



Photos courtesy of Sonders Enterprises

Watching for warmth

Patio, Frederick, Colo.

For Rob Sonders, owner of Sonders Enterprises, planning is key to decorative concrete projects during the Colorado winters. By watching weather forecasts and waiting for a warm front, Sonders was able to successfully time the creation of an exterior concrete patio in December 2005.

“We picked a warm, sunny day,” Sonders says. Warm for a Colorado winter, that is. “Pour day was about 35 to 40 degrees. I remember being cold that morning.”

Despite the warmer temperatures, Sonders still faced common winter challenges. “One of the challenges once we excavate is keeping the frost out of the ground,” he says. “(To avoid frost) we excavate and replace with dry road

base or recycled concrete material. Then we keep the area dry with two layers of plastic until the appropriate pour day arrives.”

For this particular project, Sonders utilized 4,000-psi concrete and nonchloride accelerator. He also placed blankets on the evening to help protect the concrete from chilly nights.

“There’s a little bit of a challenge,” he says. “There’s a lot of work to be done even after hours. We come back at 9 or 10 at night just to make sure the concrete is hard enough to put our blankets down.”

This process was done for four

nights, with power washing occurring on the fifth day after it was set. Temperatures were still crucial.

“We’ve got to make sure that fifth day is above freezing,” he says. “We like to be above 40 degrees. That’s really our magic temperature.”