

POOL DECKS

Concrete Pool Decks



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The Back Yard: The New Hottest Room in the House

Americans are remodeling and renovating in record numbers. In 2002 homeowners spent some \$173 billion in renovation and remodeling — more than twice the amount spent for new construction.

Improving our homes, in many cases, can bring a financial return on our investment, not to mention the enjoyment and use we derive from the improvements.

One of the rooms receiving the most attention these days is the back yard. In fact, the Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association (HPBA) says we'll spend \$65 billion this year on outdoor hearth products, grills, furniture, lighting, upgraded landscaping and gardening amenities, pools, spas and hot tubs.

The backyard patio is the new room to relax, entertain, play, and eat. The HPBA says some 91 percent of pool and spa stores now require a kitchen/dining component with their new installations.

Outdoor grilling — while growing more sophisticated — is more popular than ever with 81 percent of families owning a grill.

PHOTO BY SUBLIME CONCRETE SOLUTIONS, LLC.

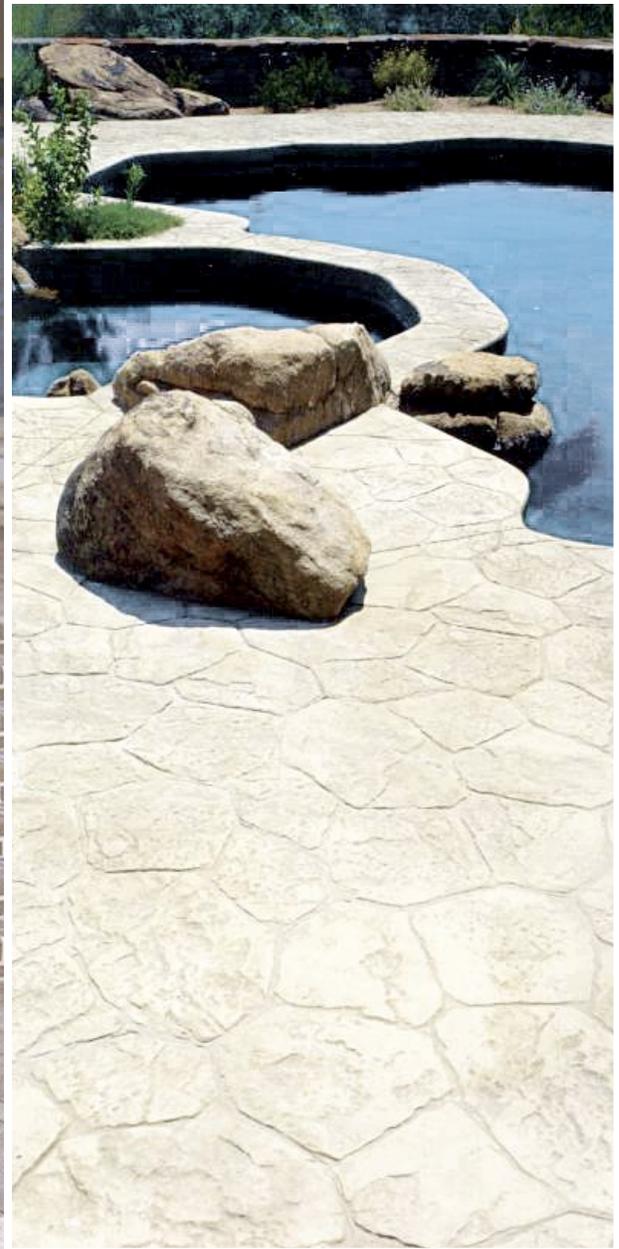


PHOTO BY PROGRESSIVE CONCRETE WORKS, INC.

*“Back yard living is, in a word, huge.
Nesting has given way to cocooning which
has morphed into living and connecting ...
The North American homeowner is spending
more time at home and within the community
with family, friends and neighbors.”*

—THE HEARTH, PATIO AND
BARBECUE ASSOCIATION, *January 2004*

Pool Trends:

One Piece of the Backyard Puzzle

It used to be that if you had a pool, it consumed most of the back yard. But today, that trend is shifting.

