

WHY YOU MUST TAKE A HOLISTIC APPROACH IN TODAY'S TIGHT LABOR MARKET

COMMERCIAL Construction & Renovation

Issue 2, 2024 • www.ccr-mag.com

Big Apple Strong

Inside SOCOTEC's LEED CI v4
Platinum Certified US headquarters

Montroy DeMarco Architecture
Project Manager Sarah A. Bigos;
SOCOTEC Senior Principal John
Amatruda, RA, LEED Fellow,
BREEAM International Assessor; and
Montroy DeMarco Architecture Job
Captain Thomas Yeh, Associate AIA
and Principal Daniel Montroy, RA, AIA

Also inside:

Exclusive Inside:

OOR's Leah Almog Arazi
on Building Partnerships

Meet BDB's Construction
Enterprise's Tallal Bhutta

Our Annual Fixture Firms Survey



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approach in tight labor market



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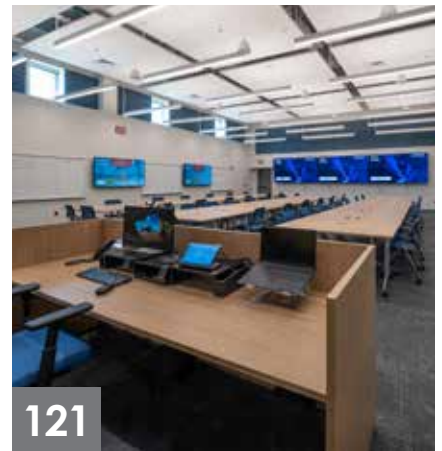


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NATIONAL SIGN PROGRAMS

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AI anyone? Anyone?

What's a conversation these days without AI (artificial intelligence for those of you who, I don't know, don't get out much). AI is the game-changing, earth-shaking, industry-transforming, time-saving, efficiency-increasing, cost-reducing consistency-improving data-rich technology platform the industry (world) has craved.

And if you are afraid of it, shame on you. Too strong? Well, let's roll out the facts here. As the commercial construction industry enters the next generation (one, I might add, is severely lacking skilled laborers to fill the holes), who doesn't need a little help?

Bet you didn't know that AI isn't even a new concept. Okay, who Googled? The history of AI can be traced back to the 1950s when computer gamer and burgeoning AI aficionado Arthur Samuel

proclaimed it was "the field of study that gives computers the ability to learn without explicitly being programmed."

Translation: The concept of AI is one that involves computers and systems that learn from experience, i.e., make machines do things the rest of us are doing, but better and faster.

Today, as the world finally starts to catch up to the vision that pioneers like Samuels had, the sky's the limit—and then some. Our industry is filled with the power

and promise of what AI can do, including pre-design (conceptual design, initial project planning, project development, etc.); design development (detailed design documents for architectural, electrical mechanical, electrical plans, etc.); construction documents (building product specifications, schedules, etc.); bidding and negotiation (help streamline processes, automate repetitive tasks, etc.); and permitting and approvals (help validate building code compliance and manage the building permit process, etc.).

Did you notice all of the etc.s there? That goes back to the "sky's the limit" factor. You know, in areas like predictive maintenance, site safety, robotics, project management, quality control and building performance.

Now, close your eyes and imagine where AI can take us next. How it can play an even more prominent role in every aspect of the construction process. As we push forward, we will continue to provide stories about the many projects the readers of our magazine are involved with—the ones that are helping change the face of today's building landscape.

In the midst of these stories will continue to be stories about how to get the job done bigger, better and faster.

That includes you—and AI.



Michael J. Pallerino is the editor of *Commercial Construction & Renovation*. You can reach him at 678.513.2397 or via email at mikep@ccr-mag.com.

We want to hear from you

At *Commercial Construction & Renovation*, we're always looking to showcase the best of what our industry is doing. If you have a project profile or a fresh perspective on how to keep our industry positively moving forward, shoot me an email at mikep@ccr-mag.com. We'd love to take a look.



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Around the Industry



RETAIL

Nike

Nike has opened its first Rise store in the US at Miami's Aventura Mall, after debuting the new format in London and Seoul, South Korea. The retailer expects to roll out in more US markets, which will feature a digital storytelling platform called Sport Pulse, a dedicated space for consumers to design their own products and a variety of online-to-offline services.

Rothy's

Footwear retailer Rothys plans to open 10 or more brick-and-mortar stores next year in Florida, Texas and the Northeast, after having opened four locations this year, and has begun shipping to 16 countries. The retailer plans to enter the Asian and Latin American markets soon and will be tapping into wholesale partnerships to diversify its offerings.

Walmart

Walmart has invested more than \$500 million in 117 store remodels across 30 states as part of a two-year, \$9 billion makeover initiative covering 1,400 stores. The upgraded locations feature more space for online pickup and delivery orders, more shopping carts and checkout lanes, expanded pharmacies, a Mother's Room for nursing, Dollar Shop sections showcasing seasonal products, a wider grab-and-go assortment and interactive displays.

GNC

GNC has opened an apothecary style flagship near its headquarters in Pittsburgh with an open floor plan, center islands and moveable shelves, changes that are part of a new design the supplement and wellness retailer plans to replicate in other big cities. A revamped point-of-sale system will allow sales associates to sell outside the store at local community events.

Valentino

Milan-based designer brand Valentino is opening a three-story, 12,333-square-foot boutique on New York City's Madison Avenue, combining the brand's new global retail concept with the flavor of Manhattan. The store is partnering with the Magazzino Italian Art museum in New York to display works by Italian artists, starting with five large paintings by Mario Schifano.

Express

WHP Global has inked licensing agreements with multiple partners to bring Express to markets in Indonesia, Paraguay, Mexico and Central America. WHP plans to open flagships and ecommerce channels next year in those markets, as well as shop-in-shop offerings in Mexico and Indonesia.

Maiden Home

Online furniture store Maiden Home is looking to expand design services and brand awareness through its first physical location, a 4,100-square-foot flagship in New York City's Meatpacking District. A brick-and-mortar presence will position the high-end direct-to-consumer brand for long-term growth.

H&M

H&M is reportedly evaluating plans to open small-format stores in the UK and Ireland. Downsizing new spaces from more than 20,000 square feet to about 8,000 square feet could mean a return of the brand to communities and towns it exited when the pandemic began.

Macy's

Macy's plans to open as many as 30 small-format off-mall stores in 2024 and 2025 after almost four years of testing, bringing the total to more than 40 locations. Toys, beauty products and career fashions sell well in the stores, which are about a fifth the size of traditional Macy's stores.

Dr. Martens

UK footwear brand Dr. Martens will open a store on London's Oxford Street next month, joining about 320 company-owned and franchise locations worldwide. The iconic brand expressed confidence that the shopping district is on the upswing after hitting hard times due to the pandemic.

HOSPITALITY

Hyatt Hotels Corp.

Hyatt Hotels Corp. has introduced the Wellbeing Collective, a group of more than 30 hotels around the world that support guests' personal wellness journeys. Examples include the Legend of the Lasso experience at Texas' Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort and Spa, where guests learn lasso skills from professional ropers, fire-building activities at Miraval Berkshires Resort and Spa in Massachusetts and the outrigger canoe experience at Hawaii's Andaz Maui at Wailea Resort.



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CIRCLE NO. 9

Around the Industry



Tommy Bahama

A 215-room property in Indian Wells, Calif., has partnered with apparel company Tommy Bahama to open the Tommy Bahama Miramonte Resort & Spa, with the brand considering future resorts in locations such as Wailea, Hawaii; Scottsdale, Arizona; and Boca Raton or Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Avenue Hotel & Residences

Construction is poised to begin on the eight-story Avenue Hotel & Residences in Coral Gables, Florida, with the project from Roger Development Group slated for completion in the first quarter of 2025. The developer secured a \$25 million construction loan from Inmocup 2 LLC for the new venue, which will include a hotel, 48 residential condos, a family dining area and a pool deck.

Preferred Hotels & Resorts

Preferred Hotels & Resorts has added 15 hotels in countries such as Italy, India, Brazil, Mexico and the US. Six of the properties are brand-new openings, including the 142-room Artyzen Singapore and the 141-room Global Ambassador in Phoenix.

Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, Autograph Collection

Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, Autograph Collection in Hawaii plans to undergo a \$180 million revamp that includes construction of a new spa and fitness center, as well as remodeling of restaurants and 252 guestrooms and suites. The project is set to start in the second quarter of 2024 and will be finished in early 2025.

Trility Guesthouse

Trility Guesthouse, a \$75 million hotel in Fayetteville, Georgia, debuted with a movie theme inspired by nearby Trilith Studios. Part of Marriott International's Tribute Portfolio brand, the full-service property has 193 guestrooms, including 36 extended-stay suites and four private apartments, and has meeting spaces with names such as "Stage Left," "Stage Right" and "Center Stage."

Hotel San Carlos

An \$80 million renovation will begin at the Hotel San Carlos in Phoenix, with planned upgrades to include the addition of 13 guestrooms, the reopening of the palm room and tea court, 5,000 square feet of new meeting space and a new lobby bar, restaurant and speakeasy. The work is expected to be completed by early 2025.

Raffles

Raffles Boston, a mixed-use development with 147 hotel rooms and 145 residential units, has made its debut, featuring amenities such as an indoor pool, Guerlain Spa, two restaurants, a lounge and a fitness center. The property is the first North American location for the Raffles Hotels & Resorts brand.

