



The Mesa Connection™

Winter 2004



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Letter from the President:

Tensar Earth Technologies (TET) begins 2004 with a Mesa Connection™ that takes us on a world wide tour from the bustling streets of Caracas, Venezuela to the rural highlands of Pennsylvania, and finally to the scenic vistas of western North Carolina.

In Caracas, we visit the Unicentro la Trinidad shopping center where a cost conscientious development team is turning a restricted urban site into a neighborhood focal point. This large commercial development is taking shape next to one of the city's main roadways and is quite an impressive project— particularly since the Mesa® Systems' aesthetic qualities played just as big a role in the owner's decision-making process as its technical specifications and performance.

Our next stop in Somerset, PA, provides an incredible example of how creative thinking and process automation can help rural block plants compete against operations located closer to major population centers. Mesa Licensee Shaffer Block & Concrete Products Co., Inc. shows us how it's done in the northeast.

Finally, we pay a visit to pastoral Forest City, NC, where Pinnacle Design/Build Group recently completed a series of Mesa structures for a new Lowe's Home Improvement Center. Read our installer profile, and you'll see why this installer is gaining a reputation as a "Big Box" specialist who can deliver integrated retaining wall solutions with no hidden charges or issues.

Welcome...



*Bob Vevoda
President
Tensar Earth Technologies, Inc.*

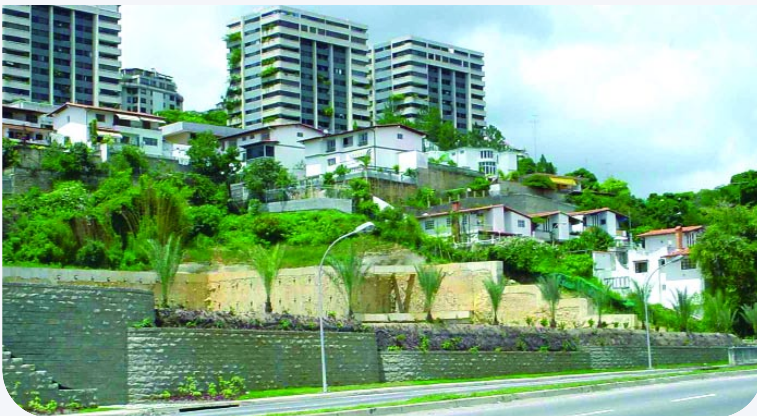
Destination Retail Center Looks the Part

Mesa Systems Provide Right Solution for a Tough Site

Like many other metro areas, hilly Caracas, Venezuela, is running out of ready-to-build real estate. This reality means local developers are under intense pressure to find effective – but affordable – solutions for turning topographically challenged sites into usable land. For Centro Pivoca, C.A., the design manager and general contractor behind the Avenue Intercomunal, El Hatillo-La Trinidad, a new commercial development taking shape on one of Caracas' major arterial roadways, the solution was to use the Mesa Retaining Wall Systems.

"The best decision from an engineering standpoint was to construct Unicentro la Trinidad on an earth-reinforced system," says Centro Pivoca Principal Project Manager Abraham Katz Levy. "We looked at a number of other systems, but they didn't have the technical resources or track record we wanted for this high-profile project. Only Tensar and Ernesto Herrera Martínez (representative of Muros Mesa de Venezuela) offered the excellent support we needed to move forward with development."

(continued on page 3)



Preferred Installers

If you're looking for an installer for your next Mesa Retaining Wall project, please take a look at the following list of some of our "preferred installers."

Burleson Contracting Incorporated
Texas – (512) 260-9566

Contour, Inc.
Georgia – (770) 577-9082

Alabama – (205) 682-2013

Custom Retaining Walls
Missouri – (816) 795-6720

Hoffman Enterprises
Missouri – (660) 338-2491

Interlock Systems of Tennessee, Inc.
Tennessee and Ohio
(865) 675-7700

Pinnacle Design/Build
Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee
(770) 205-4088
www.pinnacledesignbuild.com

Retaining Wall Systems of NJ
New Jersey – (800) 638-9255

Roche Bros., Inc.
Maryland – (301) 428-0300

Slaton Bros., Inc.
Colorado – (303) 806-8160
www.slatonbros.com

MSE Systems
Florida – (407) 931-1221

For more information on the preferred installer for your specific region, please call Tensar Earth Technologies at 800-TENSAR-1.

