

This artist's rendering shows the Merkle corporate headquarters, a five-story glass and architectural precast concrete structure that is to be built in Columbia Gateway Park in Columbia, Md., by Manekin Construction LLC.



at DOT locations throughout the country. The tour will continue through the fall and will lead up to the 3rd Annual LEAP Software User Conference.

The conference is an intensive, two-day workshop that delivers user training with LEAP product managers leading seminars on expert tips and tricks, FAQ sessions with the technical support team, user case studies, and industry guest speakers.

### Owell Unveils Spancrete Hollow-Core Technology

In July 2007, **Owell Precast** announced state-of-the-art technology in hollow-core precast concrete with **Spancrete**. This technology produces uniform, hollow-core plank that is about 60% of the weight of ordinary precast concrete.

Spancrete's precast concrete plank is used in walls, columns, and beams and can provide a complete enclosure. It can be installed at up to 10,000 ft<sup>2</sup> (930 m<sup>2</sup>) per day with a crew of three.

Once installed and grouted, it provides an immediate work deck and covering for other trades, cutting construction time. Precast concrete hollow-core plank carries heavy loads and provides stiff floors to minimize vibration and noise.

### Smith-Midland to Provide Precast for Merkle Headquarters

**Smith-Midland Corp.** will be involved with the construction of an office building in Columbia, Md., for

Merkle, a database marketing agency.

The component of the contract awarded to Smith-Midland is valued at more than \$1.3 million and features 386 traditional architectural precast panels with 36,377 ft<sup>2</sup> (3400 m<sup>2</sup>) of panel area.

The 120,000 ft<sup>2</sup> (11,000 m<sup>2</sup>) precast concrete and glass office building in Columbia Gateway Park will be five stories tall and will house the corporate headquarters for Merkle. The building, designed by Design Collective Inc. of Baltimore, Md., features a number of unique features.

Because the company relies heavily on data and communications, the design incorporates a precast concrete screen wall to protect vital mechanical and electrical services. Adjacent to the screened area, the company has planned a protected, tree-shaded, outdoor gathering area featuring precast concrete benches and bars used for seating and serving food during company functions.

The precast concrete panels that will be used in the project are light gray with a medium acid-wash finish and dark-gray accents. Panel installation is scheduled to begin at the end of October and be completed in early December.

### Spancrete Hires New Contracts Administration Manager

The **Spancrete Group Inc.** recently hired Sarah Widdes as contracts administration manager.

In her new role at Spancrete, Widdes is responsible for reviewing, revis-

ing, and finalizing all commercial aspects of sales contracts. She is also in charge of monitoring contract performance and compliance and resolving contractual issues.



Sarah Widdes

### Tekla Holds Precasters Workshop

Employees of **Blakeslee Prestress, Con-Force, Coreslab, Cretex, High Concrete, Kassian Dyck and Associates, Strescon Ltd., and The Shockey Group** attended a precasting workshop from May 2 to 4, 2007, at the **Tekla Inc.** Kennesaw, Ga., office.

The goals of the workshop were to assist the producers' advanced precast concrete structures and gather feedback on industry needs, concerns, and future developments. Attendees participated in several workshops and open discussions throughout the three days.

The workshop was the first in a series of workshops that Tekla will be providing to users to better educate and understand their needs. Tekla Structures is a three-dimensional modeling software for the concrete industry.

### Tindall Offers Precast Concrete School Folder, CD-ROM

**Tindall Corp.** released a new illustrated folder and CD-ROM for its total precast, prestressed concrete educa-