

# 9300 CONTRACTOR

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■ FEATURED INSIDE ■

*Youngstown Tile & Terrazzo Co. Project Spotlight  
Firenza Stone Exterior Large Format Porcelain Tile Installation*



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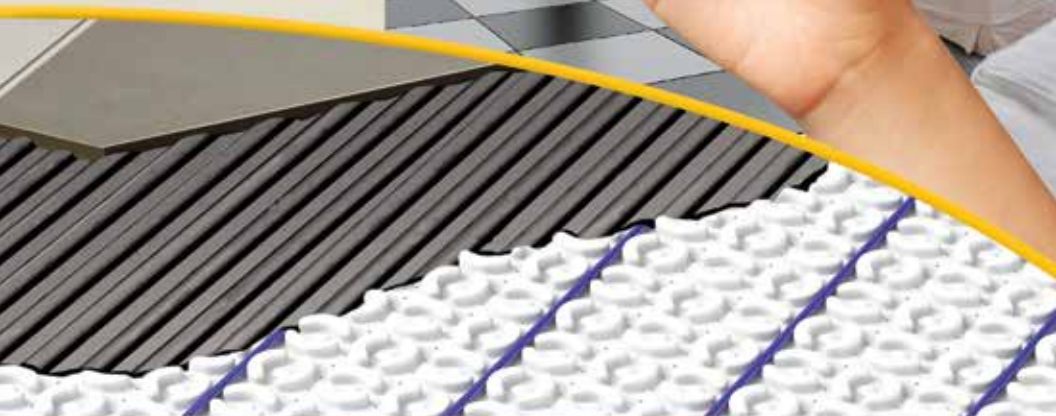
*Mr. David's Flooring International Project Spotlight  
McCorkle Aquatic Center for The Ohio State University*

WINTER 2019

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Lucinda Noel, Executive Director/Editor

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## A Message from the President

Brad Trostrud, Trostrud Mosaic & Tile  
TCAA President

### Random Thoughts

I have two adult male children and one constant complaint they both have about me is that I can be speaking on a specific topic, engaged with them, and out of the clear-blue-sky, I switch topics. Not to a related topic but, as Monty Python would say, “And now for something completely different.” As my two-year term, serving as TCAA president, comes to a close, this is exactly what I am about to do with my latest and FINAL “Message from the President.”

As union tile contractors, we must be experts in our field. We must continually raise the bar to show the architectural and design community our commitment to be the very best in our ever-changing industry where new products and techniques are constantly being introduced. We want to be considered the best option for the proper installation of ceramic tile. Together, union contractors, union leaders and craft workers should have an absolute common goal that we will, and must, be the absolute best at our craft. This requires true leadership and a vision of what we can achieve when we work toward a shared goal. This is not a painless endeavor. It requires fearless leadership, with union leaders mandating continuing education in every local collective bargaining agreement (CBA). Some local unions have already added this language to their CBA in order to ensure that every union tile setter and finisher of their local union meets an elite standard of competency. Likewise, all union tile contractors must also be committed to attending continuing education classes to ensure full comprehension of all current standards and methods of their craft. The goal, at the end of the day, is that every project installed by union craftworkers will be an above average installation. Over time this demonstration of commitment to continuing education, and to being “the best hands in the business,” will increase market share for union contractors. The architectural/design community and owners will recognize that we are the best at what we do, and that we are committed to the education that is required to continually be the best of the best. Expert contractors and skilled craftworkers may be more expensive than the alternative; therefore, we need to make sure that we ALWAYS prove to be well worth it.

Flying first class, is a luxury. A 4-carat diamond engagement ring is most certainly a luxury. Having a solid gold toilet seat would be a luxury. However, covering a floor with plastic-based materials (PBM), is bad for you and horrible for the environment. This type of flooring, often referred to as luxury vinyl tile, is NOT and will never be a luxury. A few weeks ago, I attended Total Solutions Plus, our annual ceramic tile conference, in Nashville, Tennessee. The last speaker was TCNA's Executive Director, Eric Astrachan. Astrachan's presentation included a PowerPoint showing results from recent research on floor coverings made with plastic-based materials, which include luxury vinyl tile (LVT), wood polymer composition (WPC) flooring, stone polymer composite (SPC) flooring, clay polymer composite (CPC) flooring, and rigid core board (RCB). The results of TCNA's research confirm that the design community and homeowners are being misled by PBM advertising claims. An independent market research company found that some of the most popular misconceptions about PBM flooring include:

