



Redi-Rock International, Charlevoix, MI 49720, USA

# Two Drycasters Find Reward in the Risk of Transitioning to Wetcast

**When it comes to a family business, when is a risk one worth taking? For Alan Barkman of Barkman Concrete and Pat Sauter of King’s Materials, the risk of investing in Rosetta Hardscapes wetcast concrete products to round out their existing drycast offerings proved worth the reward.**

“What gave us a comfort level moving forward with Rosetta Hardscapes is the fact that they have their own plant and are actually manufacturing the product before we’re getting into doing it. That was a big thing for us,” said Sauter.

Rosetta Hardscapes is a complete line of wetcast concrete retaining walls, pavers, steps, and accessories that mimic natural stone in appearance, but install quickly and easily. As the demand from homeowners and landscape contractors for hardscape products that stand out continues to rise, Rosetta fulfills that niche.

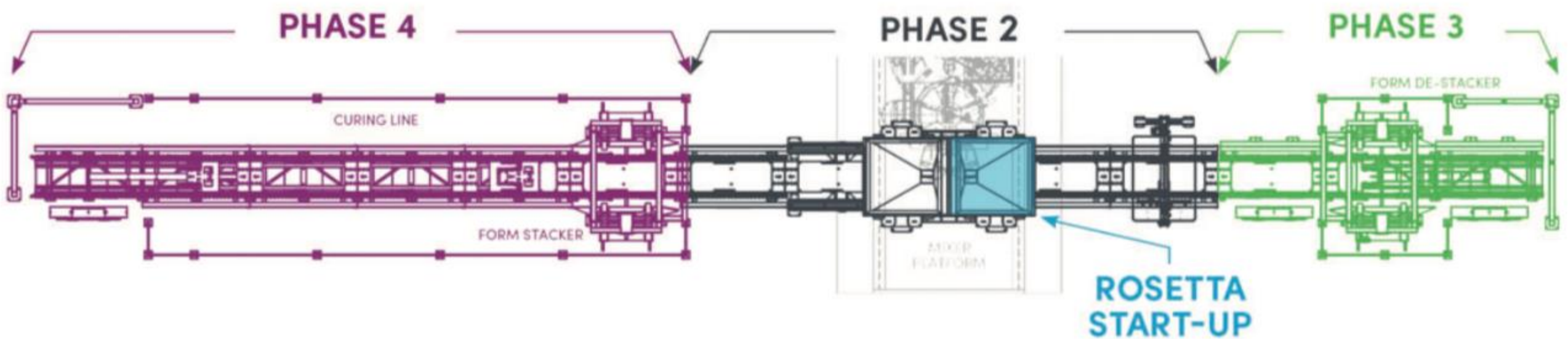
“It’s bringing a product to the market that contractors and homeowners can be very creative with. We’re seeing in photo shoots and pictures that what people are doing with Rosetta is quite amazing,” said Barkman.

Not only did Barkman Concrete and King’s Materials find initial success, but they also have found sustained growth with the scalable solutions from Rosetta Hardscapes. As sales growth warranted, both companies have expanded their production lines to add more products and further automation.

## Barkman Concrete’s Move Back to Wetcast Is a Move to Future Growth

By the time Barkman Concrete began considering Rosetta Hardscapes, the Steinbach, Manitoba-based company was a full-fledged drycast operation. For Alan Barkman, second generation family business owner, that meant getting back into wetcast was a risk.

“We’ve been into high production machinery for a long time,” said Barkman. “It was a shift for us to go back to wetcast. We thought we had moved on.” However, since the family company opened in 1948, they continually recognized changes in demand and adjusted their product offerings to meet it. Thanks to his team’s ability to standardize production processes and maximize plant space, he has never regretted the decision to move forward with Rosetta Hardscapes in 2008.



*Rosetta Hardscapes partners with Automocad, a leader in automation across industries, to create scalable solutions for businesses looking to break into wetcast concrete manufacturing. From manual start-up to fully-automated production lines, Rosetta can customize a solution to meet manufacturer’s production needs.*





"We're always looking for new and interesting products to add to our offerings, especially our hardscapes offerings," said Barkman Concrete general manager Brian Pries. "Rosetta is a really good extension of our existing product lines and gives us an offering that's different from what other companies can offer."

When Barkman first began producing Rosetta Hardscapes, they only made one product, Outcropping—a large block wall system with pieces ranging from 6 inches to 2 feet in height and 2 feet to 6 feet in width.

"We were doing everything manually with a crane, so we started fairly quickly," said Justin Fehr, Barkman Concrete's Manitoba production supervisor. "Everything was fed from the bucket."