Rosewood Hotels and Resorts

Rosewood Hotels and Resorts has launched 14 Rosewood Residences in or near a hotel or resort since launching a residential component in 2008, with 11 residences currently under development. The company also is developing standalone branded residences in markets that might not be the right fit for a hotel, particularly honing in on areas in Asia, North America and South America that have a need for luxury accommodations.

Courtyard by Marriott

Plans are progressing for a Courtyard by Marriott hotel near Norfolk International Airport in Virginia that would include 168 guestrooms and a rooftop bar. Negotiations will soon be underway with ORF Hospitality Partners to develop, manage and operate the hotel, which may be under construction by next summer.

RESTAURANTS

Fogo de Chao

Brazilian steakhouse chain Fogo de Chao is revving up growth efforts with plans to grow from its current 77 global locations to 100 units with \$1 billion in annual revenue by 2028.

Wagamama

Japanese-inspired restaurant chain Wagamama will expand into its fourth US market with the opening next month of its first unit in Tampa, Fla. The chain, which began in London, has six US units in Atlanta, Boston and New York City.

Chick-fil-A

Chick-fil-A plans to open five restaurants in two years in the UK, with five international markets open by 2030. The brand is targeting five stores in the market in the first two years and plans to invest over \$100 million to expand there within the next 10 years.

Portillo's

The Atlanta, Denver and Las Vegas markets are next in line as Illinois-based hot dog and Italian beef chain Portillo's works toward its goal of growing from about 80 US units to 920. The chain plans to reduce buildout costs by making future locations more compact and simplify the drive-thru and delivery driver pickup processes.

Chipotle Mexican Grill

Chipotle Mexican Grill has teamed with tech provider Hyphen to start testing an automated production line that the company says can assemble as many as 180 bowls an hour. The Makeline from Hyphen, which last year received an investment from Chipotle's venture fund, is designed to help the chain improve both speed and accuracy of digital orders.

Starbucks

Starbucks has certified 3,508 units under its Greener Stores sustainability program and set a goal of expanding the certification to 10,000 locations by 2025. The coffee giant partnered with the World Wildlife Fund to create the certification program, which focuses on areas including energy efficiency, waste reduction and water conservation.

Pepper Lunch

Asia-based fast-casual hot plate concept Pepper Lunch is in growth mode in the US and Canada after forming franchise

company Hot Palette America. Pepper Lunch sees the potential to grow from its current five US units to about 600 nationwide, with a menu that's accessible, customizable and easy for Americans to understand and embrace.

KAO Bar & Grill

Multi-brand operator KAO Group plans to open a new eatery called KAO Bar & Grill that will be made from repurposed shipping containers. The 5,000-square-foot restaurant in Hallandale Beach, Florida is slated to open in the coming weeks and will include an outdoor patio with a 14-seat bar.

Krystal

Krystal will open a new prototype in Center Point, Alabama, which does not include a dining room. At 1,700 square feet, the company-owned restaurant also features a smaller kitchen that uses 20% less space, a double-lane drive-thru, a walk-up window and a pickup area for online guests and third-party delivery drivers.

Taco Bell's Cantina

Taco Bell took over a former Hollywood Golden Age bookstore to create the first Los Angeles location for its Taco Bell Cantina concept. The location eschews menu boards in favor of ordering kiosks and movie screens, speakers and alcohol sales set the spot up to host live events.

They said it...

"It's really important to make people feel appreciated, recognized, heard and empowered. All of these things create a really powerful culture and environment that cultivates positivity and really brings out the best in everyone individually and collectively."

— Harris Teeter President Tammy DeBoer on what makes a great work culture

"Whole Foods Market is dedicated to growing with a purpose, from responsible sourcing and apprenticeship programs to community services and charitable donations, said. "The decisions we make as a business—even the smallest ones—in how food is raised and grown today can have a profound and lasting impact on nourishing people and the planet for future generations to come."

— Whole Foods Market CEO Jason Buechel on the retailer's sustainable mission

"We have our acquisitions team on a number of properties out there where we are in discussions. Our phone is starting to ring with opportunities we have never seen before and we are anxious to pursue them."

— Tanger Outlets President and CEO Stephen Yalof on the opportunities for growth ahead for mall operators in 2024 and beyond

Have Americans will travel

Don't look now, but Americans are on the move. According to a survey conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of the American Hotel & Lodging Association, nearly 72% say that they will either maintain or increase their number of hotel stays this year. The survey also says that 53% plan to do so via overnight travel (32% for business) for the first four months of 2024. Of those travelers, hotels remain the most popular lodging choice, with 71% of business travelers and 50% of leisure travelers saying they will likely choose them over other accommodations.



To AI or not to AI...

It's no secret that artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming every part of the commercial construction industry. Now, the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) is offering an AI guide for professionals wanting to better understand its prominence. The ABC guide features definitions of common AI terminology, example uses and some instructional guidelines for builders to apply in their own work. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

The numbers game

60,000

The number of branded lifestyle and soft-branded boutique hotels that have been proposed for openings in the US by 2027, according to STR data. The numbers translate to an annual pipeline growth averaging 29%.

2,000

The number of locations Papa John's plans to open as its store counts return to pre-pandemic levels. The goal is to ultimately become the third-biggest pizza chain in the US.

11.9

The percentage of executive leadership positions are occupied by people of color, according to Bisnow's DEI Data Series.

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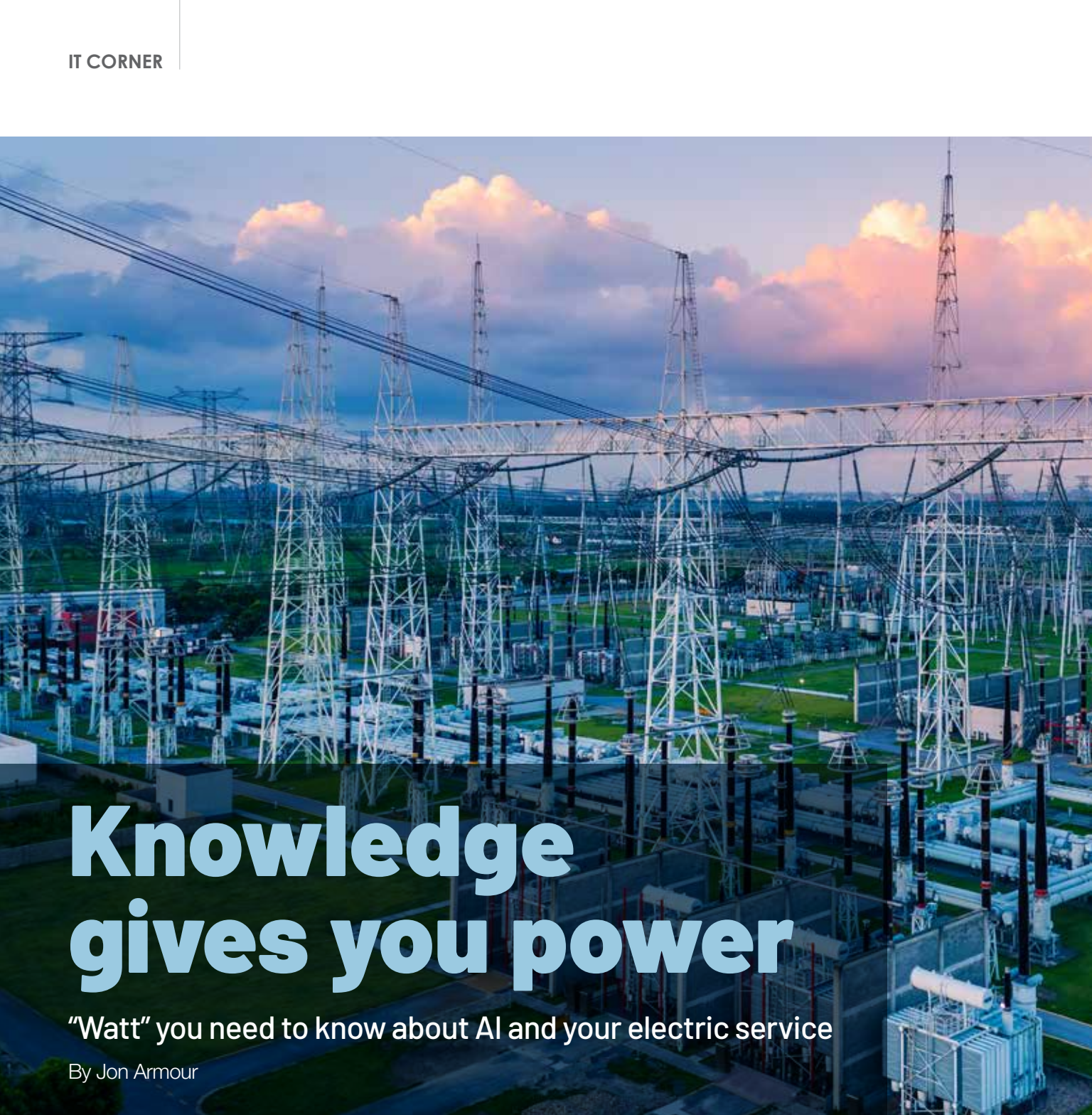
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By Jon Armour

It's Friday night, you've just sat down to your favorite television show with a Swanson's Salisbury steak TV dinner and a cold drink. The lights go out. Now, the first thing you do is yell at your wife in the kitchen, “Did you pay the electricity bill?”

After she packs your bag and hands you the car keys you realize what a terrible mistake you've made. It dawns on you that the greedy power company is probably doing rolling blackouts and you blame the power grid and your utility for interrupting your life and causing a divorce.

