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PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

By ANGELA RATZLAFF
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Carothers DiSante &
Freudenberger LLP hires
Richard Green as a partner
in immigration practice.

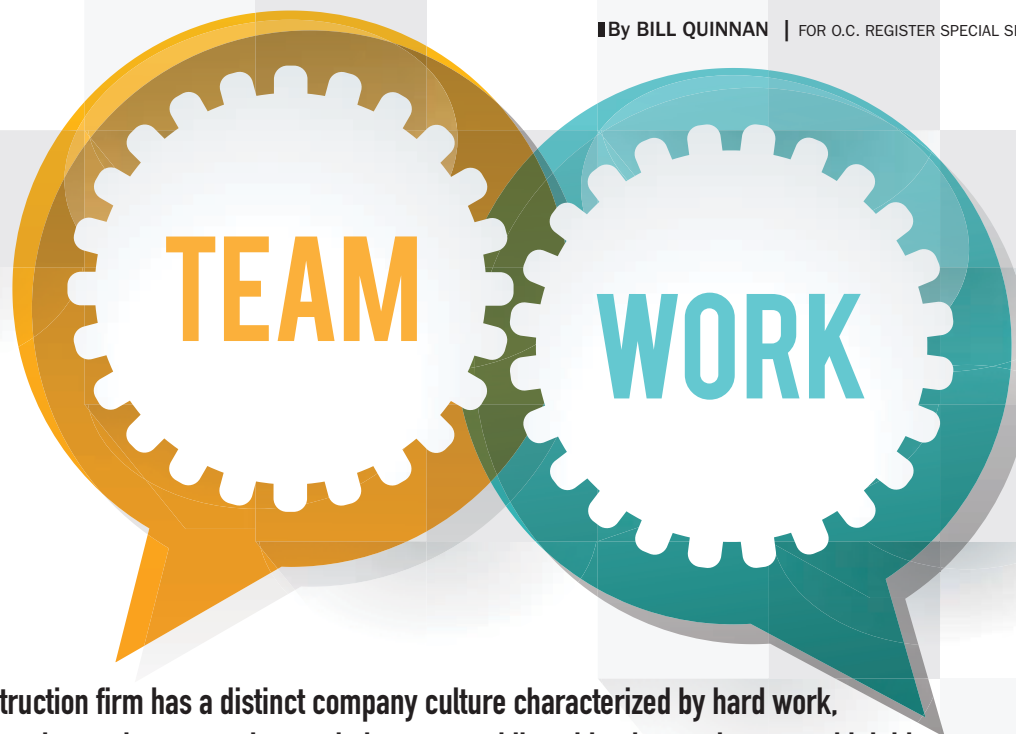
RICHARD GREEN was hired as a partner in immigration practice at **CAROTHERS DISANTE & FREUDENBERGER LLP**, an Irvine law firm. He will serve as chair of the immigration practice group helping to guide California employers through immigration matters. Green previously worked in private practice in Huntington Beach.



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- THIS WEEK'S FEATURED EMPLOYER -

By BILL QUINNAN | FOR O.C. REGISTER SPECIAL SECTIONS



Construction firm has a distinct company culture characterized by hard work, challenging projects, teaming, and ping pong, while asking its employees to think big, inspire others, and always work toward continuous improvement.

Driver SPG in Anaheim, an affiliate of construction firm C.W. Driver, was named among the Orange County Register's Top Workplaces for the second time in 2013. Among the qualities making the firm an ideal place to work are an approachable and involved executive team, a fun and collaborative work environment in which employees support each other personally and professionally, according to marketing coordinator Ethan Strong.

Also contributing to the positive work environment are a focus on work/life balance, competitive compensation, and advancement opportunities.

"The Driver SPG leadership has put together a team that genuinely enjoys working and being together," Strong said. "Each employee is known and valued within the company and is given opportunities for

their skill sets, personality and passions to impact the direction of the company."

Strong noted that the Driver SPG leadership team, headed by President Karl Kreutziger, listens to employees and responds effectively, ensuring that employee are satisfied with their experience in the firm and have the necessary resources and support to meet their personal and professional goals.

"No matter how busy work gets, the Driver SPG leaders are always making sure that everyone is taken care of, feels supported and has time to blow off steam when it's necessary," Strong said.

The positive work environment at Driver SPG is also a byproduct of the time employees spend together outside of work. Employees regularly participate in potlucks, ping-pong tournaments, camping trips and weekend outings, frequently including family members in company events.

Leaders support employee

growth and development by opportunities and by regularly taking advantage of teachable moments, Strong explained.

"The Driver SPG leadership always look for opportunities to teach employees when things don't go as planned. They take an optimistic approach so the whole team can learn and improve together."

