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WINTER 2013

# *On the* **JOB**<sup>TM</sup>

## **FIRMLY GROUNDED**

**SPECIALTY CONTRACTOR EXCELS AT  
FOUNDATION STABILIZATION**

### **ALSO INSIDE ...**

**420 BACKHOE LOADERS USED TO MAINTAIN RAILS**

**CONTRACTOR STAYS TRUE TO ITS ROOTS**

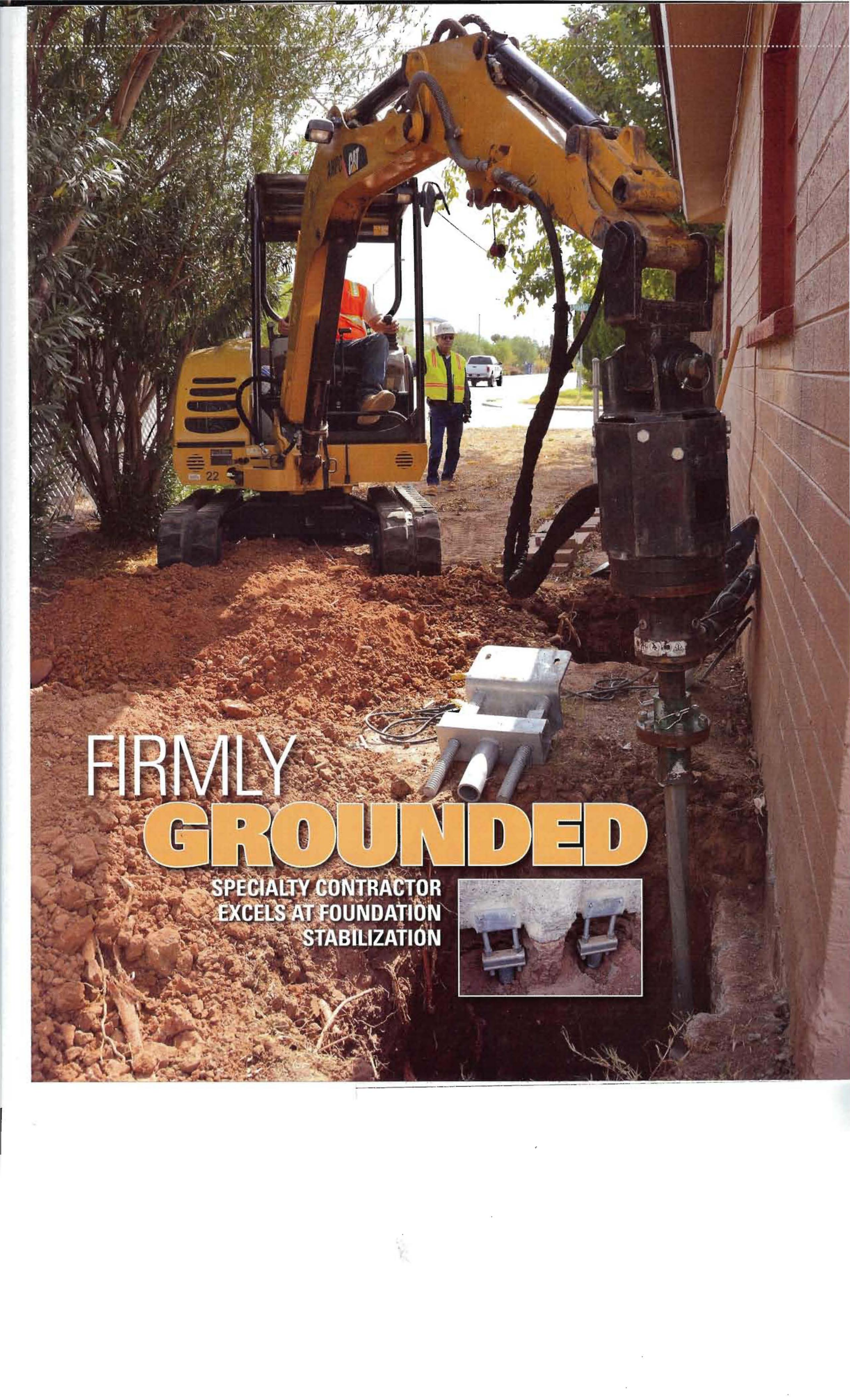
**938K WHEEL LOADER THE CHOICE FOR AUTO SALVAGE**