- Belief of scratch resistance
- Belief of wet area usage
- Belief of durability, in general
- Assumption of competitive pricing
- Assumption of health and safety
- Assumption of comparability to ceramic tile

There is quite a bit of conflict between the warranty's fine print versus the advertised message in several key attributes. Clemson University's research on the so-called waterproof performance of installation seams and the knowledge that 90% of the PBM materials tested will support mold growth when exposed to water leaking through the seams, is astounding. (I was shocked to learn that the organic materials in the plastic provided nourishment for the mold to flourish.) There are many other concerning issues with plastic-based materials. This is just the beginning and as research continues there will be more to come. By the way, whenever you have a chance, pick up a carton of PBM flooring, carefully read what's not covered by its limited warranty, and then place the box back where you found it.

In light of just celebrating Thanksgiving, I am going to wrap this up with a list of things that I am thankful for:

- I am thankful for my grandfather Earl Trostrud Sr. for taking a big chance and starting his own ceramic tile contracting company.
- I am thankful for having the opportunity to work side-by-side with my father for the last 34 years.
- I am thankful for my father being the type of man that I can love, respect and admire in all facets of life.
- I am thankful for working with the best of the best office managers, project managers, truck drivers, tile setters and finishers.
- I am thankful for the TCAA and our incredible Executive Director, Lucinda Noel.
- I am thankful for the opportunity to serve as president of the TCAA.
- I am thankful for our local stocking tile distributors: AO, CC, Dal-Tile, Mid America and Virginia Tile.
- I am thankful for the opportunity to sit on both the TCNA Handbook Committee and the NTCA Technical Committee.
- I am thankful for the Italian tile manufacturers, their cutting-edge design, creativity and ever-changing technological innovation.
- I am thankful for our annual conference, Total Solutions Plus, which brings NTCA, CTDA, NTCA and TCAA under one roof to learn and share from the best and brightest our industry has to offer.
- I am also thankful for all the friendships forged from TSP, which include Bart, Jim, Dan, James, Chris, Woody, Brian, John, Ron, Noah, Lucinda, Eric, Dirk, Scott, Earl, Tommy, Nyle, Roger, Martin, Al, Jeff, Lesley, Amber, Michael, Greg, Jennifer, Scott and Monique, just to name a few. (You know who you are!)
- I am thankful for industry articles on plastic-based materials by Kemp Harr, Dan Marvin and Lesley Goddin that contributed to the writing of this message.
- I am thankful for my beautiful wife, Linda, and her unwavering support, as I try to add my two cents to the world of tile.
- And lastly, I give thanks to the man or woman who first put clay in a fire, and then happened to notice that it changed. ♦



## TCAA Labor Report

John Trendell, TCAA Labor Committee Chair  
Trendell Consulting LLC

**Laws (codes and standards) are like sausages - It is best **not** to see them made.**

While this quote is attributed to Otto von Bismarck in the 19th century, I have taken poetic license to add "codes and standards."

I have been on the ANSI and TCNA Handbook committees for almost ten years now. As an engineer by training, I expected that working on these important committees would be a simple case of defining a problem and applying a solution. Well, it does not work quite that way. With 60-65 members on these committees, there are 60-65 different views on how to find a solution, much less agree on what the problem may be.

However, in almost all cases, there is a sincere effort by everyone to find solutions to industry-recognized concerns. And, most importantly, this work is done publicly in open meetings where everyone attending has a voice!

Important provisions added since my membership on these committees include qualified contractor language, qualified labor language and additional skills language which includes the Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers (ACT) program. These important components to standards raise the bar to make sure our TCAA members are recognized as being some of the most qualified contractors in the industry. And our ceramic tile installers, with their high degree of training in Department of Labor recognized apprenticeship programs through the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (IUBAC), are considered the best trained in the business.

To understand just how important code review and changes can be to our industry, please read the article included in this 9300 edition by Scott Conwell of the International Masonry Institute (IMI). The changes made to the national building code and the use of ceramic tile on exterior installations is a game changer! It will allow for literally thousands of square feet of new and exciting uses for ceramic tile.

