Just when LATICRETE Europe S.r.l. was moving into our new facility, with enthusiasm to finally start our adventure working together, COVID-19 entered Italy, one of the first European countries to face this pandemic.

It was a hard test from a human point of view for the LATICRETE team but we are passing it with flying colors. It’s true, social distancing has become indispensable and obligatory; but paradoxically this situation, instead of driving people away, has united them even more! This is what happened to the BENFER and LATICRETE team.

We have taken all the preventative measures necessary to face this situation, and the economic crisis that has resulted. It would have been easy to become discouraged in this situation, with the fear of losing a job or not being able to return as before. But it was not so! The whole TEAM has shown that it knows how to face this crisis humanly and psychologically.

From the business point of view, we started the year very well, despite the month of March when we could only work for a few days. In April, we managed to hit our adjusted goals — an incredible effort considering that almost all of Europe was in lockdown!

We have shown the whole team that the company is close to them, that we are a family! And the whole team continues to work with passion! We conduct frequent video conference calls, during which employees are updated on the overall company situation.

Now is also a time to socialize, express doubts and fears, ask questions and get to know each other more deeply. So we are even more united! We look forward to reuniting in person again.

For now, we hope you enjoy some positive updates in this newsletter.

In case of questions or concerns, our staff is available by phone or email.

Ph: +39 059 557680
Email: info@laticreteurope.com

We continue to work to serve you, always and above all in this difficult situation.

Un caro saluto.

Eddy Bonucelli
LATICRETE Europe Regional Director
Dear Valued LATICRETE Customers & Team Members,

It is with great pleasure that I write to you today to introduce myself as the new CEO of LATICRETE International, Inc. I hope all of your loved ones and co-workers are safe, and I wish you all the best during this challenging time.

I am honored the Rothberg family has chosen me to join a great team and continue on with their legacy of superior products along with the guidance and support of David Rothberg, who will remain as Chairman of the Board.

Your business is very important to all of us. The success of our solutions in the markets we serve is the result of the projects you drive and the market development you lead. We are very thankful for your support and are committed to being an innovative and trusted partner. We will navigate through these uncertain times and continue to develop and grow as partners.

Stay safe and well. I look forward to the opportunity of meeting you in the future.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Millot

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“Before this pandemic, we were excited to start working in the new offices in Castelnuovo Rangone, to start a new integration process with the Benfer team, to start a new adventure for TEAM Europe. Now our priority is to comply with all health and safety precaution, to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to our fellow colleagues and families. Most of us are now working from home. Connecting with colleagues via Zoom, is definitely a new experience that we never expected to have to approach so quickly; in the beginning it was not easy, human contacts always remain an added value even in working relationships, but day after day, we have also started to find the positive sides of this new way of working: keeping in touch with colleagues, customers, suppliers anywhere in Italy, Europe and the world is undoubtedly something that has changed our approach to work forever; avoiding long business trips that until two months ago we considered indispensable to keep in touch, from now on they will be evaluated in a completely different way.

We have never stopped, despite everything, we have continued to work to serve the customer, remaining always and above all at his side in this difficult moment. I want to thank the whole TEAM wholeheartedly! You have been and continue to be the strength of this company and I would like to give you a seafaring saying as an example: “The good sailor recognizes himself in storms”... and YOU have shown me that you can face any storm.”

- Mirko Mariani, Regional Manager, LATICRETE Europe

“With the outbreak of the pandemic, we had to learn a new way to stay close by staying away, at home and at work. As a family, we had to learn a new way to stay focused on our affections and embrace each other even if we are far apart. At work we had to learn a new way to stay focused on our tasks and close to our colleagues even without being in the office.

We committed ourselves and together with our loved ones, our colleagues, our company, we learned it. And we realized that there is no difference between what we have done for the family and what we have done for the job, we have realized that LATICRETE ONE FAMILY is not only an advertising slogan, but that really together we are a large, extended family.”

- Cristian Griotti, R&D, Benfer

“Take better in the worst: The moments of crisis and difficulties create new opportunities and new motivations. This emergency created obstacles that we managed to overcome, in the meantime it gave us the opportunity to see things from new points of view. In the emergency, we rediscovered the value and importance of our skills and professionalism. From this new perspective we have found a new meaning for our daily work.”

- Debora Castiello, Customer Service, Benfer

“During Covid-19 my job consists of many things: Read, listen, speak with our consultants and the authority in terms of safety at our plant and office. Every suggestion is shared with Mr. Bonucelli and Mr. Cocchi, they give us guidance indication of what to do how to implement, at the office, at home ... in short everywhere! All information have been shared by email or label or placard with other colleagues. The entire team follow the rules, many people work from home, including myself. Not every day but frequently, I have to fight with our suppliers to purchase all items needed for our safety and security. Now, I’m feeling good and protected, I am not afraid to come to the office. I like how we are dealing with the situation, I believe that doing any better than this is difficult.”