The National Spa & Pool Institute (NSPI) says small pools are hugely popular — about half the pools built these days are on the small side. Why? For starters, many back yards today on newer lots are a bit space-challenged. Also, there's a changing shift in the purpose of today's pools.

People want to vacation in their own back yards and pools are just part of the big picture. The NSPI says outdoor living spaces, made up of kitchens, furnished seating areas, fireplaces and more, offer enjoyment throughout the year for residents in many parts of the country.

In these types of situations, the pool isn't the focal point of the back yard, but just one part of an extended living area.

Pools are becoming more specialized with a strong focus on aesthetics, transforming the pool and backyard area into a mini-resort with lighting and sound, spas, waterfalls, fountains, and decorative decks.



PHOTO BY DISTINCTIVE Concrete Network



PHOTO BY BLUE RIBBON LLC

“Traditionally places to exercise and play, today’s pools are more likely to be social centers. For lots of homeowners, a pool is just part of an entertainment-ready back yard with multiple living and leisure areas.”

— BIL KENNEDY, *The National Spa and Pool Institute*

Decorative Concrete Pool Decks

Making a Splash

One of the most important considerations for any pool deck is the type of material to use. The material you ultimately choose may depend largely on where the deck is being built in terms of geographical location, what kind and how much traffic the pool deck will be subject to and how much care and upkeep the owner wishes to devote to the deck.

Deck areas surrounding a pool can run the gamut from poured in place concrete, broom finish concrete, exposed aggregate, tile, to brick pavers or natural stone masonry. Different materials have their own strengths and weaknesses, and varying costs.



PHOTO BY TOM RALSTON CONCRETE

For example, flagstone, sometimes known as “bluestone,” offers a sleek and traditional look. However, very sunny regions will often heat flagstone to uncomfortable levels, particularly for young children. While many different colors and patterns are available with brick decks, brick, too, can be a hot, sometimes slippery surface.

Decorative concrete pool decks are an ideal answer.

“The benefits of concrete are many. It can provide an extremely durable surface, as compared to a wooden deck or even stone.

With the new techniques for stamping and applying decorative concrete, any look can be created at a fraction of the cost.

Concrete today is extremely flexible in its application.”

— SILVANO SALVATICI, *Sublime Concrete Solutions*



PHOTO BY NEW IMAGES CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION

Stamping Brings First-Class Look

to the Pool Deck

Stamped concrete is concrete that is patterned to resemble whatever you want it to — brick, slate, flagstone, stone, tile- and even wood. It is a great way to beautify pool decks.



PHOTO BY DISTINCTIVE CONCRETE

Due to the wide array of patterns and colors available, and the cost of stamped concrete in relation to the materials it is a substitute for, the choice of stamped concrete is becoming more popular.

Colors and patterns for stamped concrete are often chosen to blend with other stone or tile elements at the residence. Complex designs incorporating steps, courtyards, and fountains can be achieved. Stamped concrete can also be blended with other decorative concrete elements such as exposed aggregate finishes and acid-etch staining.

“Using stamped concrete is a great way to bring a pool deck to life in bringing it character and uniqueness.”

— BILL GUTHRO, *Distinctive Concrete*

Dozens of patterns are available.

Some of the more common stamped patterns include:



Cobblestone



Ashlar slate



Weathered wood



Clay tile



European fan



Roman slate tile



Herringbone



Granite

Stenciling Provides A Great Look for Pool Decks

Another way to use decorative concrete to grace your pool deck is through stenciling.

Done at the time the concrete is poured, stenciled concrete can give your deck color, texture and any pattern imaginable.

The finished deck can sport an attractive look of brick or stone with a contrasting grout line.

Edges of plain, matching or contrasting patterns can be added and even applied to steps. Decorative features — special designs, company logos, monograms — can also be part of the stenciling.

The finished deck is sealed with a protective coating, protecting the decorative concrete from dirt and stain — and improves the overall strength of the topping. The area can be rough-broomed or an anti-slip finish can be applied to give the deck traction in steeply graded areas.

The primary advantage of stenciled concrete is that a high quality finish and image can be achieved at a very reasonable price and in a relatively short period of time.

