

December 7, 2005

Nichols Team



In response to your request as the character and professionalism of Joe Grubic, owner of Lay-A-Weigh® Rubber, who I have had the pleasure of working with over the past 10 years, I hereby state the following...

I first met Joe when he was serving as the mammal curator and primary care taking specialist at the Cameron Park Zoo in Waco, Texas. He had contacted me about our SunFlex Mono-Mat system in which 3/8" of a cushioned/soft elastomeric liquid rubber base is poured seamlessly in place; followed by an overlayment of 1/8" of our standard wear surface elastomeric into which appropriate size of rubber granules for skid-resistant are broadcasted to excess; final step being sealing with two coats of a flexible pigmented urethane.

Although the SunFlex Mono-Mat system was definitely a consideration due to its proven performance and longevity in other large animal zoo night house habitats across the country, the financial investment in doing so was not in the allotted Cameron Park Zoo budget. SunFlex materials have the capability to chemically and mechanically bond to various types of substrates; therefore, Joe wanted to test out an alternative manner of achieving a seamless/sanitary surface by encapsulating the 4'x6' (3/4" thick) rubber mats which were currently in the elephant and giraffe night houses. The plan was to bond the mats to the substrate, leave space for grouting between each mat and wall/floor junctures with a rubber/sand grout mix, then encapsulate these bonded to substrate/rubber grouted mats with our standard 1/8" thick SunFlex system. The test/evaluations were performed by Joe in elephant and giraffe barns at the Cameron Park Zoo, as well as rhino barns at Fossil Rim Wildlife Park in Glen Rose, Texas. After a period of 2 years these test/evaluation sites were proven to be a success, leading Joe to file for, and obtain, his mat encapsulation patent



In addition to Joe's pioneering of the patented mat encapsulation method, his nationally renowned 20 year standing as a highly respected authority on the proper care and handling of large mammals (primarily being elephants, rhinos, and giraffes) is a definite asset to zoo's as well. It is rare for any such facility to have a professional applicator, as well as someone with valuable insight as related to the special care needs of large mammals who depend on their caretakers and handlers for their comfort, health, and quality of life. Joe has the ability answer a wide realm of questions, based on his dual knowledge (application and personal mammal care taking experience) whether they are posed by a general contractor, architect, veterinarian, or those who are on the staff of the zoo.

On a sidebar note, after the successful encapsulation of the rubber floor mats at the Park zoo their "ability to pay for themselves became quite evident." Instead of "hours of labor time and dollars be washed away 365 days a year" due to removal of mats, scrubbing them and the floors with costing cleaners/sanitizers, then placing these heavy 60 lb mats back in the barns in order to maintain a sanitary/healthy environment ... instead Joe's patented non-porous/seamless mat encapsulated sanitary rubber surfaces were rapidly cleaned using a garden hose with pressure nozzle or pressure washer (1200 to 2400 psi with fan tip) which left the zoos with funds which were better invested elsewhere in further enhancements of other zoo facilities or acquisitions of new animals and wildlife exhibits.

Zoos that have the thick rubber mat encapsulations over radiant heat floors will find that the insulation properties, characteristic of seamless rubberized/elastomeric surfaces, will reduce their energy costs to a certain degree as compared to bare concrete or other low mil build/coating systems.

Should you have any other questions or concerns, as related to Joe Grubic's knowledge, expertise, or the mat encapsulation process using my SunFlex material please do not hesitate to give me a call. I can attest to Joe Grubic being my "guru" of sorts when it comes to the special needs of large mammals, as well as being an independent contractor that is a true pleasure to work with.

Appreciate the opportunity to work with you firm as related to the Park Zoo.

Sincerely,
Lindy (Lynn) Ausburne
Technical Service Manager