

# 9300 CONTRACTOR

Tile Contractors' Association of America

The Voice of Signatory Tile/Stone Contractors

FEATURED INSIDE:  
**Commercial Tile  
& Stone  
Large Format Tile  
Installation**

SUMMER 2013





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# A Message from the President



Welcome to the “new” 9300 Contractor. Actually, 9300 Contractor isn’t all that new. Like TCAA which was first established in 1903 as the Interstate Wood Mantel and Tile Dealers Association, the magazine you see before you originated over a century ago as Mantel, Tile & Grate Monthly, evolving over time into a quarterly newsletter called 9300 Contractor and now “all grown up” as a new industry magazine bearing the same name. Throughout this publication’s 100+ year evolution, much in the tile industry has changed. One thing that has remained constant is TCAA’s mission to promote the specification of tile, advocate for the highest levels of professionalism in the industry and serve as a voice for signatory tile contractors.

Recent years have brought forth a mindboggling array of new materials, methods and technologies at lightning speed and created opportunities to take tile where it’s never gone before. But these new materials have also brought challenges, especially when placed in the hands of unqualified contractors. Ask manufacturers about their biggest headache and the answer you’ll get most often is project failures caused by contractors installing their materials incorrectly or using the wrong materials for the job.

Recognizing the need to keep signatory contractors on the cutting edge of so much swift change and providing a way for those who specify tile to identify the contractors most qualified to install this breathtaking array of new materials, TCAA created the industry’s first certification program for contractors – the Trowel of Excellence™. Launched in 2006 in partnership with the International Masonry Institute and the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers, Trowel of Excellence™ certification quickly became the gold standard of the industry. Since then, other certification programs have been introduced and our industry is well served by those programs. But Trowel of Excellence™ with its rigorous certification and recertification requirements remains the gold standard for owners, developers and architects who want their installations done right the first time.

In today’s ever-changing and competitive construction market, architects, designers, general contractors, project managers and, yes, tile contractors have to bring their “A Game” to every project. In each quarterly issue of our new 9300 Contractor magazine, you’ll see stunning examples of installations completed by Trowel of Excellence™ certified contractors who do just that each and every day. Enjoy!

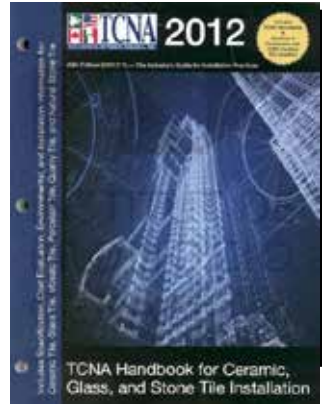
Jennifer Panning, TCAA President  
Artisan Tile, Inc.



# Installer Skills Become Focus of the Tile Industry

Scott Conwell, International Masonry Institute

Within the past year, International Masonry Institute (IMI) and International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (BAC) have worked with Tile Contractors Association of America (TCAA) and other industry organizations to lead the charge in raising the bar for the quality of work required of tile contractors and installers, effectively eliminating many of the unskilled installers from their eligibility to bid work. This article will take a look at some of our recent successes, as well as the new changes coming in the area of advanced certifications for tile installers.



*The 2012 and 2013 TCNA Handbooks include new language addressing installer qualifications.*



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## **TCNA Handbook Language**

Our organizations were instrumental in introducing installer qualification language into the 2012 edition of the Tile Council of North America (TCNA) Handbook for Ceramic, Glass, and Stone Tile Installation. The acknowledgement of the importance of the skills of the tile installers defines a new tone for this widely-used reference, which up until now has been considered mainly a technical reference for designers and installers. The Handbook now has a section on Including Installer and Contractor Qualifications in Specifications on pages 37-38 of the 2012 Handbook, saying in part:

“Every aspect of a tile installation relies on the tile contracting company and its installers.

“The following non-profit programs are well-established and recognized by the Handbook Committee:

“Journeyman Tile Layers Apprenticeship Programs... Contractors that employ union Journeymen Tile Setters can be found through the Union Locals that list their signatory contractors, primarily the Bricklayer and Allied Craftworkers (BAC)...

“IMI Contractor College...

“Tile Contractors’ Association of America (TCAA) Trowel of Excellence™ Program...”

## **Master Guide Specifications**

Building on the momentum of the Handbook language, IMI had meetings with Arcom, publisher of MasterSpec, an organization allied with AIA which produces the predominant master guide specification used by architects and designers across the United States. MasterSpec agreed on the importance of this quality language, and adopted Journeyman Tile Layer, Trowel of Excellence Certification, and IMI Supervisor Certification Program language into their published recommendations.

## **Project Specifications**

It did not take long for individual project specifications to incorporate this quality language into specifications for their individual projects. A large national restaurant chain has included the language below into their spec for their prototype designs. We have also seen similar language in bid documents for a large hotel and casino.

## Constructability Research

To supplement our role as a support organization for end users of tile, IMI has partnered with national accounts such as McDonald's Corporation, constructing mockups that explore and document the use of tile on floors and walls, for both interior and exterior applications. McDonald's uses photos and videos of these constructability mockups for their internal quality assurance program.

## Emerging Technologies

IMI and BAC have been among the first to support new systems such as



ventilated rainscreens and thin porcelain panel technology, providing AIA-registered continuing education programs and instructor training. With the support of the manufacturers, IMI has constructed rainscreen and thin panel mockups in many of our training centers, and have introduced these systems into our training curriculum in order to prepare our contractors to bid this work when it hits the streets, establishing the precedent that these systems are the work of our trade.

## Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers

With an increased focus on the skills of the installers, IMI, BAC, and TCAA have teamed with NTCA and CTEF to further distinguish our own training and quality standards from those of the untrained, unskilled sector of the market. What has evolved is the new Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers, or ACT. The first ACT certifications took place at Coverings April 29 – May 2, 2013, at the Georgia



World Congress Center in Atlanta, in the following skill areas:

- *Substrate Preparation / Large Format Tile*
- *Showers*
- *Membranes*
- *Mud Work*

The purpose of the ACT Certification program is to establish a testing vehicle that evaluates the skill and technical knowledge of the ceramic tile installers. According to the ACT Advisory Committee made up of members of TCAA, IMI, BAC, NTCA, and CTEF, a union installer must have successfully completed the BAC apprenticeship program in order to be eligible for the certification. Non-union installers must be CTEF-certified to be eligible.

To become certified, the installer must pass an online written examination and successfully construct a mockup that meets the evaluation criteria established for the respective skill area.

The committees for each of the ACT certifications have put together standardized packets for the installers, evaluators, and module constructors in preparation for the nationwide rollout of the program after Coverings. Each packet contains all the information necessary to facilitate the delivery of these certifications including:

- *Statement of intent*
- *Study guide*
- *Test questions & answers*
- *Module cut sheets*
- *Tools and equipment lists*
- *Mockup drawings and photos*
- *Evaluation criteria*
- *Reference documents*



*Ventilated rainscreen mockups in IMI's Addison training center helped lead to the use of this system on the interior and exterior walls on the First Bank and Trust in Skokie, Illinois, installed by Trowel of Excellence™ certified contractor DTI of Illinois.*

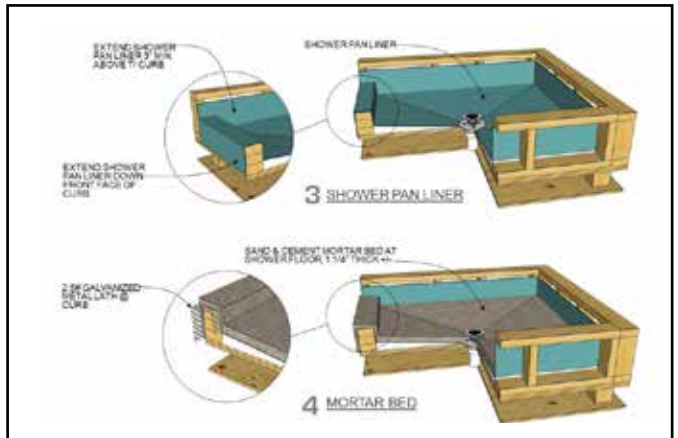
TCAA member contractors will be able to send their installers to designated IMI training centers for certification testing.

The new ACT certification program is perhaps the most comprehensive component of the tile industry's overall effort to distinguish our skilled contractors and installers as the most qualified for any type of tile work, from typical installations to new products and technologies. We have come a long way in a short amount of time, and our efforts are paying off as we see an increased awareness and demand for skilled TCAA contractors and BAC installers.

*The ACT certification in Showers tests the installer's ability to construct a shower and curb using the TCNA Handbook method B415, achieving proper continuity at corners, transitions, and terminations, for a watertight installation.*



*The ACT certification in Substrate Preparation/ LFT tests the installer's skills in identifying the areas of a floor that are out-of-flat, correcting for flatness, and laying large format tile in a 1/3 running bond pattern.*



## Large Format Tile Goes “Really Big” in Cleveland



*Installers use a special setting frame to move panels to specially built prep table.*

There's large format tile and then there's LARGE format tile. Not that long ago, 12" x 12" was considered a large format tile on the cutting edge of technology. Today, large format is 4' x 4' or bigger. And an installation project recently completed by Commercial Tile & Stone in Cleveland, Ohio involved one of the largest tile products currently on the market – Crossville's Laminam porcelain panel measuring a whopping 118.1" x 39.4" x 1/8".

Installation of the monster Laminam panels took place at the new one million square foot **Global Center for Health Innovation and Convention Center** (formerly called the Cleveland Medical Mart), scheduled to open this summer in downtown Cleveland. Commercial Tile & Stone was selected by the project's general contractor, Turner Construction, to install 45,000 square feet of ceramic tile, quarry tile and Realstone in toilet rooms and concession areas throughout the complex. An additional 5,000 square feet of Laminam was

specified for the ballroom prefunction area in the Convention Center and entry level atrium of the Global Center.

Installation of the Laminam porcelain panels was “a whole new ballgame for us” according to Lucinda Noel, President of Commercial Tile & Stone. “With these panels so new to the industry, there aren’t any installation specifications for them in the TCNA Handbook at this time and thus, we had to rely on our industry colleagues for information and advice, as well as information from the manufacturer’s website,” she said. Noel also noted that since this was her company’s first experience in bidding a project involving the porcelain panels, a certain amount of “guesstimating” was involved in identifying what the waste

factor should be and the number of man hours the installation would require. Rather than adding a percentage to cover waste as she typically does when estimating for ceramic tile, Noel arrived at a waste factor that proved to be spot-on by analyzing the drawings based on the area layout and doing a separate take off for the waste.

Estimating man hours proved a bit more challenging. Installing the Laminam panels would involve building prep tables large enough to accommodate the size of the panels and training installers on the use of unfamiliar tools such as a SIGMA 8E KERA CUT 128 tile cutter capable of cutting the oversized



*Once cut, the thin porcelain panel cleanly snaps in half.*

Photos: David Federoff



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*Installers carry a prepared panel to the scaffold. To address possible damage caused by suction cup failure on the textured face, installers developed a specific technique for carrying each panel.*

panels, euro trowels, the Tuscan Leveling System and an aluminum setting frame with suction cups for moving and placing the panels on the walls. And then there was the unknown amount of time it would take to cut, prep, move and place each panel. With not much information to go on from other contractors who had installed the Laminam panels, Noel produced a man hour estimate based on productivity results for 12"x24" ceramic tiles and added to that what she calls a "wild guess" of how much longer, percentage wise, it would take to install the panels. It turned out that her

"wild guess" was right on target for the Convention Center area where full size panels were installed to a height just under 10' using a Baker scaffold but off on installation of the panels in the Global Center area which involved a great deal of cutting, wrapping returns and working from a multi-tiered tower type scaffold in the area where the panels were installed up to a height of 17'.