Not uncommon these days; the divorce or the power outage. But what if I were to tell you that you shouldn't blame the greedy overcharging utility and blame more, the increase in demand for our prized lifestyle of everything electric.

The system was fine before the advent of electric cars and talking refrigerators. Demand for electricity has overtaken power grid capability across the country. Is that a problem? No, it just means the construction and expansion of generating assets will also increase.



homes across the country is a bit more complicated than assuming it should always work. Most people drive by plants and substations without a care or wondering what they do or how critical they are to keeping the lights on.

Within the fences and gates lie expensive and complex transformers, circuit breakers, disconnect switches, lightning arrestors and a host of other equipment that turn high voltage current into usable voltage for homes and businesses.

These various appurtenances sometimes fail due to improper maintenance, age, they are vandalized or overloaded. The same occurrences are present across the entire transmission grid to include the generating plants, gas and other fuel distribution services, and also digital electronics.

All these things must be accounted for in the rate that is charged to the customer. You cannot just pay for electricity, but you pay for maintenance of equipment, power lines, pole structures, and research and development of new technologies as well.

Some of the means by which utilities are leveraging AI are, “heat rate and yield optimization.” Think of your car running hotter than it was designed to operate.

Okay, that helps toward understanding the costs of services but behind every electric bill there is likely an angry customer. There will always be people who cannot grasp the enormity of work that goes on behind the scenes at an electric utility.

To ease their anger and frustration and aid in rate stability, utilities are embarking on the use of AI, digital and analytics to operate more efficiently, reduce carbon footprints, and repurpose the saved funds toward research and development of advanced AI for plants and supporting facilities. Does that mean your utility will lower your rates? Not necessarily, but they can work to stabilize your costs and help create a more predictable bottom line for your energy budget.

Some of the means by which utilities are leveraging AI are, “heat rate and yield optimization.” Think of your car running hotter than it was designed to operate. It will use more fuel and lose the efficiency of lower operating temperatures. Staying cool, uses less fuel. But there is a range at which the car will operate at its best efficiency.

Finding that range usually is left up to a computer that controls water flow and fuel injection and other factors. Real time optimization of a power generator and its operational set points, say every thirty-minutes using machine learning algorithms, can accelerate fuel savings and reduce carbon intensity.

It is reported that the savings can be 1% to 3% percent for coal plants and .5-2% for a gas turbine generator. Given the reduction

But what does that do to the rates the utilities charge? These infrastructure costs are passed on to the customers. What can utilities be doing to hedge against the rising costs of electricity to your home or business? That's what we'll discuss in this article. Knowledge gives you power. Knowing what utilities are up to with your rate dollars can help ease your thoughts about, “Why am I paying so much? It's just electricity.”

Let's start there. It is not just electricity. The power coming out of your outlets, running your motors, and lighting businesses and

in the “burn rate” at the scale of an aircraft jet engine, that is a tremendous savings.

“CAP,” not the one on your head, is another area of management at utilities that may prove to reduce labor hours by twenty percent and reduce regulatory costs as much as two percent. “CAP” is an acronym for “Corrective Action Program.” These are programs designed to identify steps that should be taken to understand the most cost-effective actions that can be employed to correct error causes. The premise is to reduce manual administrative efforts and implement AI analytics to project more precise corrective actions.

Analytics, algorithms, and digital data massing can automate decision making processes and leverage industry or fleet historical data to determine outcomes of events. Again, the savings are compounded across utility generation fleets, and they amount to millions of dollars that can be repurposed to further emerging technologies.

procurement of parts and equipment, and the speed at which repairs can be made.

The same AI analytics measure and compare data across generation fleets for unit efficiency to create standards for fuel use, heat reduction and other factors that increase unit availability. These tactics reduce planned outages and make generation more flexible to the grid during peak use.

One example of where the energy generation industry is headed is a large independent power producer in Texas. But this company is embracing the technology, leveraging AI, digital and analytics at an aggressive pace. They have meticulously road-mapped \$200 million of impact through digital and analytics focusing on AI to improve performance and efficiency of generation units.

The utility boasts more than sixty-million dollars of impact already realized by deploying four-hundred use case models across

Knowledge gives you power. Knowing what utilities are up to with your rate dollars can help ease your thoughts about, “Why am I paying so much? It’s just electricity.”

If this all plays out to save the utility money, maybe you’ll get a rebate on your electric bill. I couldn’t hold my breath waiting for that. But I take solace in the fact that I know most utilities are working hard to harden the grid and generating infrastructure, to everyone’s benefit and to stabilize service delivery and costs.

Amping up analytics

Back to those substations that we all drive by and hardly notice. We talked about failures and aging equipment, which is a “norm” across the country’s infrastructure. Advanced Analytics are being deployed to detect fail points in transformer and distribution equipment.

What does that mean for the customer? AI analysis of equipment performance can make recommendations as to the replacement of equipment before it fails, instead of waiting until it breaks or a storm event stresses infrastructure. Industry reports state that there could be a sixty to eighty percent increase in the detection of “trip” events.

Trips are triggered by anomalies in a circuit, weather events or malfunctioning equipment. The identification of these potential failures before they happen can assist in maintenance decision making,

their fleet to sixty-five units in the first 24 four months of implementation. That’s just plain electrifying. So, no matter how much you hate the electric company, be assured that the industry is tapping new AI technologies and employing digital and analytic solutions across generation fleets to help you, the end customer.

Generating electricity is more than Homer Simpson falling asleep on the “shutdown” button at the helm of the local nuclear power plant. It encompasses complicated mechanics, electronics and forward-thinking AI solutions to tackle complex production problems, leverage administrative costs and generate safe, clean and affordable power for your home and business.

When the “lights go out in Georgia,” it is not for lack of maintenance or a “failing grid,” of which I hear so often. It is not some kind of conspiracy with the electric company to control your life, it’s probably because a tree fell across the wires or some other weather anomaly.

These things we have no control over. It is just like everything else in this world, things break, wear out, get damaged, and are overworked. These things are built by humans and are subject to failure, but AI can certainly move us forward and close the gap between human thinking and machine learning. ■

Contributing author Jon Armour has 35 years of combined experience across the construction, real estate, and IT Infrastructure industry. He is a Certified Project Management Professional (PMP), Certified Construction Manager, IT Infrastructure Program Manager, and a published author of a popular Western genre book. He resides in Magnolia, Texas



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in the news

SARA partners with GreenHome Institute



The Society of Registered American Architects (SARA) is partnering with the GreenHome Institute (GHI) in a collaboration that will empower architects with the knowledge to create healthier, more environmentally friendly living spaces through a series of educational initiatives.

Central to this partnership is the introduction of a weekly "Wednesday Webinar Continuing Education Unit (CEU)" presentation, exclusively available to all SARA members. The program is designed to bridge the gap between traditional architectural practices and the urgent need for sustainability in the design and construction of living environments.

The GreenHome Institute brings to the table its vast experience and expertise in sustainable housing, offering insights into innovative practices that can significantly reduce the environmental footprint of new and renovated homes. By integrating GHI's knowledge base with SARA's commitment to professional development, this partnership promises to equip architects with the tools they need to lead the charge in sustainable design.

The webinars will cover a wide range of topics, from energy efficiency and renewable energy sources to sustainable materials and green building certifications. This initiative not only aims to enhance the skill set of architects, but also inspire them to incorporate sustainable practices into their projects, thereby contributing to healthier communities and a more sustainable planet.

For more information, visit sara-national.org.

SARA partners in for fight on child labor

SARA is one of the partners for design FREEDOM by Grace Farms' "3rd Annual Design for Freedom Summit." Billed as a momentous day of action and awareness, the event features some of the country's leading experts across various sectors who are working to eradicate forced and child labor from the built environment.

Since holding the first annual summit in 2021, Grace Farms has hosted more than 800 attendees representing industry professionals and university students united in the fight against forced labor in the building materials supply chain.



For more information, visit designforfreedom.org/2024-design-for-freedom-summit.

Clemson architecture student takes SARAS leadership role

Cierra Davies' passion for advocacy and support continues to take her down new and exciting roads. The Clemson Master of Architecture student recently was named National Chair of the Society for American Registered Architects Students (SARAS). While serving as a graduate assistant, she was a co-designer for a project that won an award in the Society of American Registered Architects New York (SARA NY) chapter's Design Awards.



Cierra Davies

Today, as a founding member and National Chair of SARAS, Davies will spearhead efforts to advocate for student members and professional development within the architectural community and facilitate the establishment of student-led SARAS organizations in schools across the country.

Davies says the creation of SARAS has kickstarted support from various SARA state councils, with each agreeing to have a portion of funds go to an initiative she proposed that supports students coming from nontraditional paths into architecture.

Additionally, the 2024 SARA National Board showed significant support for SARAS with personal financial contributions. The contributions underscore the collective belief in the importance of nurturing the next generation of architects.

To read the whole story, visit news.clemson.edu/clemson-architecture-student-takes-national-leadership-role-with-the-society-for-american-registered-architects.



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EDUCATION

Architecture among highest-paying industries for graduates

In today's ever unpredictable job market, you never know where the best jobs are—until you do. According to QR code generator QRFY, one of the highest-paying sectors for graduates is architecture, which clocked in at No. 9 on the Top 10. Architecture graduates can earn a median salary of \$70,000, which is above the average percentage of employees with an advanced degree.

[Read More HERE](#)

84 Lumber donates \$50K to

Germanna Community College scholarship program

84 Lumber is investing in the future of college students by donating \$50,000 to Germanna Community College's Germanna Guarantee Scholarship Program. Since at least 1999, 84 Lumber has made contributions to Germanna Community College's "Germanna Guarantee Scholarship Program" and other initiatives that benefit the program.

