

## **EPISODE: #14 Hosting Chip Balk, CoreCo USA**

### **Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Greetings, and welcome to the 14th installment of our podcast series the workforce lens, brought to you by Tarrant County College in North Texas. I am Shannon Bryan, Executive Vice President for Corporate Solutions and economic development. And I will be your host moderating strategic conversations with employers, and economic developers on all things related to preparing and growing the workforce today in the future. I would like everyone to help me welcome our guest today. Mr. Chip Bock, president of CoreCo USA, headquartered here in Fort Worth, Texas. Welcome, Chip. And thank you for being here today.

### **Chip Balk:**

Thank you for the invite, and I look forward to this podcast.

### **Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Yes, we have been spending some time together here lately. And so, no pun intended. But let's drill down to the topic and start talking a little bit about CoreCo. Chip, if you could tell us a little bit about CoreCo. What's the history, the mission, the values of the organization? What are you all about?

### **Chip Balk:**

Sure, well, let's start with where a geotechnical environmental drilling company, as you said, headquartered in Fort Worth CoreCo, as a name has been around for about two years. But the roots and foundation go back about 20 years through different joint ventures and mergers and name changes. While the current owners have right now it's CoreCo, USA, again, founded in July of 2020. Right in Fort Worth, we talked about a geotechnical environmental drilling company. That's what we do primarily. And I'm sure we'll drill down further into that as this goes along. And you asked about the values have been a lot of companies that really get way deep into the mission statements and values, we've tried to keep it really, really simple. We just believe in loyalty through professionalism, integrity, and quality. And that's both for our customers and our employees. That's what we really strive to do. And I'm not really original, our values are kind of stole from the West Point. And we just don't lie, cheat or steal, which I think I just violated, maybe we just don't lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do. So, we just try to keep everything with integrity and quality. That's really what we worked to strive for.

### **Shannon Bryan (Host):**

There. We got very good. So Chip, how long have you been president of CoreCo and tell us a little bit about your path to taking leadership there.

### **Chip Balk:**

So, I've been the president of CoreCo, since its inception, and before that, it was a company called East green logic that had really two different divisions to it. And my partner and I took the drilling division, which is now core CO, we spun that off to make it a standalone company. So, it's a core co came East green logic, I was the CEO of both divisions of that, and it had the

drilling division, and had what's called a due diligence. Division to that it was really headquartered in California. That does, there's a close tie between the two, but it's in commercial banking, anytime someone buys a piece of property, you've got to do due diligence on that piece of property. So, it kind of tied nicely, but we decided as a boy that it made more sense to split those in 2020. So, CoreCo before that a V screen split off prison of CoreCo since July of 2020.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Okay, very good. So, let's talk a little bit about geotechnical and environmental drilling. What is it? Exactly,

**Chip Balk:**

Many people know, as I didn't a few years ago either. So, we like to say nothing is built in this country or the world without a geotechnical or environmental drilling being done. And a lot of people just don't quite know that. But as you look around the highway construction in Texas, any buildings and either infrastructure, a geotechnical drilling has to be done, what that means my crews will go out and drill down anywhere from about 20 feet to about 150 feet at different intervals and pull up a rock or soil sample so they know what the integrity is under the ground. Those samples are given to an environmental geotechnical lab, when they do all the testing to understand how best to build on that piece of property. As you can imagine, there's a big difference between building a residential house and a windmill, it takes a different foundation. So, we provide those samples to the labs who then write a report, then give it to the construction engineers who will then decide how best to build whatever it may be.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Is your industry focused specifically on commercial infrastructure or government infrastructure? Or is it also focused in residential? Can you explain that to us a little bit more?

**Chip Balk:**

The answer is yes. Yes. And yes. We drill in front of residential houses, we've got several customers, all they do is build housing developments. So, we drill in front of those will drill in front of any commercial that's out there, whether it be dams, bridges, highways, TxDOT commercial buildings warehouses, there's several, several anything's being built with Drew in front of the government plays a big part because infrastructure, right TxDOT certain buildings, it's all infrastructure based. So, anything being built, it just depends on the type of samples they want and the depths they want to go. So, anything being built?

