

Congratulations To Our CRFPs

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What do you enjoy most about your job? Ramirez: At the root of it, I get to help others. I find it very rewarding helping others reach for their highest potential. I deal with hundreds of general managers, each one with their own skill set, so there's always an opportunity to teach or learn. I love it. Roach: The satisfaction of having helped a restaurant solve a problem or successfully complete a project that has improved the operators' lives and their ability to serve their guests. I'm blessed to be able to help solve day-today issues and work on longer-term projects that improve their facilities, either in terms of operational effectiveness and/or the comfort and attractiveness of their facility in the eyes of their guests. Vos: The things I enjoy most about being a facility manager are the many challenges and unique circumstances that arise within my day-to-day activities. There are so many different moving parts involved when operating a restaurant, and being able to help things run smoothly, no matter what unusual challenge arise, really drives me.

What other companies have you worked for prior to your current position? Ramirez: In the realm of facility management, I worked as a facility manager for 24 Hour Fitness for more than 16 years. It was a great company to work for and learn from. In addition to my job at 24, I owned and operated New Starr Press, a screen print and marketing materials manufacturing company. Roach: I've been in the food industry for a long time, much of it spent in operations with Pizza Hut, Quizno's (where I was a franchisee) and Applebee's. I moved into facilities in 2006 and have loved it ever since. Vos: I have worked in the restaurant industry my entire life. I started out on the operations side in a family-owned restaurant (Ram's Horn) in Dearborn Heights, Mich. I worked my way up to eventually becoming the GM for about five years and eventually decided to make a career move. After being on the I operations side for most of my life and seeing how much we were paying repairmen, I decided to shift gears and become a mechanical 1 contractor. Since this career move was in the midst of some very rough times in the Detroit area, I decided to relocate and found a service company that specialized in repairing restaurant equipment. Whaley Food service had just started up a new branch in Nashville, and they were looking to broaden their horizons and shift from just being a hot-side repair company to a full-fledged HVACR and hot side repair company. I worked my way up from being a service technician to becoming their branch manager over Tennessee, Alabama and Northern Georgia.

When you were new to the industry, what was the most surprising thing you learned about the restaurant world? Ramirez: The average range for restaurant profit margins. At the time, it seemed that many were operating between 3 and 5%, which blew my mind. It also helped me understand how important my job as an FM was within my company. Preventive maintenance, CapEx mapping, asset management, training, interface functionality and vendor quality were early action items. These areas addressed correctly will obviously help the bottom line. Roach: I knew it was people-intensive, but I never really knew how much impact a general manager had on the performance of their team until I got into the business. Vos: I think the most surprising thing that most people notice right off the bat in our world is how demanding it is. Restaurants are typically not equipped with "backup" equipment, so making sure that everything is always fully operational is key and can be quite challenging at times. (Especially when you watch how some of the store employees treat this precious equipment!

What is your all-time favorite movie? Ramirez: "A Bronx Tale." Great movie, great life lessons. "The worst thing in life is wasted talent," Robert DeNiro says to his young son in the movie. I couldn't agree more. Roach: "We Were Soldiers." I was never in combat when I was in the Army, but in discussing the movie with friends who have been, they say it's probably the most realistic treatment of battle that Hollywood has ever produced. It always reaffirms my gratitude toward veterans, especially those who served in Vietnam and never received the grateful and honorable treatment they deserved. Vos: My favorite movie of all time is "Remember the Titans." I love how Coach Herman Brown comes in and teaches the boys and the community "how to trust the soul of a man rather than the look of him."

What is the most challenging situation you've ever faced in a facility or on the job? How did you handle it? Ramirez: The Tubbs Fire of 2017 in Santa Rosa, Calif., and the Camp Fire of 2018 in Butte County, Calif. I learned a lot about the importance of preparation and clear lines of communication. From a facilities standpoint, we supported our operational partners with essentially anything they needed: safely powering down stores, moving product, staying in contact with public utilities, monitoring the hourly updates from the local fire department, reaching out to vendors to keep them ready to go in the event their services were needed and sending daily summaries to our leadership team. When facing these catastrophic events, you need to prepare for the worst, assess risks, create clear lines of communication with all involved, create an action plan and retain items now that may not be available after the disaster hits. Roach: Gutting and rebuilding a Fridays in Dallas-Fort Worth airport. We shut down an extremely profitable restaurant through the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's travel crunch and had to completely gut and rebuild it under extreme time and regulatory duress. Vos: The most challenging part of being a facility manager is keeping the stores within their monthly maintenance budgets. There are so many moving parts and so many different managers that are constantly moving around from one store to another, making this a constant struggle. I stay in close contact with my DMs and make myself available to them 24/7, keeping all of the key people involved at all times. High-level communication and good relationships are key to winning the small battles!