Large Project Designed to Blend In

When completed, the Unicentro shopping center will feature 12 theaters, a home improvement store, several restaurants, and specialty retailers. The development's hillside perch makes it a local landmark in a neighborhood of mixed residential and commercial construction. Because of its prominent location, the project owners were anxious to have the center and its associated geotechnical structures blend into the neighborhood.

"The owners wanted their project (across from Procter and Gamble's Venezuelan headquarters) to be part of the community," Levy explains. "The Mesa Systems made it possible. In terms of quality and appearance, there was no comparison between them and other systems we considered."

Sensitive Streams Create Unique Challenge

Geotechnical and Project Engineers Francisco Centeno Pulido and Carlos Rodríguez Álvarez of Centeno-Rodríguez Et Asociados, the firm responsible for site inspections and project plans, note that the project owners were also concerned with how to address the site's environmental challenges. The property included a significant amount of existing fill soils, a high underground water table, and two ecologically sensitive streams.

"One of our walls had to cross a box culvert between the site and the highway," says Centeno. "The culvert carried the stream flows, so it was important to complete this part of the construction without disturbing the area."



Shaffer Block & Concrete Products Co., Inc.

In 1945, William Shaffer used a \$2,500 loan to turn an idle block plant in rural, western Pennsylvania into a functioning business. Nearly 60 years later, Shaffer Block is one of the region's leading manufacturers of lightweight and architectural block and segmental retaining wall units.

"In 2002, we sold our ready mix operation and reinvested the proceeds into our block plant," says company president Mark Shaffer, the founder's grandson. "That enables us to produce thousands of Mesa Units using a fully automated process. The first person to physically touch our blocks is the laborer on the customer's job site."

A willingness to embrace new technologies is one reason that Shaffer Block has continued to thrive even though they're located in one of the state's least developed counties. "We compete very aggressively and maximize efficiency at every step," Shaffer says. "We use a hauler with

Mesa Walls and Tensor Geogrids Provide Solution

Centeno-Rodríguez's solution was to reinforce the base of the Mesa Wall that crossed the culvert with Tensor Biaxial (BX) Geogrid. Using BX1200 Geogrid helped distribute loads more evenly across the structure than would be possible using other systems.

"Building over the culvert was a major concern," says Levy. "We felt more comfortable doing this using Tensor Systems and Geogrids. These materials gave us a better design than other systems."

The site includes 13 installed Mesa Walls with a total length of 935 feet (285 meters) and heights of 6 feet (1.8 meters) to 17 feet (5.2 meters). Ingenieria GyM & Asociados handled the project, which required just eight weeks to install 7,320 square feet (680 square meters) of Mesa standard units incorporating Tensor Biaxial (BX) Geogrids. Five walls were combined with the Tensor Sierra® Slope Retention System to create additional slope heights of 3.2 feet (1 meter) to 13 feet (3.85 meters). These slopes included Tensor Uniaxial (UX) Geogrids as well as Tensor BX1100 and BX1200 Geogrids. Using a combination of the two systems helped reduce costs and create a more natural landscape.

"The owners wanted a space that would be environmentally friendly not only on the inside but also in the way it related to the surrounding community," says Levy. "Using Tensor Systems definitely gave us that effect. Overall, we are all very pleased with how the project turned out."



dedicated lightweight equipment that allows us to put close to 700 square feet of material on a load instead of the typical 500. That offsets our freight rate to more distant markets."

A commitment to superior service also helps Shaffer attract customers throughout western Pennsylvania, Maryland, and West Virginia. He

notes that his crews are considered masters at color matching. This skill enables the plant to produce custom Mesa Units that blend perfectly with other on-site building materials.