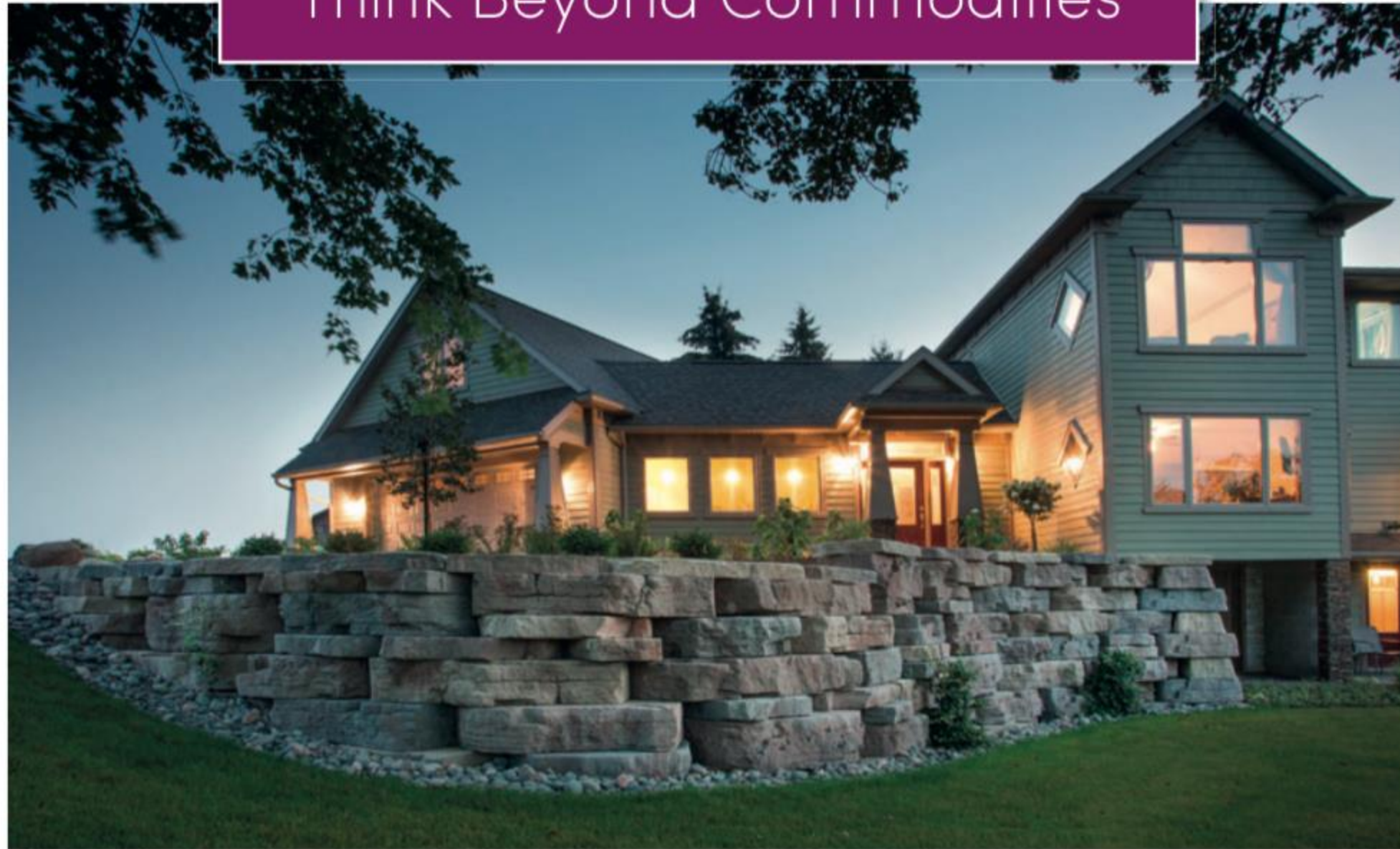
Now, with two separate plants in strategically placed locations, Barkman Concrete is one of the largest Rosetta Hardscapes operations in North America. They produce a wide range of Rosetta products including: Belvedere, a small block wall system inspired by old-world European style; Kodah, a more modern-looking wall product that mimics the appearance of snapped limestone; and Grand Flagstone, a slab paver that takes after its natural stone counterpart. Both of Barkman's plants operate a SCC (self-consolidating concrete) production line, with labor and operations shared with other product groups.

