

Have you traveled outside the country?

Last year I went to the Paloma and Rheem water heaters plant in Nagoya, Japan. They have a giant tankless water heater plant there. Myself and another group of plumbers and builders took a once-in-a-lifetime trip for 10 days. They own part of a baseball team there and we all got to go.

I see the large sign that looks like the company logo in your office and sits proudly behind three basketballs in cases. Tell me about that.

The logo is the original sign from dad's first office. It was at the Corporate Drive and Highway 59 location for over 20 years. I had this office built here on Eldridge Road (in Sugar Land) about a year ago.

Two of the basketballs are from the Rockets. The middle case has a Baylor football helmet signed by Robert Lee Griffin III, nicknamed RG3. One of the basketballs is from the Rockets team when Yao Ming played. Got that one at a charity auction. The second NBA basketball was with the Rockets team from 2008.

What about the fish on the wall?

It's a 30' speckled trout caught in Baffin Bay while wade fishing. I used a live croaker for bait. Caught it while wade fishing for six hours. It was worth every minute. –dh

Submitted to Construction News

On their oath



Texas Statewide Construction Credit Group swore in its new board of directors during a general meeting in Austin. Taking their vows were Lori J Drake, president/chairman; Austin LaFaille, CBA vice president; Tami Gardner Behner, secretary; and Belinda Miller Haynes, treasurer. Committee chairs also took on their roles at the ceremony, including Stephen Wilson, New Member Orientation; Joel N Gloria Macias, Programs and Hospitality; Toby Brutsman, Legislation; Jason Walker and Molly Atlas, Finance; and Audit Susan Viereck Interchange / Ethics Gloria Macias. –cw



THE GREAT OUTDOORS



Spring into Action on Baffin Bay

by Capt. Steve Schultz

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The month of April is just around the corner and is one of my most favorite months to be on the water. Hopefully the strong winds that we are accustomed with in March will give us a few windows in early April on get on some trophy trout. While winter fishing generally yields heavier fish, spring is the time where you can catch more numbers of those same fish. The fishing is usually a lot faster pace also. Typically during winter months fishing is done with a slow retrieve, using a soft plastic or a sub-surface slow sinking lure to give lethargic fish plenty of time to attack the prey. However when spring rolls around, fish become quite a bit more active. This gives anglers a wider verity of lure choices to use and these fish are much more aggressive.

With spring conditions upon us and the coldest of weather and water temperatures on the decline, we can



Katie Ulther, a student at Notre Dame, spent her spring break rippin lips on Baffin Bay with her dad David. Katie caught her limit of reds and trout including this 27-in. redfish and a 25-in.

look forward to some great fishing along the shorelines of the Laguna Madre. Shrimp have already started to show up at the local marinas from the northern bay systems. By the time you read this article they will be well on the way south of the JFK Causeway along the King Ranch shoreline. Using these little guys under an Alameda Rattling cork can produce some constant action when drifting over grass beds with scattered potholes. If you're opposed to using live bait a soft plastic tied 18 in. behind a mauler can be just as effective. Kelly Wigglers ball tail shad has become one of my favorite go-to soft plastics. Bone Diamond is this captasin's choice but they have an assortment of other colors that work great on trout and reds also.

Spring is also a sign of the annual drum-run through the coastal bend. Black drum make their way from the south through the landcut and from the north through CC Bay and the ICW on the way to Baffin. These cousins of the redfish family are not the most photographic species of fish in our bay system, but certainly one of the best eating this writer can recommend. With live shrimp on a bottom rig or a pound or so of fresh dead shrimp, one can sometimes make short work of a limit. These black drum can sometimes save the day for none experienced anglers like women and kids just wanting a tug on the end of their line.

For the remainder of March and April I will be keying on Trophy Trout fishing in Baffin Bay. Water temperatures already reaching the upper 60s and getting close to that magical 70-degree mark will make fishing explode in the coming weeks. Don't miss the boat... Call now to get that fishing get-a-way you've been waiting for.

I have already started to fill the calendar for the upcoming 2017 season. Don't wait until all the good dates are gone! To schedule your next bay fishing trip give Capt. Steve Schultz a call at 361-813-3716 or 361-334-3105 or e-mail him at SteveSchultzOutdoors@gmail.com.

Good luck and Good Fishing.