So, yes, code and standards work can be messy and may seem tedious at times, but who doesn't like sausage in some form or taste? ♦





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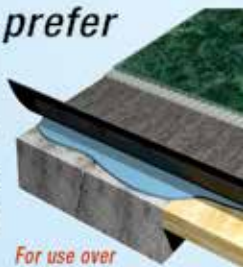
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## Youngstown Tile & Terrazzo Co. Project Spotlight

### *Firenza Stone Exterior Large Format Porcelain Tile Installation*

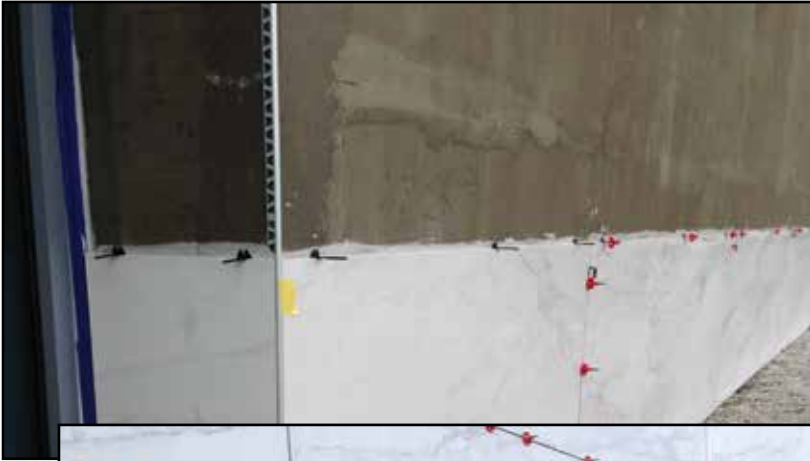
Firenza Stone, located in Eastlake, OH, is a fourth-generation family owned and operated fabricator of natural and manmade stone. Last year, Youngstown Tile & Terrazzo (YTT) of Canfield, OH, a longtime member of the Tile Contractors' Association of America (TCAA), was chosen to perform the installation of large format tile panels on the exterior of Firenza Stone's new headquarters facility. State-of-the-art large format tile panels, from Daltile, were selected to provide a sleek design and Youngstown Tile & Terrazzo (YTT) immediately chose to utilize Mapei products for waterproofing and installation.

MAPEI is a trusted leader in the manufacture of total systems for installation of ceramic/porcelain tile. Josh Cohol, owner and president of YTT, and a MAPEI representative, met onsite to plan the appropriate course of action to tackle the 4,000-square foot exterior project. Completing the project during the height of summer in Northeast Ohio presented some challenges. In order to beat the heat, and extend working times of the MAPEI installation products, the YTT crew worked at night with the use of temporary lighting.

Delivery of the large-format tile and installation products was closely coordinated with the local Daltile distributor. Prior to installing tile, MAPEI's Mapelastic™ 315, a premium trowel-applied waterproofing and crack isolation membrane, was applied over the cement board substrate utilizing a forklift with an OSHA approved personnel basket. The Mapelastic™ 315 membrane had a cure time of 8 to 12 hours enabling tile installation to proceed the next day.

MAPEI's two-part system featuring Kerabond® T (a premium-grade, non-sag, non-slump mortar for use in thin-set and large-and-heavy-tile) and Keralastic™ (a premium-grade, high-performance, second-generation "flexible" acrylic latex additive) were used for installation of the large-format tile panels. Together, these products provided exceptional bond strength and freeze-thaw durability, which is ideal for harsh Cleveland





winters. To achieve greater than 95% mortar contact with both the tile and substrate, required for exterior installations, YTT's installers back-buttered every tile panel.

To "wrap" the wall openings and entrances, while maintaining the integrity of the design, some large-format pieces had to be cut. The YTT team utilized a Sigma Kera-lift large format tile cutter to properly cut these pieces on site, creating a seamless fit and finish.

In lieu of grout, for this exterior installation, Cohol and his team used MAPEI's Mapesil™ T, 100%-silicone sealant for heavy traffic and movement joints. The sealant was applied to the 3/8" joints to prevent water intrusion and allow for expansion and contraction of the large panels.

Under the supervision of Ed Sutton, YTT's foreman, the team produced an elegant exterior finish for Firenze Stone. With the combined expertise of YTT and MAPEI, the project was a success. This large-format porcelain paneled exterior, which was installed by BAC union craftworkers, will be both durable and aesthetically pleasing for years to come. ♦

# TCAA Welcomes TSC Contractor Members

*Tile & Stone Council (TSC) of Northern California Members  
join Tile Contractors' Association of America (TCAA)*



We are pleased to welcome the following new contractor members from the Tile & Stone Council of Northern California to Tile Contractors' Association of America (TCAA):

