

Paradise Rebar: Built on hard work and quality workforce

Joel Raschke always had ironwork and entrepreneurship in his blood. So after years of work in the field, he launched Paradise Rebar.

“I was never one to follow orders, so I wanted to be my own boss,” says Raschke, a 27-year journeyman Ironworker.

His father was a union ironworker and had fabricating business. At one point his father approached him to take over his business; however, Raschke wanted to make a name for himself and decided against that.

Raschke worked full time and set up his own company in the evenings out of his home. His wife was a big help, and the Phoenix-based company became a reality in 1993.



Ironworkers at the I-10/Loop 303 traffic interchange project.
Photo by Brenda Yanez

“I was fortunate I had a couple of good mentors, including my father. But, getting started was all about trial and error, attending seminars on how to be a better businessman and a lot of self-teaching,” says Raschke.



Work getting done at the Arizona State Route 87, otherwise known as the Beeline Highway.

What really helped him and his team stand apart from other contractors is what he got from Local 75.

“The contacts you make, the skills you learn and many of the opportunities I got, I owe to the union,” says Raschke, who turned to ironwork because it provided a good living and benefits for himself and his family.

He used those learning opportunities to help him work his way up from apprentice, to journeyman, then foreman,

general foreman, superintendent and finally business owner.

His biggest challenge throughout the process was cash flow. So, he would knock on fabricator doors and ask them to “throw him a little bone.” He sought small jobs that he could bid.

“At the end of the day, it was all about putting in the long hours and making the connections that needed to be made,” says Raschke.

The Paradise Rebar team has worked on both small and large projects, and Raschke says much of his team’s success is because of the cooperation with Local 75.

Raschke says some contractors may be unaware of what the unions offer – quality work and skilled people, which translate into getting things done quicker and faster. He knows better.

“I’d like to think the Ironworkers have led the country in understanding that you have to have both well-trained workers, as well as contractors who are willing to go out and take risks. And one can’t really flourish without the other,” says Raschke.

That’s why Paradise Rebar opts to use a qualified labor force via the union.

“Some of the unique things that we do – like the post tensioning or the big columns that the bridges sit on – if not done properly can not only cause catastrophic things to happen to individuals, but also financial disasters can come with that,” says Raschke.

In order for contractors and unions to continue securing jobs, Raschke says they need to work not only on promoting themselves, but also promoting each other.



The I-10/Loop 303 traffic interchange when done will connect I-17 in the North Valley to the 1-10 in the West Valley.

“If we can continue showing customers what type of labor force we’re using and why we’re using it, I think that’s a big positive for all of us,” says Raschke.

Today, Raschke and his team are seeing the fruit of their labor paying off. One example is their recent win to work on the Interstate 10 / Loop 303 traffic interchange job – the construction company’s biggest highway project to

date. Ironworkers on the job for Paradise Rebar placed 12,000 tons of rebar and more than 630 miles of post tension that stands on those bridges.

Other notable projects include:

- Lower Screwtail Bridge, Beeline Highway – The first cantilevered cast-in-place concrete segmental bridge built in Arizona
- Sky Harbor International Airport Rental Car Center – A 135-acre facility that holds 6,200 vehicles

Contact information: Paradise Rebar, 2548 W. Jackson St., Phoenix, AZ 85009, 602.447.0839