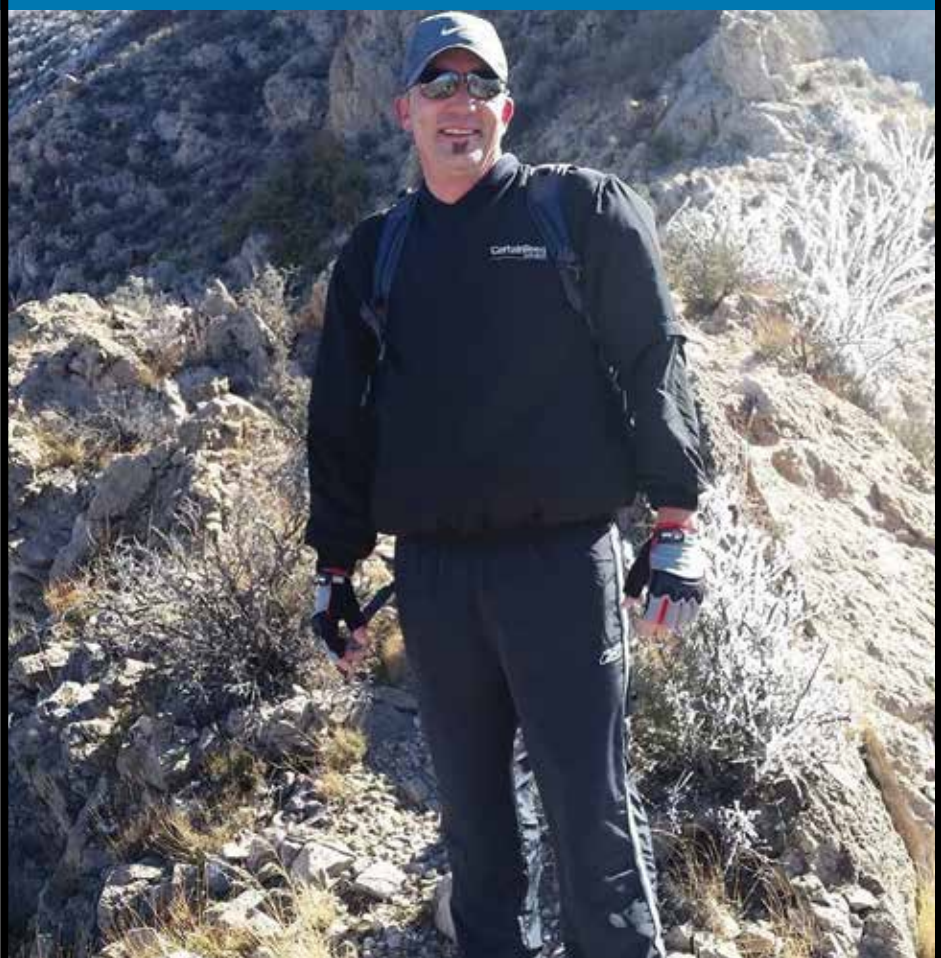


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Submitted to Construction News
Reaching higher



Joshua Knox, owner of **Alden Roofing**, climbs the mountains during a trip to the company's location in El Paso. -cw



THE GREAT OUTDOORS
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 and photos. Call us.



Ken Milam's Fishing Line

Since 1981, Ken Milam has been guiding fishing trips for striped bass on Lake Buchanan in the Texas Hill Country, You can hear Ken on the radio as follows:
The Great Outdoors: 5-8 am Saturday on 1300, The Zone, Austin and
The Great Outdoors: 5-7 am Saturday on 1200 WOAI San Antonio
The Sunday Sportsman: 6-8 am Sunday on 1300, The Zone, Austin
All on iHeart Radio

We are fishing again!

So Spring Break is winding down as I write this! Whew, it was a busy week!
 I apologize to anyone we were not able to find a fishing trip for during Spring Break. That one week a year there are simply never enough boats to go around. Don't despair though if you missed it. Spring Break is usually just the very beginning of the fishing season and as the water continues to warm up the bite just gets better. The best of the year is yet to come!

It looks like we are in for a good year for all species of lake fish. We have caught lots of nice sized crappie over brush piles so far. The bass are plentiful and getting nice and healthy and hungry. Catfish have already got quite a following among the local fishermen. The stripers and hybrids coming in from our fishing trips are nice and round too. Everything is feeding well, growing and spawning like mad. We even had a bunch of needle nosed gar that spent 3 days spawning on a shallow rock pile by my house.

It is so good to see the lake coming full circle after the drought. Now we are coming to the best part. The lake is healed up, fertile and nurturing the fish populations. We see that pattern often in lakes that were very low and had rebounding lake levels. Some of the largest fish we have seen in a long time will be caught in the next few years. For the lakes that are still suffering low water levels, hang in there. The rain will come and your lake will come back better than ever too.

It is a wonderful thing to see the lakes seeming to bloom right along with the fresh new leaves on the trees and the abundance of wildflowers. Hill Country Bluebonnets and Indian Paintbrushes are fantastic this year!



Bee Electric from Elgin, TX



You have some time to get out and catch fish and see the country side at its best. Just don't wait too long to make reservations because things are booking up early this year. If you need Mother's Day or Father's Day trips or one for your graduate this summer you need to be calling before someone else does!

We always enjoy seeing the families that visit us at least once a year. We get to see the kids learn to fish and grow up fishing and spending good family time on the water. These days we all get so busy that those trips are priceless and we feel lucky to be able to help make them happen. Nothing compares to the happy squeals and hollers of a kid when we yell, "fish on!!!" and watch the fun begin!






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Following a new lead



L-R: Randy Pawelek, Harry Moeller and Jerry Hoog recently carried out a leadership transition at Bartlett Cocke General Contractors that has been in the works for about two years now.

As of the annual shareholder meeting Mar. 3, **Bartlett Cocke General Contractors** implemented planned changes in leadership. **Jerry Hoog** transitioned into the role of president and CEO, as **Harry Moeller**, former president, retired. **Randy Pawelek** transitioned from chairman to executive chairman.