In preparation for the installation, Noel reached out to industry colleagues for guidance. Eric Owen of Crossville proved to be an invaluable resource, as did Chris Condeni of Laticrete which provided the setting materials for the Laminam installation. Videos provided by Owen allowed Commercial's project foreman Paul Felleisen to see a demonstration of how to handle, prep and place the monster sized panels. And the videos were particularly helpful as a review tool on the day of the on-site set up and training of Commercial's



installation crew on a mock up built by Commercial. The Crossville and Laticrete representatives were on hand to offer guidance to the installers on how to physically handle the panels, mix the setting material (LATICRETE 254 Platinum multi-purpose thin set mortar) to proper consistency and troweling techniques using the Euro Notch trowel to achieve the necessary 100% adhesive mortar coverage needed to hold the panels securely in place. In fact, the onsite training attracted a sizeable audience of BAC union representatives, representatives of the owner Merchandise Mart Properties and general contractor Turner Construction, sales reps from Crossville distributor Virginia Tile and TCAA Past President John Trendell, all of whom were interested in learning what installation of the large porcelain panels would entail.

Moving the materials onto the jobsite demanded advance planning. Laminam panels are shipped in oversized crates (124" long x 44" wide) and require forklifts with either 44" forks (for side entry) or 84" forks for end entry. It was necessary not only to have the appropriate forklifts at the jobsite but also to ensure that the crates would then fit onto freight elevators, as well as through openings to the installation area.

Substrate preparation was a critical consideration since the porcelain panels required a **very** flat (level 5) substrate.

To ensure the walls were properly prepared to accept the porcelain panels, Commercial's installers followed quality industry installation procedures to the letter. Another critical consideration was ensuring that each panel was prepped



*Prepared panels installed using Tuscan Leveling System.*



and placed on the wall in precise conformity to the layout. Since maximum adherence required that both the panels and the walls be coated with thin set mortar, once a panel was placed, moving it without causing damage to the panel was practically impossible.

Once uncrated, each fragile panel was carefully moved to one of the specially built prep tables where cut-outs were made to accommodate electrical outlets and installation around elevator openings. The architect's plan also called for panels in the area that extended up 17 feet high to be installed in half size (59" x 39.4") pieces, requiring that a number of the panels be cut in half before prepping. And with each panel representing 30 square feet of material, extra care was taken to ensure that every cut was precise.

The next step involved detailed precision. While installers working on the ground applied thin set mortar to the panels, another set of installers on scaffolds simultaneously applied thin set to the designated wall areas. What followed was a carefully timed process in which the "battered" panels were moved from the prep tables, up the scaffold and into the hands of installers who then placed the panels on the wall, all before the thin set had time to skim over and reduce adherence. An aluminum setting frame with suction cups that attached to the panel face was used to move and place each panel. But even with this tool, the process was a challenge because textured faces on some of the panels made adherence of the suction cups unreliable. Commercial's installation crew quickly developed a technique to carry the frame to protect the panel should any of the suction cups lose contact while not compromising the "battered" side of the panel. Areas receiving the half sized panels at a height

under 10' required two installers while installation of all the full size panels and the half size panels at heights exceeding 10' involved a team of four installers.

The project took a total of 14 weeks, going from November 2012 through mid-April 2013. Despite this being Commercial's first experience in installing the new Laminam panels and the challenges that involved, Noel says the installation went smoothly and credits that to her project foreman Paul Felleisen and Commercial's

topnotch IUBAC craftworkers. "Our crew went above and beyond to deliver a successful installation project that we are proud to have been a part of."



*Installed 10' x 3' Laminam panels. Insert shows textured panel face.*

## **Project Partners**

**Owner:** Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc.

**General Contractor:** Turner Construction Company

**Tile Contractor:** Commercial Tile & Stone, Inc.

**Materials Suppliers:** Crossville, LATICRETE International, Tuscan Leveling System

## **About Commercial Tile & Stone, Inc.**

Commercial Tile & Stone has been performing quality installations in the Cleveland, Ohio area since 1992. A member of Tile Contractors' Association of America, Commercial achieved Trowel of Excellence™ certification in 2010.

# 2013 Total Solutions Plus

## Partners in Progress

Mark your calendar and get ready for the best industry event of the year – and in one of the best locations in the country!



Total Solutions Plus is set to kick off later this fall and promises to be an event offering cutting edge education, outstanding networking and lots of fun – all in the beautiful and relaxed surrounds of southwestern Florida. The dates are October 26-29 and the location is the luxurious Hyatt Coconut Point Resort & Spa in Bonita Springs, Florida.

## Information and Education

Featured speakers include Congressional lobbyist Pat O'Connor who will show you how to plan for 2014 implementation of the employer mandate under the Affordable

Care Act, what it means for your company and whether it's better to pay or play, and Tile Council of North America Executive Director Eric Astrachan who will walk you through recent changes in ANSI and the TCNA Handbook. You'll also enjoy breakout sessions that demonstrate the new Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers (ACT) program, discuss Barrier Free Design/Techniques and Search Engine Optimization, an intriguing

session called Specification Smackdown and more! And, of course IMI's Contractor College for signatory contractors will bring you up to speed on the new ventilated façade systems.

## Fun and Games

From a golf tournament to Segway tours to an Everglades Eco tour, to the closing Beach Party Dinner Dance, Total Solutions Plus offers plenty of play to go along with the work.

Total Solutions Plus is a partnership of four of the industry's largest and most respected organizations: Ceramic Tile Distributors Association, National Tile Contractors Association, Tile Contractors' Association of America and the Tile Council of North America.

Visit the Total Solutions Plus website at [ctdahome.org/tsp/2013/index.shtml](http://ctdahome.org/tsp/2013/index.shtml) for more information and to register and make your hotel reservations. Or scan the QRC code with your smart phone or i-Pad to visit the website.



