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Western Construction Group Tops List of Nation's Safest Construction Companies

(St. Louis, MO, Feb. 27, 2015) - Western Construction Group proudly announces that in 2014, it successfully achieved a pair of world-class safety ratings and the best in the company's 100-year history. In January, Western received an OSHA Total Recordable Rate of 2.73 -- well below the nation's masonry/concrete restoration industry average of 4.2. Three months prior, Western was awarded an industry-leading .55 Experience Modification Rating (EMR).

Lofty achievements in safety, considering that Western's line of work often requires employees to work hundreds of feet in the air on suspended scaffolds, underground in crumbling parking garages and perched atop precarious roofs and monuments. Not to mention working daily with hand and power tools, lifting and carrying heavy materials, working in confined spaces, and encountering a variety of health exposures.

"We put a lot of effort into ensuring that all of our employees return safely home each night after a day on the job," said Western Safety Director Eric Olson. "At Western, it is understood that safety will not be compromised. From the owners down to the newest employees, our message is clear. If you want to work at Western, be prepared to do things the right way."

The OSHA Recordable Rate is based on injury and illness rates per 100 workers and is used to evaluate a company's safety measures. This number is used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to

determine the rate of accidents and illnesses by category, such as industry, company size and region. Western's three-year OSHA average is 2.97. Company executives have set a number of goals and priorities to continue driving the company rate down past a 2.0.

"It is important to note our size when discussing the OSHA Recordable Rate. A small company, for example, may have a lower rate than us, but only has 100 workers," Olson said. "We achieved this incredible rate with averaging over 900 workers and 1.9 million labor hours. Not only does this show our incredible dedication to safety and how few accidents we have, but it opens the doors to coveted potential customers who will only consider your business if you are under 3.0."

A company's EMR is calculated by the National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI), which compares a company's three-year payroll to the number of work comp losses the company has experienced over the same three-year time period. Any rating less than 1.00 is favorable.

An industry leader in workplace safety, Western has evolved its safety programs over the decades from the basic compliance initiatives to advanced programs that address ergonomic and soft tissue injuries. Western has also initiated a climate for safety that empowers employees to proactively take steps to evaluate their own job site activities and correct procedures to prevent accidents.

Olson said Western already has plans in place to achieve its lofty OSHA goal, and maintain its low EMR rating. Plans include bringing a stronger focus to new employee safety through Western's New Employee Accident Reduction Plan.

"We find that a large percentage of accidents are new-employee-related, so we are going to assign them mentors on the job sites to walk them through tasks, pointing out safety details and providing direct supervision," Olson said.

Western also plans to focus more on minimizing soft tissue injuries such as sprains and muscle strains by accessing job sites to determine where operational machinery can be utilized instead

of manual labor to prevent injuries to workers. An ergonomic training specialist conducts these training programs at Western.

Special focus will also be given to the company's proactive Daily Huddles, which consist of a brief discussion each morning to highlight specific safety concerns for the scope of work that day and to make safety top of mind for workers.

About Western Construction Group

Family-owned and operated for nearly 100 years, Western Construction Group is the nation's largest specialty contractor in masonry, concrete and facade restoration, waterproofing and specialty roofing. Offering a nationwide network of expertise, building owners, engineers, architects and property managers can count on Western Construction Group to develop cost-effective, corrective measures that can add years of useful life to industrial, commercial, healthcare, historic, educational and government buildings, parking structures and sports stadiums. Western Construction Group is headquartered in St. Louis, MO with over 30 branch offices nationwide and employs more than 1,200 salaried and hourly professionals who offer the best, time-tested techniques and innovative technology. For more information about Western Construction Group, visit www.westerngroup.com. *Western Construction Group: America's Master Craftsmen in Building Restoration and Preservation.*

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