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MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing major part of 'Bring Back the Trades' movement

D&M Electrical Contracting Inc.'s Doug Winston explains that while most people tend to associate the "Bring Back the Trades Inc." movement with construction jobs, one of the most overlooked sectors is manufacturing. See what that should be music to the industry's ears.

[Read More HERE](#)



TECHNOLOGY

Samco Machinery sponsors successful high school robotics team

Samco Machinery played a role in the success of a high school team competing in the first Robotics Competition. The Pink Titans robotics team of David & Mary Thomson Collegiate Institute in Scarborough, Ontario, earned the "Autonomous Award Event" at the Ontario District Humber College event and advanced to the playoff rounds.

[Read More HERE](#)



The year that was

A look at the state of construction in 2023

By Frank Fiorille

The start of a new year often brings both uncertainty and excitement for business leaders. And, after the ups and downs businesses in the Construction sector have seen over the past few years, many leaders are uncertain about what's to come. Looking at past trends can reveal insights and help business owners understand how their 2023 performance fits into the larger picture.

The Paychex Small Business Employment Watch has been tracking wage and employment growth by industry over the past decade, using the company's broad client base to get a pulse on the labor market. The company's Small Business Jobs Index and Small Business Wage Data can shed light on where we've been—and where we might be headed.

Construction's Job Growth

At first glance, it may appear that construction had a lackluster year, with its index dropping throughout 2023 but staying above 100 (indicating slight growth). However, a closer look at the sector's long-term performance has a much more interesting story to tell.

After its long run as the top-ranked industry for employment growth, construction's steady moderation led the industry to rank fourth or fifth out of eight during the entirety of last year. At the regional level, we saw a similar shift, with construction's relative performance dropping off between 2020 and 2021.

Region	Average Construction Ranking	
	2014-2020	2021-2023
National	1	5
Northeast	2	5
Midwest	2	5
South	2	6
West	1	6

However, the industry began a recovery relative to other industries at the end of 2023, moving to 4th place in December of last year. This underscores that the change in construction's relative strength in 2023 was not indicative of a decline. Despite the slowing rate of growth overall, the construction sector and the nation in general have not seen a single month of job losses since 2021.

Year	National	Construction
2021	104.50	103.12
2022	103.80	102.28
2023	101.44	101.23

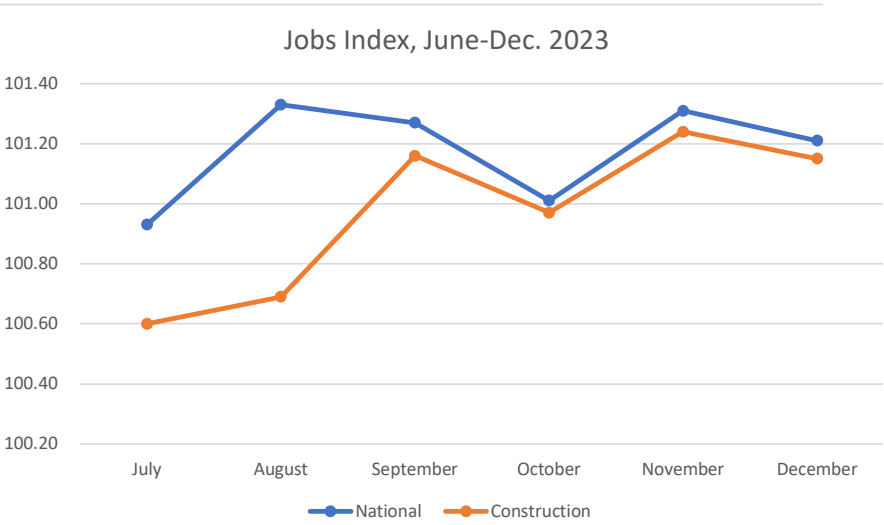
Drilling down into regions and states reveals some interesting trends within the industry. In the Midwest, the region in which construction had the strongest year overall, construction employment outpaced the all-industry average by more than a full point. This indicates the key role played in the region's overall strength.

Meanwhile, in the South—the best overall performer in 2023—construction's annual average was 0.70 points lower than the industry index overall (the largest shortfall of any region). At the end of the year, the industry was seeing a wide range in performance between states tracked. The best December '23 index was in Arizona (104.8; -1.14 Y-O-Y), despite its overall index ranking 4th among states that month. Illinois, which ranked 1st overall among states, had the second-highest index for construction in the last month of 2023 (103.55; +1.01 Y-O-Y)—while California (101.32; +1.84) showed the highest Y-O-Y growth.

Construction's Wage and Hours Growth

Job growth wasn't the only thing that stabilized in 2023. Wage growth—which spent time at record highs amid 2022's ongoing inflation—also began to wane last year, and its stabilization both nationally and within construction continued through December.

While hourly wages in general were higher in December 2023 than 12 months prior and growth slightly outpaced inflation, the rates of growth nationally and within construction were significantly lower than in the previous year.





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Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria

Architect	Designer	General Contractor
Morkovsky Associates, Inc. San Antonio, TX	Steve Harding Design, Inc. Houston, TX	Keller Martin Construction San Antonio, TX

Photographer - Anna Migeon



Construction’s slightly higher growth rate could speak to the heightened competition for skilled labor within the field compared to the general market. It appears the skills gap is continuing to affect businesses in the new year, as December 2023 marked the third consecutive month in which construction led sectors in both hourly earnings (3.94%) and weekly hours worked (0.17%) growth.

Of note, while construction is the only industry that has seen a steady increase in weekly hours worked over the past 10 years, almost all other industries peaked between 2019 and 2020. Furthermore, construction and manufacturing employees worked more hours than those in any other sector in 2023 and have done so consistently over the past decade.

Construction has seen the largest increase in full-time employment percentage among sectors during the past decade and was one of just two sectors to increase their percentage of full-time employees since 2014.

Regionally, hourly earnings growth in construction outpaced overall industry performance across regions at the end of last year, with all 20 of the states considered in the report showing similar results. Construction’s hourly earnings growth rate was in the top half among industries in 17 of the 20 states considered, and three states showed growth under three percent in December 2023.

The Year to Come

With the wage and job growth stabilization that marked 2023 holding steady in January, the outlook for small businesses in the new year is promising. It is likely to be a year of opportunity for construction businesses, as funding from the Biden Administration’s bipartisan infrastructure law is expected to continue ramping up and lead to new projects across the nation.

In the new year, the majority of construction leaders say they expect to increase their total headcounts, with nearly a quarter (22%) hoping to increase staff by more than 10%.

This might be a challenging task, despite labor market stabilization, as the industry is still facing a significant skills gap that’s likely to grow as emerging tech changes roles and responsibilities within the industry. They also

Region	Rank	All-Industry	Construction	Difference
South	1	101.75	101.05	(0.70)
Midwest	2	101.55	102.65	1.10
Northeast	3	100.85	100.68	(0.17)
West	4	100.79	100.99	(0.20)

Month	National			Construction		
	Hourly Earnings	YOY Increase	YOY Growth Rate	Hourly Earnings	YOY Growth	YOY Growth Rate
12-‘22	\$31.08	\$1.46	4.93%	\$32.63	\$1.61	5.18%
12-‘23	\$33.16	\$1.08	3.48%	\$33.91	\$1.28	3.94%

State	Hourly Earnings	YOY Change	YOY Change Rate	Rank Among Industries in State
Washington	\$36.78	\$1.82	5.20%	3
Wisconsin	\$29.21	\$1.25	4.47%	7
Arizona	\$30.97	\$1.32	4.44%	3
Texas	\$31.20	\$1.15	3.83%	2
Maryland	\$34.47	\$1.25	3.76%	4
Massachusetts	\$37.08	\$1.34	3.76%	3
California	\$34.94	\$1.25	3.72%	2
Virginia	\$34.22	\$1.20	3.64%	1
Florida	\$30.18	\$1.05	3.60%	4
Missouri	\$30.21	\$1.02	3.51%	5
Ohio	\$27.84	\$0.93	3.45%	1
Illinois	\$34.23	\$1.13	3.40%	8
New Jersey	\$32.51	\$1.05	3.32%	3
New York	\$32.58	\$1.00	3.17%	1
Pennsylvania	\$31.00	\$0.95	3.15%	1
Michigan	\$29.86	\$0.88	3.03%	7
Georgia	\$30.39	\$0.89	3.01%	4
North Carolina	\$28.72	\$0.83	2.98%	4
Tennessee	\$28.51	\$0.82	2.96%	2
Indiana	\$27.97	\$0.63	2.31%	3

anticipate contending with ongoing materials shortages and supply chain uncertainties.

Investments in technology may present a compelling solution to both issues, as emerging tech both to streamline hiring and supply chain management—will be top of mind as construction businesses contend with these pressures.

For people managers, accounting, recruiting, HR and payroll solutions will be critical to longevity as they can help

leaders trim budgets and retain the skilled workers they already have. Meanwhile, intelligent logistics suites, end-to-end supply chain management platforms, and other data-driven systems will help businesses improve outcomes.

If the data is any indication, leaders who learn from the past and take this time of relative stability in the labor market to address other concerns will be well-positioned for whatever comes next.

Frank Fiorille is the VP of Risk, Compliance and Data Analytics for Paychex.

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Going modular

Choosing the right system for affordable housing

By Tom Jaleski



Access to adequate and affordable housing is one of the biggest problems facing communities around the world today. With the current housing shortage and new construction not keeping pace with the projected population growth in many communities, more permanent, affordable housing solutions are needed.