# Tech Corner

## Installation of Large Format Tile Finishes

by Arthur Mintie, Director, Technical Services



### LATICRETE INTERNATIONAL, Inc.

With the tremendous advances in technology and materials, the average tile installation is no longer average. Tile is now available in very large facial dimension sizes. In addition, large format porcelain panels are in the market with facial dimensions as large as 4' x 8'. The advantages of large format tile include;

- Narrow grout joints – rectified, large format tile allows for thinner grout joint widths
- Easier maintenance – it is typically much easier to clean the face of tile than it is to clean grout.
- Room size perception – the perception is that large tile makes the room in which it is installed appear larger

However, there are several considerations to keep in mind when installing large format tile:

- Lippage
- Adhesive Mortar Coverage
- Curing / Protection

### Lippage

Lippage is defined as a condition where one edge of a tile is higher than an adjacent tile, giving the finished surface an uneven appearance. Proper substrate preparation is critical in avoiding lippage. In order to achieve a flat substrate that will lead to a smooth tiled finish, follow the ANSI standards for the preparation of subfloor surfaces as dictated in A108.02.4.4.1.4.3.1 – Subfloor Surfaces (page 25 of the 2012 ANSI Handbook); for thin-bed ceramic tile installations when a cementitious bonding material will be used, including medium bed mortar: maximum allowable variation in the tile substrate – for tiles with edges shorter than 15" (375mm), maximum allowable variation is 1/4" in 10' (6mm in 3m) from the required plane, with no more than 1/16" variation in 12" (1.5mm variation in 300mm) when measured from the high points in the surface. For tiles with at least one edge 15" (375mm) in length, maximum allowable variation is 1/8" in 10' (3mm in 3m) from the required plane, with no more than 1/16" variation in 24" (1.5mm variation in 600mm) when measured from the high points in the surface.

Maintaining tight joints with large format modules can be challenging. ANSI A108.2.4.3.8 deals with grout joint size in this regard: "To accommodate the range in facial dimensions of the tile supplied for a specific project, the actual grout joint size may, of necessity, vary from the grout joint size specified. The actual grout joint size shall be at least 3 times the actual variation of facial dimensions of the tile supplied. Example: for tile having a total variation of 1/16"

in facial dimensions, a minimum 3/16" (4.5mm) grout joint shall be used. Nominal centerline of all joints shall be straight with due allowances for hand molded or rustic tiles. In no circumstance shall the grout joint be less than 1/16" (1.5mm)."

### **Adhesive Mortar Coverage**

Lack of proper adhesive mortar coverage can lead to cracked tile and grout and potentially loss of bond to the tiles. Use the appropriate sized notch trowels, back-butter and tap the tiles in place to facilitate proper coverage and bedding. The use of hand held vibrating pads can also help to properly bed large format porcelain panel finishes.

Industry standards require that a minimum coverage of 80% be attained for interior, non-wet areas, and a minimum coverage of 95% be attained for any interior, wet-area or any exterior installation. Maximum or 100% coverage is typically required for large format porcelain panels as the current ceramic tile industry standards that pertain to adhesive mortar coverage do not apply.

### **Curing / Protection**

Larger tiles require a longer cure time due to the fact that the mortar simply cannot cure quickly, especially under a dense porcelain bodied tile. While there is no empirical data / formula that specifically address the cure rate in relation to the facial dimensions of tile, some manufacturers have had good experience in maintaining a minimum 7 day cure at 70°F (21°C). Allow for longer cure periods in cooler temperatures, higher humidity levels or when large format porcelain bodied tiles are utilized.

*As far as protecting newly tiled floors; the ceramic tile industry currently provides the following language:*

"To avoid damage to finished tilework, schedule floor installations to begin only after all structural work, building enclosure, and overhead finishing work, such as ceilings, painting, mechanical and electrical work, are completed. Keep all traffic off finished tile floor floors until they have fully cured. Builder shall provide up to 3/4" thick plywood or OSB protection over non-staining kraft paper to protect floors after installation materials have cured. Covering the floor with polyethylene or plywood in direct contact with the floor may adversely affect the curing process of grout and latex/polymer modified portland cement mortar." – TCNA Handbook "Protecting New Tile Work" – page 38.