Dependability is yet another advantage. The company recently provided 23,000 square feet of Mesa Units for Brentwood Town Square, a community shopping center in

Pittsburgh's South Hills district. Joseph Zuzich, field supervisor of Aetos Construction, notes, "We had difficult conditions at the site. We kept adding more walls to the project, and we never had to wait on Shaffer. They really held their own."

Contact Shaffer Block & Concrete Products Co., Inc. at 800-365-1576.

Installer Profile

Pinnacle Design/Build Group, Inc.

Pinnacle Design/Build Group is a geotechnical subcontractor who specializes in the design and construction of reinforced soil retaining walls and erosion control systems. The firm, headquartered in Cumming, GA, just a few miles northeast of Atlanta, has offices in Treasure Island, FL, and Pagosa Springs, CO. as well as crews in six states. This strategic deployment of resources enables the firm to deliver its integrated package of services to customers throughout North America.

Reputation Fuels Growth

Joseph E. Harris, P.E. formed the company in 1996 to serve land developers and highway contractors. A reputation for high-quality and cost-effective construction has enabled the firm to sustain steady growth under a variety of economic conditions.

"We have an industry reputation for delivering projects in a dependable manner," Harris says. "We're also different because our company services the market with a fully integrated solution...We come to the table with a complete package that includes engineering design, construction, and quality products."

Northside Marketplace – Nashville, TN



"I can depend on the performance of the Mesa Systems. For my clients, that means I can help them get their cash registers going a lot faster."

Joe Harris
President
Pinnacle Design/Build Group

Turnkey Capabilities for Customers

Pinnacle's in-house team handles all phases of construction on its retaining wall projects, including design, excavation, building, control fill, fencing, and landscaping. Harris says this turnkey approach simplifies the construction process for customers and makes projects more cost-effective to complete.

Big Box Projects are Routine

To ensure quality, the firm works only with carefully chosen engineered retaining wall products such as the Mesa Retaining Wall Systems. Harris says the Mesa Systems' ease of installation, design strength, and aesthetics are an ideal match for "big box" customers such as Lowe's, The Home Depot, and Wal-Mart.

"I can depend on the performance of the Mesa Systems," he says. "For my clients, that means I can help them get their cash registers going a lot faster."

The Pinnacle team has used its dependable and reliable reputation to build a national portfolio of big box projects. Harris thinks much of this success is a direct result of the firm's ability to deliver pad-ready sites, on time and on budget.

Recent projects include an 18,000 square foot wall for a Home Depot in Franklin, TN, a 6,000 square foot wall for a Home Depot in Calhoun, GA, a 4,000-square-foot wall for a Wal-Mart in Bonsack, VA, and a 15,000 square foot Mesa and SierraScape™ Wall for a new Lowe's in Forest City, NC. The firm is currently working on five new structures for big box sites in the Southeast, Midwest, and West.

Engineering Inspires Confidence

Savvy customers are looking for this sort of long-term site solution, says Hardscape Sales Manager Gordon Wagner of Metromont Materials, the Mesa Licensee that provided the Mesa Units for the Forest City Lowe's job. "The big box retailers have a lot riding on their projects," he notes. "Sometimes the sites are technically challenging, so they want a proven product that inspires a high level of confidence. With Mesa Systems, they can trust the engineering behind the product."

Contact Pinnacle Design/Build Group at 770-205-4088.