- **D & J Tile Company, Inc.** – San Carlos, CA
- **De Alba Brothers Tile, Inc.** – South San Francisco, CA
- **J. Dean Ballard & Sons Tile & Marble** – Fresno, CA
- **Deason Tile Company** – Novato, CA
- **Rigney Tile Co.** – Oakland, CA
- **Rinaldi Tile and Marble** – Watsonville, CA
- **Tile West, Inc.** – Novato, CA

The following TSC contractors joined TCAA several years ago and remain members:

- **California Tile Installers** – San Jose, CA
- **De Anza Tile Co., Inc.** – Fremont, CA
- **Della Maggiore Tile, Inc.** – San Jose, CA

The Tile & Stone Council of Northern California (TSC) was formed in 1968, as the promotional arm of the San Francisco Bay Area's signatory tile contractor's group. Its focus is to encourage the proper use and installation of tile and dimension stone through the education of the architectural and design community. Through its partnership with BAC Local 3 and IMI, TSC encourages the use of qualified labor and stresses the importance of highly trained craftsmen and women.

TSC offers AIA and IDCEC accredited courses covering topics such as proper substrate preparation, use and types of movement joints and specification writing, in accordance with the TCNA handbook. Site inspection services, and technical information resources for members are also provided. TSC currently holds a position on the TCNA Handbook Committee, the NTCA Technical Committee, and the ANSI A108 Committee.

According to Rich Galliani, Technical Director for TSC, "We were looking for a voice at the national level which could speak for the signatory contractors in our area. We felt an association with TCAA would help us best achieve that goal. At our last meeting, we unanimously decided all members of TSC would join TCAA. We are proud to be part of an organization with a long history in the tile industry."

TCAA is committed to the future and betterment of the ceramic tile industry. We are very excited to have all Tile & Stone Council of Northern California contractor members included in our roster of elite contractors! ♦



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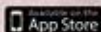


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# CUSTOM

TILE INSTALLATION SYSTEMS



## Code Update: Exterior Adhered Porcelain Tile

Author: Scott Conwell, International Masonry Institute

Many of the restrictions imposed by the International Building Code (IBC) on adhered exterior porcelain will soon be modified to allow larger tile to be adhered to building facades. Easing the size restriction on adhered tile exteriors will help expand the use of tile on exteriors, creating new work opportunities for BAC members and contractors. These changes are due in large part to efforts by the International Masonry Institute (IMI), the Tile Council of North America (TCNA), and other industry organizations.

The current language in IBC limits adhered porcelain tile to a maximum of 24 inches on one side and a maximum of 3 square feet per tile. In common tile sizes, that means the largest tiles allowed are 16 in. x 16 in., 20 in. x 20 in., or 12 in. x 24 in. In 2009, when IMI first introduced this language into the IBC, those sizes were considered large tiles. Advances in porcelain tile manufacturing have since resulted in extremely large and extremely thin tiles, as thin as 1/8 in. (3.5 mm). Moreover, advances in latex modified Portland cement mortar technology have resulted in tile setting mortar that is more resistant to pullout and stronger in shear. The combination of these factors – thinner, lighter tiles and stronger mortars – have led to larger tiles successfully being adhered to exterior facades, circumventing the IBC restrictions with code variances. When the anticipated changes take effect in the 2021 IBC, designers will be free to design facades adhering tiles as large as 48 in. x 48 in. or 36 in. x 72 in. (nominal) without a code variance. This could mean that facades that would otherwise be designed in precast concrete, metal panels, or other materials may now be designed with tile, benefiting BAC tile setters and contractors.

In tandem with this important code change, IMI is working with a task group of other ANSI A108 committee members to develop a new standard, ANSI A108.20, to address the exterior installation of adhered gauged porcelain tile. Expected to go to ballot in 2020, the working title of ANSI A108.20 is *Exterior Vertical Installation of Gauged Porcelain Tile Panels/Slabs by the Thin-Bed Method Bonded with Modified Dry-Set Cement Mortar or Improved Modified Dry-Set Cement Mortar*. ♦