- Max Monelli, Purchasing, Benfer
Welcome to the team!

Björn Fjerdingby
Daglig Leder I General Manager
LATICRETE Nordic AS
Joined the LATICRETE family: 2020

Jack Björnson
Technical Sales Manager
LATICRETE Nordic AS
Joined the LATICRETE family: 2015

Mirko Mariani
Regional Manager Europe
LATICRETE Europe Srl
Joined the LATICRETE family: 2005
Q: Did you always want to join the family business?
A: I’ve worked with Benfer since I was 8 or 9 years old! My first job was to fill buckets with adhesives — I would sit and press a pedal, then the machine would fill the pails to the right quantity. Sometimes the product would overflow and get everywhere when I made a mistake. I really started to work with Benfer when my father passed away in 1983.

Q: How did your family get into the industry?
A: My father was an engineer, and at the time there were very few engineers graduating from the University of Bologna. He started his career in the technical sales department with Montedison, at the time a well-known chemical company in Europe. After some time, he saw the demands of the building industry. Construction projects were using ceramic tiles, but they were not using specific glues or adhesives. They instead used sand and cement, maybe lime — simple materials. My father saw the need for a specific solution for tile installation. He saw LATICRETE latex as one of the first solutions to mix with sand and cement, so he looked to make something similar: Cemlatex, which is still available in the Benfer range. He then went on to formulate ready-mix adhesives and explore other chemistries. With growing confidence in the products, he opened a small facility and purchased a simple mixer in 1965, funded by my mother.

Q: How do you like working with the LATICRETE team?
A: I like and enjoy it. You feel good when there’s mutual trust and relationship. When you don’t have this, work is not easy — you don’t want to wake up and go to the office in the morning. Overall, I am happy. Sometimes it’s hard to understand the LATICRETE way since it’s still new, but I’m getting used to it.

Q: What do you think is the next big technology advancement for our industry?
A: That’s difficult. We spend a lot of time with research and development, recently spending a lot of time researching products for big slabs and large format tiles, but now I’ve been told by agents that small tiles are coming back! I think robotics will be important for the production process and other automation could also maybe help us sell. It’s so expensive to travel and visit customers, and a lot of our new customers work online and like to get information fast. So having details more digitally available will be great. It’s important to think of alternatives too, like maybe drones, that can assist with delivery.

Q: What are your expectations of the future?
A: For the near future, I hope to meet our established targets. We are a good company with good products, and with the addition of the LATICRETE team and products, we are excited. Initially it will be difficult to show two brands. The LATICRETE brand is known, and we now have a good partnership and a comprehensive range for the European market.
David Rothberg, chairman and CEO of LATICRETE, is a modern Renaissance man: pursuing extreme outdoor achievements; supporting his wife, an attorney who for a time served as mayor of their hometown; and searching for that next big “blue sky” concept, as he calls it, all while running a successful, forward-thinking, family-owned company with its sights set on giving more than it takes.

David’s parents, Dr. Henry M. and Lillian Rothberg, started LATICRETE in 1956. Two of their seven children, Henry B. and David, joined the business, which next year will transition to yet-to-be-named, non-family leadership for the first time in its 64 years, as David takes a less active role, a decision he sees not as a matter of need but principle, “I am healthy and enjoy working, but I am a firm believer in that Chinese saying, ‘The new won’t come until the old goes.’ I have to make room. I have lots of great, hard-charging young people in the company, and I need to get out of the way.” That big-picture view and essentially entrepreneurial approach is representative of the strategy that has kept LATICRETE pushing innovation for more than six decades.

Q: You’ve attended some of the finest schools—Emory, Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and IMD. What drove you to pursue this education?
A: It was mostly accidental. My older brother, Henry, went to Georgia Tech, and when I was in high school, I went down to Atlanta to visit him. We went out to a party near Emory, and I thought, this is pretty great, so I applied to Emory.

When I was finishing up at Emory, one day I was walking through the student union building, and they had different graduate schools making their pitches, and I wandered into a presentation by Harvard Business School, sat in the back, and the guy was explaining that they don’t use textbooks. Everything is based on real world cases, and I thought, that sounds pretty interesting.

While you’re at Harvard, you’re allowed to take courses at MIT. I took courses at Harvard law school, and at MIT, I took courses in the law of the sea.

IMD, as you know, is in Switzerland. I studied there after I started working at LATICRETE to help me get a more global perspective on business.

Q: Your initial education focus was geology. What attracted you to that area of science versus chemistry, which your father studied?
A: I did take a ton of chemistry courses, but I’m an outdoors person. I’m a scientist that likes the outdoors, and geology is an outdoor science. You have to work in the field; you climb mountains; you go out and take samples from the bottom of the ocean. It’s what I call science in the woods.