With the company 34 years, Hoog graduated from Texas A&M with his bachelor's degree in engineering technology in December 1982 and started at Bartlett Cocke as an estimator in March 1983 and eventually worked his way up to executive vice president.

A native of Castroville and father of seven, Hoog is very active in his community, serving as president of the Medina Valley Athletic Booster Club, co-chairman of the St. Louis Society Wild Game Dinner for 33 years now, and is very involved in his church. He also likes to hunt and trotline fish.

Residing in New Braunfels, Moeller, who started out at Bartlett Cocke as a

layout engineer in the field, says this was the right time in his life to move to the next chapter. In his retirement, he and his wife, Rita, who have been married for 32 years – also the length of his tenure at Bartlett Cocke – plan to spend time with their four grandchildren and travel.

They will be going to the Galapagos Islands in August and Germany next year, and he hopes to do a road trip one summer following the rodeo circuit through the Rocky Mountains.

Pawelek has been with the company 36 years and comments that the transition allows new leadership to step forward.

Moeller calls Hoog "one of his heroes" and "probably one of the brightest minds in construction I've ever met," adding that he will be a great leader. Hoog notes that he will miss Moeller, whom he calls "a foundation for this company for a long time."

Based in San Antonio, Bartlett Cocke General Contractors also has offices in Austin, Houston, Fort Worth and Baytown. –mh

Construction News ON LOCATION Floor-escient smiles!



L-R: **Derrick Singleton** and **Richard Sauls**, **Hill Pro Floors** in Stafford, are ready to welcome customers with big smiles. -dh

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L-R: **Jesus Hernandez, Isaac Sustaita and Rosendo Orosco** of **Elliot Electric Supply** in Stafford, have all the electrical supplies you need. -dh

Construction News JOB SIGHT
Painting is their business



L-R: **Shawn Carey, David Owens and Joshua Hudmon**, **ISP Painting** in Stafford, stand ready to paint their next project. -dh

The spirit of WIC Week



Lunch and Learn at Fluor's campus in Sugarland.

The mission of National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) is to enhance the success of women in the construction industry.

"The National Association of Women in Construction is committed to enhancing the success of all women in construction - not just those who are NAWIC members," says **Sandy Field**, the immediate past-president of NAWIC and office manager at **Horizon Group International** in Houston. "We accomplish this through educational opportunities, networking, and community/industry service projects. If you are a woman employed in any area of the construction industry, we welcome you to join us!"

The focus of WIC Week is to highlight women as a visible component of the

construction industry. It is also a time for local chapters to give back to their communities. WIC Week provides an occasion for NAWIC's thousands of members across the country to raise awareness of the opportunities available for women in the construction industry and to emphasize the growing role of women in the industry.

"While there are more than one million women employed in the construction industry, women only comprise approximately ten percent of the construction workforce. These women, whether they are administrative specialists, general contractors, subcontractors, trades people, or professionals, are vital elements to the construction process," says Field. "Women in Construction Week' is

Your company up front and in the spotlight

When our readers pick up *Construction News*, there are a few articles and sections about which they often ask, "How do they decide who is profiled in this article?" and "How can I be featured in one of these?"

In this article, we'll answer those questions regarding two of our primary features, our Front Page GC and Spotlight articles.

Front Page GC

Every month, we feature a general contractor's recent project on the front page. The size and scope of the project range from small tenant finish out or renovations to large ground up construction.

If you are a general contractor with an office located within our coverage area for that city and its surrounding counties, you are eligible to have one of your projects featured on the front page of that paper. The project should be one that has been completed within the last year and is located within our local paper's coverage area.

We will need any information about the build that you can share including but not limited to the project duration, square footage, approximate cost, design team and subcontractors on the job, and details about the build and building process. We will also need a few photos, exterior and interior.

Can your company be featured in this article multiple times? Yes, but when you are featured as our Front Page GC, you must wait five years from the publication date of that article to have another

project featured on our front page. This is to ensure the opportunity for general contractors of all sizes and markets to appear on the front page.

Spotlight

Another monthly feature in our paper is a profile of the head of a company that we call Spotlight. This article is an in-depth interview with the person who serves at the very top of a company as its owner, president, principal or CEO. The company can be a general contractor, subcontractor, supplier, architecture or engineering firm, equipment dealer or service provider of any size or specialty.

To qualify for a Spotlight article, the featured person's company must have an office located within the coverage area for the paper in which he or she would appear. The Spotlight can only run in the city in which this person is based. We only do a Spotlight once per individual and per company.

The Spotlight focuses on the individual, not the company. The profile covers the interviewee's background, career, family, community involvement, hobbies and interests, and other personal details. The interview is presented in a question and answer format along with a photo of the person being featured.

If you feel you qualify for one of these articles and would like to be featured in a future Front Page GC or Spotlight, please contact your Houston editor, houstoneditor@constructionnews.net or 832-595-0091.

simply a time set aside to thank those women for all their efforts toward successful construction projects. WIC Week will also bring attention to the industry and encourage others to realize that construction is a viable, profitable career field."

NAWIC's Houston Chapter kicked off WIC Week at the Bay Area Turning Point Resale Shop, which provides recovery for survivors of domestic abuse.