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

So, can you explain to us a little bit so we have a better understanding? Why is this type of drilling important? What happens if we don't do this?

**Chip Balk:**

Well, we like to say we're building civilizations, one hole at a time, that's kind of our little motto, or catchphrase. If these drillings aren't done, then first off, the engineers aren't going to know

how to build, they're not gonna know how to safely build. That's why we really push the integrity and the quality of our samples, our work, because everything starts there with that, as I call it, effectually, a box of rocks that we give the labs. So, if that's not done, or it's not done with quality, integrity, then we're going to have a problem with that structure at some point down the road. And we see it all the time, we some of our drillings aren't for new construction, some of them are for structures that are failing or having issues, and will be called out by the engineers and the labs to go do drillings next to or through around the structure to find out why is this failing. And they'll be able to determine that based on their lab tests and those types of things. But if we're not drilling a hole in our thoughts, civilization stops to grow. There are no more buildings being built.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Can you give us an example of some kind of recent drill that you did, where you had to do that where something was failing, and you had to go out something that you can share with us just to kind of give us a story behind that?

**Chip Balk:**

Sure. We drill on many airports around the Dallas Fort Worth area in other places, we've been out to DFW many, many times. And they're called slope failures. A lot of times, you'll see a slope and you'll see it kind of start to slough off with the rain and stuff, you'll see those things happen. That's those nets, you see the orange nets catching dirt. And so those are called slope failures. So, there's a reason that may be happening. So, we will go out and drill at a certain airport into those failures based on how they want us to drill and give them those things so they can correct those slope failures out there. Sometimes will drill at night at DFW because they don't want to shut down a busy airport, right? So, there's night work there. And we'll be actually drilling on the tarmac to make sure things are correct. A lot of bridge failures or old bridges that need to be how do we reconstruct that particular bridge, will drill all around the foundation sometimes will go up on the bridge, cut a hole through the bridge and drill all the way right through the bridge all the way to the subsurface, to whatever the engineer needs. So, a lot more than people would realize and make stay up at night if you do all the things that we're drilling in front of. But they're being proactive to make sure those things don't fail. Right.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Absolutely. needed that for safety purpose.

**Chip Balk:**

That's right.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

So, it's core CO is it just Texas based? How many crews Do you have that are drilling teams? And do you do this work outside of Texas across the country?

**Chip Balk:**

We do it outside of we do outside of Texas primarily we're in Texas, we drill in Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arkansas, Louisiana, we have drilled in those areas when needed. But there's so much infrastructure going on. We stay primarily busy in Texas, and quite frankly, in the DFW area. We've got crews in San Antonio, we've got a couple of crews in East Dallas Tyler area. Right now, we have 12 crews and we say crews that's a rig a support truck, a driller and a helper. That's how we designate a crew. So right now, there's 12 that are spread out around the DFW East Dallas and San Antonio area.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

And is it safe to say you're one of the largest drilling companies like this in Texas,

**Chip Balk:**

We would like to say we're one of the largest for sure. And we're growing to make sure we are the largest. But yeah, we're one of the one of the larger ones. Our clients are kind of amazed when they start to talk to us when we tell them, hey, we could put 234 rigs on your project to get it done faster and quicker for you know how many you have? We have 12 When they're like wow. So yeah, we're fairly large for this industry.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

So would it be safe to say, obviously, anytime someone goes to build something that they need one of your people. So, this is really an industry that is not just across the nation. This is an international job, right?

**Chip Balk:**

Every time you need folks like you every day, nothing is being built before we hand our labs, a box rocks, which is a core sample. So, it's not supposed to be I can speak to American standards for sure. But you've got to provide that core sample so they know how to build. As I said, there's a big difference between a, you know, a ranch style house and a windmill, if you can imagine the structure that has to peer into a very, very hard rock very deep to keep that from toppling over. So, you as correct.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

So, Chip you and I visited quite a bit here lately talking about your industry. And it seems to be kind of the best kept secret, if you will, right. So, tell us a little bit. So, the audience understands, what are some of the challenges facing your industry right now?

