



SPEC MIX® supports future masons at SkillsUSA-VICA Championships

The masonry apprentices gather in the area of the convention center marked “masonry,” locate their stations and look over the plans for the composite project they would be building. In the past year, they had proven themselves to be the best in their local and state competitions, but that doesn’t mean that they’re not nervous. Now here they are among the best in the nation.

On Thursday, June 26, the 39th annual National Masonry Contest was held in conjunction with the SkillsUSA-VICA National Championships at Bartle Hall in Kansas City, Mo. Forty-four masonry apprentices competed in secondary and post-secondary divisions.

This was SPEC MIX’s ninth year of participating in the masonry competition. SPEC MIX licensee Midwest Block and Brick, located in Kansas City, Mo., provided a silo, mortar and concrete block to the competition. Fifteen SPEC MIX Mudslingers hauled mortar to the apprentices’ stations, as well as being supportive in general.

Being stewards of the masonry industry has been a hallmark of SPEC MIX’s mission, and supporting the masonry apprentices in the SkillsUSA-VICA competition is a high priority. In 1995, SPEC MIX established the “Commitment to Excellence” scholarship, which awards \$1,500 to the school of each first-place winner in the secondary and post-secondary divisions. Also, Central Regional Manager Nick Blohowiak and Vice President/General Manager Brian Carney have consistently served on the technical committee for the masonry contest.

The masonry competition was one of 92 trade, technical and leadership competitions held June 23-27 at the SkillsUSA-VICA Championships. Approximately 4,350 vocational students from across the nation competed in these contests of skill.



Forty-four masonry apprentices compete in the masonry competition of the SkillsUSA-VICA National Championships at Bartle Hall in Kansas City, Mo.

The winners were announced at an awards ceremony on Friday, June 27 in Kemper Arena. The winners of the masonry competition were as follows:

Post-secondary division

1st place: Michael Pickels from the Williamson Free School of Mechanical Trades, Media, Pa.

2nd place: Luke Balsingh from PTEC Saint Petersburg Campus, St. Petersburg, Fla.

3rd place: Justin Ries, Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Secondary division

1st place: Cody Alward from Mount Pleasant High School, Mount Pleasant, N.C.

2nd place: Andrew Miller from Earnest Pruet Center of Technology, Hollywood, Ala.

3rd place: Nathan Price from Central Westmoreland AVTS, New Stanton, Pa.

(Continued on inside)

SPEC MIX® supports future masons (cont.)



Michael Pickles, a student at The Williamson Free School of Mechanical Trade, Media, Pa., works on his first-place project in the post-secondary competition.



Mudslinger Ryan Nye, Pre Mix Industries, helps with providing mortar to the apprentices.



Cody Alward of Mount Pleasant, N.C., works to complete his project. A student at Mount Pleasant High School, Alward was the first-place winner in the secondary competition.



Pictured from left to right: Brian Light of the Southern Brick Institute and Technical Committee member; third-place winner Nathan Price from Central Westmoreland AVTS in New Stanton, Pa.; first-place winner Cody Alward from Mount Pleasant High School, Mount Pleasant, N.C.; first-place winner Michael Pickels from The Williamson Free School of Mechanical Trade, Media, Pa.; second-place winner Luke Balsigh from PTEC Saint Petersburg Campus, St. Petersburg, Fla.; second-place winner Andrew Miller from Earnest Pruet Center of Technology, Hollywood, Ala.; and Harry Junk of the National Concrete Masonry Association and Technical Committee member.

From Phoenix to NYC, SPEC MIX® IWR mortar suits all climates

So why does a masonry contractor in Phoenix, Ariz., use mortar mixed with a water repellent?

“Well, that’s a good question,” says Sean Sessa, owner of Canyon State Masonry in Phoenix. “But we do get monsoons down here. ... We’ve found that it helps prevent efflorescence.”

SPEC MIX® Integral Water Repellent (IWR) Masonry Mortar is a dry, preblended mortar mix containing Portland cement, hydrated lime or masonry or mortar cement and dried masonry sand. It is formulated for water repellency, superior bond, water retention and board life and meets compressive strength requirements. The water repellent in the mortar mix makes the masonry materials hydrophobic by limiting the amount of water that can pass through the masonry unit. Thus, it reduces efflorescence, which occurs when soluble salts in masonry materials are transported to the surface by water and form deposits when the water evaporates.

Efflorescence control is the No. 1 reason cited for using SPEC MIX IWR mortar, but it also provides the following benefits:

- Eliminates the need to meter bottles of liquid admixture onsite
- Minimizes labor costs
- Provides consistency from batch to batch
- Maintains excellent workability and board life
- Eliminates sand piles and wasted materials

In October 2002, Robert L. Nelson & Associates, Inc., a construction materials laboratory in Schaumburg, Ill., did a comparative study of integral water repellent admixtures. The study concluded, “The results of the flexural bond and water penetration study show that SPEC MIX Water Repellent Mortar ... was as effective and comparable to mortars containing a nationally recognized, propriety liquid water repellent admixture.”

SPEC MIX IWR offers convenience and quality assurance for the masonry contractor. More importantly, it eliminates one more hand-add at the jobsite that can lead to mortar inconsistencies that effect the integrity of the



The Paseo Highlands Park Community Center, Phoenix, Ariz., was built with SPEC MIX IWR mortar in three colors: red, black and gray.

assemblage and reduce productivity.

