



■ From left to right: A.J. Dalgleish, Conrad Audet and Ben Audet.

Ontario Concrete Raising

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Local firm's unique “slabjacking” process can repair uneven concrete surfaces **quickly and effectively.**

BY SCOTT LESLIE *The Business Link*

Soil erosion isn't just something that happens in the Mojave Desert. It can take place underneath your home or right in your own backyard. And when it does, it can play havoc with concrete surfaces, turning places like driveways, sidewalks and garage floors into an uneven mess.

Fortunately, there are companies out there like Ontario Concrete Raising Limited in St. Catharines to come to the rescue.

Family owned and operated, Ontario Concrete Raising is in the “slabjacking” business—a process that can raise sunken concrete back to its original level. Over the years, the firm's crews have worked on all kinds of concrete structures including patios, sidewalks, drive-

ways, garage and basement floors, porches, ramps, pool decks, steps, and factory and warehouse areas.

“We can lift any type of concrete surface,” says Ben Audet, the firm's co-owner. “Slabjacking is a cleaner, more efficient process than replacing the concrete itself. It can definitely save you time and money.”

A Unique Process

Slabjacking is a relatively new procedure in southern Ontario, having been developed by engineers in the U.S. back in the early 1930s. With slabjacking, sunken concrete slabs are lifted by drilling holes at strategic points in the concrete's surface and pumping grout into the holes using hydraulic pressure. The grout material fills the gap underneath the concrete and raises the concrete to its proper height. The holes are then patched with a concrete mixture that will fade in time to match the existing concrete.

At Ontario Concrete Raising, all the material the firm uses is completely environmentally-friendly, and one of the three owners is always on site to ensure each slabjacking assignment is done quickly and properly.

Ben says slabjacking is particularly ideal for

property owners that have water running towards their foundation.

“Raising your concrete to its original grade will let the water drain away from your house,” he says. “It's also a good way to avoid running into any tripping hazards or liability issues.”

Cost is one of the biggest benefits of going with a company like Ontario Concrete Raising. For instance, some concrete surfaces can cost thousands of dollars to replace. The slabjacking process on the other hand is roughly a third of the cost of replacing the concrete altogether. (Ontario Concrete Raising also provides all quotes and consultations free of charge.)

Ben and his partners also provide a five-year warranty on all the work they do. If the concrete they're working on should sink again within five years of being levelled, Ontario Concrete Raising will lift it again for free.

“That happens very rarely,” Ben explains, “because the grout material we use stabilizes the sub-soil to prevent further erosion and sinking. It's much stronger than the original soil base so it will increase the load bearing capacity of the concrete. If the concrete does happen to sink again that typically means there's another problem like a shift in the water table.”

Replacing concrete can be a time-consuming process, not to mention inconvenient. But with Ontario Concrete Raising, most jobs can be completed within a day's time and with minimal disturbance to the site itself. The average residential driveway for instance can be repaired in as little as five hours, and customers can typically begin driving vehicles on it within 48 hours after the work has been completed.

Customers aren't required to be at the job site when the work is being done. However, they're allowed to be around during the raising process, and Ontario Concrete Raising is more than happy to schedule work periods at the customer's convenience.

“We're a family business,” Ben says, “so we make it a point to keep focused on providing our customers with the best possible service. That means having high standards, a positive attitude and doing the very best we can as a team and as individuals.”

Working from the Ground Up

Serving the Niagara, Hamilton and Halton areas, the Ontario Concrete Raising team is comprised of Ben Audet, his father Conrad, and his brother-in-law, A.J. Dalgleish. Ben is in charge

HOW ONTARIO CONCRETE RAISING LTD. LIFTS YOUR SUNKEN CONCRETE



1. Strategically placed holes are drilled through the sunken slabs.



2. Stabilizing grout mixture is pumped under the slab raising it.



3. The holes are patched with a concrete mix.



Before
 ■ Sidewalk before raising. Holes were drilled through the sunken slabs and a stabilizing mixture was pumped under the slabs.



After
 ■ The stabilizing grout mixture helps to raise the slabs, and the holes are then patched to complete the project.



Before
 ■ A driveway that has sunken into the ground due to years of stress is repaired through Ontario Concrete Raising Ltd.'s "slabjacking" process.



“ People are always telling their friends and family about us. We want to make sure we're going to do the best for them. If we can't help someone or improve their situation, we don't take the job on.” – Ben Audet, co-owner of Ontario Concrete Raising Ltd.

of the company's marketing, administration and work quotations while A.J. and Conrad manage the firm's equipment and oversee work done at the job site. A.J. also takes on quoting duties from time to time and conducts the training of new employees.

Ontario Concrete Raising has been in business for a few years now and the firm has been growing by leaps and bounds. After discovering the benefits of slabjacking some time ago, Ben quickly realized it was something that

would have tremendous upside. Ben then decided to launch Ontario Concrete Raising and soon had his father and A.J. on his side.

“Most people aren't very familiar with slabjacking,” Ben explains, “but back then, it was pretty obvious there was going to be a huge potential out there for it. You could definitely see the business growing down the road.”

And Ben's predictions were right. These days, the firm serves a broad variety of commercial clients—everything from warehouses and school boards to municipalities and property management firms. However, the majority of the company's work continues to be for homeowners.

“We treat our customers' homes like one of our own,” Ben says. “When we're finished, we ask ourselves if we'd be happy with the job if it had been done on one of our homes.”

Ontario Concrete Raising works on an average of 400 jobs a year—sometimes as many as 15 a week. Their crews essentially work from March to the end of December, weather permitting.

“It largely depends on the frost,” Ben says of the weather, which can sometimes impede their drilling, “but we're still busy in the off-season, providing quotes and scheduling upcoming jobs.”

And word of mouth has really paid off for the expanding company. Every season, they receive all kinds of referrals and the level of customer satisfaction seems to grow with each passing year.

“People are always telling their friends and family about us,” Ben says. “We want to make sure we're going to do the best for them. If we can't help someone or improve their situation, we don't take the job on.” **BL10**



Ontario Concrete Raising Ltd. is located at 600 Ontario Street in St. Catharines. For more information please call toll free 1.855.WOW.LIFT (969.5438), or visit www.ontarioconcreteraising.com.

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