**CONTRACTOR GAINS COMPETITIVE EDGE**

**EMPIRE**

**CAT**





# FIRMLY GROUNDED

SPECIALTY CONTRACTOR  
EXCELS AT FOUNDATION  
STABILIZATION





**M**ore than 100 years ago, A. Bishop Chance developed his first patented earth anchor as an engineered solution to foundation settlement. Over the next century, patented A.B. Chance helical anchoring systems have proven to be a reliable and economical method of foundation stabilization.

Based on the positive experience a friend had getting into the foundation stabilization business in Montana, Kevin Fox and Ivory Bates launched an A.B. Chance franchise in Phoenix 19 years ago (A.B. Chance is a subsidiary of Hubbell, Inc.). With the wet and dry conditions in the Arizona desert, some soils are prone to expansion, while some soils consolidate, causing foundation failures.

As foundations are repaired in Arizona and across the desert southwest, satisfied customers comment how they wished the piers would have been required as a preventive measure during the initial phase of the home building process.

"Kevin and I have been doing this for a long time," Bates says. "We have probably installed more than 13,000 piers, so we have a lot of experience—we have never had a failure or a complaint. We work primarily with engineers, architects and general contractors, and they respect our knowledge and track record. They come to us for recommendations."

Working primarily in Arizona, New Mexico and Southern California, the eight-man company has done everything from raising commercial buildings and stabilizing foundations on residential homes, to anchoring culverts, signs and cables for ziplines.

One of its higher profile jobs involved anchoring cables to the roof of University of Phoenix Stadium, a multipurpose facility that is home to the Arizona Cardinals NFL team and the Fiesta Bowl. The cables were anchored into helical piers set into the ground,

**"If you take too much time, you cut into other things that the general contractor and the engineers need to do to get the project up and running. So, what Caterpillar and Empire have helped us do is shorten the time necessary to do our work."**

— IVORY BATES  
CO-OWNER  
ARIZONA HELICAL-PIERS

and are designed to prevent the roof from blowing off during a storm.

### **A perfect match**

For all of its work, be it residential or commercial, Arizona Helical-Piers uses a fleet of five Cat mini excavators. The machines excavate around foundations, clearing the way for vertical screw anchors which are screwed into the ground with a slow rotating hydraulic power head, and anchored to structural slabs or equipment pads. The mini excavators also quickly backfill the excavated foundations and handle landscaping chores during cleanup.

"The mini excavators have the ability to get in everywhere we need to go," Bates says. "They are small and powerful, and can reach over obstacles—we bought

stick extensions for longer reach on the 302s and 304s.

"And there are a million uses for these things," he adds. "The ease of putting in the helical piers with the Cat Excavators is a definite advantage. A lot of installers around the nation still use skid steers, backhoes, forklifts and telescoping booms. At first we tried everything, but nothing worked quite as effectively as the mini excavators work for us. We found them to be far superior for the variety of jobs that we do."

### **Big assist from Empire**

Arizona Helical-Piers can jack up a building foundation using hydraulic

*(Continued on page 8)*





jacks that operate from zero to 15,000 psi. The company's Cat Dealer, Empire Cat, built a manifold system with eight interconnected 50-ton jacks for the specific purpose of raising a building.

"Empire has helped us run the mechanical aspects better," Bates says. "They took our ideas and added some of theirs to make the machinery more effective. It sped up our work processes and helped us be more competitive, because time is money in this business."

"If you take too much time, you cut into other things that the general contractor and the engineers need to do to get the project up and running," Bates continues. "So, what Caterpillar and Empire have helped us do is shorten the time necessary to do our work."

Another area where Empire has provided expertise has resulted in a technical innovation, of sorts. The traditional method of installing helical piers involves using a manual technique for monitoring the amount of torque

applied to screw the piers into the ground. By installing torque-measuring gauges, which measure the amount of torque applied, Arizona Helical-Piers has largely avoided the problems of pins breaking as the piers are screwed in.