**Chip Balk:**

Sure. And we've talked to I think you're right. I don't know if it's a secret. I just don't think anybody knows; I think we have an awareness problem. This industry is you look over all industries as a whole is fairly young. It's not that old, an industry if you look at construction, how they did things. And it grew up and I effectually say, you know, America was built on what I call Mom and Pop small business owners that start to build their business and make it in our industry, you know, two to five rigs that that would be a fairly good mom and pop. And they can only do so much, right. And maybe it was a family business that you grew up your sons, your

daughters grew up in that business, maybe your cousins or nephews' kind of knew about it. What we found when I got into this particular industry, which was really interesting was, nobody knows about it. I didn't know anything about it before I got involved in it. And therefore, nobody knows how to get into it. One of the questions I've asked and we've talked about Shannon is if you want to be a geotechnical driller, that's what you want to do first off to even know that exist. And then how do you do that? Well, I'm blessed to have some guys that have been in this industry. 40-45-30 years are spent their entire life drilling. And why ask these types of questions. If you don't know somebody in industry, or your family's not in the industry, you're not in this industry, you're just not. And so, there's a real problem of awareness of what the industry is, and then getting quality people into the industry. And so that's the biggest issue we face with this industry is how do we grow? If I don't have a driller that makes any sense to have a drilling rig, and therefore I can't drill for whatever the cause may be. So, it's all about a workforce, which is how we kind of got into our discussions.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

So, it sounds like two things is number one awareness of the industry. And number two, a serious lack of workforce, but it certainly doesn't seem like there's any lack of work, no be done. So?

**Chip Balk:**

No, I could use 20 More crews and still be busy. You the awareness, and I've done you know, we've done the basic hiring, like everybody does through different, you know, job things. And I do all the interviews, I just take it very personal, who's going to come onto our team, and always ask what do you know about geotechnical? Drilling or engineering? I will tell you the hundreds I've done none, unless you came from it. None. No one has ever known anything about you, which is amazing to me. But I didn't either.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

I'm glad you're here today. So, we can talk about it and educate some people about it. So, they know. So, your website says that you are changing the rules, the geotechnical drilling game, what does that mean?

**Chip Balk:**

So, as I said, this industry is primarily smaller companies. So, as I affectionately call mom and pops, my mom pops, you know, Bill, the skyline of Dallas, right? In this industry. And so, one of the things with my background coming from some fairly large corporate structures, and also working in smaller ones, we want to kind of elevate the one the professionalism of the industry a little bit, helped bring some of that awareness, as we've talked about, bring in some training certifications, and what does it really look like to be best in class world class driller? What's that look like? We've overlaid technology on a lot of the stuff we've done, how we communicate with our customers. It was interesting to me a couple of years ago, maybe three years when I got involved at the beginning of this. It just made sense to me when a customer would call and hey, we need XYZ drilled, that we'd provide them a quote for our services. And over and over and over, we found out we're the only company that provides a quote, the only one they just kind of

go out they do it and hope they get paid. So, we're trying to elevate a lot of the business side of it from professional. We like to say we want to have all the structures and things that a big corporation brings, but we want to keep that mom-and-pop A family feel and take care of our employees like they are family. And that's a, it's a tough balance. I've worked on both sides of that. So, we're working on it, it is,

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

The more you grow, it's difficult to, you know, have the big corporation look and feel, but also to be able to maintain the quality, the value on the customer centric approach to your clients. It's it can be done, it just takes time.