After that, the women packed Mar. 5-11 with plenty of fun events to raise awareness of women in construction and help

On Mar. 7, the group met for a Lunch and Learn at Fluor's campus in Sugarland, on Mar. 10, everybody gathered up for Crawfish for a Cause and the women ended the week with an organized walk/run in Memorial Park with Reason2Race. -cw



Everybody had a great time at Crawfish for a Cause, which raised funds for the chapter's scholarship program.



Houston chapter President Tracy Shoemaker reads the Proclamation from the Mayor of the City of Houston that was awarded to the chapter in honor of WIC Week

F O C U S

THIS
MONTH

Women in Construction



Room for growth for women in construction

Erin Stansell, Project Manager
Tellepsen
Houston, TX

When talking to project manager Erin Stansell, one gets the feeling she has a passion for every project she undertakes at Tellepsen, a commercial, industrial and concrete construction firm. Stansell tackles the day to day plans of working with contractors and money scheduling.

But the construction industry is also an area where young women can forge a successful career in management and in the field. Mentoring young students is part of the ongoing change.

How did you get started in construction? When did you decide this was the career for you?

A high school program called Explorers. They introduced you to careers that you might fit into from career testing results. Construction was a good fit. But I thought 'construction?' Yet once I learned more and did some job sharing in high school I realized that's what I wanted to do. The whole of seeing that I could be part of something that was a tangible result at the end of the project appealed to me. That was fulfilling for me. Eventually I majored in engineering, but found out that Purdue had a construction management program. So I quickly switched to that in my freshman year and that's the rest of the story.

So are you a planner and an organizer by nature?

Yes. I knew when I put on the hard hat and stepped out into the field.

Part of what I do now is I help with the Architecture, Construction and Engineering (ACE) Mentor Program of America here in Houston. It's great to introduce high school students to the construction field. I would never have known about a career I love if I didn't have an introduction at a young age.

Did you have a mentor?

There's not one specific mentor. I can definitely say I've had so many.

What are the benefits for women pursuing a career in construction?

There's a lot of opportunity out there for good jobs and the ability to grow a career. Even in management. There's another side of construction in management, but there's also a lot of opportunities in the field as well.

How quickly can women move up the ladder?

If it's something you love and you put a lot of effort into it, you can move up quickly. I saw quick growth because I was ready to learn and listened and worked really hard. So, if you want to put a lot of effort into it I think there are a lot of opportunities out there.

What challenges have you seen?

There's a lot to construction. It's a lot of work. It's an ongoing learning process. It's a short schedule where people want a lot built in a short amount of time. It's always a challenge meeting deadlines!

I've seen a lot more areas in skilled trades out in the field, like women becoming electricians and plumbers. There is a tremendous amount of growth in these fields. Also there is growth in management. I see companies starting to see the benefit of having both men and women in management.

Trade schools are a good start, too. You don't have to go to a four-year school but you can make just as much if not more than some people who are in management. They have a lucrative career, but you can also have an equally lucrative career in the trades. And you can work into management positions from there.

What is your advice to young women today?

I would steer them towards what their interests are, such as do they like architectural engineering, for example, or are they interested in going to trade

school. Construction is one of the industries that have the least amount of wage disparity. Not only do you get paid better, you are choosing a job that has a skill that pays better than many entry level jobs.

Are there networking groups for women wanting to go into the construction field?

NAWIC (National Association for Women in Construction) is a great place for women to network. One of the things I appreciate about NAWIC and being involved in the network there is getting to know professional contacts. They are focusing on getting both men and women into the construction industry and they provide scholarships too. There is scholarship money available and it can be used toward college or trade school.

The more people are involved, that will give you more people to mentor.

Yes! The construction field can be a very rewarding career. If someone likes schedules, and they are organized and like numbers, this could be a good career move for them. Then there's the project management route, which is a great career choice. You can utilize your skill set and do a job that you love.

Experience or education – which is most important?

Experience is a huge factor. Even though many companies are requiring more education, it's good to ultimately build respect within the industry for you as a person, and it comes from the knowledge you gained through experience. –dh



Construction is a relationship business

Catherine Case Larson,
Business Development Director
DCA Construction
Austin, TX

How did you get into the construction industry?

After I spent 23 years in surgical sales in the Dallas area, my husband and I moved to Austin. I took a hiatus from working for 13 years, and then took a position with Associated Builders & Contractors (ABC) Central Texas Chapter as the marketing director and membership sales.

That's where I met Randy Don Carlos, one of the founders of DCA Construction.

It took me five months of persistence to get him to join ABC and that tenaciousness impressed him! He called one day and said, we need to do lunch, and offered me a job. I've been here three years and my nickname is "The Bird Dog"!

What do you enjoy about working in the construction business?

The common denominator from surgical sales to construction is I mostly work with men. A bonus is that I'm really enjoying networking with other women in commercial construction, as well.

It's a fabulous field and I'm enjoying the heck out of this. I love building relationships and that's so important in this field. It's phenomenal!

I really love introducing people to new contacts and networking.

Have you faced any specific challenges as a woman in the construction industry?