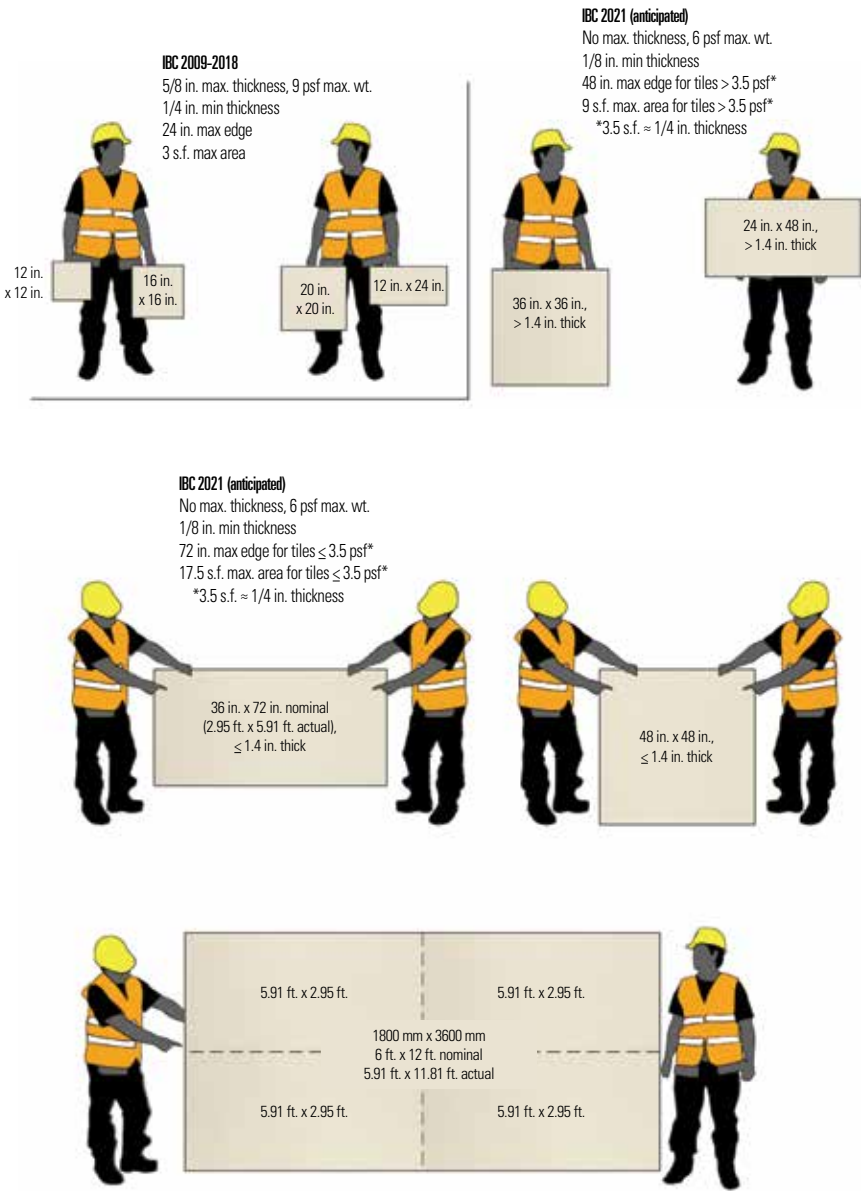


Fig. 1. The diagram in the upper left corner represents current restrictions in thickness, size, and weight of adhered porcelain tile in the International Building Code. The other diagrams illustrate the updated allowable criteria anticipated in the 2021 IBC.





## A Tribute to America

### Missouri's National Veterans Memorial

Submitted by: LATICRETE

**The Situation:** In 1968, veteran Jim Eddleman promised himself that if he survived the Vietnam War he would one day honor his comrades and those who've also bravely served the United States. His dream has finally come true with the opening of Missouri's National Veterans Memorial in Perryville.

With the hopes of creating a safe place for veterans, civilians and those currently serving to reflect on the sacrifices made daily by American soldiers, Eddleman and his wife Charlene contributed a staggering \$2.5 million, as well as donated 47 acres of land that had been in his family for three generations. In addition to several onsite educational facilities, such as a museum and welcome center, Missouri's National Veterans Memorial main feature is a full-size replica of the original Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.



After gaining the necessary approvals from government officials to move forward with the project and with the support of Robinson Construction, the project officially kicked off in March 2017.

“When I first heard of this project, I asked how they planned to clean, seal and maintain the wall. When I came to the realization that they had not planned on this, I went to LATICRETE and knew that they would want to be involved,” said Joel Tully, founder of Trends in Tile. “I have been a distributor now for more than 21 years, so LATICRETE® products were an obvious choice. I knew I’d be able to trust that they could protect and maintain the memorial in all of its glory.”

As part of a combined effort, Trends in Tile and a local flooring contractor volunteered their time to clean and seal the wall and train the memorial personnel on how to maintain the engraved panels which contain more than 58,000 names of the brave soldiers who were killed or declared missing in action in Vietnam.

