



Innovative Tile and Stone  
Installation Systems

# University of Nevada, Reno

## Project Spotlight: May 2008



**LOCATION:**

Reno, Nevada

**OWNER:**

University of Nevada, Reno, NV

**TILE CONTRACTOR:**

Quality Tile and Marble, Inc., Sparks, NV

**TILE SUPPLIER:**

Arizona Tile, Las Vegas, NV  
Bedrosian Tile and Marble, Sparks, NV

**TILE INSTALLATION SYSTEM:**

LATICRETE International, Inc., Bethany, CT

**LATICRETE DISTRIBUTOR:**

Bedrosians Tile and Marble Supply, Sparks, NV



## The IGT-Mathewson Knowledge Center at the University of Nevada-Reno

By Eric Carson

Nestled in the foothills of the Sierra Mountains, just 15 minutes from the California border and 35 miles from Lake Tahoe, the University of Nevada, Reno is the flagship land-grant institution of America's fastest growing state.

Originally founded in 1874, the University landed on its current 250-acre site in Reno in 1887, marking its first-year of college level study. Since that time, the University of Nevada, Reno has played a vital role in the progressive development of Nevada, energizing the workforce with highly educated graduates while on its way to becoming one of the top 150 research universities in the country.

With 120 years of history under its belt, and some buildings just as old, the University of Nevada, Reno has continued to grow and evolve by meeting the demands of its increasingly diverse and tech savvy student body that swelled to nearly 17,000 in 2008, up some 14,000 students from the 2,915 enrolled in the fall of 1962.

In September of 2005, the University of Nevada, Reno continued its ascension when it broke ground on a brand new library targeted for completion in May of 2008. Funded largely by private donations, none sweeter than the combined \$10 million generously provided by Chuck and Ann Mathewson, the new \$75.3 million project promises to be one of the most technologically advanced libraries in the country.

Located on the north end of campus, the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center is a 295,000 square foot, five story structure dressed in classical red brick. Inside, every modern amenity imaginable is available for the students of the University of Nevada, Reno, including a 200-seat auditorium on the lower level, a gourmet coffee shop in the rotunda, and the Tower Reading Room on the top level. The Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center also features a dynamic media lab for multi-media project development, an art gallery, exhibit space, state of the art conference rooms with wireless connectivity, the Nevada Writers Hall of Fame, and over a million volumes of books and journals.

The concrete for the new Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center was poured in May of 2006, with construction

for the replacement of the 45-year-old Getchell Library beginning in June of the same year. In March of 2007, with the foundation detail and ironwork complete, it was time to install the floors of this new bastion of information.

To install all the porcelain tiles on the floors of the first three lobbies, as well as the ceramic tile on the floors and walls of the 32 restrooms, the University of Nevada, Reno trusted Quality Tile and Marble, Inc., in neighboring Sparks, Nevada.

Perhaps fitting for the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center, which will serve as the research hub of a University famous for its research programs, Wes Tews of Quality Tile and Marble arrived on the scene with LEED compliant installation materials from LATICRETE, based in Bethany, Connecticut with over 50 years dedicated to the research and development of innovative systems for the installation of ceramic tile and stone. In fact, it was the research done by LATICRETE founder and chairman emeritus, Dr. Henry M. Rothberg (a chemical engineer) which led to the direct adhered method of installing ceramic tile and stone.

For the first three lobbies of the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center, Quality Tile and Marble field superintendent Tony Sparaco and his lead tile setter, Jerry Sollars, installed 21,000 square feet of large format, 18" x 18" porcelain tiles with a variety of products from LATICRETE — all GREENGUARD certified. Quality Tile and Marble were supplied with large format porcelain tiles from Bedrosian Tile and Marble, also from Sparks, NV.

For the first step, the concrete substrate had to be treated to prevent cracking and delamination of the finished tiles with LATICRETE® Blue 92 Anti-Fracture Membrane. Rated "Extra Heavy" per ASTM C627, LATICRETE Blue 92 Anti-Fracture Membrane is easily roller applied for time and labor saving benefits, meets the ANSI 118.12 specification for crack isolation, and is ready for tiling in just two hours. LATICRETE Blue 92 Anti-Fracture Membrane inhibits the growth of mold and mildew with anti-microbial protection from Microban®, while providing piece of mind along with

all LATICRETE System materials at the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center as part of the LATICRETE 10 Year System Warranty\*\*.

