



2505 N Plano Road
Richardson, TX 75082

January 13, 2009

SLABTEK Still Breaking Ground in the Residential and Commercial “Slab on Grade” Industry



Richardson, TX – Since its introduction to the residential and light-commercial markets in 2005, SLABTEK has lived up to its name. Promoted as “a revolutionary change in foundation design,” SLABTEK structurally suspended slabs continue to gain popularity among light-commercial, production, and high-end custom home builders and concrete contractors in the Dallas/Ft Worth Metroplex and surrounding cities.

SLABTEK foundation after lift

SLABTEK was born out of the offices of the Richardson, TX, based Childress Engineering Services, Inc. (CES) as an initiative to devise a new foundation system. The idea was to find a workaround for where piers only addressed settlement issues and not upheaval of soils that later cause foundation problems for both the homeowner and builder. When CES engineers looked at a design for a field repair on a pier that could be adjusted over a short period of time to monitor soil movement, it appeared quite clear. The solution to foundation distress without adding tremendous cost was to reduce the amount of concrete within the foundation and raise the foundation above the active or unstable soils. With a suspended two-way flat-slab analysis and the use of an adjustable pier, SLABTEK was born.

“The concept is pretty simple: If you have a lot that has issues with expansive or problematic soils, meaning that they have a high PVR, or potential vertical rise, or the lot requires a vast amount of pre-dirt work, this would be the solution,” said Alex Childress, Business Manager for SLABTEK. SLABTEK systems start with the installation of a lifting mechanism set on top of each pier, a concrete slab is then poured on-grade, post-tension cables are stressed, and the slab is eventually lifted to a predetermined height slowly and uniformly. A concrete perimeter beam skirts the foundation to protect the void beneath the slab from animals and debris. “When it’s all said and done, the foundation is literally suspended from the soil below” said Childress.

Since pioneering their patent pending suspended foundation system, SLABTEK foundations ranging from 1600 – 9000 square foot production/custom homes (some with a 2 – 3 foot drop elevation) to a 15,000 square foot light commercial structure have been constructed and successfully lifted not just in the DFW metroplex, but in Austin and Waco. “The current

residential housing market has impacted our production, but we are still in demand and lifting slabs every week” according to Childress. “It’s a radical change to the industry and naturally there are skeptics, but we sold over 100 SLABTEK systems in 2008 alone, so we are winning them over” said Childress.

Concrete contractors who have installed SLABTEK systems praise the innovation. “When you consider my savings in time and labor not having to install void boxes or dig interior beams, it’s the way of the future” said Jason Fraser, Founder of FraserCon Concrete Experts, of Carrollton, TX. But perhaps the greatest selling point to builders in adopting a SLABTEK foundation besides the fact that it removes the requirement for interior beams or void boxes is that it virtually eliminates future warranty foundation calls. According to Childress, even if a lot had good soil but the builder wanted to insure against seasonal movement and opted for a SLABTEK system instead of a conventional “slab on grade” foundation, the builder would on average see an additional cost of \$1.00 to \$2.00 per square foot. “If you were willing to spend another \$1.00 or \$1.50 per square foot on a foundation system that guaranteed that you would not be seeing a foundation warranty call during the next 10 years, why wouldn’t you build a SLABTEK foundation?” said Bill Donald of Bill Donald Custom Homes.

While SLABTEK is gaining popularity within the light-commercial and residential market, SLABTEK’s research and development team is continuing to work on improving the SLABTEK system and reducing current costs. SLABTEK is currently testing a new lifting machine that provides additional lifting capability and will soon be experimenting with a new prototype of adjustable lifting mechanism that can be lowered or raised to meet top of finished floor specifications. With the approval on their pending SLABTEK patent months away, SLABTEK projects that 30 percent of the Dallas/Ft Worth residential new homes will be supported by the SLABTEK foundation system by the end of 2009.

For more information on SLABTEK or this article, contact Alex Childress at (214)451-6630 or at achildress@slabtek.com