The local flooring contractor stated *“This wall is a great addition to our community. Our family has worked with Eddleman and the board of directors in charge of Missouri’s National Veterans Memorial to raise more than \$50,000 in the past three years through a sponsored barbecue. We could not have been more thrilled to get our hands dirty and do our part on the jobsite the best way we know how.”*

### **The Challenges:**

- *Proper Care:* Trends in Tile and the local flooring contractor have dealt with many customers facing issues with their natural stone throughout their years of business. Often times these errors, such as scratches or improper polishing, are a result of incorrect cleaning methods using unsuitable products which cost a lot to repair. It was imperative that they be able to protect the wall from damage for the foreseeable future using quality products and proper installation techniques.
- *Everyday Use:* Missouri’s National Veterans Memorial bridges the gap between veterans and civilians by providing a common space to learn about and honor heroes of the past. Because of the heavy crowds that will visit daily, stain prevention tools would be vital in maintaining the original look of the finished wall.



**A LATICRETE Solution:** As recommended by LATICRETE National Sales Manager Marcella Prado, the panels were sealed using STONETECH® BulletProof® Sealer, an advanced sealer designed to provide maximum protection on natural stone against the toughest oil- and water-based stains. Accompanied by the LATICRETE STONETECH Lifetime Product Warranty, the panels will remain in pristine condition for decades to come.

After the sealing was complete, the memorial staff was trained how to maintain the granite panels with STONETECH Revitalizer® Cleaner and Protector. This product is a pH balanced, all-in-one cleaner that tackles everyday messes while reinforcing protection, thanks to its built-in sealer. STONETECH Revitalizer Cleaner and Protector has also earned a Health Product Declaration (HPD) for being environmentally friendly in both of its citrus and cucumber scents for added freshness.

**Outcome:** “Whenever help was needed, Marcella was there to interject her STONETECH expertise. She was deeply involved in the project and due to inclement weather at the time of application, made fast decisions to move the project forward,” added Tully. “We are extremely pleased with the outcome of our work and take great pride in our contribution to this piece of American history.”

Aside from the Vietnam memorial wall, other features of Missouri’s National Veterans Memorial include a welcome center for visitors to learn about the history of the American military and an event hall. An interfaith chapel, a scattering oak grove where loved ones can spread the remains of their veterans and a cemetery will be added to complete the campus in the coming years.

“This is not just a project for us. This is a project for everyone who cares about this country, who cares about the military and who appreciates the sacrifices that have been made. It’s up to us to make sure that courage and selflessness like that is not forgotten,” said NFL Hall of Famer and proud supporter, Jackie Smith.

An all-day grand opening celebration attended by Eddleman and hundreds of veterans took place in May of 2019. ♦



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## 2019 Total Solutions Plus in Nashville

**Where Country is Number One and  
TSP Was a Close Second!**

Total Solutions Plus (TSP) brings the ceramic tile industry together on an annual basis. This year's conference was held in Nashville, TN at the beautiful Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center, 10/27/19 – 10/29/19. There was not only “a whole lot of shaking going on” in Nashville, but also a whole lot of technical meetings, educational sessions, networking and very enjoyable social events.







After association board meetings and optional tours in the Nashville area on Sunday, and an opening reception that evening, Total Solutions Plus officially began early the next morning. On both Monday and Tuesday we enjoyed a breakfast buffet followed by great keynote speakers - "Get To Yes Faster" with Dean Minuto on Monday, and "The 4 Disciplines of Execution" with Chris McChesney on Tuesday. Monday and Tuesday were packed with an excellent slate of business and technical breakouts to choose from, industry award luncheons, and valuable networking breaks. Monday ended in the Ryman Hall meeting room which was filled with close to 100 manufacturer and industry affiliated tabletops displaying their products and services. The Total Solutions Plus Conference 600+ attendees visited with the exhibitors and each other, all while enjoying appetizers and drinks. Then on Tuesday evening, at the close of TSP, a country western-themed dinner with entertainment that included a band, line dancing and rope tricks was enjoyed by all.

TSP is truly a first-class event where members of the four major organizations (CTDA, NTCA, TCAA & TCNA) within the ceramic tile industry come together to facilitate the advancement of the industry. Most major players in our industry have already realized the value of attending Total Solutions Plus and show up every year without fail. Attendees



benefit, both personally and professionally, from information shared by the excellent keynote speakers, educational breakout sessions, the tabletop event for viewing the latest products while also visiting with major industry manufacturers, as well as many networking opportunities that produce priceless friendships that can last a lifetime.