The C.W. Driver Companies offers employees the opportunity to participate in DRIVE, a 12-month leadership-development program. Topics addressed in the program include situational leadership, project management, strategic planning and negotiation skills.

Driver SPG also offers the Driver Launch Program, a fast-paced mentorship and training program designed to teach new employees about the three primary functions of commercial building: estimating, field operations and project management. Participants in the

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COMPANY
STATS

Driver **SPG**
SPECIAL PROJECTS GROUP

- Industry: Construction
- Employees in region: 42
- Headquarters: Anaheim
- Founded: 2011
- Web site: driverspg.com

AWARDS:

- Top Workplace – Orange County Register, 2012, 2013
- Top Tenant Improvement Contractors – Orange County Business Journal, 2014
- Best Places to Work – Orange County Business Journal, 2013

WHAT DO EMPLOYEES SAY
ABOUT THE COMPANY:

"The people and the culture. We are a group of like-minded individuals who sincerely care about each other and want only the best for each other, on a personal and professional level.

The people I work with share the passion I have for the industry and they encourage me to pursue opportunities I feel strongly about.

We have very strong leadership and very positive people.

We give back to the community a lot, and do volunteer work.

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program spend six months in Driver SPG's estimating department working one-on-one with a senior estimator before transitioning to six months in the field with one a superintendent, followed by six months in a field office working directly with a project manager.

Driver SPG's benefits package includes tuition reimbursement for employees, and the company pays for employees to earn additional certifications pertaining to their field.

According to Strong, the most important quality for employees to succeed at Driver SPG is fitting into the organization's culture.

"We look for individuals who like to work with others and be a part of a team, have a heart for giving back to the community, and a work-hard, play-hard mentality," he said.

Annual company traditions include a Santa Party, to which employees bring their children for an evening of cookie-decorating, craft-making and visiting with Santa Claus. Every July 3, the firm invites employees to bring children and pets to a "Kid-dependance Day" luncheon, after which employees are allowed to leave early for the Fourth of July holiday.

Driver SPG currently has projects underway at the Discovery Cube Orange County in Santa Ana, the Mark IV MacArthur Offices in Newport Beach, and Premier Chevrolet Dealership in Buena Park. Its 43,000-square-foot expansion of the Discovery Cube, doubling the museum's annual capacity, will include new exhibit space, an Education Wing, a Showcase Theater and a Natural Resources Pavilion.

While Driver SPG has always made it a priority to give back to the local community through donation drives, volunteer events, and sponsorships, the firm has looked for opportunities to do even more over the last two years by partnering with specific non-profit organizations in Orange County.

Recently, Driver SPG teamed up with the ALS Association of Orange County to renovate four homes in Orange County for people currently living with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. As a result of the disease, patients are restricted to a wheel chair and often require extra equipment such as medical beds, lifts, temporary ramps and other equipment that must be installed in their homes.

Its first renovation benefitted a Navy Veteran with ALS whose mobility restrictions have confined him to the use of a powered wheelchair and prevented him from accessing any of the bedrooms in the home he shares with his wife in Brea. In a 10-day project requiring 30 volunteers and more than 250 hours of labor, Driver SPG completed a renovation valued at more than \$19,000.

The firm has also completed a renovation for Veteran's First Orange County – a local non-profit organization serving homeless and at-risk veterans – and is nearing completion of two additional renovations for families in Orange County. Driver SPG will also be teaming up with Veteran's First at its annual Subcontractor Appreciation event at the end of August to raise funds for additional renovations.

The firm is participating Canstruction Orange County, an annual event held by the Orange County Food Bank Event, at which teams design and build elaborate structures out of canned food. The structures are then displayed at South Coast Plaza for a month and judged on overall design, best meal, and people's choice. Once the exhibit ends, all canned food items are donated to the Orange County Food Bank.

In September, Driver SPG will be hosting the second annual Dave Anderson Memorial Golf Tournament at Anaheim Hills Golf Club. A colleague in the construction industry and good friend of Kreutziger's, Dave Anderson passed away in 2012 after a long battle with lung cancer. Driver SPG decided to host a golf tournament to raise money to be put toward education costs for Anderson's four children. Last year's tournament raised more than \$25,000 for the family.

In March, Commercial Real Estate Women-Orange County recognized Kreutziger with a SPIRE Award for Superior Performance in Philanthropy for his own and the firm's community service.

So far in 2014, Driver SPG team members have volunteered more than 600 hours, and the firm has raised more than \$30,000 in donations for local non-profit organizations.

Bill Quinnan is a freelance writer who lives in Orange County. Readers can send e-mail to him at bquinnan@sbcglobal.net. Bill cannot provide job leads.