Statistical data provided by the National Precast Concrete Association, the PCAV and other related associations indicates a nice trend toward strong growth in precast product specification and use across the nation. To the delight of PCAV members, this growth has been quite evident in Virginia and has helped create many great opportunities—and a few challenges!

I had the privilege and pleasure of attending the NPCA Industry Outlook Conference held in Palm Springs, Calif. in October, and returned motivated to find ways to work with NPCA and PCAV to take our industry and association to a new level.

The keynote address by Robert Kreigel, a former All-American athlete and best-selling author of several management books, was inspiring. His book, *Sacred Cows Make the Best Burgers*, addresses the need for companies to be forward thinking and not get mired in outdated thoughts and processes. He defines *Sacred Cows* as “an outdated belief, assumption, practice, policy or system, generally invisible, that inhibits change and prevents responsiveness to new opportunities.”

Several thought-provoking ideas

To automobile dealerships, the parking lot is their sales floor. The more automobiles they can display, the more they will sell. So, when they decide to expand their retail operations, the goal is to gain the most paved space possible, while achieving an aesthetically pleasing selling area.

Foster and Miller of Glen Allen, VA is a civil engineering firm that works with various commercial clients, like Carmax™, to design new parking facilities.

One of the requirements of any design is to comply with state and local stormwater quality regulations, while maximizing the sales utility of their client’s valuable real estate. Chris Sims, director of engineering at Foster and Miller, is often charged with the task of evaluating and selecting stormwater treatment systems that will meet their client’s site utilization criteria. He contacted Americast to learn more about the Filterra® Bioretention Stormwater Treatment System.

Filterra® is one of the only treatment systems available that integrates a highly effective bioretention treatment system for removing pollutants into a visually pleasing, structurally unobtrusive package. Filterra’s® unique processes remove and/or neutralize pollutants such as phosphorus, metals, suspended solids, bacteria and hydrocarbons. It employs the fundamental physical, chemical and biological pollutant removal mechanisms of bioretention to filter contaminated runoff through a plant/soil/microbe complex. Its simple design/sizing requirements, drop-in-place precast concrete construction, highly efficient filter media, high annual runoff volume treatment and safe, straightforward and inexpensive maintenance makes Filterra® the system of choice for many projects.

Mr. Sims says, “There are so many BMP options to choose from today, most of which take up a lot of space and are expensive to maintain. I liked Filterra’s® decentralized sizing approach which allows us to place these systems, with relatively small footprints, in smaller drainage areas throughout the site and at the source.
PCAV Happenings

This last issue of the year for Hardfacts provides an opportunity to look back at progress made in 2004. It is also a time when the association begins formulating plans for next year’s activities. In both instances, one fact remains clear—the dedicated and active involvement of the PCAV membership is the secret to our continued success in representing the interests of the precast concrete industry in Virginia.

A couple of examples need mentioning. Alex Mason’s diligence in continuing regular and meaningful dialogue with VDOT has produced results. The numerous Specifications Committee meetings he and his committee held during the course of the year addressed a broad range of technical and specification issues of concern to PCAV members. And when specifications issues arise in localities around the state, such as the ongoing discussion in the Tidewater area regarding warranty requirements on sanitary manhole coatings, PCAV is there and actively engaged.

PCAV’s Educational Committee, consisting of Caressa Alexander, Ann Couwenhoven, Ed Page and Patrick Rodgers, continues to create many positive impressions on the value of precast concrete products by hosting educational programs targeted towards designers and specifiers in both the private and public sector. Nearly 100 attendees have participated in these sessions and left with a much stronger understanding of the technical superiority of precast products. Your Board of Directors was so impressed with the value of these training sessions they agreed to spend association money to cover the overhead costs associated with presenting these programs, thereby allowing the Committee to offer these training sessions at no charge to attendees. This program is so highly regarded that both the NPCA and other state precast associations want to learn more about the content and marketing of these sessions in an effort to reproduce the program in other states. That’s quite a compliment!

As staff to the association, I can only hope that Scott Crumpler remains chairman of the Marketing Committee for life! Year in and year out Scott does an excellent job in ensuring that PCAV is well represented at various conferences and industry events throughout the state. That is no easy task given the logistics involved in moving and staffing the PCAV booth, not to mention the time Scott spends coordinating this effort. The effective marketing of precast products is a core component of our mission, and Scott and his committee always ensure that the impressions left are positive.