The increasing frequency of emergency situations caused by storms, flooding and migration also has created a growing need to quickly provide temporary, transitional housing for displaced and homeless residents.

Modular construction is one way of addressing these challenges in a manner that can quickly adapt to changing conditions and demands. Modular building systems can provide housing at a lower

cost and reach far more locations than site-built housing. Two main approaches can be used to provide affordable modular housing, with transportation costs being the primary factor in determining the type of modular system employed.

A localized, market-rate approach allows for a wider diversity of unit sizes but requires a local fabrication facility to reduce transportation costs. A global approach uses standard shipping sizes as its base.

Ultimately, the further away the site is from a fabrication facility, the more the unit needs to fit typical shipping size and strength standards.

Why Build Using Modular Systems?

Modular housing is built off-site, usually in an indoor, quality-controlled setting. It is completed in sections and then transported from the factory to the site, where the sections are installed onto foundations as individual units or multi-story assemblages.

Modular systems offer several advantages for cost savings. Construction can take place simultaneously on the building site, with products being transported to the site upon completion. This effectively speeds up the timeframe for construction, which helps cut costs for labor and financing.

Using prefabricated modules also prevents issues arising from weather and material delivery delays, resulting in significant time savings. A shorter timeframe for construction and smaller on-site construction crews can help lessen the disruption to the surrounding community and reduce traffic control expenses.

Moreover, modular housing presents opportunities for more sustainable construction if the materials are selected with low carbon production and energy efficiency in mind. Building the units in a factory environment allows for more control over waste and pollution than traditional construction methods.

A Localized Approach

Localized construction focuses on finding a market area, like California's San Francisco Bay area, where housing shortages and high costs create a market for lower-priced housing with easy commutes. These market-rate and low-income housing needs can benefit greatly from modular construction



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methods, which allow flexibility and lower construction costs.

High land costs in desirable locations make it more cost-effective to build high-rise buildings, which would require stacking of modular units and integrated structural systems. Modular systems are the most feasible solution when building affordable housing in this context, as the per-unit cost savings can be rapidly multiplied.

The stacking emphasizes the materials used (non-combustible in high-rise buildings), the structural frame, and access to connections in the infrastructure systems. Code requirements for tall buildings over five stories generally require steel framing with columns integrated into the frame. Infrastructure typically is accessed through a vertical shaft system, where connections can be made from an easily accessible central point in each module, such as the corridor.

Modular systems offer several advantages for cost savings. Construction can take place simultaneously on the building site, with products being transported to the site upon completion.

Transportation costs are a significant differentiator for modular construction. Localized construction addresses transportation costs by finding an in-demand market and reducing transportation costs for flexibly sized, stacked modules to serve wider market demands.

Having a production facility near the building sites is key in keeping transport costs low for the variety of widths needed for different housing and amenity-space unit types. It reduces the distance for modules to travel, decreasing the cost of oversized, load-sized modules.

Localized construction can also take advantage of the short transport distances

to create three- and four-sided modules that eliminate duplicate wall and floor/ceiling material costs. On average, factory-built modules save about 30% on labor costs, but building duplicates, walls, floors and ceilings eats into those savings.

Constructing three- and four-sided modules allows for additional flexibility in unit size and configuration as well as greater customization in room sizes for use in multi-bedroom units and amenity spaces.

A Globalized Approach

Globalized construction focuses on providing units that are easily shipped using standard transportation modes and have a variety of built-in infrastructure connection stubs. This is particularly useful when affordable housing must be provided quickly and delivered to areas with limited access to resources, such as underserved and

connections can be made through strapping, if not the standard locking connection found in shipping containers.

Ultimately, flexibility within the structure is key to addressing different locations and cultural conditions.

Globalized construction has the most size restrictions for truck, rail, and ship transport, as it is based on standard shipping sizes. Because globalized construction works within these restrictions to reduce transportation costs, the location of the assembly facility is much less relevant, even though every mile still incurs costs.

Therefore, fabrication in low labor cost areas will save significantly more than the extra transport costs.

Developing a Modular Housing Strategy

Understanding the market you want to serve is the first step in developing an approach for modular construction. Market-rate housing requires a localized approach, which allows for more flexibility in unit sizes and larger amenity spaces in multi-story buildings.

The location of the fabrication facility is key to reducing transportation costs in this context. Below-market-rate housing also is typically multi-story and depends on low transportation costs to be profitable.

The single-family, emergency, and developing-area housing market requires conformance to standard transportation sizes to keep transportation costs as low as possible. This globalized approach allows the fabrication facility into areas with low labor and material costs.

Modularization can provide significant cost savings, no matter which approach you use. Keep in mind the prime cost drivers, materials, transportation, and labor. Knowing the market you want to serve will help you develop a strategy that supports the community and contributes to the success and growth of your company.

Tom Jaleski is Director of Jensen Hughes. With more than three decades of project experience with regulatory agencies across the US, he has authored code appeals, alternates and variances to resolve complex issues, resulting in savings to clients while ensuring the primary goal of safety for the occupants. He also is an expert in accessibility and code regulations for high-rise, healthcare, residential, assembly, commercial, public and aviation facilities.

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That's why it recently acquired a New York City-based building envelope and sustainability consultant Vidaris and then consolidated its US operations at a new office at the One Five One tower, The Durst Organization-owned commercial building. The space is located at 151 West 42nd Street at the convergence of Broadway with Manhattan's Times Square.

“Our firm’s leadership determined that a hybrid work environment—where the majority of the staff would divide their time between field work, home and office—would be most suitable for the firm’s operations.”

— John Amatruda, SOCOTEC

Montroy DeMarco Architecture (MDA) designed the new workspace in a close collaboration with SOCOTEC's internal sustainability consulting team to meet the tenant's high energy efficiency, sustainability and wellness requirements.

The newly completed, 11,000-square foot office received LEED Platinum certification from the US Green Building Council. LEED Platinum is the highest level of

certification, indicating an ultimate degree of sustainability through energy efficient design and building systems, recycled and environmentally responsible materials, and sustainable operations and practices. At the time of its certification, SOCOTEC's headquarters was one of only six LEED CI v4 Platinum certified projects in New York State.

“When our previous lease at 360 Park Avenue in Manhattan expired, we looked



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upon it as an opportunity to rethink our office environment and associated work practices,” says SOCOTEC Senior Principal John Amatruda, RA, LEED Fellow, BREEAM International Assessor. Amatruda launched the new office design effort while still at Vidaris. At that time, the firm also maintained several smaller satellite offices throughout New York City, all of which had been impacted by workplace changes during the pandemic.

“Our firm’s leadership determined that a hybrid work environment—where the majority of the staff would divide their time between field work, home and office—would be most suitable for the firm’s operations, and called upon Montroy DeMarco Architecture to design it,” Amatruda says. “The new office has enabled us to both consolidate space as well as to create a highly collaborative, energetic and sustainable workplace that is well suited for a hybrid working model.”

MDA Partner Daniel Montroy, AIA, says that through the use of a flexible seating concept and numerous collaborative and social spaces, the new office accommodates all of the programmatic needs in a footprint that is nearly 20% smaller than Vidaris’ previous office space. The project’s total cost was approximately \$4 million.

Following its acquisition of Vidaris, SOCOTEC supported the design of the new U.S. headquarters office. European executives and colleagues now use the new space when visiting New York.

One Five One was constructed in 1999 and is regarded as the first green skyscraper in the United States. The building, also known as 4 Times Square, has since been LEED Gold certified. Vidaris has worked extensively with the landlord, The Organization, on both One Five One when it was originally designed and many other projects. “We were thrilled to work with Durst, our long-standing client, on the development of our new office space,” Amatruda says. “As a landlord, Durst has been very supportive of our sustainability initiatives and design efforts, and has assisted us in optimizing and testing the base building MEP systems.”

The Durst Organization also served as Construction Manager. The contractor was Cross Management Corporation and ME Engineers served as the MEP designer.



“The office can accommodate up to 120 people. Approximately 40% of the employees are transient workers who do extensive field work and come to the office sporadically.”

— Glen Walker, Chief Administrative Officer, SOCOTEC





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Office Layout and Finishes

MDA Project Manager Sarah Bigos says the office occupies the south half of the building floor and is wrapped on the east, south and west sides with large windows that flood the space with natural light and enhance employee well-being. The layout is planned around several functional areas.

The reception area faces a 16-seat 490-square foot boardroom that is flanked by two executive offices, two smaller meeting rooms, each of 230 square feet, and several additional offices. Each of these rooms has glass partition walls facing the central corridor so that light and views can be appreciated by the other staff.

"The highlight of the suite is a centrally located, 2,000-square foot open space, located adjacent to the executive office section and facing the curved exterior building wall. It serves as a co-working area, technical library, pantry, and event and presentation space," says Tom Yeh, MDA Job Captain. The pantry features an L-shaped counter along the interior wall

and an L-shaped bar height island with traditional kitchen appliances, as well as taps for both coffee and beer. It is finished with black millwork, a black, white, and gray tile backsplash, gray Caesarstone countertops in a concrete finish, and a white island base.

The black finishes contrast sharply with the adjacent co-working space that features a multi-seat work counter along a section of the window wall, several small meeting tables and a combination of soft and hard seating in white, neutral, and orange colors. The space was designed to be flexible, informal, and comfortable. Furniture can be easily moved to accommodate different seating needs. A large retractable projection screen is located at one end of the space, so that it can be converted into a presentation area when needed.

