

Practical Guide to Concrete

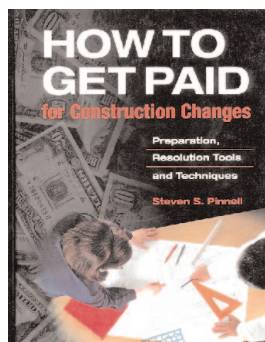
by Pete Young

Four new books for specialized concrete applications form the *Practitioner's Guide* series (American Concrete Institute, P.O. Box 9094, Farmington Hills, MI 48333; 248/848-3700; www.aci-int.org). Each guide — *Hot Weather Concreting* (75 pages, \$48); *Cold Weather Concreting* (184 pages, \$43); *Tilt-Up Concrete Construction* (245 pages, \$54); *Slabs on Ground* (567 pages, \$100) — is a compilation of articles, book excerpts, and association reports. The series is impressive because it draws from so many players in the concrete industry. Articles are reprinted from magazines such as *Concrete Construction*, *Concrete International*, and *The Construction Specifier*. Technical reports are included from associations such as the Aberdeen Group, the American Concrete Institute, the American Society for Concrete Construction, the Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute, the Portland Cement Association, the Tilt-Up Concrete Association, and the Wire Reinforcement Institute. Although commercial work somewhat overshadows residential work in these guides, the concrete fundamentals that are explained apply both ways.



Getting Paid Without a Fight

How to Get Paid for Construction Changes (\$60 from McGraw-Hill, 11 West 19th St., New York, NY 10011; 800/722-4726; www.mcgraw-hill.com) presents a philosophy and business procedures intended to help contractors collect on change orders without damaging their business relationships. At the heart of the book is a “partnering approach” that stresses good faith management, negotiating, and dispute resolution between the various players on a construction project. The basic idea is that the partnering approach



will work well with the majority of people who are reasonable and who also want to preserve good business relations. Author Steven Pinnell is well aware, however, that disputes are sometimes unavoidable. In fact, he stresses that a successful contractor must be ready for adversarial disputes and be able to counter them effectively. In these cases, you’ve still got to be ready to go to court to get your money — and in court you’ll need the kind of bulletproof paperwork Pinnell writes about to back up your claims.

Finding the Job Site

So you live in AnyCity, USA, and there’s a potential job on the other side of town — or you’re trying to explain to your crew or subcontractors how to get to a new job site. With *Street Atlas USA 6.0* (\$55 from DeLorme, P.O. Box 298, Yarmouth, ME 04096; 207/846-7000; www.delorme.com), you can identify possible routes by entering a place name or zip code to bring up a map onscreen. You can even locate a particular street intersection and mark it onscreen. Print out a map and bring it with you in your truck or fax it to your suppliers and subs. Computer maps have come a long way over the last few years. This program has most small side streets as well as the locations of helpful landmarks, such as rivers, parks, museums, and public buildings.



Custom Stairbuilding

Although most of us will never take on a job building the curved custom stairways explained by George di Cristina, a few of us just might. And if we’re even thinking that someday we’d seriously like to have a go, then it’s already time to get a copy of *A Simplified Guide to Custom Stairbuilding and Tangent Handrailing* (\$35 from Linden Publishing Co., 336 W. Bedford, Suite 107, Fresno, CA 93711; 800/345-4447). As I see it, understanding this stuff would happen in stages: first the design geometry, then the techniques for making curved stringers and handrails, such as the use of templates and form walls. Don’t buy this book if you are not a studious and patient person because curved stair-



building would probably just leave you insane, broke, or both. But there's hidden treasures in them there pages, and maybe some future high-end work to boot.

Resolving Water Problems

Residential Water Problems: Prevention and Solutions is a brief primer that touches on how to recognize potential water problems, how to design for anticipated water (ground and roof), and how to solve water problems when they do happen. This short book by Alvin Sacks (\$22 from Home Builder Press, 1201 15th St., NW, Washington, DC 20005; 800/223-2665; www.builderbooks.com) briefly reviews the soil science you need to know to understand groundwater issues. Sacks presents practical prevention measures and problem solutions, and clearly explains them, although additional graphics would have helped even more.



FREE & CHEAP

Good HUD Pubs

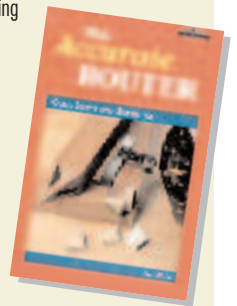
Two recent publications from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (\$5 each — contact HUD USER, P.O. Box 6091, Rockville, MD 20849; 800/245-2691; www.huduser.org) — both address cutting-edge issues in residential construction. *Building Innovation for Homeownership* was put together by HUD, the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing, and Steven Winter Associates. It reviews 63 award-winning residential jobs that used new technologies to lower production costs. Of particular interest are chapters covering panelized construction, structural insulated panel construction, steel framing, insulating concrete forms, and aerated block.



HUD, the National Homebuilders Association, and the Portland Cement Association teamed up to produce a manual on designing, construction, and inspecting insulating concrete form (ICF) wall systems. *Prescriptive Method for Insulating Concrete Forms in Residential Construction* is a comprehensive guide for both foundation and above-grade wall systems. The first half of the book consists of a straightforward ICF technical guide, including sections on floor-wall connections, wall-roof connections, and wall opening reinforcement. The second half of the book consists of two appendices — the first an actual design example and the second a presentation of advanced engineering information.

Router How-To

Although Ian Kirby's *The Accurate Router* focuses more on shop use than field use, it's packed with useful information on router features, setup, jig making, and shaping techniques. At \$15, it's a bargain (Cambium Press, P.O. Box 909, Bethel, CT 06801; 203/426-6481).



Building Green Houses

Using wood efficiently is one central goal in building green houses. The Natural Resources Defense Council's *Efficient Wood Use in Residential Construction: A Practical Guide to Saving Wood, Money, and Forests* has two central themes: to take advantage of new technologies and job-site practices that reduce wood consumption, and to build durable structures that will last longer and thereby reduce future wood demand. Different chapters delve into component systems, structural insulating panels, optimum value engineering, working with certified and reclaimed wood, job-site waste reduction, and detailing for durability. The book (\$7.50 from NRDC Publications Dept., 40 West 20th St., New York, NY 10011; 212/727-2700; www.nrdc.org) backs up each chapter with detailed cost analysis on dollar and wood savings.