"It's a matter of nailing down your timing and using the space that you have effectively," said Fehr. "If you have your timing right when you're delivering molds and when you're taking away molds, you don't need a lot of line space to make it work." The Manitoba plant can produce 40 pallets or more of Rosetta Hardscapes products every day.

Rosetta Hardscapes is a key part of Barkman's plans to continually expand their current operation. In 2017, between the two plants, Barkman made

# Make More Money with Your Concrete

Think Beyond Commodities



With Rosetta Hardscapes you can break out of the realm of concrete commodities and into the high-margin, wetcast world. We'll help you diversify your product mix, strengthen your portfolio, and remain relevant in the changing concrete industry.

## Can you afford to wait to get started?

The demand for wetcast hardscapes is projected to increase 8% a year through 2024. Why wait, when you can start making money now? Rosetta Hardscapes is a national brand that's already developed in-demand products and streamlined the production process.

## You'll have our team behind you to:

- market nationally to provide you warm sales leads
- plan for long-term growth to continually meet the demand in your market
- research and develop new advances, keeping you ahead of your competition

ROSETTA®

Ready to start making more money with your concrete?

**See the new start-up packages  
at [MakeRosetta.com/CPI](https://www.MakeRosetta.com/CPI)**





*Rosetta Hardscapes products mimic the appearance of natural stone but have the ease of install of a manufactured concrete product, making them a hit with both homeowners and landscape contractors.*

enough product to generate \$4.3 million (CAD) in Rosetta sales alone.

"As we've pushed further into western Canada, Rosetta has opened up new avenues for us," said Barkman. Those avenues continue to expand as Rosetta Hardscapes continues to research and develop new products to bring to market.

"I like what Rosetta has done as far as product development, in bringing new products to the market," said Pries. "I think there's a lot of potential to grow the Rosetta sales and our overall sales by adding to the product line."

### **King's Materials Aims to Control Their Own Destiny By Embracing Wetcast**

For Pat Sauter, General Manager of King's Material, April 2015 was the time for a big play. His family's Cedar Rapids, Iowa, company had been in the ready-mix concrete business since 1935, operated several drycast plants, and produced some precast items. Sauter and his team decided it was time to make Rosetta Hardscapes.

Sauter first heard about Rosetta Hardscapes from an industry association trade show, and after distributing part of the product line for nearly five years, he made the decision to partner as a licensee with an exclusive manufacturing territory. During their time as distributors, Sauter and the King's team grew in



*Barkman Concrete operates two strategically located plants in Canada, making it one of the largest Rosetta producers in North America.*

confidence that they could sell enough high-end, landscaping products in their market to justify an investment in forms and equipment.

When the opportunity arose to purchase a competitor's drycast plant, their move to develop what would become their wetcast production business became clear.

"We had Rosetta in the back of our mind before we even closed the deal on the competitor's plant," he said.

The process of switching a plant from drycast to wetcast was not without its challenges, but Sauter and his team entered the transition by embracing the idea of a learning curve. While the King's production department was learning to make Rosetta, the sales crew was being trained to sell it.

"Rosetta has the margins in it to be able to set up a network of dealers that are farther away, so it gets us into some markets that we've traditionally not had a whole lot of products to offer," Sauter explains. By year two of Rosetta production, Sauter's sales team was working with around 15 independent hardscapes dealers plus six of their own. Their 2017 Rosetta sales topped \$2.1 million.

In addition to sales training and marketing support, Rosetta Hardscapes also provided King's with comprehensive technical support during their first year of production. The Rosetta





After selling part of the Rosetta Hardscapes product line in their dealer yards, King's Materials saw the opportunity in to capitalize on the growing demand for high-end landscaping products. They purchased a competitor's drycast plant and transitioned into wetcast concrete manufacturing.

tech department walked their sales team through the Outcropping Wall Layout App job by job.