Two separate workplace wings are located to the east and west of the central co-working/pantry and executive areas. Technical departments, including Envelope Consulting, Architectural Testing Certification and Inspection, Engineering Testing

Inspection and Certification, and the Code Advisory Department, are located in an area of shared workstations bordered by glass faced interior offices and a meeting room.

The Accounting and Administrative departments have a more traditional layout with assigned workstations and additional private offices. Standing desks are used throughout the office to give employees the option of sitting or standing as they work.

"The office can accommodate up to 120 people," says Glen Walker, SOCOTEC's Chief Administrative Officer. "Approximately 40% of the employees are transient workers who do extensive field work and come to the office sporadically. "The feedback we have received from our employees regarding the new office space is very positive. They enjoy the flexible seating, open space and windows, and the upscale, hip environment."

MDA worked closely with SOCOTEC's Energy and Sustainability team and the firm's leadership to develop a collaborative aesthetic for the space, and all materials were selected specifically to be highly sustainable. The





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palette throughout the suite is a combination of light and neutral tones.

An FSC-certified engineered wood flooring in a white oak finish extends through reception, the boardroom area, and the pantry. Carpet tile by Patcraft is used in the offices and open workstation areas and is inset below the table in the boardroom. The muted grey patterned carpet is typically manufactured as a broadloom, but Vidaris worked with Patcraft to modify the product into carpet squares so that a LEED compliant backing could be used.

Glass partitions with sliding doors by Tagwall separate the offices from the central spaces. In the boardroom, the wall telescopes so that the room and the reception area can be merged into one contiguous space. One wall in the reception area is faced with a custom decorative fluted wood panel in a white painted finish by Textures-3D to add visual interest to the space.

Suspended gypsum board ceilings extend through the reception area and corridors, and acoustic tile ceilings are used in offices. The boardroom ceiling features a gypsum board border with an inset of four-foot square acoustic tiles. In contrast, the



open areas feature K13 acoustical cellulose insulation sprayed on the underside of the deck and painted white to maximize the ceiling height while providing sound attenuation.

The designers incorporated several innovative concepts into the lighting and power systems. Duplex electrical receptacles at workstations and offices have been designed so that power for each upper outlet, utilized for task lights and auxiliary

items, shuts down at 8:00 p.m. to conserve energy, while each lower outlet that supplies power to computers and essential equipment is active 24/7. Occupancy and vacancy sensors are also used to control lighting, and a Lutron programmable control system adjusts light usage based on daylighting conditions and the season. Lighting fixtures are by National Lighting.

Sustainability and changing workplace dynamics drove design

As a specialist in the field of sustainability, SOCOTEC imposed a clear philosophy that drove the project design. “We feel strongly that every company needs to be a responsible corporate citizen. Sustainability must be incorporated into all activities as part of accountable business practice to minimize the corporate environmental footprint,” said Amatruda.

MDA consulted closely with SOCOTEC’s leadership and employees to understand their use of the space before final design began. As Bigos explained, “The model of the space was shared with employees to obtain their input regarding functionality and sustainability issues.”

The final design successfully addressed a shift in the corporate paradigm. Perhaps the most important lesson learned from this project is that architects and their corporate clients need to work collaboratively to accommodate employee expectations, changing technology, and shifts in workplace culture. **CCR**

Inside the SOCOTEC HQ LEED certification highlights

- ▶ Energy use reduction: 14.2% as compared to LEED’s ASHRAE 90.1 baseline
- ▶ Water use reductions: 35.1% as compared to code
- ▶ Sustainable materials: 31.7% of materials by cost used recycled content or FSC certified wood
- ▶ Embodied carbon: architectural materials were selected to achieve in excess of 20% reduction in embodied carbon as compared to standard products
- ▶ Construction waste recycling: 78.2% diversion rate from five waste streams
- ▶ Daylighting: 41.6% of the regularly occupied floor area meets LEED criteria
- ▶ Quality views: 75.1% of the regularly occupied floor area meets LEED criteria
- ▶ Carbon dioxide monitoring: monitors are provided in all high occupancy spaces to ensure appropriate outside air delivery
- ▶ IAQ sensors: monitors are used to track TVOCs, temperature, RH, CO2, and other air quality metrics
- ▶ Green Power purchases: offsets were purchased representing 66.4% of the office’s annual energy use for 10 years

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Where are all the work boots?

Why you must take a holistic approach in tight labor market

By Anne Lackey

You need boots on the ground to get the job done, but “Where are the feet to fill them?” That refrain sounds like the mournful chorus of a blues tune for today’s labor outlook, and it’s not going to get better, at least not without a truly holistic hiring strategy.

The big picture isn't pretty. Projections from the US Bureau of Labor reveal ongoing demographic shifts are affecting the job market, with Baby Boomers retiring and the number of Gen Z workers entering the labor force smaller than previous generations.

The US labor force participation rate—the proportion of the working-age population either working or actively seeking employment—dwindled from 67.3%

in 2000 to 63.3% before COVID, 62.2% in 2022, and is expected to dip to 60.4% in 2032.

Those percentages represent millions of workers no longer available to fill the roles businesses need.

"The projections released by the BLS (Bureau of Labor Statistics) confirm what economists and business owners are both seeing: what many believed to be a temporary, Covid-induced lack of workers is, in

fact, a 'forever' labor shortage," said Tom Bowen, a Gusto Inc. economist, as quoted by The Business Journals.

There's a "double whammy" behind those numbers. As a significant portion of the U.S. ages out of the workforce, more young people will be needed in health-related fields to serve that population, diminishing labor pools for other industries seeking new employees as dollars and talent flow to the health sector.



The Holistic Approach

As always, companies that hire and retain quality staff pull ahead of others. But with the demographic sea change underway, that old truth is now chiseled in granite, an epitaph for some, a sturdy foundation for others.

The sparse labor reality means construction firms can expect an increasingly fierce bidding war for quality workers, who will chase the highest pay. Those firms must gear up to navigate rough labor waters for years to come.

Companies tend to focus on hiring only when a need arises. But in a narrowing labor market, it is increasingly important to broaden your hiring outlook beyond the immediate gratification mindset of hiring in reactionary mode.



So, what's in your tool belt? It's time for an inventory. You wouldn't send any crew out on a job without the equipment to handle the task. Don't do that to yourself either as you contemplate labor structure in the coming decade.

Commit to a holistic hiring and personnel outlook, which means addressing every angle: "future self" gardening, your automation power tools, breaking geographic labor boundaries, and your retention strategy.

Be a 'Future Self' Gardener

Companies tend to focus on hiring only when a need arises. But in a narrowing labor market, it is increasingly important to broaden your hiring outlook beyond the immediate gratification mindset of hiring in reactionary mode. Think of the baseball "farm" system, which identifies and nurtures talent before it's needed. What can you do to mimic that?

Identify inspirational and charismatic members of your team. Get them in front of young people and have them help teens imagine their "future self" as a co-worker in that company. Have sessions with tools in their hands. Develop more internship opportunities. Find the teachers in your community who have the "it" factor when serving youth.

Ask them to point out inquisitive teens exhibiting a great attitude and work ethic. Contact those teens directly and discuss your company and why it is unique. "What will I do with my life?" looms large with teens. The more you present a quality answer to that question, the more talent and loyalty you'll find from the younger generation over the years.



Your Automation Power Tools

Of course, everyone everywhere is feeling the explosive wind on their face as we race on the tracks of the AI hype train. Every third headline on almost any news site includes those two letters. No doubt, AI needs to be on your belt. It's the newest power tool with so many applications. You're surely working to find those functions.

But pay attention to the most pressing AI matter: seek employees who exhibit intellectual curiosity about AI's potential uses. We are in the early stages of the new technology, and the best way to harness this power is to identify and hire people eager to engage in the ongoing pursuit of functionality. The human imagination remains your top power tool. Employees who embrace AI and envision new uses are your keepers.

Break Your Geographic Labor Boundaries

The web eliminates geographic constraints in so many ways. Labor, too. AI gets all the attention as a labor market game-changer, but outsourcing office duties to less-expensive

markets provides companies with massive savings without a reduction in the quality of work if the hiring process is right. That reduction in office costs can be transferred to increased pay for "boots-on-the-ground" employees in high demand.

Here's a simple exercise requiring just a sheet of paper and a pen: Put "On-site" as the header on the left and "Off-site" on the right. Think of every duty in your company. If it must go in the left "On-site" column, put it there. But what tasks can be handled anywhere? What can go in the right column?

It is essential to recognize that your key on-site employees' off-site workload is a company inefficiency you can actively address through a holistic approach. Do off-site duties need to be handled within a local labor pool?

If not, would you limit your search to the US? Are you tied to "on-shore," or would you consider "off-shore" employees from a more affordable labor market? Many businesses leverage this new virtual reality to offset other pressures while gaining an advantage over competitors.

Your Retention Strategy

Even if you've secured quality staff, continue recruiting your employees, who always have the stay/go option. Why not focus on retaining the stars on your team with incentive-based rewards? Set key performance indicators (KPIs) for what's expected, then develop a secondary metric for bonuses and perks.

Those who excel will be rewarded appropriately and won't fall into motivation-killer "no-good-deed-goes-unpunished" cynical mindsets, destroying morale in many companies.

When you plan, consider budgeting for the job well done, and if you don't have the money for it, be creative in getting the message across in other ways. Failure to be mindful of your employees' sense of self-worth on the job is a leak in your boat. Make sure that ship is tight.