“My guys don’t have to do any measuring to put it in a batch of mud,” Sessa says. “One of the reasons we use SPEC MIX is that it’s a no thinking thing. It’s more cost effective than Dry Block liquid integral water repellent. ... And we only have to order one thing. We don’t have to worry about ordering SPEC MIX from Superlite, then Dry Block from someone else. ... It’s cost effective and convenient.”

Although it seems counter intuitive, Arizona leads the masonry market in use of SPEC MIX IWR mortar, but on its heels are Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Nebraska, Arkansas and Connecticut. Canyon State Masonry currently is using IWR mortar on the Pinal County Courthouse in Florence, Ariz., and they have used it on many previous projects, most notably the Maricopa Sheriff’s Training Academy and the Paseo Highlands Park Community Center, a state-of-the-art facility, both of which have received a lot of public attention in the Phoenix area.

For more information, you can download a SPEC DATA sheet on IWR mortar at www.firstsourceonl.com. Click on “Browse By Participating Manufacturers.” Scroll down to SPEC MIX. Click on SPEC MIX Preblended Integral Water Repellent (IWR) Masonry Mortar.

licensee profile

TCCP expanding sales in Upper Midwest

Twin City Concrete Products (TCCP) Company is a leader in packaged concrete products in the Upper Midwest region of the United States.

Continued growth during the past half century has brought TCCP to its current position. The company began producing premixed packaged concrete products

under the Handi Crete label in 1957. Over the years, the company grew through acquisitions and, in 1990, TCCP became a SPEC MIX® licensee.

Currently, Twin City Concrete Products Company operates eight dry mix packaging plants in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota, and a corporate office in suburban Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn. Among those plants are 650 SPEC MIX silos dispensing SPEC MIX products for hundreds of projects annually. In addition, TCCP operates a concrete and masonry laboratory in St. Paul that works on research and development of new products, plant raw material evaluations, quality control and troubleshooting.

"This investment and commitment to plants, labs, equipment and people separates Twin City Concrete Products in the industry," says Brian DiGrado, marketing/business development manager.

Customer service is a key component at TCCP. From dispatchers to sales reps, a strong effort is made every day to ensure that the SPEC MIX® customer is satisfied.

"We are aggressively looking at new markets and product development throughout our region to enhance the SPEC MIX® brand," DiGrado says, "while expanding our efforts in the areas of stucco and shotcrete."

Today, TCCP is able to offer a complete line of packaged concrete, stucco, shotcrete, grout, mortar and sand products to satisfy needs from the do-it-yourselfer to the professional mason contractor.



Twin City Concrete Product's St. Paul plant

industry highlights

SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500sm regional contests kick off in Chicago

Packaged Concrete Inc. (PCI) held the first qualifying regional competition for the SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500 on July 12 at the Du Page County (Illinois) Fair. Six masons from Illinois and Indiana competed for a paid trip to the big event in February 2004 at the World of Concrete/World of Masonry in Orlando, Fla.



Winning mason Mike Boll shows skill and speed by laying an amazing 714 bricks in one hour.

Mike Boll of Boll Masonry, Monee, Ill., won the competition by laying 714 brick in one hour. The masons were also judged on level, plumb and voids. "Our expectations of quality and quantity of the brick laid by all the competing masons were well-exceeded," says Shawn O'Malley, Mudslinger for PCI. "I think we successfully organized the first-ever Bricklayer 500 regional qualifier for PCI. We expect our No. 1 qualifier to be in top contention at the nationals."

Boll is ready for the big contest in Orlando. "It's all I keep thinking about," he says. "I must be driving my wife crazy."

"My brother was in a similar competition in '87 — The U.S. Brick Olympics. He won. I was there but wasn't laying brick myself yet. When I saw that this competition [SPEC MIX Bricklayer 500] was coming up, I just had to do it. ... It was really neat to get a feel for what you're going to do at the national competition."

The other competitors came in as follows: **2nd place:** Bert Schneider of Helander Masonry, Dixon, Ill., 625 brick; **3rd place:** Nole Fane of Helander Masonry, Dixon, Ill., 564 brick; **4th place:** Dale Gough of Gough Construction, Crown Point, Ind., 543 brick; **5th place:** Tadek Stazel of Build One LTD, Chicago, Ill., 509 brick; and **6th place:** Paul Maurer of Illinois Masonry Corp., Schaumburg, Ill., 490 brick.

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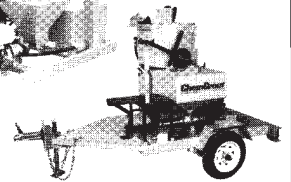
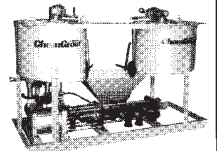
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September 17-20
Austin, TX

**INCON Florida Concrete and
Products Association**
September 17-20
Orlando, FL

**Restoration & Renovation Exhibition
and Conference**
September 18-20
Chicago, IL

**Fall Conference of the Concrete
Masonry Association of California
and Nevada**
September 25-28
Sonoma, CA

**Joint Fall Meeting of the Portland
Cement Association**
September 30-October 1
Chicago, IL

**Arizona Masonry Expo & Fastest
Trowel on the Block**
October 18
Phoenix, AZ

**BAC/IMI International
Apprenticeship Contest**
October 18
Washington, DC

**WEFTEC 2003 Annual Conference
& Expo**
October 11-15
Los Angeles, CA

**4th Annual Brick Industry Marketing
Forum**
December 4-5
Ponte Verda Beach, FL

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