I would say that once an individual realizes that I have the knowledge, the respect comes. At first, they might look at you and think, who is this? But, I've made it a mission to learn what I need to know to be knowledgeable. Once you are introduced and they can tell you know what you are talking about, it is not intimidating. There are a lot of smart people in this

field and a really diverse group of people.

One thing I learned in a course on entrepreneurship at SMU that has been invaluable to me is to know your strengths and weaknesses.

For example, when I walked into DCA brand new, I didn't know what a tilt wall was. I was naïve but I learned by listening and asking questions. Once you learn, you will be constantly learning.

I've also been very involved with taking our safety courses. It's important because you never know when you are on a job site if you will need those skills.

What advice can you offer women who are thinking about a career in the construction field?

I would say, go for it! The daughter of DCA's other founder, George Allen, is here now, doing an internship while she is on spring break and for the upcoming summer break. Haeli is studying construction management.

It's a tremendous field with a lot of opportunities. –cw

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MONTH

May 2017 Concrete Industry

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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
Oct: Specialty Contractors

Nov: Architecture & Engineering
Dec: Construction Equipment

F O C U S

Women in Construction



Opening the gates for women

Jordon Brown, Gate Assistant Manager/
Marketing Coordinator
Quality Fence & Welding Company
San Antonio, TX

At 28 years old, Jordon Brown has been with Quality Fence & Welding since November 2012. After spending her first five months with the company as the receptionist, she has moved up to gate dispatcher/marketing assistant to her current position as marketing coordinator and assistant gate department manager.

Having spent nearly five years working in the construction industry, Brown recently shared the insights she has into being a young woman in a construction office and the field.

What is your background in the construction industry?

I had no background in the construction industry when I started at Quality Fence & Welding. The company took a chance on me and now I sit on the ASA board and attend events for organizations ranging from AGC to the San Antonio Apartment Association and in between. I would like to think that I have become the staple among young females in the construction industry.

Why did you choose a career in the construction industry?

I just stumbled upon a job opportunity at Quality Fence & Welding; the environment here is very inviting and we were a perfect fit. I can't say I chose the career as much as the career chose me!

How would you describe your experience working in the industry as a young woman?

Working in a male-dominated industry is challenging some days, but as a young female, I have found that these men have such valuable knowledge, and if you are willing to listen and learn, they are willing to teach.

What opportunities has the industry given you to broaden your horizons or take on new challenges?

It is not so much the construction industry as it is Quality Fence & Welding,

especially Craig Noto and TJ Howard, that have allowed me to become versed in a very specific trade of cameras, automatic gates and alarms. This technology is ever evolving, allowing me to gain knowledge and speak confidently about the products.

I would have never known all of these items if Craig and TJ had not seen my potential and taken a chance on me. Plus, handling the marketing for the company, I am able to attend events and network within the construction industry.

What are the advantages younger women might find in pursuit of a career in the industry?

As young females, we have the advantage that we are eager and willing to learn! Women want to be independent and like a challenge. It also helps that women have a certain "state" about us that brightens any job site!

What specific challenges have you faced as a young woman in the industry and how have you overcome those challenges?

Most challenges that I have seen and experienced are men on sites taking a female, especially a young one, seriously. However, it is not hard to overcome that stigma as long as you know your stuff!

The stigma of women in the construction industry 10 years ago was definitely more challenging, but with more women earning degrees in the field and being on job sites, those stigmas are

fading. It's allowing us young females to walk on a job site and be acknowledged. So thank you to all of those women who paved the way for us women today!

How has being a part of the construction community changed or influenced your life as well as your perception of the industry?

The construction industry is such a small world; most people use the analogy of "six degrees of separation of Kevin Bacon," but in the construction industry it is more like three degrees! It's not just an industry; it is a family! Everyone knows everyone, and we all band together in order to build this amazing city and state. Members of the construction industry look out for each other, and that's what makes it such a unique field. If anything, I am the lucky one to be part of this family!

What are your goals for your future in the industry?

My goals are simple: to do the best job that I can each and every day and appreciate every day to the fullest – that is embracing the good with the bad. Be respectful, eager, knowledgeable and up for a challenge because no job site goes exactly to plan! You can only continue to grow in the construction industry, if you continue to grow you as a person.

Quality Fence & Welding does commercial and residential fencing and welding, as well as access controls. –mh



Being a woman in industry is positive

Paula Pacanins, President
Container King
Denton, TX

What has been your experience as a woman working in the construction industry?

In my experience, it has been overwhelmingly positive. I feel that if you come in and you know your product and you are providing great customer service, that's really all they're looking for. [Customers] don't care if the company is a woman-owned company or a male-owned company. They never ask that question. They really just want to know that you can follow up on the promises that you made and that you are going to provide them with a quality product.

What advice would you have for women who want to start their own businesses in the construction industry?

I would advise them to go for it. We hear a lot about how women are at a disadvantage but I don't really see that. I feel that if a woman works hard and provides the same quality product as a male-owned company, she'll have the same opportunity. Don't let the perception that women are at a disadvantage cause you to stop from fulfilling your dreams.

What resources are available to women who would like to start their

own businesses?

