

## All in the Family

### PROFILE: RICK VASQUEZ JR.

By Jennifer Frakes

**R**iver City Coatings is a family-owned and -operated commercial and industrial flooring contractor based in San Antonio, Texas. Rick Vasquez Sr. started the business in 1989; since then, the entire family has become an integral part of the company. *CoatingsPro Magazine* recently sat down with Rick Vasquez Jr., Operations Manager, to talk about his experiences in and out of the coatings industry.

#### Long History

"I was raised in the concrete coatings industry. I started helping my dad when I was about 14 or 15 years old," said Rick Jr. River City Coatings opened its doors nearly 25 years ago and has been a mainstay in the San Antonio flooring industry ever since.

According to Rick Jr., his father became interested in concrete coatings after visiting the World of Concrete in 1987. "At the time, my dad was the concrete foreman for Texas Trident, a construction company created solely to build Sea World of Texas. With his hands-on experience in concrete and the ideas he had after going to the World of Concrete show, he decided that after the Sea World project was finished, he wanted to open his own company," explained Rick Jr.

In the early days, River City Coatings specialized in concrete repair and thin mil (micron) coatings. "After a few years, my dad started taking on projects in decorative concrete coatings. We did kitchen remodels and other jobs like that to get our name out there," said Rick Jr. Now, River City Coatings works on many high-profile commercial and industrial flooring jobs, including installing methyl methacrylate (MMA) flooring systems at

Sea World of Texas, the former stomping ground of Rick Sr. "We also install flooring systems for many well-known restaurant chains. We take pride in being their first call," said Rick Jr.

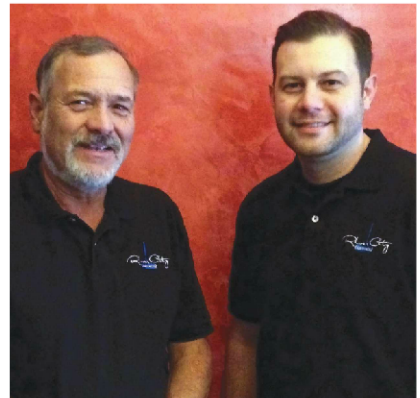
#### Return to the Family Business

Even with his history in the industry, Rick Jr. wasn't always certain that he would end up working at River City Coatings. He went to the University of Texas, San Antonio, and in 2004, received a degree in Business Management. "I thought that I might do something else, but the business had grown so much that I just couldn't see leaving," stated Rick Jr. Although the company is still small, averaging 9 to 13 employees, River City Coatings has experienced a great deal of success over the years. "We have a lot of repeat customers and receive a lot of referrals. We are committed to providing our clients with the highest quality flooring installation and the best technology that is out there," said Rick Jr. He and his father both feel that it is this commitment that has allowed River City Coatings to grow even in these tough economic times.

#### Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

Each member of the Vasquez family is involved with the day-to-day operations of River City Coatings. "I am the operations manager as well as the main estimator," related Rick Jr. "My mom, Ann, does the bookkeeping; my sister, Sabrina, mixes; and my dad does sales and project management." And while Rick Jr. admits that working with family members can sometimes be a challenge, the Vasquez clan has successfully navigated these tricky waters by each having a distinct role within the company.

"We separate tasks within the



business, and each of us has our own area of expertise. This allows us to make our own decisions in that particular area. I think that this division of labor is a key to our success and ultimately helps us to function better as a team," revealed Rick Jr. The family has a great deal of trust in one another; also, the division of labor keeps them all sane and keeps meddling — no matter how well intended — to a minimum. Rick Jr. also said that not sweating the small stuff helps maintain family harmony and keeps the company running smoothly.

As far as father and son are concerned, the two men have very different approaches to the business, but these differences have helped River City Coatings develop a great reputation and create loyalty with their customers. Rick Jr. says he's the cautious one and his father's the one more willing to take risks — risks that include taking on large and challenging jobs. "We balance each other out, which is really a benefit to the company," said Rick Jr. With this ying and yang, River City Coatings is able to take on projects that might seem overwhelming to many other contractors and, at the same time, walk away from jobs that just aren't the right fit. **CP**