Q: Considering the public service that you and your wife do, it’s clear that you believe in giving back. Why do you think that’s important?
A: We refer to it as “healing the world.” The Rothberg family has been blessed, and we want to help, to do something. LATICRETE has helped build hospitals in Haiti and Uganda. It’s just the way we are.

My wife, Nan Birdwhistell, was mayor of Woodbridge, Connecticut, the town I grew up in and we raised our kids in, a town of about 10,000 people. She enjoyed being mayor, but the history of New England is all about resistance. A mayor’s term is two years. That means you’ve got to start running again...
one year in. She was the first woman and the first Democrat in 250 years, so every election was a battle.

Q: What sets LATICRETE apart?
A: A couple of things. One is that we are owner-operators. That means the people who own the business are in the business, face to face with the customers. We’re hearing what we’re doing well, and we’re hearing what’s not going well. Before cell phones, Henry and I had our home phone numbers on our business cards. You just don’t see that often. It’s customer-centricity.

In addition, our sales force utilizes net promoter scores [which are used to gauge the loyalty of a firm’s customer relationships], and our valuations are almost as high as companies like Apple. Our people care about the customers. They hustle. They take care of what the customer needs.

In addition, the family’s made an evergreen commitment, which means we’re never selling. We’re in it for the long run. We may not always have a Rothberg as CEO. But the business will be owned by Rothbergs forever. Think of how that changes the perspective—how you look at a customer or a claim or how you invest. You do what’s right, fix the problem, as opposed to the short-term compromise, which is rampant.

Q: How has the company’s core competency evolved since your father’s initial thinset breakthrough?
A: Fifty years ago, we were essentially a one-product, or maybe a three-product, company. My dad came out of chemical engineering school at the end of World War II. He was setting tile, and he applied modern polymer chemistry to make this wonderful tile adhesive, which he called LATICRETE.

Today we’re a flooring company. We’ve shifted from ceramic tile and stone products to products for all hard surface flooring. We now work with any chemistry. We don’t make tile or any floor covering, but we are in resin flooring now. In the case of resin, the floor is the chemistry; the chemistry is the floor.

The other thing in terms of competency that we’ve worked towards is the competency to do acquisitions. That was a capability we had to develop. As you know, you can screw things up quickly if you don’t handle an acquisition correctly. We’ve had our bumps, but we’ve got good core competency now in being able to do acquisitions, to bring companies into the LATICRETE fold. We bought STONETECH® from Dupont. We got into resin flooring through a company called Spartacote®.

We just bought a private, mid-sized manufacturer of tile and stone adhesives in Italy. It’s very similar to the original LATICRETE business. In Europe, it’s very difficult to build a factory from scratch and develop land. This is right in the heart of the tile industry, in Sassuolo, where 400 porcelain factories exist. Being able to bring the company in and not chase away the good employees—not screw it up—this is a skill we had to develop.

Q: What approach and metrics do you use to determine if an investment in a new innovative product will pay off?
A: We break it into two areas. One is what we call “blue sky.” Blue sky is fundamental. We don’t even have a product in mind, so there is no real payoff. It’s just done on a hope and a prayer. We decide how much money we want to put into something, which years from now may pay off. For example, we are doing 3D printing of buildings. We’ve been pursuing that for maybe seven years. There is no real payoff. No metric other than that something good may come out of it. The world may be printing buildings eventually, and we want to be active and recognized and a contributor to that. Or smart floors—putting intelligent devices into a floor that could be tied to an alarm system or tell the store owner which aisles people are standing in. Those are blue sky concepts. There is no real payoff.

Then there’s the more practical stuff—the evolutionary changes in products. We do market and voice-of-the-customer research. We talk to contractors and other users, asking what problems they are having, what changes are taking place. Right now, for instance, we are seeing gauged porcelain in the market, and there are some unmet needs there. Our people are out in the field, and a customer might say, “The contractor is having trouble using the regular materials. Can you develop something that’s thinner?” With those sorts of endeavors, you have an actual calculation. The investment will be X millions; we expect to sell X millions of dollars with this—the typical ROI calculations.

Q: What is LATICRETE’s focus when it comes to sustainability?
A: One thing is incorporating recycled materials wherever possible, whether it’s ground-up bottles or plastic, glass beads, or the byproduct of coal combustion. We are using recycled components wherever we can formulate it in.

We did something really cool. As you probably know, we do a lot of epoxy product, and we now use the world’s first bio-sourced epoxy. It comes from cashews, epoxy resin from cashews.

We’re also putting in some software for transportation optimization—the kind of stuff that UPS does—using the least number of miles to achieve the delivery schedule. The transportation of building materials is a big user of fuel.