There are amazing resources. For instance, in the city of Dallas, there is a center that helps historically underutilized businesses. Companies who are owned by women, minorities and veterans can utilize this, which gives them the resources they need to be able to take advantage of the contracts that are out there for women. My business isn't quite woman-certified yet, but I'm almost there, and often when I share that with government entities, many of them are looking for female-owned companies to do business with. My thought is to get that certification as quickly as you can and then start taking advantage of those

contracts and get the word out that you are woman-certified. That means a lot of business.

Have you found associations to be helpful for women?

I have found that networking does make a difference and you can meet a lot of people fast if you belong to associations. Honestly, I wish I could network more but I am so busy.

How would you encourage women to broaden their knowledge of owning a business or working in the industry?

There's so much knowledge out there. My advice would be to read a lot of books. I try to read one or two books every month. I make notes and try to take an idea from every book I read and implement it into what I'm doing. I love Napoleon Hill's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*; I reread that book as many times as I can. I think it's about just life lessons in general; it's a good book.

I try to read every newspaper I can get my hands on and I try to watch every news station. I don't like to focus on one; my thought is to listen to every one of them and form my own opinions.

What lessons have you learned along the way?

Every time you make a mistake, don't let it get you down. Just keep going. There are a lot of pitfalls, and no one really knows what to tell you and what to do. You just learn as you go.

One good thing is my partner and I never took a loan; we sat down and said, "We're just going to build our capital by focusing on sales first." I do believe that's why you don't see us on all of the job sites; we didn't have the money to go out and invest in containers to put on the job sites. But for the last three years we have just focused on selling, selling, selling and every bit of that money is reinvested into our inventory so that we could have inventory to put out on the job sites.

What do you hope the future holds for your business?

My competitors are at all of the construction sites. I'd love it if I could drive down any street in the Metroplex and I could see Container King containers on all of the job sites. That would be my dream.

Container King offers mobile offices and containers for construction job sites. –mjm

Let's talk turkey

Don't get your feathers ruffled if you have a hard time getting some gobblers this spring.

Biologists with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) say Texas Rio Grande wild turkey numbers are way up, thanks to well-timed rainfall and cooler summer conditions over the years. The conditions have been optimal for turkey reproduction and recruitment, which means that many areas where turkeys were lost due to drought are seeing a comeback.

While more turkeys may seem like great news for hunters, the early spring green-up and abundance of hens this year may impact breeding behavior and make them not as willing to come to the call this season.



Apparently, flocks are already beginning to break up and the toms have been strutting for a few weeks now.

"That means many hens could become interested in breeding near opening day of the season, effectively hampering a hunter's chance of luring love-struck gobblers," Jason Hardin, TPWD Upland Game Bird Program specialist, says. "If you do go early in the season, some of the best hunting could be mid-day after hens split off from males. However, by mid-season most of the hens should be bred and incubating eggs, leaving a large number of mature gobblers looking for love. Also, if conditions remain mild and if we get in a few more timely rain events, Texas can expect another good year of nesting and populations growth."

Turkey season for the Rio Grande – North Zone runs April 1- May 14. –mjm

Here comes the pitch!



Advanced Seed Stage winner at HOLT Ventures SXSW Industrial Pitch Competition L-R: Adam Bridgman, director, HOLT Ventures; Charlie Strickland, managing director, HOLT Ventures; Corinna Holt Richter, executive vice president and chief administrative officer, HOLT CAT; Brian Lowry, investment manager, Caterpillar Ventures; Lu Yan, CEO, Yan Engines; Peter John Holt, executive vice president and general manager, HOLT CAT; Dave Harris, president and COO, HOLT CAT

HOLT Ventures, the investment arm of heavy equipment dealer **HOLT CAT**, hosted its first-ever SXSW Industrial Pitch Competition Mar. 14 at the SXSW Startup Village in Austin. Three Texas companies made it to the finals, and one of them won in its category.

Partnering with Caterpillar Ventures, Brick & Mortar Ventures, and Cottonwood Technology Fund, HOLT Ventures hosted the live pitch competition to discover and expedite technology innovation in the construction, resource, energy, and transportation industries.

At the competition, 15 finalists from across the country – and two from Europe, specifically the UK and Netherlands – competed in three categories. The categories were classed according to the maturity stage of the projects: Seed Stage, Advanced Seed Stage and Series A/B Stage.

Each category had one finalist representing Texas with **Genesis Dimensions**, Houston, competing in the Seed Stage;

Yan Engines, Austin, competing in the Advanced Seed Stage; and **Bractlet Inc.**, Austin, competing in the A/B Stage.

Only one of the Texas companies emerged victorious. Yan Engines won the Advanced Seed Stage with a D-Cycle piston it is developing to increase fuel efficiency 20 percent as a retrofit or designed into existing engines.

PermitZone, based in Raleigh, NC, won the Seed Stage, with a simple way to apply for, pay for, and receive permits online. 5D Robotics won the A/B Stage with micro positioning that can replace or enhance GPS over a large area.

Each of the winning companies received a portion of the \$50,000 cash prize as well as exclusive tours of HOLT CAT with the company's executive team and Caterpillar's R&D and machine testing facilities in Peoria, IL. They also received pitch presentation feedback and strategy coaching from Brick & Mortar Ventures and Cottonwood Technology. –mh

continued from Page 1 — Plumb quality

corrugated galvanized steel construction tanks, or the wood stave tanks," he says.