Poured as a new area of concrete, a stencil is laid on the wet concrete. Next, a color hardener is spread and troweled in, so that when the stencil is removed, a grouted paving pattern is achieved. The area is then washed down and sealed.

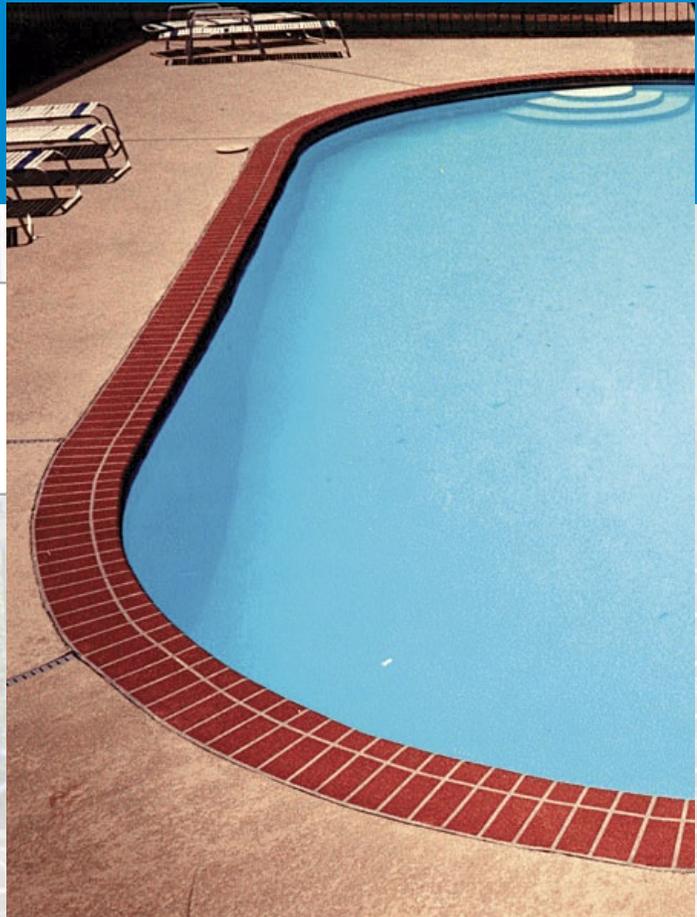


PHOTO BY DECORATIVE CONCRETE IMPRESSIONS



PHOTO BY COLORATION SYSTEMS INC.

Give Your Pool Deck the Hue of Your Choice

One of the most effective ways to beautify your pool deck is through colored concrete. You can choose the specific hue that will best complement your home, outdoor surroundings, or other elements in the vicinity of the pool.

One of the biggest draws of incorporating colored concrete into your pool deck is the expansive range of colors available. Because of ever-advancing technology and jaw-dropping chemical techniques, concrete can be colored in just about any hue imaginable. Some contractors offer upwards of 250 hues and shades.

Colored concrete can be used in combination, abutting each other, or stamped with a variety of textures to simulate brick, flagstone, pavers, or tile.

Using a curing compound in the matching color cures, seals, hardens, and dustproofs the concrete. It will preserve the natural look and protect against stains. It also provides a means to bring a consistent look throughout the project. Clear curing compounds specific to colored concrete are also available.



PHOTO BY RICHARD S. DAVIES CONSTRUCTION

“People are starting to learn that there is more than just bland, plain concrete out there ... I always seem to have a lot of customers that are tired of looking at plain concrete and decide to spruce it up a little. By adding a stone or brick border and a color sealer can completely transform a place.”

— TIM SCHOENIG, *TTK Resurfacing*



PHOTO BY TTK RESURFACING

A SAMPLE COLOR CHART

The chart below is representative of the myriad integral colors available.



Exposed Aggregate: Another Option for Pool Decks

Exposed aggregates help convert pool deck surfaces from plain finishes to a component of outdoor landscaping, including rocks, fountains, lagoons, and waterfalls, all without, stamping or etching.

