



Rapid Set® Cement and Cement All®, El Paso Zoo (El Paso, TX)

EL PASO ZOO MAKES A SPLASH

with Precast Water Playground Entrance

In Texas, the El Paso Zoo looks as though it was carved right out of the city — an expansive green space that is home to exotic animals from around the world. The zoo is also home to the African Star Train, the Foster Tree House Playground and the Hunt Family Desert Spring Splash Pad, a popular attraction for families during warm-weather months.

The interactive water play area features dancing water, gushers, spray tunnels, tower sprays, pop-ups and more. What it didn't have until recently was a distinctive entrance that showcases the names of financial donors who made the splash pad possible. In November 2015, the zoo commissioned contractor Matt Larranaga, owner of Aquamatic Landscape LLC in Albuquerque, NM, to remedy that issue.

Larranaga had less than two weeks to create the 14-foot-tall by 20-foot-wide by 4-foot-deep precast concrete entrance in his Albuquerque shop and transport it 400 miles to El Paso for installation. Larranaga uses many Rapid Set® products for their strength and durability. For this

fast-track project, he also needed the products for their fast setting times and high early strength gains.

Working with three custom molds to replicate natural rock found in the Southwest, Larranaga's crew was able to cast multiple panels per day to meet the project deadline. The precast application consisted of spraying a face coat of Rapid Set® Cement All® on the rubber mold at about ¼-inch thick and then spraying a heavy backer coat, which consisted of Cement All with polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) fibers and alkaline-resistant (AR) glass fibers added to the mix. The fibers help prevent early shrinkage cracks and improve flexural strength.

A high-performance blend of Rapid Set® Cement and specialty sand, Cement All is a high-strength, multi-purpose repair material and non-shrink grout that sets in as little as 15 minutes, making it ideal for casting and formed work. After final set, Cement All was able to reach the structure's specified strength of more than 3,000 psi in an hour.

The resulting panels were from ½- to 1-inch thick, with a 4-foot by 3-foot face. All panels were cured enough to demold in about an hour.

TRANSPORTING THE ENTRANCE

The entrance was built in three sections with two columns and an overhang sign. Each column has a 4x4-foot base that is 11 feet tall. The sign is 3 feet tall, 20 feet wide and 2.5 feet deep. The crew transported the three pieces to the zoo via flatbed trailer and bolted them together on site.

Next, they hand-seamed all open ends with another special mix of Cement All. They colored the three sections to the approved color and finished off with a sealer.

The completed entrance is approximately 600 square feet of rock-like concrete that blends in with the natural settings of the El Paso zoo. It beckons families to splash around and cool down in between their encounters with wild, exotic animals. This was Larranaga's second zoo entrance project using Rapid Set products, and both the owner and contractor are happy with the results that were completed on time for this fast-track project.

