



VERTI-CRETE NEWS

"THE EVOLUTION OF PRECASTING"

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I-84 Boise, Idaho Accomplishment

When Owell Precast was awarded a large sound wall project in Boise, Idaho (USA), they were faced with the daunting challenge of producing nearly 2 mi (3.5 km) of precast sound wall in less than seven months. Further complicating matters, the project demanded a range of panel sizes, each with multiple textures. As Owell evaluated its production options the solution became clear. By using a Verti-Crete™ Panel Stacker System, Owell would be able to produce a high volume of large precast pieces in a fraction of the time and floor space otherwise needed. In addition, Verti-Crete's mold and form system made it possible to provide the Idaho Department of Transportation (IDOT) with a product that had a molded texture on both sides of the wall, far surpassing the surface quality specified on the project.



Because of the unique textures and the diverse panel sizes, Owell originally bid the project with the intention of casting in horizontal steel beds with polyurethane liners. Using their existing steel casting beds and then being able to easily change the size of each panel seemed like the lowest cost path to take. After all, the investment in a vertical battery mold such as Verti-Crete's seemed expensive when amortized over just one project. The only downside appeared to be the quality

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Versatility with Verti-Crete Systems



Above: One of Pour in Place's retaining walls.

Jeff VanHoose, owner of Pour in Place, Inc and VanHooseCo, LLC has brought much versatility to this industry with the Verti-Crete system.

Jeff is a commercial concrete contractor and has been working in the precast concrete industry since 1998. He started East Tennessee Precast, a business pouring sanitary and drainage structures such as manholes, catch basins, and utility structures. After selling his precast operation to Hanson Pipe & Precast in August 2007, he signed a non- compete agreement. "I had to think outside the box to find something different I can produce," said Jeff.

Jeff discovered Verti-Crete at The World of Concrete Show in Las Vegas early this year. Wanting to explore his options, he researched different systems without breaching his non- compete agreement. He considered a variety of wall methods, but realizing he could do more things with the

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of the texture on the back of each panel, which would have to be stamped instead of molded. As the production schedule and budget was put together, however, casting horizontally turned out to be the most expensive of all.

Verti-Crete has been manufacturing vertical precast forming systems for almost 10 years now and has precasters who license its forming systems all over the world. The typical battery mold produces 8 to 10 panels at a time in a 10ft x 14ft (3m x 4.3m) area. Standard privacy wall systems come in 6 ft, 7 ft, or 10 ft (1.8m, 2.4m or 3m) tall by 13 ft (4m) long but custom sizes can be as



much a 10ft (3m) tall by 22ft (6.7m) long. Verti-Crete post molds are also poured vertically for privacy fence applications up to 3m tall so you get a molded stone pattern on all four sides of each column. Columns for this job, however, needed to be as much as 30 ft (9m) tall so Verti-Crete produced a convenient horizontal form with adjustable end stops to vary the height as needed.

The Panel Stacker utilizes a series of vertical divider sheets that are placed back to back in a battery mold system. Each divider sheet is made of steel with molded polyurethane permanently mounted to each side. Concrete is then poured between each divider sheet from the top of the mold, which means that each panel is cast between two molded surfaces. This creates panels that have equally pristine

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-Jared Johnston

molded finishes on both front and back, whereas panels that have been produced using a flat bed have a molded finish on only one side and a stamped or plain finish on the other side. In the case of Howell’s sound wall job for IDOT, this came as an unexpected—but welcome—bonus. Johnston says, “When we told the Idaho Department of Transportation that we would be able to provide a product with molded finishes on both sides, they didn’t quite believe us. They wanted to know what the catch was. Was it going to cost more money? Were we changing our bid? We said, ‘There’s no catch,’ and we explained the vertical casting methodology to them. They were thrilled. And why wouldn’t they be? Everybody loves a free upgrade, and that’s exactly what they got.”

Verti-Crete was able to guarantee impeccably molded textures on both sides of each panel because all of their mold work is done in-

house in its own custom mold shop. For this project, Verti-Crete produced five new mold designs to IDOT’s exact specifications. Johnston states, “We were really lucky when it came to the production of the molds themselves. Verti-Crete’s mold makers are true artisans who have an incredible attention to detail. The first feedback we got from IDOT was on the quality and detail of the mold work—they just weren’t expecting such realistic textures. It’s really raised the bar on their sound wall expectations. They may even specify a double sided molded pattern now that they know they can get it so cost effectively. It feels great to know that we had that kind of impact by supplying such an outstanding product.” For this job, IDOT required a leaf design on the top and fractured fin below for sound abatement on the freeway side. On the opposite side, facing the residents, the design called for an ashlar slate with a row of diamond shapes across the top.