As you hear, "The boots on the ground—where are the feet to fill them?" recognize that the tight labor market doesn't have to be the blues for you. You can write an uplifting tune with a holistic approach. **CCR**

Anne Lackey is the co-founder of HireSmart Virtual Employees, a full-service HR firm helping others recruit, hire & train top global talent.

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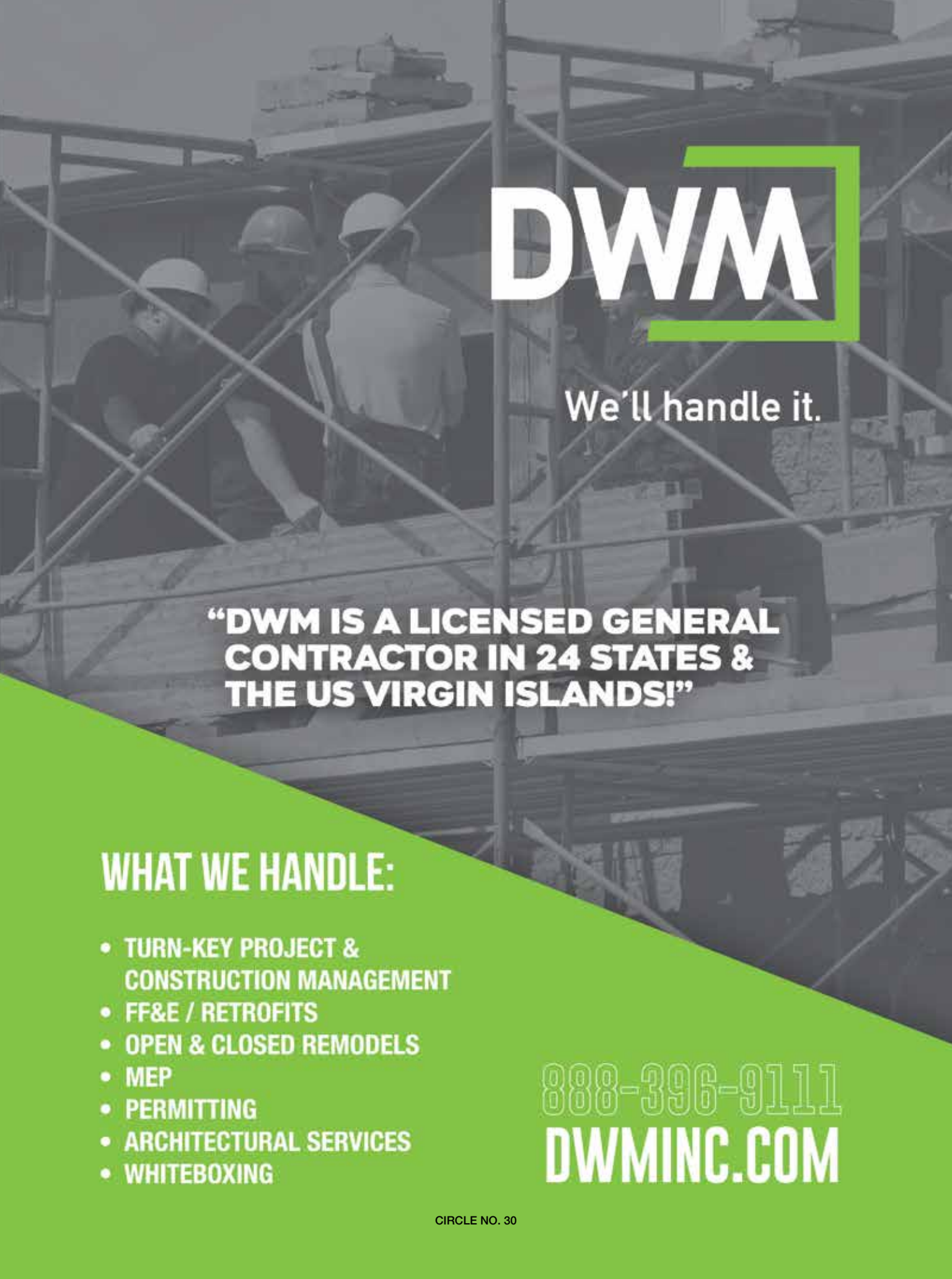
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Welcoming aesthetics

How Broad River Electric Cooperative's
new HQ balances optimal efficiency
with innovative design

Terry Mallard, CEO
Broad River Electric Cooperative

Welcoming aesthetics

How Broad River Electric Cooperative's new HQ balances optimal efficiency with innovative design

By Dave Jackson

From busy suburbs to remote rural communities, America's electric cooperatives provide reliable energy to thousands of homes while serving as engines for economic growth. According to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), these vital enterprises play a key role in transforming communities by powering 56% of the nation's landmass and investing in the future of those localities.







South Carolina's Broad River Electric Cooperative (BREC) has been a leader in innovative technologies and client service since its founding in 1940.

The Broad River team recently completed the daunting task of relocating its headquarters from Gaffney to Cowpens with the goal of fine-tuning efficiencies and workflow. In addition to situating the complex in a more centralized location, key objectives for the new build included facilitating department interactions, streamlining work crew logistics and enhancing customer service. "If we can get closer to where our members live, we are able to improve our response time for restoring services," says CEO Terry Mallard. "That is the type of reliability that our members have come to expect, so we've got to make sure that everything we do is to the best of our ability."

Chris Nordmeyer is an expert in this niche area of design. As the Managing Director for the Greenville office of SGAINW,

"This building is a marked departure from typical electric cooperatives, which tend to have a more common look."

— Mike Metz, President, MBM Consulting

a GF Design Company, he was the lead architect on the BREC project, drawing on his extensive experience working on electric cooperatives to deliver a successful outcome. His background gave him a clear understanding of the project goals—seamlessly integrating high functionality with a welcoming atmosphere.

Top-quality, sustainable materials were a key consideration for all aspects of this meticulously planned build. Once the interior layout was finalized, Nordmeyer was able to address design goals for the exterior of the highly visible headquarters building. Along with traditional brick, he chose Waterford

Stone, an Echelon Masonry product and Nichiha, a composite wood element to create the desired effect.

The architect said, "We have been big fans of Echelon Masonry and have used it on other electric cooperative projects including Edisto, Barnwell and Georgetown. The full-bed units made the installation go smoothly, and the aesthetic was a great complement to the other materials."

Along with its adaptable design features and easy installation, Waterford Stone was engineered to hold up to the toughest conditions. The water-repellant composite stone resists mold and fading

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for a maintenance-free exterior, a desirable feature for the humid Southeastern climate.

Throughout the planning process, Nordmeyer partnered with Mike Metz, President of MBM Consulting, a family-owned business that specializes in configuring electrical cooperative layouts to achieve peak efficiency for internal workings. “As the owner’s representative, we manage the process from beginning to end—from purchasing property to hanging pictures before we leave,” Metz says. “We provide a very specialized service for the cooperatives. The process is designed around the flow of business from the inside out.”

Nordmeyer says he and Metz have a history of collaborating on projects like this. “He assesses and interprets the needs of the client and conveys that to me; the design is then driven by those functionality goals.”

Within the rectangular two-story headquarters building, Nordmeyer carried out Metz’s efficiency directives by factoring in the specific needs of each department. The less hands-on administrative offices would occupy the second floor, whereas the ground floor was designed to facilitate daily operations.

Departments with frequent interactions were placed close together at one end of the building, and customer service was situated at the opposite end and made more publicly accessible. The layout was guided by the most efficient use of time and space to best serve clientele—those entering through the service lobby and those utilizing drive-up lanes.

For continuity, Waterford Stone was used to form the base of the Broad River logo sign located at the public entranceway. The same modular units were used on the columns of the drive-through lanes. The element of flexible convenience, a dedicated staff of Customer Service Representatives and a warmer design concept for the headquarters façade added a welcoming feel to the in-person experience, and the centralized location provided a wider range of regional accessibility.

Crystal Petty, Member Service Representative, says the co-op members come first. “Without them, we wouldn’t be here. Every phone call is important, because if a



member has an issue, we want to help them as quickly and efficiently as possible.”

In the rear of the complex, the industrial components of the building included a 22,700 square foot warehouse and a 15,000 square foot truck shed and crew quarters. Metz’s calculations assured that crew members could move through the facility in a streamlined manner.

COO Cary Johnson says that with our new building and the way our warehouse is set up, the company is more productive because everything is getting in and out quicker.

While the inner workings of the Broad River complex prioritized efficiencies, Nordmeyer managed to create a lodge-type aesthetic for the public face of the head-



quarters by including side pitched roofing on each end of the building and blending earth tone mixed materials—Waterford stone in Avondale color, traditional brick and composite board in pleasing configurations. The modern window design is enhanced with alternating brick arch-shaped brackets, which were scaled down by horizontal wood composite canopies.



"This building is a marked departure from typical electric cooperatives, which tend to have a more common look," Metz says. "The high-level design is not only functional but makes an attractive architectural statement—Chris gets all the credit for that."

The new Broad River headquarters has generated a great deal of attention across the region for its innovative design and build. Staff members have been hosting regular tours of the complex since its debut in 2021. "The one principle that is so important to us as we serve our membership is concern for the community," Mallard says. "We're here for the long term, and we're here to

serve those members with reliable service at reasonable rates. That's a key reason we built this facility." ■

Dave Jackson is Senior Brand Manager, Echelon Masonry, Oldcastle APG, (a CRH Company). Coming from an ad agency background with a specialization in building products, he melds creativity and industry intelligence to help the masonry team remain the premier provider of modern masonry solutions to construction pros, architects and builders across North America.

