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AMERICA'S CONCRETE CONTRACTORS

Tales from the trenches. Twenty firms tell us the secrets to their success. pg 21

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LeChase has won nine Build New York Awards in the past two decades. Photo: JOHN SMILLIE PHOTOGRAPHY

Safety First

A commitment to be a world-class safety organization drives LeChase Construction Services to implement programs and policies that exceed OSHA standards. These efforts produced an EMR of 0.73 for 2013 and earned a 2008 Presidential Award for Outstanding Safety Performance and 2012 Associated General Contractors Safety Excellence Award in 2012.

LeChase Construction Services

ROCHESTER, N.Y.

CEO: William H. Goodrich

2013 Total/Concrete Revenue: \$565 million/\$28.3 million

In Business: 70 years

Website: www.lechase.com

Repeat business in the healthcare and education sectors helped maintain LeChase's bottom line through the economic downturn of 2009-10. To stay ahead in the face of increased competition, the company has stepped up risk management efforts regarding subcontractor and vendor prequalification.

LeChase performs a host of preconstruction consulting services, such as value engineering and Building Information Modeling (BIM). The company also offers expertise in the LEED rating system and certification process.

Innovation in Beauty and Function



Tom Ralston gets the word out on decorative concrete. Photo: TOM RALSTON CONCRETE

When Tom Ralston took the reins of the family business in 1989, the third-generation contractor gradually developed a focus on decorative concrete. Tom Ralston Concrete aims to provide clients with unique, artful creations and to offer employees the opportunity to express their innate talents.

In a close relationship with concrete supplier Granite Rock, Tom Ralston frequently works with their chemist on unique mix designs. For example, they recently designed a mix using nine additives for a bench with drain holes in the seat that was perched on an ocean shelf along the Pacific shore.

Ralston presents seminars on topics such as concrete countertops and marketing decorative concrete. He has written two books on the subject: *Cast-In-Place Concrete Countertops* and *Sculpting Hillside with Decorative Concrete* (see the June 2014 issue of CONCRETE SURFACES for an excerpt from *Sculpting Hillside*).

Tom Ralston Concrete

SANTA CRUZ, CALIF.

CEO: Tom Ralston

In Business: 25 years

2013 Revenue: \$2.6 million

Website: www.tomralstonconcrete.com

His inventions include a system to produce sawcut lines without a saw and the Lumi Lum concrete brand that uses luminescent aggregates and sands.

Out of the Box



Elliot Construction steers away from big box projects and toward challenging projects with unique design elements that might deter other contractors. "The harder the job will be to complete, the more competitive our price will be," says president Dan Hagen. Elliot has worked on such Chicago landmarks as Millennium Park and the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center, as well as 30 waterparks. The company uses electronic optical surveying equipment and conveyors and pumps to place concrete.

Elliot views its contractor customers, subcontractors, and suppliers as partners, and invites prospective customers to contact them. "Our subs are a reflection of us, so we foster excellent relationships with them to ensure a team approach," says Hagen. "We pay all subs within 30 days of receiving their invoice, often before we get paid for their work."



Elliot Construction moved upward from building residential basements. Photo: ELLIOT CONSTRUCTION

Elliot Construction Corp.

GLEN ELLYN, ILL.

CEO: Rob Elliot

2013 Revenue: \$10 million-plus

In Business: 50 years

Website: www.elliottconstruction.com

Pickup Drives Contractor to the Leading Edge

In 1974 Charles and Frank Urata scraped together about \$100 and a used pickup truck and, under the guidance and experience of their father, Sofio Urata, began placing and finishing concrete patios and driveways. Today, Urata & Sons works in an array of industries—retail, resorts, gaming, condos, schools, public works, and parking structures—and has traded in the old pickup for state-of-the-art equipment such as a 3D pavement profiling system.

The company reports 90% client retention. In contrast with the early days is Urata's \$14 million contract for the new Stanford Central Energy Plant, projected to cut carbon emissions in half.

Urata & Sons Concrete

LA BREA, CALIF.

CEO: Kelly Urata

In Business: 39 years

2013 Revenue: \$44.4 million

Website: www.urataconcrete.com

Urata crew works on the 200,000-square-foot central energy facility at Stanford University. Photo: URATA

