

Topping the Canopy



Sundt Construction Inc. celebrated the topping out of the Canopy by Hilton San Antonio Riverwalk at the northwest corner of N. St. Mary's and Commerce. The 22-story property will feature more than 3,000sf of meeting space, 195 guest rooms and a restaurant with an outdoor terrace overlooking the Riverwalk. Gensler is the architect of record for the project, which broke ground in 2017. The project is scheduled for completion in 2020. -cmw

Like the Riverbed flows



L-R: David Harris and David Forren

When **David Harris** established **Riverbed Concrete**, the work came pouring in.

"I started our company in 2003 creating custom concrete furniture," Harris says. "Recognition quickly grew, and I began to be solicited by custom home builders for custom concrete countertops. During this time, the same home builders were also contracting us for stained concrete flooring. In 2005, my business partner **David Forren** moved down from Montana, leaving a great position with a log home builder, to begin building Riverbed Concrete. During the next several years, we continued to gain more home-builder contracts for our services."

When the housing market slowed in 2008, Riverbed Concrete transitioned into commercial construction for restaurants and retail. Harris and Forren then made a fortuitous discovery.

"During this time, we noticed that Valero Corner Stores were installing concrete flooring that was failing soon after a new location was opened," Harris says. "We identified their problem and began to do research into what would be a better solution for more durable flooring for their many stores. Once we found a solution, we developed a proprietary solution, proposed it to Valero over the course of approximately one year, and then were ultimately awarded a national contract with Valero to install our new flooring for all new store construction. Identifying their issue and developing a solution was a main catalyst to our growth. We installed polished concrete flooring for as many as 35 new Valero locations a year for seven years. The steadiness of the Valero contracts allowed us to grow, invest in more and more equipment, improve our processes, improve our employee and job management, all while focusing our attention on larger commercial construction contacts. Manufacturing facilities, new churches, and large retail became our focus for the next several years."

In 2014, Riverbed Concrete won its

first school flooring contract and developed a niche that now nets them approximately 10 new school contracts a year. The rest of the time is devoted to other commercial contracts and precast countertops. Harris and Forren have also continued to develop processes for the products that launched their business.

"We worked through trial and error to develop a unique mix of concrete that is strong and durable," Harris says. "In approximately 2010, after extensive market research into possible markets that we could serve, we discovered an opportunity to make an impact using our unique formula of strong concrete to serve the concrete planter industry."

Branding this subsidiary business **Slick Rock**, Harris and Forren made their own fiberglass molds to create more complex and curved shapes and developed a concrete planter line that is now marketed throughout the U.S. Several years ago, they also expanded into the custom pool market by offering backyard and resort products centralized around fire bowls, water bowls and fire tables.

In 2014, the partners built a 14,000sf shop with attached 2,000sf offices where they could build both their business and their relationships with their employees and community. For the past decade, the company has built award-winning floats for the Boerne Christmas parade, a cherished tradition. The company also hosts 'Riverbed Days' full of fun activities and competitions to bond their staff.

Future plans are to continue to service the commercial contract focus with a strong niche in ISD and university projects. Further development of Riverbed and Slick Rock products for the retail market are also expected. The business partners hope to continue to expand and further establish Slick Rock on the national market and introduce new product offerings for both planters/site furnishings and pool products. They also plan to expand into product distribution in 2020.

Subcontractor Riverbed Concrete is in Boerne. -mjm

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Engaging students



FJ Enterprises LLC Office Manager, **Russell Bartlett**, represented the San Antonio Masonry Contractors Association (SAMCA) at the Bandera Career Day in November. The first wave of students started perusing the tables at 10 am and continued in groups until 2 pm where Bartlett engaged with students who seemed to be very interested in what he had to say about the masonry industry. -cmw