To Bryan, making the customer happy is far more important than growing the company.

"The work will speak for itself as far as getting repeat customers," he says. "Quality is the most important. If we do make mistakes, we're the first ones to admit it, and we'll fix it."

Looking back at the very early days of growing their business, Bryan says "learning the value of our work was a hard lesson for us to learn. We were trying to get

the job instead of understanding the value of our work. Hard lessons usually are the best lessons.

"Dad is a master plumber, but still likes to be in the field, working like a journeyman. You never really see him in the office. He has his own truck and likes to be out in the field. And that's why my sister and I are here to help."

Nicholson Plumbing is a Pasadena plumbing company that specializes in many areas of commercial and industrial plumbing. –dh

continued from Page 1 — Highlighting your project

In this tough economy we want to highlight our Texas-based general contractors who are in the game and competing with the out-of-state contractors who have come to our great state.

Do you have a recently completed project you would be proud to see on

our cover?

Give us a call or send me an email and let's get you covered.

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continued from Page 1 — A Houston icon

Jason Brace, also Brian and Eric's sister, **Kelley Walters**, and Gary's uncle, **Lester Sorsby Jr.**

Sorsby says the key to the company's success and longevity is customer service.

"That's what my grandfather strived for from early on and he implemented that into everybody else," he says. "We always put the customer first. It's the backbone of our business."

Sorsby says when family members

are not working, they keep busy with several things.

"We are big outdoorsmen, including hunting and fishing," he says. "All of us have children now and they keep us busy, with among other things, Little League sports."

Aztec Rental Center, in both Houston and Sugar Land, provides equipment rentals, tool rentals and equipment sales for homeowners and contractors since 1966. –cw/dh

Submitted to Construction News

Viva Las Vegas!



Several National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA) members represented Texas at the NUCA National Convention. Hosted in Las Vegas Mar. 4-6 at the Palms Resort and Casino, attendees enjoyed educational sessions, speakers, team building challenges, and the legendary food! –mjm

ON THE SPOT

What was the first thing you bought with your own money?

I had started work as a pot washer in a hotel and was lucky enough to be provided accommodation (not luxurious by anyone's imagination!) – to offset this, my pay was very little and I ended up spending most of it on a single tank of gas for my motorcycle and one night at the movies!

Walt Watzinger, Warwick Construction

I bought a used Ford Fairmont station wagon! I had just started college and needed decent transportation. I had saved for years for a car. Myself and my friends loved it - we could fit a lot of people in this thing, and did!

Tracy Shoemaker, Rodzina Construction

My own living room and bedroom furniture for my first apartment that didn't have a Murphy Bed.

Carol Pitman, Pitman Construction

The big thing when I was a teenager was the 80's rock bands, and when I started working when I was in 10th grade and I got that first paycheck I bought a ticket to go see Def Leppard in concert with some of my gal friends. It was an amazing show and worth every penny!

GinaRenee Autrey, Gilbane Building Company

I started my first paying jobs at the age of 12 as a Little League umpire and as a soccer linesman (referee). My first memorable purchase revolved around a brand new BMX style fluorescent orange bike. My parents agreed to pay up to \$75 for a bike, so I had to come up with the balance of the \$230 bike that I desperately needed. You were allowed to start as a linesman for soccer at the age of 12. The minimum age for the umpire gig was 14, but the league's umpire director lived down the street and let me get started at 12 years old. I was making a "fortune!"

Asher Kazmann, Locke Solutions

The first thing, with babysitting money, was the Fresh album by Sly and the Family Stone in 1973. Two friends and I were candy stripping for the summer at Seton Medical Center, which was founded by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul – so there were a lot of nuns there. I left on my lunch break and went and bought the album and brought it back. You should have seen their eyes

pop out when they saw that album cover – not that it was anything bad, rock-n-roll was just extremely foreign to them. But they took it well!

Cyndi Wright, Construction News

The first big purchase I remember making with my own money was my first laptop. It was a Compaq, and the logo fell off when I took it out of the box, but I re-attached it, and that laptop served me fairly well in my first years of writing.

Mary Hazlett, San Antonio Construction News

I saved up enough money to take a trip to Europe. I got to visit my twin for six weeks.

Helen Greenwood, Construction News Production Department

I bought a \$500 Pioneer Stereo - actually my dad bought it and I made payments to him. A very cool receiver, turntable (yes we had vinyl records in those days!), cassette deck and speakers. Little did I know that my next purchase would be the car payments since I was listening to way too much music and not concentrating on school!

Dana Calonge, Construction News Account manager

I don't remember exactly how hold I was at the time, but it was sometime between 4th and 5th grade. I had my very own paper route. I woke up at the crack of dawn, rolled up the newspapers every morning, took out my beat up old bike, and rode the streets delivering newspapers to my neighbors.

It took months to save up enough money for what I really wanted. It may have taken a shorter amount of time if I had not splurged a little at the local convenience store. My early mornings sometimes required sugar intake to make it through the entire paper route.