The concrete-based mix incorporates differently shaped and colored pebbles and stones, which rise to the surface once the concrete is applied. Adding 1/8-inch polished stones instead of using raw stone in the mix results in a more comfortable walking area. Once the material hardens, it can be further buffed, resulting in a richly colored surface.

The rock (aggregate) in the concrete mix is exposed by either water pressure, chemical application, or by sandblasting.

The aggregate can be purchased from a material yard for “seeding” in the fresh concrete mix. Or a ready mix supplier may have colorful aggregates suitable for seeding or poured integral in the mix and then exposed by sandblasting.

A variety of looks can be achieved by exposing the aggregate. Aggregates vary widely from region to region, so the look can be different depending on what part of the country you live in. Another factor that will determine how the finished driveway looks is the amount of aggregate exposure, which can vary from light to heavy.

“People are generally putting more money into their homes versus stocks or other sources. A pool deck is a great way to improve the value of a property and enjoy the investment.”

— VINCE VANHEUKELEM, *Colorado Hardscapes*



JS FRAZER CONSTRUCTION

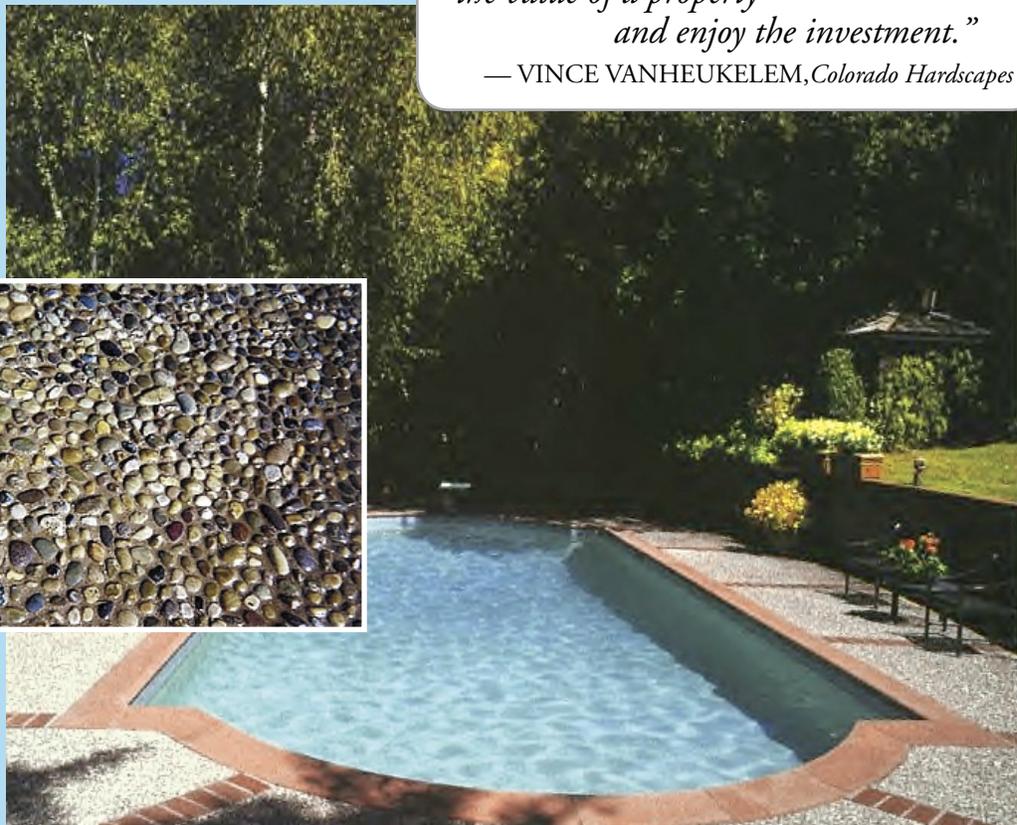


PHOTO BY CONCRETENETWORK.COM, INC.



PHOTO BY CONCRETE SOLUTIONS

Concrete Toppings: Beautify Your Existing Concrete

For those who have an existing pool deck but want to spruce it up or get rid of the boring, old, gray look, there is an easy option: concrete toppings.

