

Earth Tech

"We're Not Planning to Participate in the Recession"

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"We're not planning to participate in the recession." These words from Ron Broadrick, CEO of Earth Tech Geotechnical Construction Services out of Tampa, seem bold right now, but Earth Tech had its best year ever in 2008, and entered 2009 with a record number of contracts on hand.

A good year for Earth Tech is a good indicator of work for contractors on down the building line.

Ron co-founded the company with his father, Lewis, in 1991. Both have many years of experience in geotechnical soil stabilization. Before Earth Tech, Ron was a project manager for Geo-Con, a large national geotechnical company, and managed projects throughout the U.S.

Earth Tech performs all types of soil improvement for stability so structures and buildings avoid the nightmare of significant sinking. No one wants to feel like the captain who has to go down with the building. When problems develop under an existing structure, Earth Tech is called upon to remediate sinkhole conditions and foundation settlement issues. Working closely with a licensed geotechnical firm, property owners of commercial and residential are assured a proven and lasting remediation.


Prudent Florida developers, builders, and homeowners recognize the potential for soil anomalies and will address the issue prior to construction. Since most soil challenges are rarely visible from the surface, geological testing for commercial and residential construction is often



required by some counties. Once recommendations for soil improvement are made, Earth Tech has the expertise and equipment to execute a remediation plan.


The two major earth instability problems are appropriately called sinkholes. The most common type is the cover subsidence sinkhole, which typically moves slowly over a long period of time. Passageways from water moving along and through limestone eventually allow soil particles to flow into the void created, similar to the way sand from an hourglass passes from the top to the bottom. The cover collapse sinkholes are rare but dramatic and are often triggered by extreme weather conditions such as long periods of drought followed by heavy rains. They open quickly as the roof or cover over a large cavity can no longer support the heavy soils creating a large open void.

Earth Tech has also provided expert and reliable repairs in all types of soils and all types of existing structures, commercial or residential. All work is overseen by licensed, certified and experienced geotechnical engineers, and Earth Tech has developed its own materials, machines, and techniques so it can formulate and apply the exact combination of components needed to successfully remediate the problem. If steel piers or other supports are needed, the company performs that work also.



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Need a bridge to withstand hurricanes? It was no surprise in the industry a few years ago when the Federal Department of Transportation chose Earth Tech to stabilize the causeways of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge across Tampa Bay, the major hurricane evacuation route for several counties in South Florida.

Maintaining top-quality personnel, equipment, and service is one of Earth Tech's major strengths, said Broadrick. They replace major pieces in their fleet every two to three years, with vibro equipment being the 2008 focus. They also adhere to top LEED product guidelines, ensuring that the materials they pump into the ground are safe for the environment. Cement, which becomes rock underground, is usually a major ingredient.

With about 90 employees today, Earth Tech's business has grown at an enviable 15 to 20 percent each year. Customer service and working closely with other area contractors has resulted in a high rate of project referrals. They have remediated the foundations of more than 2,000 homes, and were a leader in developing the Florida Sinkhole Stabilization Specialists (FAS3), bringing firms together to develop standards for work and cooperative relationships. Broadrick credits relationships built by membership in Associated Builders and Contractors, Florida Gulf Coast Chapter (ABC FGC) as a key factor

in rapid advancement to even-larger jobs with larger contractors. It will also assist them in plans to expand in both Florida and nearby southeast states in the near future.

Broadrick is especially excited about an upcoming project in which Earth Tech will stabilize one of the largest sinkholes in the Orland, Florida area. Slated to start in March 2009, the project has a budget of approximately \$4 million and entails the stabilization of a sinkhole 300 feet wide and 300 feet deep. Appearing almost a century ago, the sinkhole will become a greater threat to I-4 as it is widens. Working with another contractor who will remove the water and do initial fill, Earth Tech will then drill into the throat of the sinkhole and stabilize it with grout material.

"We're not planning to participate in the recession. We are looking for ways to improve our company, looking for new markets, and consolidating to attract new talents that will help them grow," said Broadrick when asked about the recession. In the business of stabilization, Earth Tech is used to dealing with unraveling soils and fragile foundations. They can rest assured they will fight their way through today's fragile economy.