But once I had enough, the day was set. I had the best day planned for me and my best friend. We had enough money to take the city bus to Playland Park for the day. I don't have a car or a stereo to show for all my hard work, but I have some of the best memories of that day. It was money well spent.

Terri Adams, Construction News Administrator

Association Calendar

Content submitted by Associations to Construction News

ABC Associated Builders & Contractors

Apr. 17: Spring Clay Shoot, Greater Houston Gun Club, 9am-3pm
Apr. 26: Member mixer, Constellation Field in Sugar Land, 5:30-7:30pm
Apr. 29: BP MS150 Houston Builders Team

AGC Associated General Contractors

Apr. 24: AGC/AIA Joint Golf Tournament, Champions Golf club, 11:30am-6pm

ASA American Subcontractors Association

Apr 7: Annual Spring Golf Tournament, Cypresswood Golf Club, 10am-5pm, \$200 per player (\$800 per team),
Apr 13: ASA-HC and Houston Area Glass Association (HAGA) Joint Meeting, Trends in Building Construction presented by Richard D. Voreis, Consulting Collaborative, 1-2:30pm, \$30 per person.
Apr 20: General Lunch Meeting, Turning Skilled Employees into Leaders, HESS Club, 11am-1pm, \$35-55 per person.
Apr 25: Houston Fall Prevention Safety Day by the Houston Fall Prevention Alliance, Layher US, 8225 Hansen Rd., 12-4pm (lunch will be provided), free.
Apr. 27: Lien & Bond Claim seminar presented by: Jason Walker of Andrews Myers, P.C., 9am-noon, \$60-\$120 per person. Details for these events on asahouston.org Calendar of Events. For more information call 281-679-1877

FPA Foundation Performance Assoc.

Apr. 12: Monthly meeting with speaker David Eastwood, PE, CAPM, at 5pm at The Hess Club. Topic: Foundation Repair Techniques for Lightly Loaded Founda-

tions in Texas.
 For more information: www.foundation-performance.org

HAGA Houston Area Glass Association

Apr. 6: Golf Tournament, Houston National Golf Club Sterling Member Course.
Apr. 13: Joint Seminar with HAGA and ASA at Marek, 2115 Judiway, Houston, 1-2:30pm.
 For more information call 281-849-8293

NECA National Electrical Contractor Assn.

Apr. 7: Coastal Sabine Sporting Clays
Apr. 25: Houston Division Meeting
Apr. 26-28: NECA Legislative Conference
 For more information, 713-977-2522

PHCC Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors

Apr.11: Monthly lunch meeting, location TBD, Speakers: Lisa G. Hill, Executive Director, Alex Rosenthal, Veteran's Liaison Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners and Legislative Update
 Contact 281-702-2955 for registration details.

RCAT Roofing Contractors of Texas

Apr. 27-29: Annual Fishing Tournament and quarterly membership meeting at Woody's Sport Center in Port Aransas. For more information, (512) 251-7690

WCA Women Contractors Association

Apr. 6: Monthly Luncheon, Maggiano's Little Italy, 2019 Post Oak Blvd., 11:15am-12:45pm, meeting starts at 11:30am. Speaker: Abbey Roberson, Texas Medical Center.

Submitted to Construction News

Safety first



Oxford Builders prides itself on providing safety training for all of their employees. Their recent safety course was held at the offices of the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) of Greater Houston, demonstrating ladder and stair safety. The demonstration was presented by Rene Garza with Compliance Safety Consulting. -dh

Submitted to Construction News

Mix it up!

Recently, **Oxford Builders** hosted the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) of Greater Houston's first 2017 mixer, which ties in to their 20th anniversary. -cw



Oxford's William Sanchez, president and Leonard Bedell, Mobil Steel



Oxford's Alice Canales, VP of operations/safety and Katie Brannon, business development



Oxford's Arnold Medellin, superintendent and Rafael Cabrera, estimator/project manager



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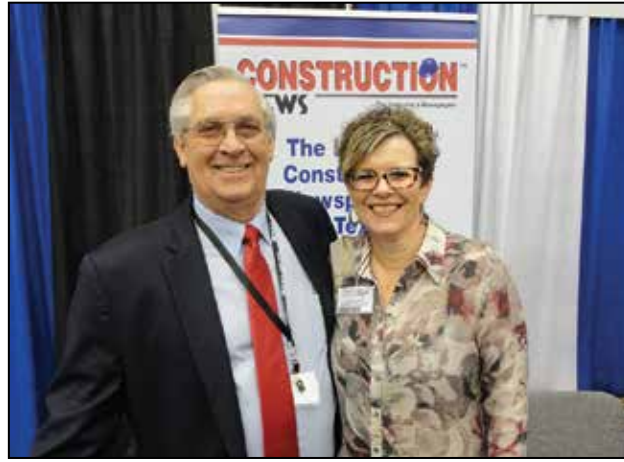


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Expo-nential function . . . Coming to Houston April 19-20

Networking was the name of the game at the annual Build Expo. Held Mar. 15-16 at Dallas' Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, guests had the chance to meet others in their industry, attend workshops and view thousands of construction-related products at more than 100 exhibits, some of which were presented by construction-related companies with locations in the Houston area. *Construction News* was also a sponsor of the expo. -mjm



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