Textured and colored overlays can be applied over just about any surface.

But these overlays are only as good as the concrete beneath it. If the base isn't solid, the overlay won't adhere properly. The base can consist of a newly poured one to two inch concrete deck, or it can be applied over an existing deck.

If the slab is pre-existing, it is probably necessary to scour the surface area for adhesion purposes, and file any existing surface cracks.

Some companies, like Concrete Solutions, offer a 1/4 thick stampable mix for refurbishing pool decks. You can choose from any of the patterns available for stamping new concrete and a variety of textured finishes and colors.

Some companies also offer a spray-applied texture coat. For example, Concrete Solutions offers a spray-applied texture coat of Ultra Surface Polymer

Concrete designed to provide a decorative, slip resistant finish on residential and commercial pool decks, walkways, driveways and other surfaces.

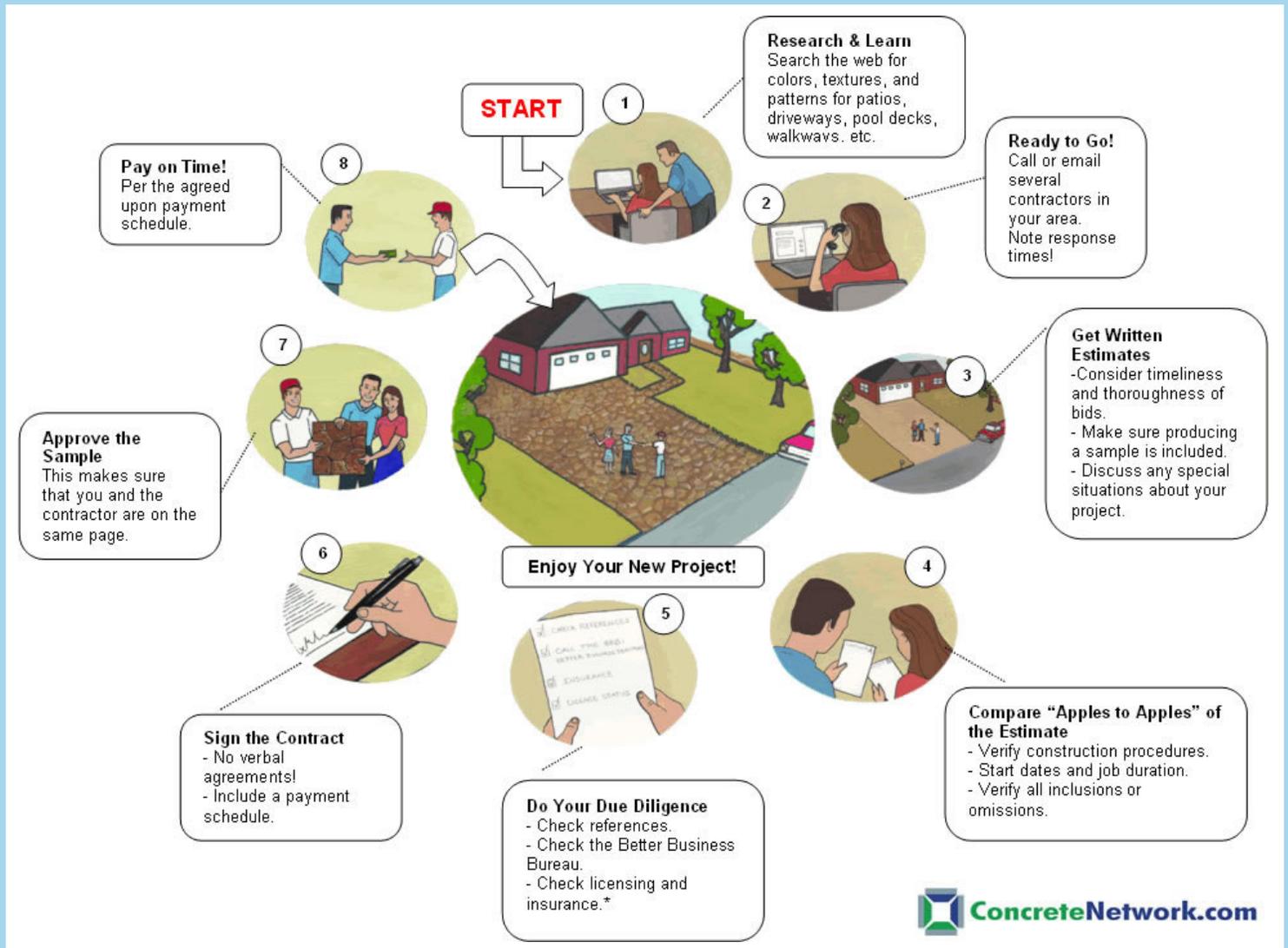
It is sprayed using a compressor and hopper gun type sprayer and then knocked down flat using a trowel to create the texture or finish desired. Once the trowel knockdown texture dries, another spray topping can be used to achieve a more uniform colored appearance in any color desired.

