



# PRE-CAST CONCRETE COMPANY

By CARLY HORTON

## Strength born of flexibility

*Anchorage Pre-Cast Concrete Company bucks economic downturn by identifying trends, offering diverse range of products*

**I**t seems a contradiction in terms, but Pre-Cast Concrete Company has built a rock-solid reputation on its willingness to be flexible.

Even as other companies struggle to stay afloat during these trying economic times, business is booming for Pre-Cast Concrete thanks, in large part, to its ability to not only keep a large selection of standard products in stock, but design new precast concrete solutions, produce detailed shop drawings, build forms or use existing forms and manufacture products for custom jobs.

According to Manager Chris Taylor, offering a diverse range of products and services is a strategy that has served the company well during its 32-year history in Alaska.



*Memorial bench made by Pre-Cast Concrete.*

"We just listen to what our customers want," Taylor said. "That's the beauty of this industry. We're constantly evolving our business and adding to our product line."

Pre-Cast Concrete was established in 1977 by John McGee, and Anchorage Sand and Gravel Company Inc. purchased the business in 2000. Ac-



Crane hoists a 30-ton Alaska Railroad bridge component.

MEMBER PROFILE

cording to Taylor, being a subsidiary of AS&G has been a boon to business.

"It definitely increased our productivity and has allowed us to better serve our customers," Taylor said. "In 2003, we acquired a new building and a new yard. We had always used AS&G products, and now with the batch plant right next door, we're more efficient."

Unlike standard concrete, which is poured into site-specific forms and cured on site, precast concrete is cast in a reusable form, which is then cured in a controlled environment, transported to the construction site and lifted into place. By producing precast concrete right at the plant, the product can be properly cured and closely monitored. Precast concrete also allows for a virtually limitless set of colors, textures and shapes.

Pre-Cast Concrete manufactures three categories of products: Architectural products, such as wall panels, foam insulated panels and weights; landscaping products, such as planters, benches and landscape blocks; and utility precast items, such guard posts, median barriers and bollards.

According to Taylor, Pre-Cast Concrete is the only company in the state that produces architectural products.

"We're exceptionally flexible in our designs," Taylor said. "We can pretty much take any architect's design and produce it."

In addition to its Anchorage location, PCC also has a plant in Fairbanks. The company operates year-round, which gives it a leg up on the competition. Winters are dedicated to manufacturing standard products for utilities, and summers are generally reserved for custom jobs.



*Architectural panels made by Pre-Cast Concrete.*

"Alaska's short construction season means we spend the colder months of the year producing standard products, so when the contractors are ready to roll in the spring, we have the materials ready and waiting for them," Taylor said.

Pre-Cast Concrete's clients include Anchorage Municipal Light and Power, GCI Communications Corp., the Alaska Railroad Corp. and ConocoPhillips Alaska Inc.

Anchorage-based Davis Constructors and Engineers Inc. has collaborated with Pre-Cast Concrete on a number of notable recent projects, including the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport North/South Terminal connector, the Providence Alaska Medical Center parking garage and

the Providence Cancer Center.

"PCC provided all the architectural panels for the North Terminal connector," Davis Project Engineer Mack Miessner said. "Unlike basic precast wall panels like you'd see on a Target or Wal-Mart, architectural panels offer maximum design flexibility. They're also relatively easy to manufacture, erect and maintain."

Working with Pre-Cast Concrete, Miessner said, proved virtually effortless.

"It was a very straightforward process – there were no hiccups as far as the design and the panels themselves were concerned. We were very happy with their product and service. I'd definitely use them again."

ML&P has worked with PCC on a number of projects over the past two decades and counts the concrete company among its most frequent collaborators.

"PCC builds all our transformer pads, underground utility vaults, switch cabinet pads, 14-foot and 18-foot utility vaults and produces all our specialty concrete work," ML&P Head

Warehouseman Mike Sawyer said. "A lot of our projects are time-sensitive in nature and they always get us everything we need in a timely manner. We've been working with them for 20 years and they always do an exceptional job."

Not content to rest on its laurels, Pre-Cast Concrete is always looking for ways to improve its products and service the diverse needs of its customers.

"There's always new technology we can use to enhance our product, from improved forms to additives for mixes," Taylor said.

According to the National Precast Concrete Association, a not-for-profit organization representing more than 1,100 companies that are committed to expanding the use of quality precast concrete, precast concrete products have many environmental attributes including energy savings associated with concrete's thermal mass, reducing construction waste and emissions reductions from on-site equipment.

Precast concrete products correlate directly with at least four Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design


(LEED) Green Building credits.

"LEED is a huge trend, and rightly so," Taylor said. "It's our job to stay at the forefront of that trend."

Pre-Cast Concrete employs roughly 10 full-time employees in the winter and 20 during construction season. In spite of the flagging economy, Taylor said he expects another busy summer.

"I'm not complaining this year," he said. "The economy hasn't affected us because we're so diverse in what we produce and not limited to the standard products. And I expect the economic stimulus package will bring us even more work."

Taylor, who has worked in the precast industry for more than 15 years, said he derives great satisfaction from knowing Pre-Cast Concrete has contributed to so many successful projects.

"We see the end result, the fruits of our labor, every time we drive through town," he said. "The best part is just seeing your work and helping your clients achieve their vision." 

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*Carly Horton is a reporter based in Alaska.*