"We had to keep changing these pins, because they would break—it was really time consuming," Bates says. "Empire helped us build and utilize a calibrated gauge, so we know now what the pressures are for the different power heads. That gauge has really simplified

things for us. So by visiting our jobsite, Empire helped us assemble the right equipment package, and it has really made our life easier."

### **Safety emphasis**

Once at the jobsite, the crew discusses what it's going to do, how it will be done and any safety considerations associated with the job.

"In our line of work, we find ourselves in places that people shouldn't be, but we try and do everything

#### **COMPANY PROFILE:**

## **ARIZONA HELICAL-PIERS**

**Employees:** 8

**Location:** Cave Creek, Ariz.

**Business:** Commercial and residential foundation repair company that specializes in the installation of A.B. Chance Helical-Pier Foundation Systems

**Cat® Equipment:** 302.5 Mini Excavator (2), 304 Mini Excavator (2), 226 Skid Steer Loader



[arizonahelicalpiers.com](http://arizonahelicalpiers.com)





we can to be safe on every job,” says Keven Kullberg, co-owner of Arizona Helical-Piers.

“For me, part of safety is taking care of the equipment,” Fox adds. “I’ve got hydraulic hoses that have been in use for years and are still in perfect condition because I take care of them. I take good care to replace the hoses when I see any kind of dry rot. I don’t want to put any of us in jeopardy.”

Fox does daily maintenance on his own, while Empire performs scheduled maintenance as part of a Customer Support Agreement.

### Going the extra mile

Arizona Helical-Piers takes extra care to ensure that its reputation for performing top-notch work stays intact. That includes staying away from inflating costs or addendums.

“We try to eat unforeseen costs when we have to, just because it fosters good relationships with our customers—they know they can trust us,” Bates says. “We have a reputation that far exceeds almost anyone else, and we protect it like mother hens.”

After just barely staying alive the first several years they were in business, the company never abandoned its practice of going the extra mile for its customers, doing things like helping move furniture, or working from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. so as not to disturb day shift office workers.

“We get letters from homeowners all the time stating that we went in and did what they couldn’t do in two weeks,” Kullberg says. “We go in and clean everything up, move all of their furniture and roll their carpets up. None of this stuff is in our contract, but we see it as part of the job. We will cover it up, keep everything clean, and when we leave we want it to be cleaner than when we got there.”

Adds Bates: “People have offered to tip our guys because they do such a good job. I don’t think too many contractors can say that.” **OTJ**

## WHAT THEY LIKE ABOUT THEIR CAT DEALER

“Empire has branches in many locations all over the state, enabling us to pick up anything and everything we need if something should happen to a piece of equipment,” says Keven Kullberg, co-owner of Arizona Helical-Piers. “Very seldom do we have a breakdown situation, and if we do, we have it fixed immediately. Empire has treated us well. Fast response is always provided for field service. If shop service is required, the machine typically comes back within four hours or the next morning, and we are right back on the job.”

“We have built a solid relationship with Empire,” adds company co-founder, Ivory Bates. “Our Empire representative, Mark Snow, knows us well, and the guys down in the mechanic’s section know Kevin, so we have formed a bond with Caterpillar.”

Adds job superintendent Kevin Fox: “Mark has always been good to us, and has always taken care of us when we need help.”

## WHAT THEY LIKE ABOUT CAT EQUIPMENT

“Everyone knows Cat equipment, and it’s pretty hard to overcome that if you’re a competitor using a different brand,” Bates says. “And there’s also another side to it: We realize that part of what we do as a business has to do with image. There’s a familiarity factor, and Caterpillar is a world-renowned name—it’s a name that is well respected and trusted.

“A lot of the other helical piers installers around the nation still use skid steers, backhoes and forklifts,” Bates continues. “We found the Cat mini excavator to be far superior for the variety of jobs we do, and for their ability to make the changes we need to make in the field if we have to.”

“We have so few service needs it’s just incredible,” Kullberg adds. “We are not experiencing downtime because of the equipment.”

In the past, Fox tried most of the competing brands, but once he tried a Cat machine, he never considering using anything else. “The Cat excavator has always been the smoothest, most reliable machine for me, and the easiest to service.”



Co-owners Keven Kullberg (L) and Ivory Bates.