**Chip Balk:**

Is difficult and we've talked about leadership and management and those styles and coming from the military. That's part of the other way, we're changing. The three guys I talked about with all the experience, they know how to drill, they forgotten more about drilling in this industry than probably most people ever know. What I'm working with them now is leadership and mentorship, and how do you bring up the next group, and not in this dictatorial type of way that it is now? Right? And the smaller companies, typically, the owners out drilling, right, so how much time are they focused on employees and those type of things and their career and their growth and those things. So, it has to do with levels of quality leadership that are looking out at different sections and functions and the middle guy called the rural at 12, you really can't manage any more than 12 individuals or just gets lost. So, we start to build those levels and try to take care of the employees in a different way.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Absolutely, yeah, leadership was definitely key guy, I always say, and I think I said it on every podcast is, you know, people are your number one asset, and you got to take care of them. And that also makes not only a difference from the retention standpoint, but also the recruitment standpoint. And that sounds like something for this industry specifically right now that is really needed. So?

**Chip Balk:**

It's huge. and you're right, and I was blessed. I worked for Stryker for many years inside, and they really preached employee engagement and in Gallup and the data is very clear that engaged employees help every bit of your business, from your bottom line to retention to recruitment, everything across the board. If your employees aren't engaged, your business is going to struggle, because they're your most important asset. Absolutely.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Absolutely. So Chip, the future of geotechnical drilling. Tell us a little bit about what you think that looks like not only from a workforce standpoint, and what we can do about that, but you also mentioned, you know, technology, innovation, what does that look like as far as how it's going to impact your industry moving forward?

**Chip Balk:**

Yeah, well, we can go way into the future we'll start with, I've been very honest, it's kind of bleak and scary. It's bleak and scary. The difficulty is I'm a member of many Facebook geotechnical drilling sites. And there's not a company a drilling company across United States that isn't just begging for drillers people that can drill quality drillers, there's, I couldn't even put a number of the shortage. The other part that's really, really scary, as I said, the guys I have Dan and Dave and Ryan and Benny who have been in this industry, their entire professional career. It's a little bit more of a young man's game. It just is it's not super easy work by any means. And so, these guys are reaching that 60-65 mark, and that's across the industry. They're kind of aging out, which is blessing for me. I mean, a lot of them are still out there, you know, drilling holes and fighting this pretty hard. That's where I bring them in and install it on the leadership and I need to get I tell them all the time, 45 years in the business, the core varme engineer has him on speed dial, he knows everything. I told him they want to go down; I'm not paying you from the neck down. I'm not interested in that. It's a neck up. It's what you have in your in your brain that I need to keep and preserve for this industry. And that's why I'm so passionate about this. And the Benny's and those guys, we've got to get that information, that knowledge that's truly in their brains into a structured formal training type of deal. And there's none right? So, there's a massive shortage. There is no real formalized training certification at all like you'd see for other type things, whether it's plumbing, welding, truck driving, there is none. And I don't see a path forward unless I start to partner with people as yourself.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

to kind of say, sounds like you need to be talking to a community college.

**Chip Balk:**

I think I have, like I presented but it's a little bleak and scary. If we don't replace these drillers you We haven't developed a robot that can do it. And there's some thoughts on data because I know Dan is drilled in some of the same vicinities 100 million times. But there are shifts. So I'm not sure dad is ever going to replace, actually seeing what's under there, Dan says, reasonably drills that no one's down there. And so even though there's a data collection play, we're years away from that. And so we've got to crack the nut of how do we produce drillers, which is where I really started from a training and background. And that's where we started and then talk to you.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

There you go. Very good. So a couple of questions for you. What industry association or is there an industry association for this? For this type of work that you do specifically and core sample drilling?

**Chip Balk:**

There's really two main ones were regulated by whatever water well, licensing board there is a Texas water well licensing board, the Oklahoma Water well license board and to be able to drill and each state's a little different. You have to have someone or your company licensed with a waterfall license, okay? Which is fine, right? There's not a geotechnical license, there's a water

well, I'm not a water world, really. But that's who governs us. So, you have to have that license. So that's the biggest regulate, but nutshell, you just have to have one driller, it hasn't been air belt drills underneath him as an apprentice. So that's one. And then the professional organization is the NDAA, or the National drillers Association. They're the began the professional organization, they've got chapters, pretty much in every state, every cutting is our president of the Lone Star chapter, who shares my same vision in view of how do we grow this? How do we protect this industry? And he's really pushing and it's why we're partnering with Indiana, to bring awareness to it, how do we save it? How do we train it? How do we certify it? How do we bring that professional standard to this industry? And so, he's doing some great work, at least in Texas for sure.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Yeah. And that's the gentleman I met the other day. Correct. So, but national drilling Association, it's not just the geotechnical and environmental, it's also water and oil and gas as well.

