

## RCP Block and Brick Inc.

# Building a Foundation of Recyclable Concrete

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The region of Southern California is one of progressive, forward-thinking businesses, making RCP Block and Brick Inc. (RCP) right at home as San Diego's go-to concrete company. RCP has been manufacturing and supplying high-quality concrete block- and concrete-based products since 1947, including brick, retaining walls, interlocking pavers, landscape rock, stepping stones, stone veneer, natural stones, as well as plenty of edgers and cappers for outdoor walls. However, RCP has a few surprises in addition to the standard building material fare.

### Pioneering New Green Products

Mike Finch, president of RCP, states that during the mid-1990s the company began producing a line of Keystone Retaining Wall products that left behind a great deal of by-product. "We needed to find a way to use the by-product, which was really just split-off chunks of concrete," says Mike. If the product went unused it would increase the company's carbon footprint and inevitably end up in a landfill.

Notably, the RCP team didn't allow anything useful to go to waste; at that point, Marvin Finch, Mike's father and founder of RCP, bought a portable crusher at a local auction and used it to crush the product down into a mix. "We tried it in our manufacturing process; that didn't work the way we had hoped," says Mike. Finally, the company screened the crushed product into two sizes, a fine sand and a more coarse aggregate, and the team was able to incorporate both materials into RCP's mix designs to make finished products with a percentage of recycled content.

"Virgin sand from river beds was becoming increasingly becoming scarcer in our area," says Mike. "The cost to bring raw materials in from out of our geographic area was prohibitive. We were confident that we could use our own waste and continue to make quality products RCP was known for."

The RCP team proudly achieved its goal of utilizing on-site waste and recycling it into something durable and usable, and as a result the company did not have to truck waste to overflowing landfills. With green construction practices becoming increasingly more common, the recycled concrete was not just a novelty, but it also proved to be a viable resource, and EconoBlock was born.





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The team was proud to have pioneered a new construction material, and RCP was rewarded even further for the team's efforts. "We're the first concrete block company to have International Code Council Evaluation Service [ICC-ES] third-party certification," says Mike. "ICC-ES confirms that our company makes a concrete product with at least 25-percent recycled content." RCP took its revolutionary recycled concrete one step further as the company delved into more green supplies and practices.

According to Mike, the team has been working to reduce both RCP's carbon and cement products for two reasons: keeping with the company's foundation of healthful and honest practice and to benefit each customer. "In almost all of our products we can use these mix designs using recycled product to help the contractor get a LEED Gold or Platinum certification status," he says proudly. "We're just one piece of the puzzle, but we can help them gain points toward that."

The staff has been consistently applying new processes to increase the recycled content without reducing the block's structural capacity. "We've been playing with a new mix design and are now able to get 62 percent of the product to

be recycled," Mike boasts. While the company acquiesces that the block is not intended for heavy industrial or commercial building, the block works perfectly in the residential market. Even more impressive is the fact that there is no difference in the product's appearance from that of a regular concrete block.

Mike admits that the EconoBlock may look like any other concrete material, but explains that it isn't. "It's one of our product line's waste that we're putting back into another product, and it will test above American Society for Testing and Materials [ASTM] C90 of 2,000 psi," opines Mike. RCP has now been using the EconoBlock for nearly 20 years, and the team continues to push the envelope with its percentage of recycled materials. Not being a company to rest on its laurels, RCP has advanced in other areas in addition to the team's visionary and inventive green product line.

### Proudly a Family Environment

RCP has always been a family-owned, -operated and -orientated company, but this strong sense of belonging is extended to nonfamily members as well. The Chubb family of La Mesa, Calif., established the La Mesa Block Company in



# Congratulations

Keystone Retaining Wall Systems congratulates RCP Block & Brick on their success over the last 65 years; a wonderful accomplishment.

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“Family comes first. Everybody’s got lives outside of work, they have children, wives and husbands that they need to spend time with.”

Many times, Mike confesses, people will come into the corporate office and be surprised to see a child running down the hallway. Whether it’s from daycare complications or other reasons, the company looks after its own. “Sometimes it’s free and easy, but it creates an atmosphere that my people feel comfortable or want to be in,” Mike says with a smile. “The company is an extension of the family in my opinion.” It’s no exaggeration on Mike’s part; at one point a mother, father and their two sons were all working at RCP simultaneously and none of them were related to the company’s founding family.

RCP is a lot like a good neighbor; it is a company that knows exactly how and when to help out the community with a rock-solid and progressive product line and consummate service. Based on a foundation of family, the company has advanced not because of acquisitions or takeovers, but because of the team’s genuine interest in providing an outstanding package to each customer, the community and the Earth. RCP Block and Brick Inc. is looking forward to continuing the steady pattern of growth and building upward, block by block. •

1948, just a year after RCP was established. Both businesses prospered and expanded over the years, erecting branches in nearby towns of Southern California. Eventually the two businesses became joined as one. La Mesa and RCP found the two had a lot in common; both companies were family-oriented and started from the ground up, literally by making block-on-hand operated machines.

RCP and La Mesa realized the level of advancement both companies could achieve by combining, and the two companies ultimately merged in 1966, maintaining their shared operational philosophy. “Being a family business we’ve got a family culture,” says Mike.