Once you have attended TSP for a few years you actually feel like you are at a family reunion of sorts. Some are close family, and some are distant cousins, but we are all part of the same family. Total Solutions Plus 2020 will be held in Indian Wells, California, October 25 - 27. Save the date so that you don't miss the opportunity to join us in 2020. Hope to see you there! ♦





## **Mr. David's Flooring International Retiles McCorkle Aquatic Center for The Ohio State University**

*Overcoming a legacy of adhesion failures and tile challenges with expertise and craftsmanship.*

Dedicated in October 2005, the McCorkle Aquatic Pavilion, at The Ohio State University (OSU), is part of Ohio State's Recreation and Physical Activity Center (RPAC). The facility is Ohio's premier competitive swimming venue and home to the Ohio State varsity men's and women's swimming and diving teams, and varsity synchronized swimming team. Hailed as a state-of-the-art facility, the McCorkle Aquatic Center is a showcase facility for the university and the surrounding community. Needless to say, missing pool tiles do not reflect well on a state-of-the-art facility and posed a significant problem for the university.

Shortly after completion of the new facility in 2005, tiles started coming off in the water. Believing the problem to be limited, University staff members simply took to diving into the pools and replacing faulty tiles one by one. Failed tile adhesion continued, and in 2012 the OSU administrators decided to retile the pools. Sadly, the university faced a repeat of failed tile adhesion problems within weeks after retiling was completed.

In 2015, the university determined a third reinstall was required. That project targeted the RPAC Aquatic Center, consisting of a leisure pool, a class and lap pool and a recreation whirlpool spa, which accounts for approximately half of their full aquatic facilities. Mr. David's Flooring International, with 40-plus years of installation experience and a long-standing reputation for quality craftsmanship, was chosen to replace the pool and spa tiles. Teamed with Berglund Construction Co and the unparalleled engineering assistance



of Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates (WJE), Mr. David's Flooring International delivered a completed project that has not experienced a single adhesion failure or tile loss.

After a successful tile installation in the RPAC Aquatic Center, OSU administrators decided to reinstall the tiles of the McCorkle Aquatic Center in May of this year. With a 50-meter competitive pool, the Ron O'Brien diving well, and a dive spa, the project encompassed nearly 25,000 square feet of ceramic tile work. Determined to ensure resolution of the tile adhesion problems that had plagued the facility from the beginning, OSU officials once again selected Mr. David's Flooring International, along with Berglund Construction Co, and WJE, to provide ceramic tile installation services.

The OSU Aquatic facilities host a myriad of programs and events for the students and the community beginning mid-August. The start date was in early May, and completion by the beginning of August was imperative to allow for the two weeks necessary to fill the pools with over a million-and-a-half gallons of water. The project timeline had no wiggle room for problems or mistakes!

The team specified Daltile Keystone 1"x1" ceramic tile in white, black & midnight blue for the project, which came with the new Daltile Keystones Clearface™ tile mounting system. This new mounting system differed significantly from the standard paper-face offerings and presented installers with the significant challenge of mastering a new mounting system during a time sensitive project.

After careful study, WJE decided the best installation approach would be to use setting and grouting materials from one source, and to prohibit the introduction of any additional products without their expressed written consent. The team determined it was imperative that the manufacturer's instructions be strictly followed with no shortcuts. They specified Laticrete 254 Platinum, a one-step, polymer fortified thin-set mortar to install the tile, Laticrete 3701 Fortified Bed Mortar to prep and make the cove at the bottom of the pool, and Laticrete Permacolor® Grout, a high performance, fast setting grout.





WJE and Mr. David's Flooring International timed and documented several aspects of the installation including the mixing and slaking times. They ensured the mortar was allowed to slake properly and made certain that the tile bond coat coverage was at a minimum of 95%, as per industry installation standards.

After installation, during removal of the new Clearface™ tile mounting system from the face of the tile, the team from Mr. David's discovered that an adhesive residue remained on the tile, which would pose a challenge to the project's final state. They worked with the project team to identify a cleaning product that would remove the residue without impacting the integrity of the tile surface. Before a new product could be used, it would have to be tested and approved by the WJE team, presenting a potential project timeframe issue. Fortunately, Mr. David's Flooring International expert installation team was able to quickly identify Aqua Mix® NanoScrub® as a suitable cleaning agent, which allowed for WJE to test and approve with no impact on the project schedule.