**Chip Balk:**

Can be but primarily it's us. It's geotechnical. Okay. Yep.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Great. So tell us a little bit about the career opportunities in this industry. I want for those who are listening to this, which includes a lot of our students here at Tarrant County College. If someone had an interest in getting into this industry, tell us a little bit about what are the career opportunities,

**Chip Balk:**

I can certainly speak to Corcos career opportunities, other drilling companies, I think there's similar to the most part, but I don't think it's quite as structured as our career path. Everybody interviews in front of me, I tell him, McDonald's gives you a job. I don't give jobs, I give careers, and I want somebody to come stays and have a career big difference. It's a big difference. And if people have to understand that there's a big, big difference between a job and a career. So, if you just come in off the streets, no experience whatsoever, the way we've structured, so if I want to say I'm gonna have a graph, gotta have some structure, right? There's got to be a career path. There's got to be a way to get there's got to be steps on how to make the next rung. Right. So, you start out as a helper, okay, and you'll be with us, you'll get a 30-60-90 review, make sure you're doing all the right things, which is mainly Are you showing up to work? Are you good team player, you've got that work ethic, you're doing those things? And then within about six months, you've kind of figured out what helpers do which is basically help or assist the driller in the drilling activities day to day, they'll move we'll promote them to a driller's assistant, we just expect them to know a little bit more understand the nomenclature drills and this and that and all that kind of stuff. Then, probably within another six months to a year, depending every person moves a little bit differently in different speeds will look to put you in what we call a DIT or a driller and training, fairly informal, fairly, or Genic kind of structure we put together to help fill this gap of how do we train people. And they'll become a driller and training



under one of our senior guys to learn how to manage rig how to drill and they'll start in what we call the oil rig or these residential 20-40 foot auguring pretty simple. I think I could maybe do that now after three years of watching this enough, and they'll become a driller, and when you become a driller with us, you moved to salary, you move directly to salary, and that's somewhere between 55 and \$65,000 a year. That's what you'll make. Then there's an art form that comes in core drilling kind of the next level Going down, you know, from 50 to 150 foot bringing out the nice core samples quality core samples, is what Dan will tell me is an art form. It's a feel of the different formations and different rocks and different issues you run into. It's an art form that takes some time to develop that as much time as Dan will tell you because he learned OJT, right. So, once they've got that, and we feel good, we'll start moving them into what be called a senior driller. Senior drill is some of the requirements, you've had to run an auger rig for probably at least a year, you've got to have your CDL Class B, which is required. You've shown you've got good above ground skills, dealing with the customer dealing with issues and you've got good leadership and mentorship for your help. You've kind of probably raised one up if so, we'd like to say, and then the move to the senior driller once we think they're ready to take on a corps Regan do that. And that jumps from about 65 up to about 85 it, maybe even \$90,000, depending on the skill set and what you can or can't do. And there's different levels of corn, which I would butcher and Dan would laugh at me if I tried to talk about all of them. And then the next one is really what we call a chief driller and a chief driller really, the big mark is getting your waterwall license, which is not easy at all. Which is another opportunity I want to chat with you about as we've talked about CDLs we became a CDL school because of necessity you do the classmate correctly do a class B CDL. Anybody in the public once we open completely but internally, I needed CDL so I'm just an old army guy and so we just got to make them we got to train them we got to make it happen. So, we did that the water was the next mark on the pole for me. And as I look around, there is no training. There is no anything. If the stats are right that we heard 2020 100 No 200 drillers set for that test. You and me past five, yeah,

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

It's really low. I worked with a group of individuals in a prior state before coming here in the past, right for that it's not the best.