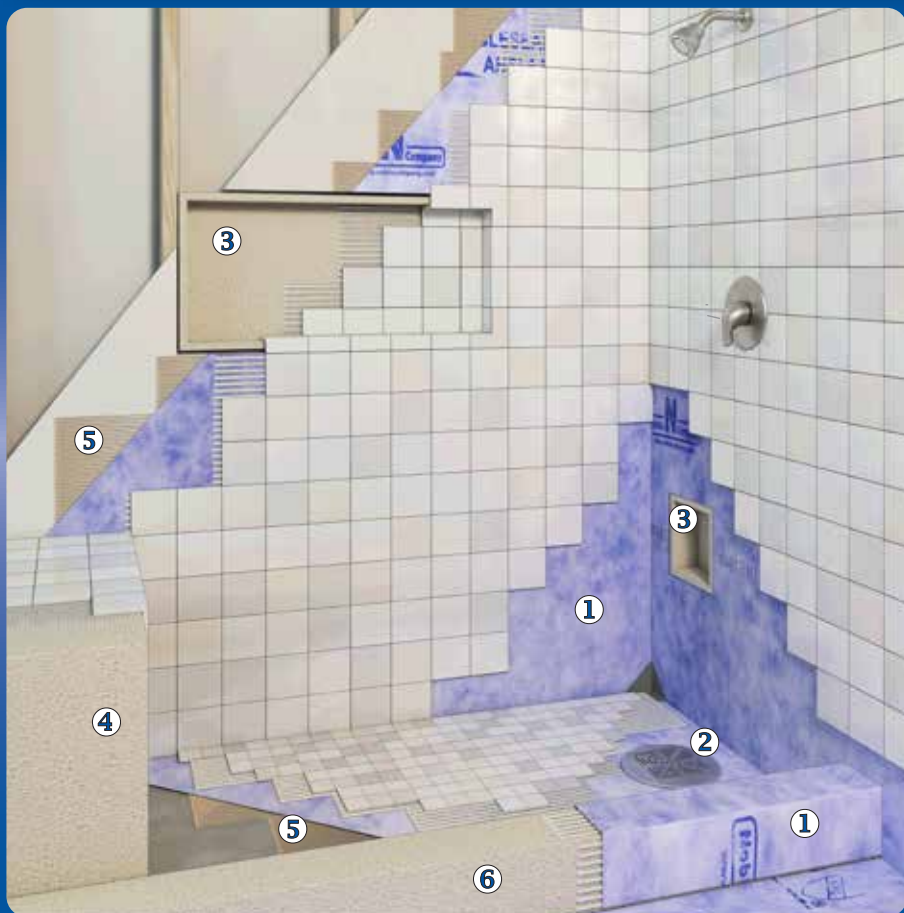
### **References:**

*2012 TCNA Handbook for Ceramic Tile Installation 49th Edition. Tile Council of North America, Inc. Anderson, SC.*

*2012 American National Standard Specifications for Installation of Ceramic Tile. Tile Council of North America, Inc. Anderson, SC.*



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# Complete TEC® System Solves Installation Challenges at Pinckney School's New Fine Arts Connector

*TEC Products Provide Solutions for Both Interior and Exterior Challenges*



A fine arts building addition at Pathfinder and Navigator Schools in Pinckney, Michigan contains more than 16,000 square feet of tile, all installed with TEC® products.

The building addition houses fine and performing arts space, including a new band and orchestra suite, choir and music rooms, art rooms, a fine arts integration studio and conference room. More than 15,000 square feet of terrazzo, ceramic and porcelain tile is featured inside the facility. Terrazzo tile outfits the floor, ceramic adorns interior columns and porcelain creates unique interior benches.

Outside, the Fine Arts Connector makes an especially artistic statement. An additional 1,000 square feet of tile is featured on seven piers that are curved, designed to resemble the profile of a cello. Installing glass tile on the undulating piers created many challenges for the project team, so they turned to TEC brand products. “We were presented with several unique challenges on this project,” said Jennifer Panning, President of Artisan Tile, Inc., who served as tile subcontractor. “The combination of a 30 feet-high exterior application, using glass tile, various radiuses and a vertical substrate meant we needed products that could stand up to these challenges. We chose the TEC brand for this very reason – quality products and technical support.”

Artisan Tile's firsthand experience and past successes with TEC products and technical support made their choice easy. The construction manager, architect and H.B. Fuller Construction Products representatives were involved early on to consult and help navigate the complexities of the job. Everyone worked together to determine the solution. According to Panning, the team agreed that the most important part of the tile installation was beneath the surface. As a

result, Artisan Tile spent 80 percent of its time focusing on substrate preparation.

Artisan Tile utilized several TEC products that all meet or exceed ANSI specifications: Xtra Flex™ Acrylic Latex Additive, HydraFlex™ Waterproofing Crack Isolation Membrane, Super Flex™ Mortar, AccuColor® Premium Unsanded Grout and TEC® Acrylic Grout Additive. On the scratch coat and mud set, XtraFlex Acrylic Latex Additive was used at a 1:1 ratio, providing additional bond strength. For waterproofing, HydraFlex™ Waterproofing Crack Isolation Membrane was used. It is flexible, mold and mildew resistant and has crack isolation properties. Super Flex™ Mortar was used to set the tile

and has the highest bond strength of any TEC mortar. AccuColor® Premium Unsanded Grout was mixed with TEC® Acrylic Grout Additive in place of water. Together they form joints that are less susceptible to water penetration, which is necessary for exterior use in Michigan's freeze/thaw climate.

Combined, the TEC products worked to overcome the unique set of installation challenges the project team encountered. The result is a striking external aesthetic that sustains the seasonal elements of Michigan, and a beautiful interior that endures high traffic and heavy use by students. "We are happy with the results TEC products brought to the Fine Arts Connector," said Panning. "H.B. Fuller Construction Products provided the technical support and products we needed to provide a smooth installation that meets the unique challenges of the project."

The Fine Arts Connector was completed in August 2012. The Michigan-based project team included Artisan Tile, Inc., Wold Architects and Engineers, and construction manager, George W. Auch Company.



*Curved pillars featuring glass tile and designed to resemble a cello presented unique installation challenges.*



The TEC brand is offered by H.B. Fuller Construction Products Inc. – a leading provider of technologically advanced construction materials and solutions to the commercial, industrial and residential construction industry. Headquartered in Aurora, Illinois, the company's recognized and trusted brands - TEC®, CHAPCO®, Grout Boost®, Foster®, AIM™ and others – are available through an extensive network of distributors and dealers, as well as home improvement retailers.



*The interior of the Fine Arts Connector featured over 15,000 square feet of terrazzo, ceramic and porcelain tile.*

For more information, visit [www.hbfuller-cp.com](http://www.hbfuller-cp.com).

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# John Mason to Retire From IUBAC

John Mason is retiring from his position as National Craft Director for Tile/Marble/Terrazzo for the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers effective August 1st. A BAC member since 1967 and a Journeyman tilesetter, Mason was a longtime local union officer and served as Business Manager of Local 32 in Detroit prior to joining the International Union's field staff.



As IUBAC's senior representative to the Tile/Marble/Terrazzo industry, Mason brought extensive firsthand experience to a multi-faceted BAC portfolio which includes: educating owners, design and construction professionals, and consumers on the proper installation of tile, marble and terrazzo products and working with industry leaders to secure the standards for proper installation of TMT products; promoting the sustainability and countless other unique advantages of TMT materials over competing products; and strengthening Labor-Management cooperation to develop state-of-the-art customized education and training programs for design professionals, signatory contractors and craftworkers.

Mason's service on the ANSI and TCNA Handbook committees was instrumental in helping labor and ceramic tile contractors gain a much stronger voice in the process of establishing the installation standards for our industry. He retires on a particular high note with recent roll out of the new national Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers (ACT) program which he played a key role in establishing.