The final step involves applying a topcoat to provide extra stain resistance and to help keep the surface looking like new. If you want more embellishment, decorative borders can be applied using tape or stencils to enhance the appearance of the trowel knockdown application.



PHOTO BY BLUE RIBBON LLC

Eight Tips for Hiring a Concrete Contractor



Use this guide to make sure you're prepared when it comes to hiring a contractor. These 8 simple steps are your key to knowing what information you should look for, what questions you should ask, and to understanding some vital do's and don'ts during the process. Your preparedness can make a difference in how smoothly your project gets installed. Print a copy of this diagram and refer to it through each step of your project. Before you know it, you'll be enjoying your new concrete too!

Coping Options

Enhance Pool

One of the finishing touches of the pool and pool deck is the coping.

The coping is the material that caps the pool shell wall. Material options include poured-in-place concrete, pre-cast concrete material, tile, and natural stone — pavers, flagstone, stones, etc.



PHOTO BY BLUE RIBBON LLC

Poured concrete allows the coping to be one unit with the pool deck, incorporating the coping right over the edge of the pool so there is no break in the finish on the horizontal plane. This method can help to make a small area around the pool look much bigger, and give the deck cleaner lines.

Multiple edge shapes are available.

Natural stone or brick coping offers the warmth, texture and sturdiness of stone. Materials ranging from quarried granite to limestone to natural fieldstone offer beautiful and long lasting coping solutions.

Pre-cast concrete coping offers a wide range of textures, patterns and colors, often at a significantly lower cost than poured concrete or natural stone. From an installation standpoint, it is typically simpler to install, and it is also usually easier to provide uniformity in thickness and color than when working with natural stone.

“There seems to be a big uprising in homeowners that like a beautiful, tranquil back yard and pool area ... People like a place to relax and have get-togethers.”

— TIM SCHOENIG, *TTK Resurfacing*

About The Concrete Network

The Concrete Network (www.concretenetwork.com), located in Yucaipa, Calif., is the largest and most comprehensive resource online for concrete information. Over 1 million people visit the site each month to read articles, get design ideas, and to search its extensive directory for a concrete contractor in their area.

Established in 1999, The Concrete Network's purpose is to educate homeowners, contractors, builders, and designers on popular decorative techniques and applications. With thousands of articles, photographs, and a comprehensive directory of concrete contractors, The Concrete Network is a repository of information about the industry's products and services, including stamped concrete, stained concrete floors, concrete countertops, polished concrete, and much more.

The site excels at connecting buyers with local contractors in their area through its Find-A-Contractor service. The service provides visitors with a list of decorative concrete contractors throughout the U.S. and Canada, and is fully searchable by 23 types of decorative concrete work and 200 regional areas throughout North America. The directory is organized by area and specialty, such as patios, pool decks, driveways, countertops, floors, stamped concrete, and water features, among many others.

Site visitors can choose their local area and view concrete contractors and concrete products, obtain full contact information for the listed businesses, and contact them directly.

The Concrete Network was founded by Jim Peterson, a former Vice President of a major concrete company in Riverside, Calif. During the 1999 World of Concrete Trade Show in Las Vegas, Peterson had the idea to create an industry portal on the World Wide Web for all things related to concrete.

