



FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Thursday, March 27, 2003 was an evening of celebration that was particularly meaningful for the founder of American Constructors. Addressing a broad cross section of construction industry professionals, including some very dedicated employees, President Bill Heine gave thanks for 20 years of business in Austin, Texas.

One hundred-fifty friends and associates mingled in the American Constructors facility in southwest Austin, two decades of history bedecking the walls of every room. When Bill took center stage, he told of the company's humble beginnings in the fall of '82. Then as now, the goal was to be the best contractor in Austin and an industry leader. They knew they needed to distinguish themselves from the crowd, and that they would need to build quality structures that provided exceptional value while saving time and money. Long story short, they did that. Not surprisingly, they're still doing that.

Today, American Constructors enjoys a reputation for building quality educational facilities faster than anyone else. They've built showcase elementary schools in less than ten months and this spring, they will have completed a \$47 million high school in less than 22 months.

Here are some ways American Constructors is staying ahead of the pack and focusing on the future:

American Constructors was one of the first contractors in Austin to integrate "partnering" into their construction management methodology. Partnering assures that everyone involved in the project, from owners to subcontractors, are informed and in agreement with the pro-

ject's objectives. The partnering concept is used in every phase of the construction process.

American Constructors uses a preconstruction plan review and coordination process. This constructability plan is designed to bring the design team (owner, contractor, architects, and engineers) together in focused meetings that lay out specific objectives and identify potential problems before the project begins. Plan revisions are made to the construction documents ahead of time, resulting in fewer change orders and schedule impacts, as well as lowered costs.



Founders Jim Casey and Bill Heine with Yolanda Heine and Judy Casey

American Constructors has implemented a comprehensive commissioning, post-construction, and warranty program which includes regular contact and visits to the projects they've built, and a 24/7 on-call service program to rapidly respond to any problems.

American Constructors uses the estimating, accounting, and project management modules of the Timberline software package. One advantage of networking the documentation process is the ability to

track and report project costs, Requests for Information (RFIs), Requests for Proposals (RFPs), substitutions, submittals, change orders, and monthly invoices. Easier access to the pertinent data during construction is essential for properly awarding subcontracts, as well as monitoring and managing costs.

In addition to its Internet site, which is used in part to post bids and addenda for preconstruction, the company has added an "Intranet" site for internal communications (employee news, benefits, anniversaries and birthdays, etc.).

An area of real pride is the comprehensive summer intern program. Now in its 4th year, American Constructors brings in engineering and building science students from higher education institutions to give them practical experience in theories they've been taught in the classroom.

After 20 years, Bill Heine recaps the company's accomplishments: over 8 million square feet of buildings at a value of just under \$700 million, including 44 school projects in Central Texas. Bill is quick to note that his company's achievements would not have been possible without a tremendously talented staff. Last year, in addition to 116 staff members, American Constructors provided employment for 2,400 construction industry workers in the Austin area.

A retired Rear Admiral in the United States Navy, Bill feels great patriotism for the country he loves. He says, "We've been very blessed with opportunities and terrific clients, great architects and engineers, super subcontractors and a tremendous group of American Constructors employees. Last but not least, we live in a wonderful country that has permitted us to do all the things we've done and to be here today. God bless you all, and God bless America."

Jared Davis Twice a Citizen

U.S. Marine and Construction Engineer

Jared Davis is a field engineer for American Constructors, and has been for two years, minus a little detour in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. As a member of the Marine Corps Reserves since high school, Jared was continually involved in training and readiness for deployment. He was a 2001 graduate of Texas A&M with a degree in Construction Science and a promising field engineer with American Constructors when the call for duty came.

In February of 2002, while working on the new Artie L. Henry Middle School (Leander ISD), Jared left his wife and family, his friends and his job, for a ten-month stint as part of the Joint Task Force at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Camp Delta. Camp Delta is a new 816-unit detention facility housing Al Qaeda and

Taliban detainees. While Navy Seabees and Marine Corps engineers constructed the new detention and recreation/exercise facilities, Jared's primary mission was protecting the 17-mile "fenceline" between the United States and Cuba. As Corporal of the Guard, he provided security for American and Cuban dignitaries and apprehended Cuban/Haitian Asylum Seekers. He also put some of his construction and leadership skills to use doing small jobs ahead of the maintenance contractors and, as a squad leader, managing up to 30 subordinates.

In his spare time, Jared stayed physically fit by diving, spear fishing, and working out in some outstanding recreation facilities. He was able to keep in touch via email, and every seven days was allowed 15 minutes on the phone.



Says Jared, "Being away from your home, your loved ones, and life's daily routines for an extended period of time makes you deeply appreciate the time you have when you are not there. You never know what unexpected turns your life will take, which is why it is so vitally important to not take life's blessings for granted. I love this nation and the freedom we are all blessed with."

Jared adds this advice, "Keep a watchful eye, appreciate what you have, and stand up in defense to protect it. There have been many sacrifices made before us to ensure our freedom and many more will be required to keep it."

Now that he's back home, Jared can be found at the precast yard working on concrete beams to be used in the Round Rock Stadium project, and getting ready to start on Middle School #5 for Leander ISD, to be built across the street from the recently-completed Laura Welch Bush Elementary School in Steiner Ranch.