When he learned of Mason's retirement, TCAA Labor Committee Chair John Trendell said the following. "I have known John for over 25 years and he has worked his whole career to secure a better life for the working men and women he has represented. He has also worked to bring about programs that insist on nothing but the highest quality for ceramic tile installations. And his efforts to establish the new ACT program will result in widespread recognition of the expertise of IUBAC tilesetters who are among the most qualified people in the industry ... just like John has been throughout his career."

TCAA Executive Director Carole Damon seconded Trendell's sentiments. "John has been a driving force for quality in our industry, a very good friend to TCAA and will be greatly missed."

IUBAC has not yet announced its plans to fill the position left vacant by Mason's retirement.

# TCAA Labor Report

**John Trendell, TCAA Labor Committee Chair**  
**Trendell Consulting**



The winter Labor-Management meetings of the IUBAC were held in San Diego in early March. Attendees from TCAA were Tommy Conner of Superior Tile & Stone, Grace Gebhardt of Venice Terrazzo & Tile, John Baumgardner of BFC, Ltd., Brad Trostrud of Trostrud Mosaic & Tile, and John Trendell of Trendell Consulting.

General session meetings included information on new initiatives in 3-D computer modeling of masonry buildings, Building Information Modeling (BIM). These design systems will be the next great change in building design. IUBAC is being proactive by funding and working with Professor Russ Gentry of Georgia Tech to develop this software. Other topics included health care information, training, and marketing.

The TMT Craft Committee meeting held presentations on thin porcelain panels and ventilated façade systems. Svend Hovmand of Crossville was the speaker and certainly enlightened everyone on these new materials and installation procedures. In fact several of our contractors are on the cutting edge of these new products. Vinnie DeLazzero of Port Morris Tile & Marble of New York and Lucinda Noel of Commercial Tile & Stone of Cleveland have had great success with the porcelain panels and, in Chicago, Brian Castro of DTI of Illinois has completed a ventilated façade project and has several more underway.

Scott Conwell of IMI reported on the success of their marketing of the new qualified contractor language found in the TCNA Handbook. As reported previously, MasterSpec, McDonald's Corporation, and MAPEI now incorporate this language in their specifications. The newest development, however, has raised the bar even higher for quality ceramic tile installations. Conwell gave a presentation on the new national program developed for the testing of tile installers. The Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers (ACT) has initially set up 4 categories of tests: showers, large format tile, waterproof membranes, and mud work. The first ACT field tests were conducted at Coverings in early May and four TCAA Trowel of Excellence contractors were





*Eric Manzaroli (Artisan Tile) at work on large format certification test.*

represented by BAC installers taking the tests: Terrence Trame (Trendell Consulting); Gavin Collier (Trostrud Mosaic & Tile); Bill Dumas (Superior Tile & Stone); and Eric Manzaroli (Artisan Tile, Inc.). IUBAC and IMI also provided two test evaluators - Bob Mion, IMI Regional Training Director (Northeast) and Lupe Ortiz, Northern California Apprenticeship Coordinator.

With so many changes in materials and installations, it has become even more imperative that our contractor members, the IUBAC and their trained tile installers work together to be at the forefront of gaining these markets for our people. To date, we have seen great success and we look forward to working with labor to secure even more work in future new material ceramic tile projects.

# Superior Tile & Stone Receives CID Award

Superior Tile & Stone of San Leandro, California was among those honored at Coverings with a 2013 CID (Coverings Installation & Design) Award. Superior was recognized in the Stone, Commercial category for its installation work on The Smith Center for the Performing Arts in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Center features white Indiana Limestone on its façade with extensive use of marble on interior floors and walls of a large concert hall, two smaller theaters and a center lobby. The Art Deco design called for installation of light and dark polished Fior Di Pesco in an alternating pattern on the floors and a mixture of polished Rosso Asiago and Rosa Verona on the walls, installed in both book matched and diamond matched patterns, incorporating sculpted jams, layered headers and cubic columns. LATICRETE adhesive, waterproofing and grout were used in the installation.

Superior's engineering and fabrication teams in Las Vegas and Northern California supplied all the marble to the project cut to size and ready to install, producing over 1200 different shop tickets based on over 100 pages of shop drawings. One of the most challenging aspects of the project was the Founders Wall, composed of 16 large diamond matched panels, eight of which are incorporated into the concave





rotunda entry walls of the large concert hall. Custom fonts were developed for engraving over two thousand characters and many of the founders' names span more than one marble panel.

Since 1929, Superior Tile & Stone has sourced, fabricated and installed porcelain and ceramic tile, natural stone, marble, granite, quartz, thin brick, mosaic and terrazzo in commercial, hotel-casino, and residential properties throughout California, Nevada and the Pacific Northwest. The company became a certified Trowel of Excellence™ contractor in 2010.



# Trowel of Excellence™ Showcase

**Artisan Tile & Marble Co., of NJ, Inc.**  
**Somerset, New Jersey**  
**Owner: John J. Sekora**  
**Trowel of Excellence™ Certified 2006**

Founded in 1964, Artisan Tile & Marble Co., of NJ, Inc. (ATM) was one of the first signatory tile contracting companies in the nation to achieve Trowel of Excellence™ certification. Led by owner John J. Sekora, the pursuit of excellence in every facet of its operations resulted in ATM becoming one of the largest union commercial tile and stone contractors in New Jersey and a recognized leader throughout the industry.



*John and Doris Sekora*



Sekora began his tile industry career just out of high school, working as an office boy for Eugene Bazzell's BA-MOR Tile Co. in Baltimore, Maryland. He later worked for Peter Bratti Assoc. in New York City and sold tile for U.S. Ceramic Tile Co. before joining and eventually becoming owner of ATM.

“Artisan means true craftsman and reflects the company’s commitment to outstanding quality, value and dedication to professionalism,” said Sekora. “In the 49 years since its founding, ATM has lived up to its name, offering outstanding and award-winning installations by working in harmony with its general contractors and suppliers. ATM has installed nearly 50 million square feet of tile in over 12,000 projects and has worked for over 1500 general contractors.”