**Chip Balk:**

It's unbelievable. I mean, sweat scares me about that. It tells me then that somebody's got a waterwheel license, there's 195 drillers drilling underneath them that can't pass a test. So, do they really know what they're doing?

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Or are they just not having the proper training to pass it.

**Chip Balk:**

or they just Oh, JT. I've got a gentleman who's probably set more water wells than my 40 By my company. He's just never passed the test. And so, we thought, we're going to see how it goes. And he took it yesterday, as a matter of fact, and failed it and failed it. And we tried, but there's

no real training. And a lot of it was Believe or not, and again, my wife words have meaning it's vocabulary. Day, we'll call it this Daniel call it this Margarita might call this, but the test has a nomenclature, a word that is precise and professional. And they may not know what that is. And so, there's no standardization. That's kind of where I want to raise.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Sounds like, that sounds like that's what they're trying to do with a waterwall license. But there's not enough exam preparatory around it to make sure that everyone's trained appropriately to get there. So, trying to set the standards to make it the gold standard. It sounds like what the attempt is, but we've got to filter that down to individual so they know what path they have to take to get there.

**Chip Balk:**

Absolutely, Absolutely. No, it's really, here's a manual from 1802, or wherever this thing came from was about this thick. Study. That's not education. That's not training. That's not certification. That's good luck. Yeah, that's good luck.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

All right. Well, we'll have to talk about that.

**Chip Balk:**

Yes, it's a big, it's a big opportunity.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

There you go. So, tell us a little bit Chip about if you are going to hire someone from Cork or for CoreCo to start out? What kind of education and skill sets are you looking for, to even bring in an entry level person to your organization?

**Chip Balk:**

So, because it's outdoor work? You don't? We don't really look for an education level. Believe it or not, we really don't I've got guys that have dropped out of high school. I've got guys that have their GED. I've got guys I've got a little bit of college. I've got guys that have a past. I'm okay with that. I really believe everybody future starts today and moves forward. The past is the past I'm not concerned what you did. That's kind of the lie, cheat steal. Those are crimes of the heart for me and I can't fix those. That's something your parents or somebody should have fixed a long time ago. So, your education all that is a little bit irrelevant for baseline for like a helper right. I look for where work ethic, attendance, the basic things that you would think is pretty common sense out there. Do you show up to work? Do you get a good track record? And one of the questions I always ask first, why are you sitting in front of me? Why are you here? Why are you here? And almost the number one answers are looking for a career. They've hit these jobs, right? Where they're being whatever industry and it caps out. It's done. So, they're looking for a career, they've been told a lot of things. So, for me, it's work ethic, are you going to be able to do the work outside in the elements? Can you lift augers? Can you do those things? So, it's a

physically manual job? And are you just someone I would want to work with every day behind the rig? It's really that for me, at a baseline,

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

So, it's really the essential skills one would think so but then they need to be trained on the technical skills is where we come in.

**Chip Balk:**

Yep, absolutely.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Okay. So I know we've talked a little bit about it, but you have formed something called organically I think the school of rocks let's talk about the school rocks.