The Home Depot – Franklin, TN



Alabama
Shelby Concrete Block Co.
#205-664-0095

Arkansas
Nettleton Concrete Works, Inc.
(Gardener Units Only)
#870-932-4400

Colorado
Basalite Concrete Products
#800-289-2562

California
Tensar Earth Technologies, Inc.
#888-831-8333
www.tensarcorp.com

Quikrete
(Adobe/Gardener Units Only)
#818-767-7191
#909-277-3155

Connecticut
Northeast Mesa
#888-3NEMESA
www.northeastmesa.com

Delaware
E.P. Henry
#800-444-3679
www.ephenry.com

Florida
RMC Ewell Industries, Inc.
#813-689-3150
www.rmcindustries.com

Singeltary Concrete Products
#941-921-5551
www.rmcindustries.com

Georgia
Allied Ready Mix
#770-963-4819
www.alliedreadymix.com

Idaho
Mutual Materials
#800-922-6699
www.mutualmaterials.com

Illinois
Country Stone
#309-787-1744

Crumb Colton Block
& Brick Co.
#800-373-3408

Indiana
Irvin's Concrete Products
#765-742-0155

Wheeler Corporation
#317-398-7500

Iowa
Shell Rock Products, Inc.
#712-338-2408

Kansas
Midwest Block & Brick
#816-241-5197

Kentucky
Meade Concrete
#859-885-1700

Louisiana
Acme Building Products
#800-563-4083

Maine
Bolduc
#800-603-5567
www.bolduccanada.com

Maryland
York Building Products Co., Inc.
#717-848-2831

Massachusetts
Northeast Mesa
#888-3NEMESA
www.northeastmesa.com

Michigan
National Block Company
#734-721-4056

Minnesota
Borgert Products
#800-622-4952
www.borgertproducts.com

Mississippi
Jackson Ready Mix Masonry
#601-354-3801

Missouri
Midwest Block & Brick
#816-241-5197

Montana
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www.mutualmaterials.com

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Northeast Mesa
#888-3NEMESA
www.northeastmesa.com

North Carolina
RMC Carolina Materials
#336-294-1124
www.rmccarolina.com

RMC Metromont Materials
#704-597-2100
www.rmcindustries.com

New Hampshire
Bolduc
#800-603-5567
www.bolduccanada.com

Ohio
Miami Cement Products
#800-848-6739

Tri-M Block and Supply
#330-264-8771

Wellnitz
#614-220-9419
www.wellnitz.com

Oregon
Mutual Materials
#800-477-7137
www.mutualmaterials.com

Pennsylvania
A.A. Robbins
#814-398-4607
www.aarobbins.com

E.P. Henry
#800-444-3679
www.ephenry.com

Northeast Architectural
Products
#570-826-1120

Shaffer Block & Concrete
#412-373-5217

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Northeast Mesa
#888-3NEMESA
www.northeastmesa.com

South Carolina
RMC Metromont Materials
#864-585-4241
www.rmcindustries.com

Tennessee
LoJac
#615-444-2504
www.lojac.com

Texas
Featherlite Building Products
#512-255-2573/972-241-1400
www.featherlitetexas.com

Vermont
Bolduc
#800-603-5567
www.bolduccanada.com

Washington
Mutual Materials
#800-477-3008
www.mutualmaterials.com

Wisconsin
Van Der Vaart, Inc.
#920-459-2400
www.vandervaartinc.com

INTERNATIONAL:

Argentina
Alubry San Pedro
#54 11 4717-0588

Brazil
MPZ Aplicacoes
Tecnologicas TDA.
#55 11 5506-9496

Canada
Arrow
#506-458-9610

Bolduc
#800-603-5567
www.bolduccanada.com

Nilex Group Canada
#800-667-4811
www.nilex.com

Terrafix
#416-674-0363

Chile
Emin Comercial, S.A.
#562-299-8000

Colombia
GeoSintec Ltda.
#571-527-0000

Costa Rica
Leonard & Asociados
#506-234-6968

Ecuador
Pivaltec, S.A.
#593 2-246-9843

El Salvador
Precon, S.A. (Platinum)
#503-260-9035

Guatemala
Precon, S.A.
#502-368-3511

Mexico
Vibropren S.A. de C.V.
#524-44-823-0620

Panama
Fundaciones, S.A.
#507-292-7868

Puerto Rico
R & R Engineering Products
#787-746-8826

Venezuela
Muros Mesa de Venezuela
#582 12-976-6235

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