What is your favorite work-related app? Ramirez: Amazon. I drop ship parts to my stores all the time, and they usually ship within 48 hours. It's a great tool in creating strong relationships with my store managers as their perception of "intensity" revolves around, "How fast can you get this done?" Being stretched out over several states, I love how Amazon expands my reach to deliver restaurant parts and equipment efficiently. Roach: Site Audit Pro. Vos: I love my Google Keep App! It helps me stay organized and in control.

What is the best advice you ever received? Ramirez: Everything in moderation, even moderation. Roach: In my first week of work out of college, a mentor advised me to never make significant career decisions when you were either at the high point or low point of job satisfaction. It can be hard to judge exactly where you are on the roller coaster, but try to find that midpoint where you can make logical decisions. It's served me well during my almost 40 years of work. Vos: The best advice that I've ever received came from my high school wrestling coach: "If you believe you can win, you can beat anyone!" Although it is a very simple statement, I think about this quote on a daily basis as it pertains to all aspects of life, and it has helped me through many rough times on my road to success.

Who is the most impressive person you have ever met? Ramirez: My wife. Watching her give birth and help raise my children is by far the most impressive thing I have ever seen. Roach: The late Buck O'Neil. Unless you're a baseball history buff but for watched Ken Burns baseball documentaries, the name may not register. Buck was a legendary player and manager and became MLB's first African-American coach. I was blessed to have the opportunity to get to know Buck and spend time with him during some charitable activities, and he may be the finest man I've ever known. For someone who was treated so poorly by our society for much of his life, Buck didn't have an ounce of bitterness or regret and was full of love for people. Even though he was in his 90s when I got to know him, he always remembered our conversations and worked the events we attended together beyond the point where the rest of us were collapsing from fatigue. I'm honored to have called him my friend. Vos: My grandfather, Noel William Gittens, is the most impressive person that I've ever met. He grew up in Great Britain, was a boxer for the British Navy and raised five children who all have beautiful families of their own. He was always smiling, always thinking positively, always willing to help anyone in need. Truly an inspirational man.

To what would you attribute your success in achieving your CRFP? Ramirez: My experience in the field. There is nothing like getting your hands dirty and learning on the job. You can take the courses and study books, but some education you can only get by experiencing it. Roach: I've worked with tremendous facility managers during my career who've mentored and taught me what they knew. Vos: My broad background throughout the many aspects of the restaurant industry helped me acquire my CRFP. I was contemplating taking the exam for quite some time but never had time to study the material. My peers recommended that I just go ahead and take it regardless. I woke up one Monday morning a few weeks ago and decided to just schedule the test; the test would've been much easier if I had studied for it, but I received my CRFP title 24 hours later.

Would you recommend attaining a CRFP to other colleagues? Why? Ramirez: Of course. It shows another mark of accomplishment in your field. It designates you as someone who hasn't stopped continuing your education. Who doesn't want to stand out among their peers? Roach: Absolutely. Like any accomplishment in life, no one can take it away from you. The process of preparing for it will teach you things you didn't know. Vos: I definitely think anyone in facilities management should attain their CRFP. The test covers a wide variety of material, and mastering each of these areas will definitely help anyone in facilities become more comfortable and confident in their role.

What do you do for fun in your spare time? Ramirez: The role of an FM can be very rewarding, but it can also be a thankless job at times. To deal with that stress, I like to cultivate various things in my spare time. I love to garden, and the climate in Northern California allows us to grow fresh veggies 10 months out of the year. So fresh peppers, lettuce, onions, tomatoes and cucumbers are always on the menu. I also like to brew hard cider with fresh apples from Apple Hill, a famous collective of apple orchards in the foothills of the Sierras. It's become somewhat of a serious hobby, now taking up about 40% of my garage. Most of the time, you're just cleaning and watching the juice age, but my wife and neighbors really love the end product. It's well worth all the mess. Roach: My wife and I are empty-nesters now, so we like to travel. With grown children living in Los Angeles, St. Louis and Hilton Head, S.C., as well as friends all over the country, we love traveling to visit them. We sort of have a tradition with each person or couple, where we attend an event or do some activity together that we try our best to continue. Vos: I have three boys who love sports. In my spare time, I love coaching and helping them develop. I started coaching baseball for my oldest son's baseball team about 11 years ago. I've been fortunate to be able to coach all three of them in baseball, football,

basketball and wrestling. It is definitely a great stress reliever, and it helps keep me grounded! I also enjoy water sports, riding motorcycles and exploring different areas of our beautiful country. I recently volunteered at the annual RFMA Gives event and was able to take some time to explore Pikes Peak. Watching eagles fly below me was amazing!