“LATICRETE had the program and they warranty all the products,” said Tews, owner of Quality Tile and Marble. “LATICRETE materials are awesome on a project like this. We get to use a product that we know we can stand behind and guarantee. As an installer we know the system and we know there will be no maintenance or call backs. That’s what we like.”

The next step was to set the large format, 18" x 18" porcelain tiles supplied by Arizona Tile in Las Vegas with LATICRETE® 254 Platinum, a premium thin-set providing unsurpassed strength, far exceeding all ANSI requirements. GREENGUARD Certified, LATICRETE 254 Platinum provides a tenacious bond with a long working time, protecting against mold and mildew with antimicrobial protection from Microban®.

Quality Tile and Marble, a member of the LATICRETE MVP program, set the tiles with 1/8" and 3/16" grout joints when needed with a revolutionary epoxy grout, LATICRETE SpectraLOCK® PRO Grout. GREENGUARD Certified, LATICRETE SpectraLOCK PRO Grout offers the high performance, color uniformity, durability and stain resistance of an epoxy grout with extraordinary ease of use. Ideal for floors and walls, LATICRETE SpectraLOCK PRO Grout makes grout a design element instead of a challenge with 40 different lifestyle colors to choose from, including the Parchment and Sand Beige used at the University of Nevada, Reno. LATICRETE SpectraLOCK PRO Grout inhibits the growth of stain-causing mold and mildew with antimicrobial protection from Microban, and contributes to LEED certification with low VOC content for better indoor air quality.

“LATICRETE makes great products,” said Steve Akerson, a project manager at Quality Tile and Marble. “We have never had a problem. The service both before and after from LATICRETE is outstanding. They stand behind their products. The LATICRETE SpectraLOCK PRO Grout they make is the best going. The clean up is so much easier.”

After the lobby floors and stairs were set and ready for student traffic, Quality Tile and Marble turned its attention to the 32 bathrooms spread out over the five levels of the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center. For all of the bathroom floors, exact in dimensions, Quality Tile and Marble installed 7" x 7" Crossville ceramic tiles

supplied by Butler Johnson in Northern California over a depressed concrete substrate. The specification for the floors called for the same LATICRETE System except one step was added to protect the installation from the possibility of deflection occurring with a depressed concrete substrate.

To accomplish this, Quality Tile and Marble prepared a mud bed by mixing LATICRETE 226 Thick Bed Mortar with LATICRETE 3701 Mortar Admix, a specially designed latex admixture that improves the working and physical properties of any cement mix for permanent, problem free installations of tile and stone. LATICRETE 226 Thick Bed Mortar is a factory prepared blend of carefully selected raw materials, portland cement and graded aggregates for interior and exterior use, and along with LATICRETE 3701 Admix will prevent deflections in the substrate from telegraphing through to the finished tile work.

As was the case in the lobbies, LATICRETE Blue 92 Anti-Fracture Membrane was roller applied and after curing, LATICRETE 254 Platinum thin-set was troweled on. The tiles were grouted with LATICRETE SpectraLOCK PRO Grout. The LATICRETE System used by Quality Tile and Marble at the University of Nevada, Reno offers peace of mind with the LATICRETE 10 Year System Warranty\*\*.

The final step for Quality Tile and Marble was to set the same 7" x 7" ceramic tiles with a 1" x 1" mosaic accent band on the five-foot wainscot walls in all 32 bathrooms. With no need to protect the substrate from moisture, cracking or deflection, Quality Tile and Marble skipped the first two steps used on the floors and troweled on the versatile LATICRETE 254 Platinum, then grouted once again with LATICRETE SpectraLOCK PRO Grout for maximum stain and chemical resistance.

With the new Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center the students at the University of Nevada, Reno have all the necessary technology and research tools needed to receive a first-rate education and make a difference in their field or industry of choice.

LATICRETE, a global leader in the research and development of innovative systems for the installation of ceramic tile and stone, will be busy doing what they do best: making a difference in their industry of choice, and passing on the knowledge to help drive demand for ceramic tile and stone.