That commitment has led ATM to numerous recognitions and achievements. The company has been featured in a long list of industry publications that include NY Construction Magazine, - Institutional Architecture, NJ Monthly Magazine, Tile Industry News, Tile & Decorative Surfaces, Tile Letter, Forbes

Newspapers and Dimensional Stone. And in 2000, ATM was selected as New Jersey Monthly's Family Business of the Year.

Family business means just that at ATM. Sekora's oldest daughter Carol handles the company's computers and finances, middle daughter Nancy does expediting and purchasing, youngest daughter Michelle serves as company administrator and does the billing and son Ken serves as COO and handles the outside as a superintendent. Cousin Jim who has been with the company for nearly 35 years is president of the ceramic division and Jim's son Tim is the company's newest estimator. And wife Doris handles special projects and collections. In addition, ATM employs half a dozen other office employees who have been with the company for many years and who, according to Sekora, "are all members of my family except they don't have the same last name".

Commitment to the industry shows in the fact that ATM has two national association past presidents on staff – Sekora who is a past president of Tile Contractors' Association of America and Paul Vigna, a past president of the Marble Institute of America. ATM is also the only firm to boast two employees who received the highest honors bestowed by those two organizations – the TCAA Cesery Award to Sekora and MIA's Migliori Award to Vigna. Sekora and ATM were also the first tile contractor and tile contracting company to be certified by the International Masonry Institute's Contractor College in 2003.

Sekora has served as both president and treasurer of the New Jersey Tile Contractors' Association, and was the TCAA president in 2000-2001. He has also served as chairman of the TCAA Scholarship Committee since its inception, a program which he was instrumental in creating. And he was designated "official TCAA historian" in 2002 for his efforts in compiling the TCAA's 100th anniversary book, Ceramic Tile in 20th Century America. He has also served on many local and national union committees, was management trustee for several funds and founded Celebration of Tile, a local educational convention focused on architectural participation. Sekora is a member of the Greater New York/New Jersey Tile Contractors Association, the Marble Institute of America, and the American Subcontractors Association.

Currently enjoying semi-retirement, Sekora is an avid placomusophile (translation: a collector of champagne bottle caps) and even has his own website devoted to his collection at [www.champagnecaps.net](http://www.champagnecaps.net).





## Donald Stewart Center for Early Childhood Education

Artisan Tile and Marble has been the proud winner of numerous Golden Trowel Awards and TCAA Project of the Year Awards, among which was the Donald Stewart Center for Early Childhood Education, located in Elizabeth, NJ. According to Sekora, "This wasn't one of Artisan's largest or most famous projects but it is an ATM favorite because it won both First Place in the Commercial category of the TCAA Tile Project of the Year competition and First Place for Tile/Marble/Terrazzo in the NJ Golden Trowel Masonry Awards."

*Tile in a rainbow of colors and sizes created a whimsical, child-friendly statement.*

Challenged to create a whimsical, child-friendly, brightly colored and functional early childhood facility, this installation set a new standard in the use of unusual combinations.

Assisting the architect, Artisan Tile and Marble and its skilled union tile installers worked with a rainbow of colors and sizes showcasing the great depth and diversity of masonry materials incorporated in its design.

Tile was installed in corridors, lobbies, toilet room floors and walls and as exterior window designs. Very creative 3-dimensional geometric designs dominate the school, utilizing four different sizes, three different thicknesses and twenty diverse colors. These combinations formed a unique and intricate installation with an elegant and appealing balance of careful details. Blending different sizes and thicknesses - 11-5/16" x 11-5/16" x 3/4" terrazzo tiles with 2" x 2" x 1/4" unglazed ceramic mosaics by Daltile - a striking juxtaposition of patterns and colors was created - highlighting the recent trend toward the use of contrast colors and unusual design concepts.

The special challenges of this complex project were magnified by a conventional thick-bed mortar application on ramps and steps which created a unique layout situation along with a fast track installation schedule (with no overtime). The lobby was enhanced with medallion ceramic mosaic murals which were hand-made and hand-installed since time restraints prohibited the use of water jet or precut murals. Laticrete crack suppression and multiple Mapei grout colors added to this project's complexity.



# The Carl V. Cesery Award

Carl V. Cesery (1908-1963) was a force of nature in the American tile industry during the first half of the 20th century. His well known dedication to God and country was matched only by his fierce dedication to the tile industry where he distinguished himself over several decades for dynamic efforts to keep ceramic



tile before the building and construction market. He served with distinction as president of Tile Contractors' Association of America (TCAA) and the National Terrazzo and Mosaic Association, was one of the original trustees of the TCAA Trust Fund and worked tirelessly at local and national levels as a volunteer for the American Cancer Society.

Seeking to honor Cesery after his death in 1963, TCAA established the Carl V. Cesery Award to annually recognize distinguished service to the industry. The first Cesery Award was presented in 1964 to William North, president of American Olean. The award, a five inch bronze medallion, was created by legendary American sculptor Gilroy Roberts whose other notable work includes creation of the Kennedy half dollar.

This year, TCAA honors two individuals who, like Carl Cesery, have distinguished themselves in their service to the tile industry. Our 2013 and 2012 recipients will be recognized at ceremonies held this fall at the Total Solutions Plus industry event in Bonita Springs, Florida. They are:

## 2013 Cesery Award Recipient

Earl J. Trostrud, Jr.

Trostrud Mosaic & Tile Co.

For over 50 years, Earl J. Trostrud, Jr. has dedicated his life to the improvement of the ceramic tile industry. Born and raised in Chicago, he attended North Park Academy where he met Phyllis, his wife of 55 years. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from St. Olaf College in Minnesota in 1958 and joined the family business - Trostrud Mosaic & Tile Co., founded in 1929 by his father



Earl Trostrud, Sr. Earl learned the business from the bottom up, first working in the field and later in the office when he moved into estimating. In 1985, he became president of Trostrud Mosaic & Tile.