Jared remains in the Marine Corps Reserves and was recently promoted to Sergeant. Congratulations, Jared!

New MHMR Center Opens

In December of 2003, American Constructors completed the new Bluebonnet Trails Mental Health Mental Retardation (MHMR) Center in Round Rock, Williamson County, Texas. Construction began in February of 2002 for owner Bluebonnet Trails, and according to Project Manager David Fletcher, this \$7.7-million-dollar project was completed on time and within budget.

MHMR offers extensive mental health and mental retardation services for 10,000 children, adolescents and adults annually in an 8-county region. More than half of those served each year are from the Williamson County area.

Some of the services include: 24-hour crisis and screening services, outpatient psychiatric and counseling services, employment assistance, training in daily living skills, therapy for children with developmental delays (from birth to age 3), residential living services in the form



of group homes or foster care, and partnering with local services including, law enforcement, hospitals, schools, and public health departments.

Previously, the MHMR operated out of rented or donated space. Now the new single-story community center provides 48,600 s.f. of administrative and health care space all under one roof.

In addition to offices, visitors will find a conference room and activity spaces, classrooms, and a warehouse for community donations that are then given to MHMR's clients.

One interesting component of the building design is the precast, suspended slab floor. Because Round Rock's soil is clay, it expands and contracts when wet, making it unstable. But American Constructors and its team members came up with an innovative solution.

Construction started with a solid concrete sub-slab with double Ts for stability, and above it is a suspended topping slab which became the floor of the building. In essence, the building is elevated and a crawl space exists between slabs. While this method is not uncommon for use on clay soils, it is a bit unusual for the Central Texas region.

While the construction method might be uncommon, praise for American Constructors is not. In a letter to Vice President Marty Burger of American Constructors, MHMR's Chief Executive Officer, Nancy Gettelfinger, said, "...we truly enjoyed working with all of your staff. David Fletcher was always available and responsive to our requests. We have had a very good experience with your company."



Your skin and concrete don't mix

To a professional, this warning gets a "Duh!" but it bears repeating. While working with wet concrete, be sure to wear protective clothing and safety glasses.

Concrete mixtures are strongly basic (pH of 12 to 13). This means its alkaline nature is caustic to the skin. It absorbs water, which is needed for hardening, and will draw moisture away from any material it contacts, including your skin. In fact, wet (unhardened) concrete mixtures can cause severe chemical burns (third-degree) and serious eye damage. Eyes are particularly vulnerable to the blowing dust and spattering that comes with mixing this common building material, and safety precautions cannot be underemphasized.

Here are some important safety tips for working with wet concrete:

- Wear waterproof gloves, a long-sleeved shirt, full-length pants, and proper eye protection. For some jobs, full-cover goggles or safety glasses with wide shields are a must.
- Waterproof pads should be used between fresh concrete surfaces and knees, elbows, hands, etc. to protect the body during finishing operations.
- If you have to stand in wet concrete, use waterproof boots high enough to keep concrete from flowing into them.
- Wash concrete from your skin immediately with pH neutral soap and clean water. Neutralize contact points with a mild acid, like vinegar.
- Flush eyes with clean water immediately after contact.
- Indirect contact through clothing can be as serious as direct contact, so promptly rinse out wet concrete from clothing.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you have persistent or severe discomfort.

Last but not least, all of these important safety tips apply to wet cement and mortar mixes as well.



PROJECTIONS

is published for the friends and team members of American Constructors.

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A Winning Year

American Constructors is proud to share some of our accomplishments for the last year:

Austin Business Journal

- Inching up two slots, American Constructors sits high and proud as Number 7 on the Austin Business Journal's Top 25 Commercial Construction Companies.

Artie L. Henry Middle School

Leander Independent School District

- Associated General Contractors of America's (AGC) Construction Excellence Award.
- Texas Nursery & Landscape Association's Texas Excellence in Landscaping Award. Presented to Chapman Services, the landscaping subcontractor. This project required removal of 55 trees (post oaks and live oaks aged from 25-200 years old). After consulting with designers and tree experts, minor adjustments were made to the site plan and \$572,959 worth of trees were saved to enhance the school's setting, provide shade, and screen parts of the school site from surrounding properties.
- Construction Owners Association of America's Project Leadership Award in recognition of leadership, professionalism, and excellence in project management (submitted and presented to owners, Leander Independent School District).

Laura Welch Bush Elementary

Leander Independent School District

- ABC Local: Certificate of Excellence.
- ABC National: Certificate of Commendation for outstanding achievement reflected by quality, innovation and teamwork.

Cactus Ranch Elementary

Round Rock Independent School District

- The Texas Association of School Administrators and The Texas Association of School Business for value and process of planning.
- AGC's Construction Excellence Award (from Austin chapter);
- Texas Building Branch Outstanding Construction Award (state-level AGC chapter).
- Central Texas Masonry Contractor's Golden Trowel Award: Honorable Mention, Excellence in Project Leadership.

First Evangelical Free Church

- ABC's Certificate of Excellence awarded to RM Mechanical, Inc. and American Constructors (Submitted by RM Mechanical).

Engineering News-Record

- American Constructors included in ENR's Top 400 (May 20, 2002).