**Chip Bock:**

As you can tell, I got my rocks, rocks, little rocks and seems to stick with my guys to understand a little bit better. The school rocks so we were like every other company we had a hard time finding quality drillers, right or drillers that could actually drill so I asked around how do we get them? How do we find where they come from? As we've talked, I traveled to Mississippi the only drilling school in the country. They do water wells. I don't do geotechnical. So, no help. They're talking to Dan Oh, it takes you 15-20 years to make a driller. I'm like well can't do that. The other way you get them is your money weapon. I don't I don't want people that I money whip to my company because it is amusing. Be money whipped out the chemists know what I'm looking for. Right? So, I thought well, they're not you know, not being born. They're not being trained anywhere. And I don't want to money whip them. I got to make them. I got to train them. So, the catch word came out school of rocks just came out one day. I don't even know how but it did. You're taking me back to Fred and Barney in the Flintstones. Yeah, exactly. And Jack Bloch is my spokesman for me. We have a lot of fun with that. But I started with a very simple question to Dan and Dave, I go exactly what you asked me if somebody said their drill and they walk through the door, what would a best-in-class driller look like that we'd hire and pay him, you know, \$60,000-\$80,000 to go run a rig and a crew and manage our customers. What would that look like? As we went down this, here's all the certifications with OSHA, AED Bloodborne, all of those type of regulatory things, class B CDL. And then swore that was easy. That's easy training, then it became the art form, we can teach some mechanical, how to pull sticks and all that great stuff. Then it became this art form. The art form of drilling, when you're in this type of formation, or this type of dance are gone take 20 years for everybody to get that and I'm like, I haven't got 20 years. I'm not a spring chicken anymore. I can't wait that long. And it hit me in please. Educational people don't dig me on the words. I said, why can't we do labs? That's how doctors learn how to do things. They can average the stuff I did in high school, it's worms and frogs. How do we do labs? Because I have 12 Labs going on every single day all across Texas. In every formation, you can think of what if one of these students set with a Dan or Dave and learn how to drill in that formation over and over and over for over a week or two, they would develop a sense of how to manage that formation. Then the next one, so I enlisted you know one of my employees whose next drill sergeants who understands training a little bit and then

manage some things. And my, my, my significant other who's been in the educational world for many, many, well, a few years. I'm gone back up on that a little bit. Um, to help me develop kind of a curriculum, or a program of instruction of what a school of rocks would look like with a CDL and waterwall license, and just how do we create this? And so, the school rocks were kind of formed. And I don't know if was formed, but it was put on paper of this is what it would look like if we had to do this. And I went, can I get some professionals help? And here we are, there we go.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Trying to put some professionalism around some guiding standards.

**Chip Balk:**

Absolutely. Absolutely. So that's where the school rocks came from was how do we, how do we train and certify people as drillers? How can you do that? I believe it can be done about six months. That's what I believe Dan thinks I'm crazy. And that's okay. I know it's not 20 years, but it may be longer, but I really do correctly. You could probably knock this out in six months to have a very competent driller. It's not a dance vous driller, I understand that. But someone I think that has enough experience and skill sets labs done correctly. About six months, someone could be out making \$60,000 to \$80,000. I truly believe that.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

That is definitely a living wage that could change his trajectory of someone's life and their families for so many years to come. 100% with a good career. So, we'll tip you and I will definitely continue conversations down that path. For purposes of today, though, if someone is listening today, and they want to learn more about your industry, they want to learn more about CoreCo. Can you give us some information for a website contact information? Where do they go?

**Chip Balk:**

Certainly, can go on our website at [www.cocousa.com](http://www.cocousa.com). And all the contact information is there. You can call anybody hit that number and punch in the numbers and say you're interested certainly can stop by we're at 2200, South Riverside and Fort Worth. And you'll see Miss Karen, she runs a place I do not this Make no mistake about that. But she'll set you have an application and all those things. And we'll get you started there. But you can certainly stop by and we'd love to meet you. Absolutely.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

That's great. Anything else that you would like to tell us parting words today, pertaining to your company, the drilling world, anything that you might like to a message you might want to deliver to our young folks who are listening?

**Chip Balk:**

The Wow, that's a big one to swallow? No, I just I appreciate your partnership and the discussions we've had the awareness that I think has to come the importance of this industry,

the ability to create a just a super Creek career for you and your family. Doesn't matter what you've done in the past, you start today to build a career that, again, I've got guys that have passed that are making 70-80-\$90,000. And we're changing a person and a family. And if we don't do that one person at a time, or we're going to really change society. So, I'm really passionate about that side of it is producing careers for people who walk into companies and get said no, because you don't have a college education. You don't have this. I just don't believe in that. So, I don't care what you did yesterday. Come see me today.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

I love it was great words to leave on. Chip. Thank you so much. I really appreciate you being here today. Thank you so much. If you're all listening, please go visit Chips website, reach out to his organization and we at TCC will continue conversations with you and your industry. So, thank you so much and for our listening audience. Thank you again and we will look forward to seeing you on the next episode of the workforce lens. Thank you.