

Eco-Logic, Inc., Temecula

CROSS VALLEY CONNECTOR GAP CLOSURE PROJECT – A WINNING EFFORT

Story by John Hernandez • Photos by Michael Selden and John Hernandez

Business as a Team Sport

Well known for his landscaping abilities and marketing acumen, David Moralez, Owner and Founder of Temecula-based Eco-Logic, Inc., literally brings much more to the game than at first glance.

Sure, David Moralez has taken the time to get all his technical and professional ducks lined up in a row. Earning a B.A. in Communications with a minor in Advertising from Cal State Dominguez Hills, David eventually took a position with his brother's company, Diversified Landscape, in 1994, where he soon became an estimator and worked in the business end of the firm. His efforts brought several years of continued growth to Diversified.

Eventually wanting to do something on his own, David took an interest in the mulch service industry, at first brokering and then later bidding on his own projects. Mulch service slowly grew to include landscaping, and the rest as they say, is history.

Landscaping can be an



DAVID MORALEZ is the Owner of Eco-Logic, Inc., a successful commercial landscape design and installation firm based in Temecula, CA. David is an expert in choosing and coaching his teams to victory.

interesting business, and it is to David, a C-27 Landscape Contractor. But the *business* of landscaping – now *that's* exciting to the Yorba Linda native. It's all that marketing, the thrill of the deal, the negotiating of the contract, the cultivating of union relationships and the balancing of budgets...those are the elements of the industry that captivate this young entrepreneur...and are the areas in which he truly excels.

In the Big Leagues

To distill the many lessons learned from his years as a star baseball player – from Little League through high school and college, where he was scouted by the pros – David would point to two: “Winning is better than losing,” and “It takes a talented, well-managed team to achieve lasting success.”

David Moralez drew on all aspects of his winning ways to

acquire and then successfully complete the \$1.3 million landscaping contract for the Cross Valley Connector Gap Closure project in Santa Clarita, shown on these pages. The mile-long Cross Valley project is an extension of Newhall Ranch Road, and runs between the Golden State 5 Freeway and Rye Canyon Road, connecting two vital parts of the City of Santa Clarita.

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TENACIOUS – David Moralez hung in there with this project through re-bidding, a stack of change orders, and having to repair existing landscaping damaged by road construction.

The general contractor for the project was C.A. Rasmussen, Inc.; Eco-Logic, Inc. was in charge of landscaping the median strips and the areas on both sides of the new highway.

It's Not Over 'Til It's Over

David's first challenge came when his first bid was not accepted, but was impressive enough that he was asked to re-bid the job. The tenacious David sharpened his pencil, as sharp businesspersons sometimes have to do, and came up with a figure that was acceptable, and thus, was awarded the project.

Another challenge had to do with some additional work with which Eco-Logic was tasked. This portion of the project involved the delicate job of repairing any damage done to the landscaping of adjacent businesses during construction of

the new highway. David certainly needed to use his best marketing and communications skills in fulfilling this area of the contract.

This project had its share of changes and change orders, not the least of which was the change in the landscape design from sod to plants and ground cover. But for David, this was all part of the learning curve in dealing with projects of this size and complexity.

Busy Equipment Manager

The mile-long project required more than 20,000 feet of irrigation pipe, 100 valves, three 36-station Rain Master controllers and three Bernie Clark Backflows. It also used approximately 3 miles of 3" water main, and about 10 miles of wire.

Close to 1,000 trees were installed (mostly 24" box), and included: *Koelreuteria*, golden



EXISTING TREES alongside the project are lonely no longer. That's because they are now joined by close to 1,000 trees installed by the Eco-Logic team at Cross Valley.

rain tree; *gleditsia*, honey locust; *podocarpus*, yellow wood; chitalpa trees and pear trees. The almost 7,000 plants and shrubs (mostly 5-gallon) included *rhapiolepis umbeolata* and *sylosma contacta*. The 500 flats of ground cover included *myoporum tutah creek*, plus more than 1,000 yards of forest floor mulch bark. Over 680,000 square feet of hydroseeding was also used in the project.

Key Team Members

The Project Manager representing the General Contractor C.A. Rasmussen, Inc., was Jesus Garcia; the General Superintendent Tom Hardin, and the Project Foreman Hank Almanza, are from Eco-Logic. Vince Diaz of Pipefitters Union Local 345 provided the irrigation

personnel needed to complete the project. Union Business Agent Kauhi Miner was also involved in checking on the progress of the project. Emilio Blanco was the City Inspector on the job representing the City of Santa Clarita.

Earning a Big Win

"Our Eco-Logic team started on this project in September of 2006, and completed it several months ahead of schedule," said General Superintendent Tom Hardin. "I am proud of the fine work done by the 7 to 12 pipefitters from Union Local 345 that were on the job at any one time." Tom is also a long-time member of Local 345. "It was great working with the City of Santa Clarita and the other workers on the project," he continued. "They made good working partners on a massive job that saw an entire hill removed to allow the road to go through."

Hank Almanza, another long-time member of Local 345, was the Project Foreman. "This project was a challenge, especially considering all the subcontractors involved," said Hank. "That's why I made sure that most of the

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MULCH APPLICATION 101 – Move over sacks, wheelbarrows and rakes. Make room for a more efficient way of applying mulch bark...by blowing it in...all 1,000 yards of it.



AHEAD OF SCHEDULE – David Moralez' crews did such an outstanding and efficient job at Cross Valley that the project was completed months ahead of schedule.

members on my crew had from 10 to 15 years experience doing this kind of work. Even though I have 25 years of experience in the trade, I am still learning with every job I run. I am proud of the work our team accomplished. Not just anybody could have completed this project ahead of schedule and earning such high marks from the City of Santa Clarita.”

Hank also commended David Moralez for taking on the challenge of this unique project, and for securing all the plants and equipment needed to complete the job – on budget and ahead of schedule.

Philosophy of a Champion

Drawing from his training as a player and a coach, David Moralez enjoys being a mentor to his employees; helping a first

year Apprentice rise up the ranks to Journeyman and beyond. Like other good coaches, he believes that character matters; and that if you exhibit good character good things will follow.

The Box Score

Sometimes the real beauty of a mostly functional project, such as Cross Valley, is in the way the team is able to get the project completed on time (or before), on budget...and with minimal distractions or bumps in the road. Such was the case with this project. No fancy water features or outdoor lighting here; just a good, sound, expertly installed irrigation system, with practical, eye-pleasing landscaping that will be enjoyed by Northern L.A. County motorists for decades to come.



THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT, and the right personnel for the job, help to turn a complicated project into a successful project.



MOVING MOUNTAINS – There are not too many people who can say that a mountain was moved in order to install their project, but David Moralez can do just that, as a large hill was partially demolished to put the road through.

Future Hall of Famer

What's in the future for David Moralez? A man of many talents, David would like to someday make room in his busy schedule for teaching history or physical education at a local high school, and serving as the school's baseball coach. Given his incredible drive and winning attitude, there's no reason why David can't be a leader in more than one industry. His commitment to CLIC – along with projects and articles like this one – have demonstrated he is worthy of CLIC's Hall of Fame. Could Cooperstown be next?



CONNECTING two vital parts of the City of Santa Clarita, the Cross Valley project not only makes driving more convenient for residents, but safer and faster for safety vehicles.