

FOUNDATION

Foundation Firms Seeing Improvement

Business is getting better.

By Larry Kahaner

That's the word from foundation companies. Although projects are not coming along as fast or as plentifully as they did before the recession, company officials are seeing a slow but steady improvement in the pace of inquiries, bids and projects. (...)

“**T**hings are looking up on the testing side of the foundations business,” according to Gina Beim, P.E., senior consulting engineer-marketing at GRL Engineers (www.pile.com) in Cleveland, Ohio. “We see an increase in remote testing. Business seems to be picking up.” She credits the increase to several factors, including the cost savings involved with remote testing as opposed to on-site testing. “We have been seeing some results of campaigns to help DOT understand remote testing. Lots of structures are transmitting data now. This is a trend. We’re feeling the pull for this.” She notes that AASHTO’s LRFD bridge design standards will lead to more testing, and that the cost effectiveness of remote testing will become of greater interest. “We hope that testing in a more economical way will give the market a method to keep standards high while offering cost-saving methods.” Aside from the savings of not needing someone on site to check readings, another cost benefit is not having to ship wires and cables to the project site.

Beim adds that the company is introducing a product aimed at the drilled shaft market. It will include remote sensing. “The Thermal Integrity Profiler (TIP) inspects the integrity of a drilled shaft using a temperature method,” says Beim. Now in prototype, the product is expected to be available in spring or summer. “We can inspect the drilled shaft that has been fitted with the temperature sensor remotely. It’s imbedded in the shaft itself and will indicate how good the concrete is.”*