Labor is not only one of the largest components of a project like this. It can also be one of the biggest variables. Brent Baker, President of Howell Precast, explains, “The time during which we produced this job for IDOT was one of the busiest we’ve ever had, in terms of our production schedule. We had a number of large projects going on at one time, all with crucial deadlines. We had to maximize every inch of production space and every minute of our workers’ time. We just couldn’t afford to spend the time it would take to cast horizontally.

That’s what made the Verti-Crete System such a fantastic option for us. We were able to pour ten panels in a system that fit in the

corner of our production building—and it only took about an hour to strip the pieces from the previous day, clean and prep the forms, and it’s ready to pour again. All our guys had to do at that point was trowel off the tops of each panel, and then they could move onto working on our other jobs. You can’t find a more efficient way to cast.”

When it came to adjusting panels sizes, Verti-Crete came through again. Baker notes, “Our system was built to accommodate the largest panel size. We then used molded gaskets to create a water tight seal to block off the panel wherever we needed to. It was every bit as flexible as a horizontal bed, but with all the benefits of vertical casting.”

Ultimately, the Verti-Crete System offered the complete solution to Howell Precast’s challenges in completing their sound wall project. Baker remarks, “Looking back at it now, I can’t believe we bid this project thinking we would cast it in flat beds. The Verti-Crete System really addressed every issue that we threw its way. It made it possible for us to produce almost 2 mi (3.5km) of fence in a six month time frame. That’s pretty incredible when you think



about all the other projects we had going on at the same time. We met our customer's schedule and gave them a product that was better than what they were hoping for. And most importantly, we did it in the most cost-effective, labor-efficient way possible. We are currently bidding on a few other sound wall jobs, and I believe that using the Verti-Crete System will give us the upper hand over the competition. It's the complete package. If you're precasting sound wall or fence, it's the only way to go." way. It made it possible for us to produce almost 3.5km of fence in a six month time frame. That's pretty incredible when you think about all the other projects we had going on at the same time. We met our customer's schedule and gave them a product that was better than what they were hoping for. And most importantly, we did it in the most cost-effective, labor-efficient way possible."

Versatility with Verti-Crete Systems (cont'd from page 1)



Above: Pour in Place using the versatility of the Verti-Crete System to build a garage suitable for a motor home.

Verti-Crete system, he decided this system was a better fit for him.

With the unstable economy, industries have been trying to make use with what they can with the mold system, but Jeff has taken full advantage of the diversity of the Verti-Crete system. With the Post Stacker System, he built more than just precast fences or sound walls but also retaining walls, garage walls, horse shed walls, businesses and church signs, and subdivision entrances walls. Jeff worked with a local engineer to ensure that his design would meet local building codes. The Verti-Crete system has given Jeff a wide range of capabilities he didn't have before.

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Currently, Jeff is working on building a Precast Tilt-Wall operation. He studied the tilt up wall business in Europe and has brought it back to the U.S. in hopes of diversifying his company. Jeff practices intentional congruence where he develops and

manufactures all his projects from beginning to end keeping his business within the sister companies he owns. He is building his own ready mix operation and uses his precast company's, Verti-Crete and Tilt-Wall Molds and Forms, to create all his projects so his contracting company can install the finished products.

Because of the versatility of his company and from using the Verti-Crete system, he has been able to increase profit and gain an advantage over his competitors. "I've gained a lot more business and plan on buying a new system with a different form liner design from Verti-Crete in 2009," says Jeff.

Annual Verti-Crete Association Meeting

The Third Annual Verti-Crete Association Meeting will be held in conjunction with the World of Concrete in Las Vegas, Nevada on Wednesday evening February 4, 2009. The trade show runs from February 3 - 6 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Our VC Assoc. dinner/meeting will be from 6:30 to 9:30 pm at the Treasure Island Hotel.

This annual gathering has become one of the highlights of the year serving as a platform for training and for announcing new products and marketing initiatives. It's also a great way to learn from your fellow Verti-Crete Producers and see how you can apply what's working for them in your market. We'll also discuss accomplishments in specifying Verti-Crete walls with various Departments of Transportation, national retail chains and public utilities which can open up opportunities in your own back yard.

This will be the best way for you to stay in tune with Verti-Crete's support network and enable you to make the most of your precast fence business. It is a very exciting and valuable time

for everyone so don't miss out on this opportunity! Verti-Crete will be at the World of Concrete Show from February 2 - 6, 2009. Come visit us at Booth N1749. We hope to see you there!

Verti-Crete will also be at The Precast Show from February 20-22, 2009 in Houston, Texas. Come see us at Booth 1827!



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