Q: The Rothberg family has a history of significant achievements. What is the family secret?
A: My grandparents—all four sides—fled Europe at a young age. No cell phones. No contact with their family. These are inherent risk-takers. Who would cross the ocean in the bottom of a ship to live in a place where you don’t speak the language? There is some kind of selection there.

Q: What mentors helped shape who you are?
A: My father always said, “Be curious. Look around. Study everything around you and ask questions all the time.” He would educate himself. If my dad was on a flight beside a petroleum engineer, by the end of that flight he would know a hell of a lot about petroleum engineering.

Q: You like to challenge yourself outdoors. Tell us about your favorite pursuits.
A: I used to do a lot of backpacking. Now I’m doing a lot of bicycling, long bicycle trips. Canoeing. Cross country skiing.

My most memorable experience is my trip to the South Pole. It is super, super remote. As a kid, I was always interested in the Arctic and Antarctic explorers, so to be in the footsteps of Roald Amundsen, the first guy to the South Pole, was pretty cool.
Q: Why do you believe it’s important to balance your life with these types of activities?  
A: I find that the outdoors, especially these more remote trips, boils everything down to basics: staying warm, shelter. It’s super simple and highly focused, instead of all the distractions.  
Plus, there is an element of risk. There is no risk in modern life. There really isn’t. Modern life is good, but everything is pretty damn safe and secure. And I have one or two of those risk genes, I guess.  
And finally in the outdoors, you develop a tolerance for adversity—rain, cold, snow, failing to get to the summit—and that is something that is missing in a lot of people today.

Q: What advice do you have for the new generation that is entering the workforce?  
A: My father always said, “Pick a job you love, and you’ll never work a day in your life.” He worked as hard as anyone you’ve ever met. He’d work all day and go back to the office after dinner. He loved inventing stuff and traveling the world.  
And then, I would hope that the new generation would understand the idea of conscious capitalism. It’s not just about making more, selling more. You have to give something back. You have to make the world a better place.

Q: What do you look for when you hire someone?  
A: First and foremost is passion. Are they excited about this? Passion is super contagious. If someone believes in something and gets up there excited about it, you believe too.  
I like people who are well read. And I like people who are worldly, who can find Switzerland on a map.  
I also like people who are curious. That’s how you find out what problems are or come up with a better way of doing something.  
And finally in the outdoors, you develop a tolerance for adversity—rain, cold, snow, failing to get to the summit—and that is something that is missing in a lot of people today.

Q: How do you manage a smart phone so that it’s a useful tool and not an interruption?  
A: I see a smart phone as a liberator, not a burden. We have a twelve-hour rule at Laticrete; you have to answer any email or return any call in twelve hours. And I have to set an example, so if someone asks me a question, I have to get right back to them. It’s that customer-centricity I was talking about.
GETTING SOCIAL WITH LATICRETE EUROPE

Thank you to all our followers for sharing your projects with us!

It’s great to see where our products are being used. Keep on sharing, and maybe your project will end up featured in our newsletter or in a Project Spotlight!

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AT THE FOREFRONT OF INNOVATION

The future is no doubt digital, and LATICRETE is demonstrating that the expertise of our global team is an asset in moving forward 3D construction printing, a digitally native construction practice known as additive manufacturing (AM), via our proprietary printing mortar, LATICRETE® 3D Printing Mortar.

Our R&D and innovation teams continue to push the future of construction and digital fabrication with advancements in 3D printing and have been actively involved with publications, seminars, conferences, institutes, and standards: Transportation Research Record journal, Digital Concrete 2020 – RILEM book series, and the American Concrete Institute (ACI).

The LATICRETE teams work globally to develop, localize, and pilot 3D printing solutions, ranging from North America to Europe to the Middle East to Singapore.

Largest developer in the Gulf, Emaar, contributes to Dubai’s future vision of 25% 3D printed buildings by 2030 with this demonstration project.

| Project: | Arabian Ranches III Development |
| Developer: | Emaar Properties |
| Material: | LATICRETE 3D Printing Mortar (M-31 Formulation), certified by the Dubai Central Laboratory |
| Designer & Print Specialist: | 3D Vinci Creations |
| Location: | Dubai, United Arab Emirates |
| Completed: | 2019 |
The DE | Stress pavilion shows how complex design is seamlessly achieved and optimized using 3D printing, reducing the amount of material required.

- **Project:** DE | Stress Pavilion
- **Designer:** Christopher Battaglia, Ball State University
- **Material:** LATICRETE 3D Printing Mortar (M-31 Formulation)
- **Design:** 110 unique panels with integral rebar support, structure optimized for minimal weight
- **Location:** Exhibit Columbus, Columbus, Indiana, USA
- **Completed:** 2019