



VERTI-CRETE NEWS

“THE EVOLUTION OF PRECASTING”

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Verti-Crete Fences Withstand Wind Loads Over 200 mph

When C&M Precast had their Verti-Crete fence products tested for strength against wind loads this January, they were amazed to find just how strong their products actually are. C&M Precast is located in Kerrville, Texas, a city that is subject to highly rigorous building standards because of its location in the storm-prone Gulf area. C&M Precast set out to prove through testing that their Verti-Crete fences—which are reinforced with FORTA Ferro Fiber (polypropylene fiber)—are strong enough to withstand hurricane-force winds. Testing of the fiber-reinforced fence took place at C&M's plant in Texas. The tests were conducted by Ronald Thornton, an engineer from Delta Engineers; testing was supervised by Marty Doody from FORTA Corporation, Bob Barker from C&M Precast, and Chris Barker from C&M Precast.



The first test involved a fence sample that included six columns and five panels, installed as they would be in the field. “We actually built the sample fence to lower standards than we would ever use in the field,” says Chris Barker of C&M precast. “We dug our footings in looser soil than usual, we didn't dig our footings extra deep, and we only used #3 rebar instead of #4, which we

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Second Annual Verti-Crete Association Meeting

The Verti-Crete Association Meeting was held on January 23 this year at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas, making the meeting an official annual tradition. Like last year, the meeting included dinner, speakers, and—most importantly—mingling among the licensees.



The Verti-Crete Association Meeting serves as an unequalled opportunity for licensees to network, exchange ideas, and learn more about what their colleagues are doing. This is crucial to fostering an environment of community and camaraderie between licensees. When licensees are in touch with each other and are invested in each other's success, everyone benefits by receiving motivation, ideas, and leads from around the country—and even around the globe.

One way that the licensees get ideas about how to market their products and where to look for work is by listening to the speakers at the Verti-Crete Association Meeting. This year, the following licensees spoke to the Association: Bernard Kennedy of Carlow Precast in Dublin, Ireland; Brad Davis of Liberty Precast in Tulsa, Oklahoma; and John Walsh of Hawk Construction in Dallas, Texas. Each speaker shared information on a different topic, but all three offered something valuable to

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Fiber-reinforced Verti-Crete fence panels were tested for strength by applying horizontal pressure in incremental amounts with a hydraulic jack.

Fiber Testing (cont'd from page 1)

always use in real applications. We wanted to be able to say, “We always build better than this, so whatever you get from us will be even stronger than the testing shows.” The idea behind testing a sample of wall with multiple panels—as opposed to testing the strength of individual panels—is that it provides more realistic, true-to-life results. Marty Doody explains, “In the real world, fences are composed of panels and columns that are joined together and support each other, so you have to take that into consideration when you test for strength.”

The sample fence was tested by applying horizontal pressure in incremental amounts with a hydraulic jack. “The fence sample never actually failed,” says Barker. “You could see it flexing a little under pressure, but it never cracked or broke anywhere on the panels or the footings, and we were applying enormous amounts of pressure—probably the equivalent of 300-mile-per-hour wind loads.”

“Using fibers in footings makes the whole process so much faster and more economical.”

—Chris Barker, C&M Precast

After testing the wall sample, individual panels with various forms of reinforcement were also tested to find their capacity for wind load resistance. The weakest panel tolerated pressure equivalent to 212 mph wind loads before failing while the strongest panel endured wind

loads in excess of 280 mph. These results far exceed the wind load resistance required by even the most stringent building codes in the country.

“I knew how the fiber-reinforced fence would perform,” says Doody, “but I was really pleased because I think it performed much better than Bob and Chris Barker expected.” Doody is absolutely correct in his observation. In discussing the results of the test, Chris Barker commented, “We were definitely surprised, especially by how strong the panel with the rebar

perimeter frame was. It was the strongest panel—even stronger than the one with wire mesh in it.” The observer who was the most surprised, though, was a last-minute guest—a potential customer for C&M Precast.

“These guys purchased a fence from one of our competitors, and the fence had actually blown over. They were considering replacing it with a Verti-Crete fence, so they showed up to watch the testing. Needless to say, they were very impressed.”

The benefits of using fibers aren’t limited to lending incredible strength to concrete products. As Doody points out, polypropylene fibers are less likely to be negatively impacted by factors like weather and time than steel fibers. “With steel fibers, you’ll see razor sharp edges poking out, which presents an immediate safety issue, but then the steel can also rust and corrode.”

Fibers are even more convenient when it comes to reinforcing footings for a fence. Barker explains, “Using fibers in footings makes the whole process so much faster and more economical. You don’t have the cost of shipping steel to the job site. If you have to notch out a footing for a change in elevation, you don’t have to deal with grinding down steel. You don’t have to worry about having an inspector check the precise placement of your steel cages on every single footing. And in my opinion, you get a much stronger, better pier with fibers.”