With the combined expertise of the project team and a collaborative solution-oriented approach, the McCorkle Aquatic Center project was completed in time for the pools to be filled with water and ready for use by mid-August. Visually, the new pool tiles enhance the desired state-of-the-art facility image and reflect the OSU athletic pride and spirit. And, most importantly, to date there have been absolutely no issues of adhesion failure, or any other tile malfunctions, which once persistently frustrated university administrators. Today, the McCorkle Aquatic Center once again stands proudly as the OSU showcase aquatic facility, thanks largely to the vision, experience and craftsmanship of Mr. David's Flooring International and the skilled IUBAC craftworkers who performed the installation.

For additional information about this project you may contact Michael Tate, Senior Account Executive - Ceramic Tile Department at (630) 751-9466 or [miket@mrdaids.com](mailto:miket@mrdaids.com). ♦

*Mr. David's Flooring International is a leader in full-service commercial contract flooring installation, logistics services, and supplier of carpet, resilient, wood & laminate, tile and stone, and appearance retention services. Founded in 1972, Mr. David's Flooring International has completed over \$1BN in customer contracts through 16 U.S. locations and nearly 1,000 employees. Mr. David's provides an industry-unique vertical integration that meets a customer's full project requirement, from design specification, project management to distribution and installation. Mr. David's Flooring International is proud of independent financial review resulting in a maximum 2500 Contractor Score, placing the company in an industry leading position.*



# HISTORY OF TILE



Henry Chapman Mercer, circa 1890.  
Collection SL/BCHS.

## A “Monumental Achievement” for the Industry

By the turn of the last century, the tile industry in America, having followed the lead of European and British manufacturers for the past forty to fifty years, was well established and growing substantially. Dust-pressed decorative tiles in the parlor had been joined by 6” x 3” wall tiles in kitchens and bathrooms and ceramic mosaics, having replaced encaustics by this time, were used on floors throughout the home as well as in commercial establishments. However, an undercurrent was evolving that would ultimately alter the way Americans would relate to ceramic surfaces.

In the view of some, like Henry Chapman Mercer (1856-1930) in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, the Industrial Revolution had dehumanized the work place with machinery replacing the human hand, notably in the ceramics industry. With virtually no human contact, tiles in particular had become strictly utilitarian.



Indian House, 1896. Collection SL/BCHS.

In 1898 after a short stint with a local potter, Mercer began making tiles from local clay... by hand. He built a studio, “Indian House,” on his family’s estate, which he titled the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works after the local German craftsmen. Having traveled extensively throughout Europe and North Africa, Mercer had plenty of design inspiration to complement his innate artistic talents. His tiles, referred to as “artistic pottery,” were instantly well received by the architectural community and profitable from the start.

In 1903, just five years into his ceramic enterprise, Mercer was approached by architect Joseph Huston of Philadelphia who ultimately commissioned him to produce 16,000 square feet of his handcrafted 3" x 3" red paving tiles for the entire main floor of the new State Capitol Building in Harrisburg, for which he would be paid \$1.03 per square foot. In addition, knowing that the architect was envisioning a pictorial aspect to the floor, Mercer offered to produce up to 400 mosaic panels depicting the history of Pennsylvania to be inserted throughout the vast tiled floor in roughly chronological order.



Pennsylvania State Capitol, Harrisburg.  
Tile Heritage Digital Library



"Clover Stripper"



"Hoing Corn"



"The Butterfly"



"Wolf"

It was challenging enough to gear up for this large of an order, adding buildings and kilns to accommodate timely production, but the creative task of designing all 400 of the mosaic inserts fell to Mercer himself. The pieces of each panel were cut from a rolled-out slab of clay, marked, dried and then fired. The pieces were then reassembled and placed into a bed of thick wet cement before grouting. They arrived on the job site preassembled. Imagine the weight, and the Herculean task of installing a quarter of a million 3" x 3" handmade tiles one at a time!



The general contractor on the job, George F. Payne & Co. of Philadelphia, employed carpenters and builders along with tile setters. The tiles arrived on site in multiple shipments, sent well apart between 1904 and 1906, as the tile production was slow and methodical.

Special thanks to Vance Koehler, Charles Yeske at the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works and Kristin Lapos at the Mercer Museum for their assistance.

Quoting Vance Koehler, former Curator of Collections at the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works: "Today, this monumental achievement remains one of the most original works of public art ever produced in the United States."

NOTE: "Guide Book to the Tiled Pavement in the Pennsylvania Capitol," written and published by Henry Chapman Mercer in 1908 is available for purchase online and describes each of the mosaic panels in detail.

More about Mercer and his Moravian tiles next time. ♦



Joseph A. Taylor  
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