Marie Derby again arranged a well attended, informative, and fun annual conference. Her work on this meeting is almost a year-long effort, with countless hours spent handling the hotel arrangements, negotiating with speakers, selecting menus, preparing mailings, and soliciting financial support in the form of sponsorships. How good a job she does is best demonstrated by the seamless way the conference unfolds for attendees. Based on these attributes, the membership is already looking forward to seeing what Marie has planned for the 2005 conference, which will be held at the world-renowned Homestead Resort. I share their anticipation.

PCAV members know that your Immediate Past President, Mimi Coles, didn’t just fade away when her term as President ended last year. Instead, she has worked to revamp
President’s Letter

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we could use in our association or business include:

• Round up Sacred Cows that take time, cost money and inhibit change and innovation.
• Organize Sacred Cow hunts to eliminate outdated thinking and practices.
• Create and lead a change-ready organization.
• Get control of paper piles, meeting mania and email epidemics.
• Develop innovative out-of-the-box thinking strategies.

I would encourage our members to read his book and think about the many innovative ideas that challenge your growth in our industry.

There is a constant challenge to our industry and products, but—for every challenge, there is an opportunity, which we should take advantage of whenever possible.

With the advantages of precast concrete products over other products—strength, durability, watertightness, buoyancy, environmental friendliness and availability—the superiority of precast is ours on which to capitalize!

This year’s theme for IOC was “Reach for the Stars.” Maybe it was the desert air opening my mind to the many opportunities for the future of our industry that made me realize it is time to round up the Sacred Cows and present a new vision for our future.

As your President, this past year has been a joyful experience and I have enjoyed working with our staff and members. I look forward to many challenges and opportunities in 2005.

—Stephen C. Rodgers

PCAV’s Happenings

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the association’s website, overseen the timely production and distribution of this newsletter, and continues to provide input on a broad range of association activities. Let’s hope she never fades away!

And last but not least, Steve Rodgers has done a great job in leading our association in 2004. The four regional, joint PCAV/VDOT meetings were his idea, and one that has proven to be instrumental in maintaining our relationship with the newly decentralized state highway department. He has represented the association at numerous national meetings and joined the PCAV staff in our successful presentation to NECSA. And he has been a great resource to the PCAV staff as we dealt with a broad range of administrative issues over the course of the year. I know the members join me in thanking Steve for his time and commitment to the association.

I want to wish each of you a safe holiday season, and a prosperous year in 2005. At year’s end you will be receiving your dues invoice for 2005. Your renewed commitment will help ensure PCAV’s future prosperity. I look forward to working with each of you in the coming year.

—Mark Singer, Managing Consultant

The Annual Convention Was Spectacular

This year’s PCAV Annual Convention was held on September 14-16, 2004 at the Wintergreen Resort in Virginia. The weather was wonderful and the views spectacular as always.

Attendance was great and all enjoyed the golf outing followed by reception and dinner. The winners of the golf event were first place team: Tommy Jones, Vince Beyer, Craig Whitten and Hank Gottschalk. The second place team was Hank Rainero; Bill Tichacek, Ed Pennypacker, and Ted Coons. The longest putt winner was Peter Fortini and the longest drive winner was Brad Meyers.

The next day brought very informative and entertaining speakers. Ed Sullivan, Chief Economist from the Portland Cement Association delivered a very enlightening speech on the state of the economy and the extreme conditions facing our industry. Larry Sabato, nationally renowned political scientist and analyst, then talked about the various avenues and reflections of the upcoming election.

You may remember that Larry also spoke to us in 2000 and provided very valuable information with his clever delivery. What great speakers!

Steve Rodgers, our association president, shared some thoughts with the group and we concluded with lunch. Special thanks to golf chairman—Jim Richmond! Many golf and door prizes were provided throughout our function and I would like to thank our sponsors:

• A-Lok Products
• A.L. Patterson
• Boral Material Technologies
• Essroc Cement
• LaFarge North America
• LeHigh Cement
• Martin Marietta Aggregates
• Permatile Concrete Products Co.
• Universal Sales

The PCAV will hold its 2005 convention on September 20-22, 2005 at the Homestead in Hot Springs, Virginia.

—Marie Derby
Americast is a publication of the Precast Concrete Association of Virginia for its members. Submissions, story ideas, member kudos, letters to the editor and comments are welcomed. Contact the editor, Lois Carter Fay, at 800.203.8660 or lcf@marketingideashop.com.

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