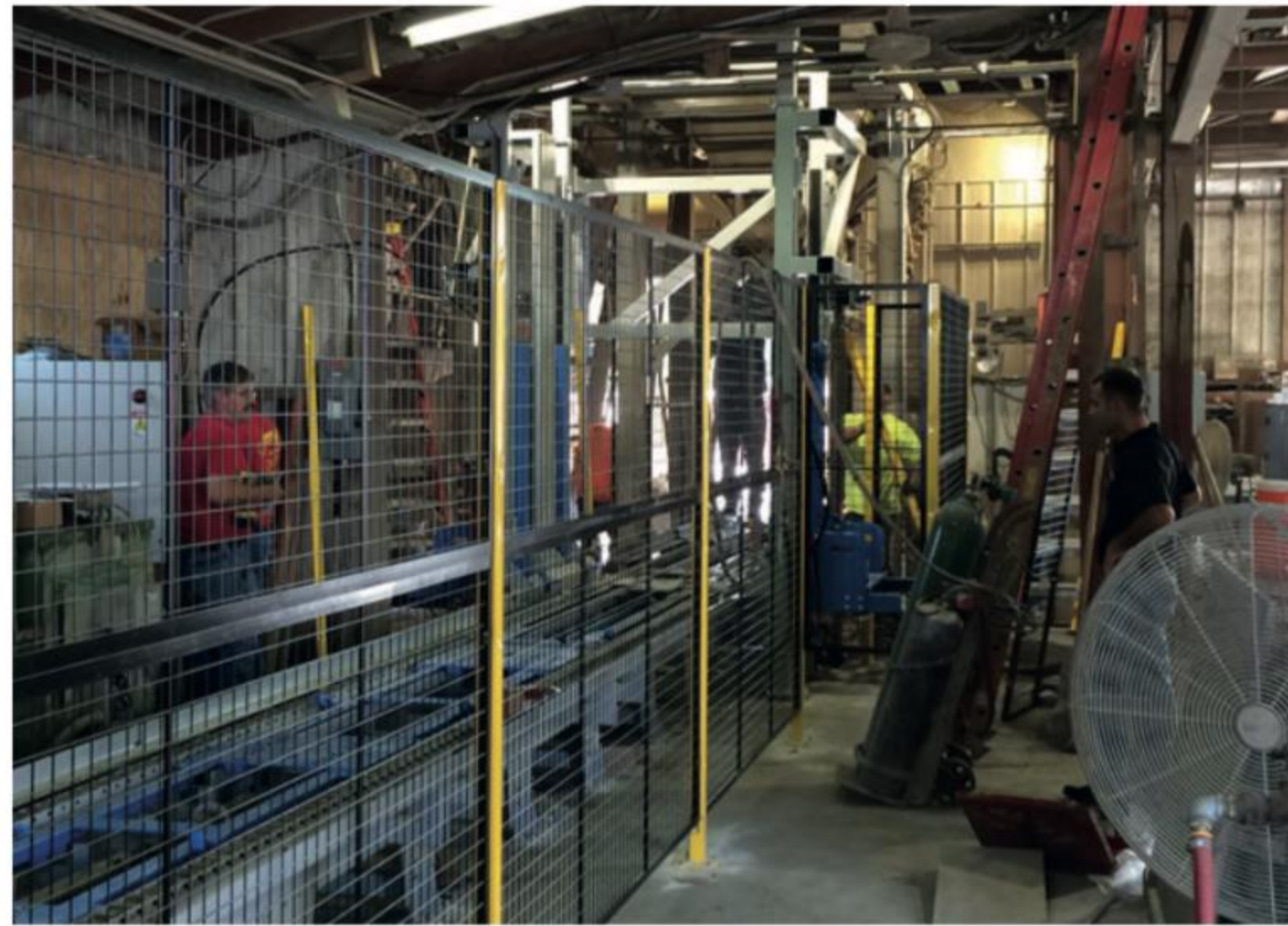
"Having the Rosetta team available to help train our sales staff and get the contractors comfortable installing the products has been very helpful," said Sauter. King's was able to bid and land 35 Outcropping jobs alone in their first year—an impressive launch for a new product line.

With a committed sales team and a trained production staff, King's Rosetta business continues to grow, which was Sauter's plan all along.

"We were attracted to Rosetta and the Automacad equipment because it was scalable," he said. "Last year we were working through our production system and workflow. By the spring we felt comfortable with it and had some extra capacity, so we added additional molds."

Now King's is adding both a stacker and indexing line to their production process, taking quality and efficiency to the next level.

For Sauter, making Rosetta Hardscapes is a step towards his ongoing goal to steadily grow King's Material in the concrete, landscaping, and masonry industry. "We're trying to control our own destiny a little more with more products that we can actually manufacture," he said.



Part of the allure of Rosetta Hardscapes for King's Materials was the ability to start small and scale up over time. Within the first few years of production, King's has already added a stacker and indexing line to their plant.

### The Opportunity

Still available in select territories, the Rosetta Hardscapes manufacturing opportunity is for quality concrete manufacturers who want to diversify their product mix, impress their customers, and grow their business. ■

### FURTHER INFORMATION



Redi-Rock International  
05481 US 31 South  
Charlevoix, MI 49720, USA  
T +1 866 222 8400  
F +1 231 237 9521  
[info@redi-rock.com](mailto:info@redi-rock.com)  
[www.redi-rock.com](http://www.redi-rock.com)