When Earl joined the family business, Trostrud Mosaic & Tile was already well established and highly respected in the residential field but he soon found that commercial work was more rewarding. Through his active involvement and in a variety of leadership positions with what is today the Ceramic Tile Contractors Association of Chicago (CTCAC), he continually sought out ways to bring the benefits of ceramic tile to the attention of architects, specification writers and interior designers and to generate a larger market for CTCAC's members. His efforts bore fruit and, today, CTCAC is one of the most successful local organizations in the country serving signatory tile contractors.

Earl was instrumental in starting the Chicago Tile Institute Promotion Fund in Chicago. The Fund, established to promote value of union installed ceramic and stone tile, was supported by a "self tax" of \$.02 for each man hour worked paid into the fund by Chicago signatory contractors. Over the years, the fund has been used to provide education to architects and designers and to showcase the many varieties, types, etc. of tile and their installation and applications. But perhaps the most successful use of the Promotion Fund was implementation of the CTI Showroom at the Chicago Merchandise Mart. The CTI Showroom was the result of a partnership between the Promotion Fund and five Chicago-area tile distributors and was the first showroom of its kind in Chicago where a broad audience of owners, developers, architects and designers could view, research and select the best finishing products for their

building projects. The CTI Showroom proved so successful that numerous tile manufacturers and distributors soon began establishing their own showrooms.

Through his influence and efforts, Earl also gained the support of the Chicago Tile Institute to publish and distribute a quarterly Ceramic Tile Newsletter focusing on new tile products, the newest and best installation materials and practices and noteworthy ceramic tile installations in the Chicago Metro area. And he was instrumental in the creation and distribution of indexed binders featuring a compilation of ceramic tile literature from 35 industry suppliers used by architects, designers and contractors in their reference libraries.

Earl served as Zone Director for the Tile Contractors' Association of America from 1972-1976. He has served as a trustee on the Board of Directors of the Chicago Tile Institute since 1974. In 1990, he became the Chairman and still serves in that position for the Pension and Welfare Fund. Earl also remains active in his business where he still does estimating and often visits job sites in the field. When he's not at work, you'll find him on the golf course or spending time with his thoroughbred horses which he races at tracks across the United States and in Canada.

## 2012 Cesery Award Recipient



Les L. Lippert  
Lippert Tile

Les Lippert is a third generation tile contractor and the second member of the Lippert family to receive the Cesery Award (his father Al Lippert was awarded the Cesery in 1996).

Les joined Lippert Tile Company in 1983 after graduation from college. Founded in 1949 by his grandfather William Lippert, Sr., Lippert Tile was a well known leader in the Milwaukee commercial tile installation market and Les'

first full-time role was as an estimator of commercial ceramic tile.

Seeing growing opportunities in the residential market, Les immediately began developing relationships that would lead to creation of a residential tile contracting sub-division of Lippert Tile. Les also saw the growing benefits of computerization and immediately began efforts to computerize Lippert

Tile's job costing process. After assuming the role of Controller in 1989, he computerized all of the company's accounting functions and after being named General Manager of the company's floor covering division, he computerized all estimating processes and introduced semiannual Strategic Planning. In 2000, Les was appointed president of Lippert Tile.

In the years since he took over leadership of Lippert Tile, Les has served the tile industry with distinction, amassing an impressive resume of active involvement with numerous industry organizations and service on a multitude of committees and boards. He is a member of the StarNet Best Practices Committee and Chair of the Vender Partnership Committee. Les currently serves as Chair of the Tile Contractors' Association of America Trust Fund and on TCAA's Scholarship Committee which he chaired from 2004-2007. He also currently serves as a trustee for the Building Trades United Pension Plan and on the Plan's Mortgage & Investment and Executive Committees

Les is a past president of TCAA, the Milwaukee Tile Contractors Association and the Floor Coverers Association of Greater Milwaukee. He has served on the Board of the International Council of Employers of Bricklayers and Allied Craft Workers and as a member of the IUBAC National LMCC and Local 5 LMCC. He was a member of the Government Affairs Committee, Strategic Planning Committee and Board of Directors of Associated General Contractors of Greater Milwaukee, served on the Bargaining Committee of the Allied Construction Employers Association and on the Training & Education Committee and Board of Directors of Floor Covering Installation Contractors Association.

Les' dedication extends beyond the tile industry and into his community where he is active in his church and served in various roles for the Lutheran High School Association of Greater Milwaukee and on the Board of the Make-A-Wish Foundation. An avid hunter, Les was founder and chair of the Milwaukee Chapter of Friends of the NRA. He and his wife Cindy have three children: Jeremy, an attorney in Arlington VA; Rebecca, a public relations executive in Louisville, KY, and Patrick who is serving in the United States Navy.



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Trowel of Excellence™ certification designates that a company consistently delivers outstanding skilled craftsmanship and superior management practices. Trowel of Excellence™ contractors employ only the best trained and most

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### **Corcoran Tile & Marble, Inc.**

Doug Taylor  
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### **Trendell Consulting, LLC**

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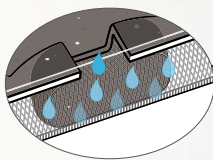
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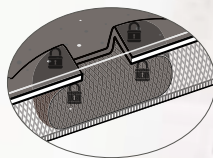
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Translucent color indicates proper mortar coverage under LATICRETE STRATA\_MAT



Snap for more information

- **Designed for use with modified thin-set mortars**
- **Single source supply**
- **ASTM C627 (Robinson) - EXTRA HEAVY**
- **Easy layout** - Chalk lines are easily visible
- **Anti-fracture protection** - Helps prevent cracks
- **45" (1.1m) roll width** - Covers floor area fast

[www.laticrete.com](http://www.laticrete.com) | 1.800.243.4788



**Globally Proven  
Construction Solutions**

See Data Sheet 230.99 for complete warranty information.

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