Under the Verti-Crete national account, licensees receive a discount when purchasing fibers with FORTA. Another benefit to Verti-Crete licensees is that the engineer who oversaw testing in Texas is also licensed in over 40 other states throughout the country and will provide free stamped engineering for licensees in those states. For more information about using polypropylene fibers, contact Mike Sharp or Elizabeth Weight at Verti-Crete headquarters, or check out FORTA’s website at <http://www.fortacorp.com>.

The weakest panel tolerated pressure equivalent to **212 mph wind loads** before failing.

The engineer who supervised FORTA fiber testing in Kerrville, TX is also licensed in the following states.

Alabama	Kentucky	North Carolina
Arizona	Louisiana	Ohio
Arkansas	Maine	Oregon
California	Maryland	Pennsylvania
Colorado	Massachusetts	Rhode Island
Connecticut	Michigan	South Carolina
Delaware	Minnesota	Texas
D. C.	Mississippi	Tennessee
Florida	Missouri	Utah
Georgia	Montana	Vermont
Idaho	Nevada	Virginia
Illinois	New Hampshire	Washington
Indiana	New Jersey	West Virginia
Kansas	New York	Wisconsin

VCA Meeting (cont'd from page 1)

their fellow licensees.

Kennedy spoke about the development of a unique form that Verti-Crete developed for him; this has allowed him to replicate the style of thick, rounded-top stone walls common in Ireland. Davis spoke about the process of getting approved by large organizations and also discussed some of the realities of working on large jobs. Walsh shared the story of his journey to success. It began with a rough first year during which he carted around a Verti-Crete panel in the back of his truck to take to potential customers; since then, he has become one of Verti-Crete's busiest and most successful licensees.

This year the Verti-Crete Association Meeting was 50% larger than last year, with the group of 75 comprising brand new licensees along with veterans of the Verti-Crete System. All licensees, old and new, came away from the meeting with new perspectives on manufacturing and selling Verti-Crete fence. "Everyone encounters their own set of unique challenges. And even though we may be in very different markets, hearing about solutions that other producers have discovered helps us address our challenges in ways I never would have thought of," commented Joe Deere. Seeing and hearing how others have handled their individual situations often sparks ideas for licensees as they reevaluate their own challenges in a new light.

Having contact between licensees is so valuable, in fact, that many licensees at the Verti-Crete Association Meeting asked for more opportunities to communicate with each other. "It's great that we can get together like this, but it just wouldn't be practical for everyone to fly in and have dinner together more than once a year. It would really help if there was some other way that we could talk to each other and communicate throughout the year, even if we can't get together in person," said Rick Ianello of Teknafab in western Washington. Licensees offered various suggestions including adding a section of the newsletter for posting licensee news, creating an online forum, and sending out mass email updates when a licensee has news he'd like to share immediately.

Verti-Crete has taken the licensees' advice to heart and is currently working to implement many of these suggestions. In fact, in this issue the "Licensee Bulletin Board" section of the newsletter shows the recent announcements that were submitted by Verti-Crete licensees. This section will become a regular feature in the newsletter, allowing licensees to share their news and announcements with each other. Verti-Crete is committed to supporting their licensees in any way possible, and will continue the effort to foster networking and communication between producers.

"Even though we may be in very different markets, hearing about solutions that other producers have discovered helps us address our challenges in ways I never would have thought of."

—Joe Deere

Licensee Bulletin Board

Carlow Precast Tanks in Dublin, Ireland now has its customized LedgeStone system up and running. The system was built to meet metric standards in both height and length (2.5 meters tall, 4 meters long). To reduce substantial shipping costs, the frames and access platforms were assembled in Ireland after they had been shipped. Even though Carlow Precast Tanks is as far north as central BC, their mild winters allow them to produce outdoors all year round. Good luck on a productive and exciting year of producing Verti-Crete fence products, Carlow Precast Tanks!

Liberty Precast in Tulsa, Oklahoma has dedicated itself to receiving approval and specification with cities, subdivisions, large companies, and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. "It's mainly a lot of leg work," says Joe Deere of Liberty Precast. "To get in and get approved, you have to show the actual application with pictures and drawings. You also have to show that it's engineered for local conditions. For example, our products have to meet the demand of intense wind loads in Tulsa. It's a long process." The hard work paid off last month, though, when Liberty Precast received approval from ODOT for Verti-Crete walls. They have also received approval with the City of Tulsa and Wal-Mart. Deere recommends focusing on getting approval with your state's department of transportation as quickly as possible: "As soon as DOTs approve a product, cities fall right behind because they use DOT guidelines." Congratulations on receiving ODOT approval, Liberty Precast!



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