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Western Specialty Contractors Uses Leading-Edge Concrete Repair Technology to Protect Workers on Springfield, IL Parking Garage Restoration

(St. Louis, MO, Aug. 14, 2018) – Manual concrete chipping can be a dusty, noisy endeavor that subjects workers to risks of injury and illness. When extensive overhead hammering is required on a job, such was the case when Western Specialty Contractors - Springfield, IL Branch restored the City of Springfield's Municipal parking garage recently, the strain on the body can be even greater.

Western was hired by the general contractor on the project, O'Shea Builders of Springfield, IL, to perform overhead patching on the bottom two levels of the concrete parking garage and overhead patching on the helical ramps at the garage's west and east ends. Started in April 2017, the City of Springfield, IL expected the project be completed by the middle of December.

Western began the project using electric chipping hammers to remove the unsound concrete from overhead. This technique proved to be a challenge with crew members holding the hammer above their heads for eight hours a day, five days a week. As a result, production slowed on the project and the decision was made to utilize a PAM machine manufactured by RNP Industries.

The PAM machine safely holds the 30-pound hammer to completely eliminate the ergonomic stress on the worker. The equipment not only helped with the strain on the workers and mitigation of soft tissue injuries, but production increased and the project schedule was able to be maintained.

"At Western, we feel that it is critical for companies to evaluate opportunities to reduce these risks, and in doing so, we have discovered the alternative to manual chipping," said Western Safety Director Eric Olson. "This machine offers faster and effortless concrete chipping for overhead and vertical surfaces. There is no longer a need to stop and reposition, recover or stretch sore muscles since the workers are not performing the work directly. It also allows workers to stand nearly five feet away from the point of impact so they are able to avoid unexpected falling concrete."

With the project back on track and the crew working safely, Western hit another snag on the project. With the parking garage located in Downtown Springfield and directly adjacent to the Municipal Building and a busy hotel, the parking garage was at full capacity for most of the time.

Working closely with the general contractor on the project, it was determined that the safest and most effective way to perform the necessary repairs was to close the garage during repair of the ramps.

The garage closure came with an additional acceleration in the schedule. The ramps had to be re-opened and available for use within one month. To meet this deadline, an additional PAM machine was utilized so that both ramps could be repaired at the same time. A total of 1,350 square feet of overhead repairs were performed on the ramps in less than 30 days and the garage was re-opened on time.

In total, Western crews made 810 square feet of beam/joist/column repairs, 380 square feet of full-depth repairs and 70 square feet of partial-depth repairs, coated the top level ramps, and made a total of 963 patches and 4,700 square feet of overhead repairs. The project took a total of 250 days to complete.

The engineer on the project was Hanson Engineering and the architect was FWAI, both of Springfield, IL.

About Western Specialty Contractors

Family-owned and operated for more than 100 years, Western Specialty Contractors is the nation's largest specialty contractor in masonry and concrete restoration, waterproofing and specialty roofing. Western offers a nationwide network of expertise that building owners, engineers, architects and property managers can count on to develop cost-effective, corrective measures that can add years of useful life to a variety of structures including: industrial, commercial, healthcare, historic, educational

and government buildings, parking structures and sports stadiums. Western is headquartered in St. Louis, MO with over 30 branch offices nationwide and employs more than 1,200 salaried and hourly professionals who offer the best, time-tested techniques and innovative technology. For more information about Western Specialty Contractors, visit www.westernspecialtycontractors.com.

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