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The big brew

**IMC Architecture designs new
Le Café Coffee at One Dag in Manhattan**

Photography by Ola Wilk Photography

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IMC Architecture's associate Roberto De Los Rio (left) and principal Dominick Casale, AIA, NCARB (right) at the new Le Café Coffee at One Dag in Manhattan.



IMC Architecture's principal Dominick Casale, AIA, NCARB (left) and associate Roberto De Los Rios (right) led their firm's design team for the new Le Café Coffee location and other alterations and upgrades at One Dag in Manhattan.



Photography by Ola Wilk Photography

The big brew

IMC Architecture designs new Le Café Coffee at One Dag in Manhattan

By Roberto De Los Rios

Le Café Coffee is a regional coffee shop chain and coffee supplier focused on operating retail outlets at iconic locations and inside prominent commercial buildings in New York City. It began in 1952 with the opening of the brand's first coffee factory. The chain's first coffee shop opened in 2013 in Manhattan's Union Square. Since then, Le Café has grown to 12 locations.

Le Café recently signed a lease at another prominent property: the One Dag. Located at 885 Second Avenue, between Grand Central Terminal and the United Nations headquarters complex in Manhattan, the 49-story, 870,000-square foot One Dag was designed by Emery Roth & Sons. The building's name is derived from its alternative address of One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza. The skyscraper houses commercial office tenants as well as numerous national missions to the UN.

The One Dag property management team retained Brooklyn, New York-based IMC Architecture to design the new café as well as several other upgrades within the building, all of which are part of a multi-million-dollar capital improvement program.

Overall work designed by IMC included not only the new café, which was constructed to mainly serve the building's tenants,

“Our firm’s leadership determined that a hybrid work environment—where the majority of the staff would divide their time between field work, home and office—would be most suitable for the firm’s operations.”

— Dominick Casale, Principal, IMC Architecture

but also a new bike room and new package room, as well as upgrades to select hallways and a new bathroom.

The building's lobby extends from 47th Street to 48th Street and Second Avenue. The 300-square-foot coffee shop is located closer to 48th Street and the One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, which is part of the building. The coffee shop's main entrance

is located in the lobby. It has a secondary street entrance, facing one of the property's promenades, which doubles as an after-hours entrance to the building.

“IMC Architecture's interior design studio focuses on commercial, institutional and hospitality projects, including those that need to appeal to international clients, such as the new Le Café Coffee



IMC Architecture's interior design studio completed a new Le Café Coffee location and other alterations and upgrades at One Dag in Manhattan.

Photography by IMC Architecture



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The adjacent lobby's marble wall tile was extended into the café entrance to provide visual continuity for customers when they enter the café from the lobby.



Photography by IMC Architecture

and other upgrades at One Dag,” says Dominick Casale, AIA, NCARB, principal at IMC Architecture.

As the coffee shop’s operator, Le Café provided functional requirements, look and branding directions, and spec and equipment requirements. In the early phase of the design process, IMC’s designers collaborated with Le Café’s team in reviewing branding elements and materials, which included visits and meetings at the chain’s other locations.

The building’s property management provided input and support throughout the process, as it was important to ensure comfortable, well-designed and functional amenities for the tenants.

WB Engineers+Consultants was the MEP engineer and the general contractor was Unity Construction Group.

The café’s branding elements include vinyl wallpaper with vertical green and red stripes in different shades. The wallpaper has a film finish for ease of cleaning.

Design and Construction

“Our team encountered several design challenges during the project,” says Casale. “The coffee shop concept had to be redesigned for a much smaller square footage than a typical Le Café location. To accommodate all required functions in the smaller space, the operator and design team decided to specify a smaller line of appliances as well as a more compact, but functional and visually attractive serving counter.”

In addition, Casale says that since the ceiling in the café contains mechanical systems that needed to remain accessible for maintenance, the layout had to be designed in a way that access to the ceiling wasn’t blocked by furnishings.

The completed café features top-of-the-line appliances and a Caesarstone counter. Some of the walls feature engineered wood in the European oak look and there are white faux brick tiles behind the counter.

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There is continuous wood-paneled wainscoting on the walls as well as shelving to display coffee-related merchandise and ornamental plants. The existing terrazzo flooring was repaired and provides a visual contrast with the darker wood present throughout the space.

The adjacent lobby's marble wall tile was extended to bleed into the café entrance to provide visual continuity for customers when they enter the café from the lobby.

The café's branding elements include vinyl wallpaper with vertical green and red stripes in different shades. The wallpaper

has a film finish for ease of cleaning. Lighting elements include light sconces on the walls, track lighting in the back of the house section, and recessed lighting in the ceiling.

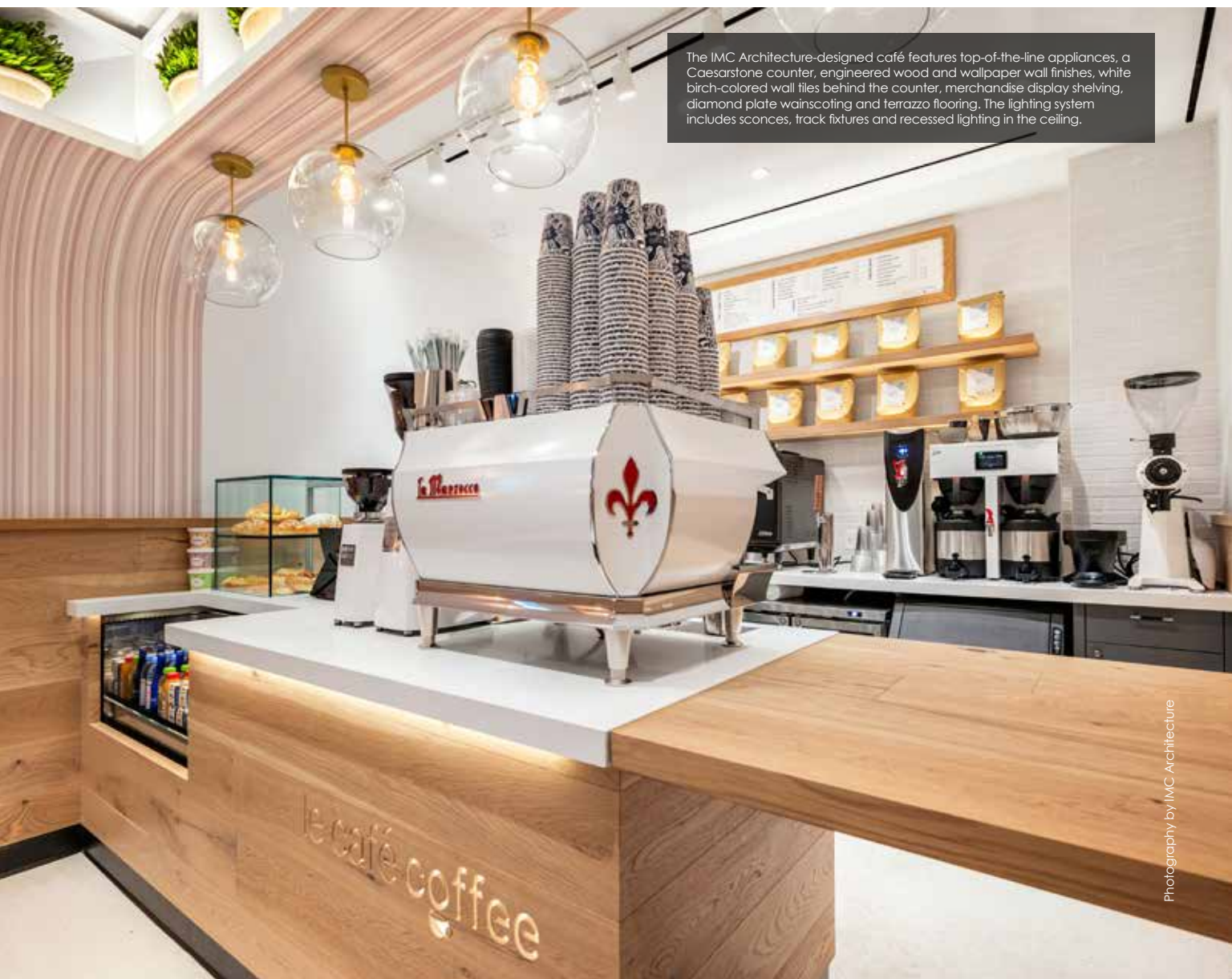
Bookshelves hanging from the ceiling near the counter feature indirect LED lighting that is used for ambiance. The gypsum board ceiling is painted white and features sleek, linear air diffusers, which the designers chose for a more harmonious look with fewer visual distractions.

The new 500-square-foot bike room features bike hangers for 40 bicycles. There is new 2-foot x 2-foot recessed lighting

installed in a new acoustical ceiling, for ease of maintenance. The original package room in the lobby was demolished and reconfigured to house the new café. A new 500-square-foot package room was constructed in the sub-cellar. It features a new window counter with a security roll-down gate for package pick-up.

The package room houses a state-of-the-art X-ray scanner for parcels and allocated space for additional future safety equipment. The package room also has 2-foot x 2-foot lighting fixtures in an acoustical ceiling.

The IMC Architecture-designed café features top-of-the-line appliances, a Caesarstone counter, engineered wood and wallpaper wall finishes, white birch-colored wall tiles behind the counter, merchandise display shelving, diamond plate wainscoting and terrazzo flooring. The lighting system includes sconces, track fixtures and recessed lighting in the ceiling.



Photography by IMC Architecture



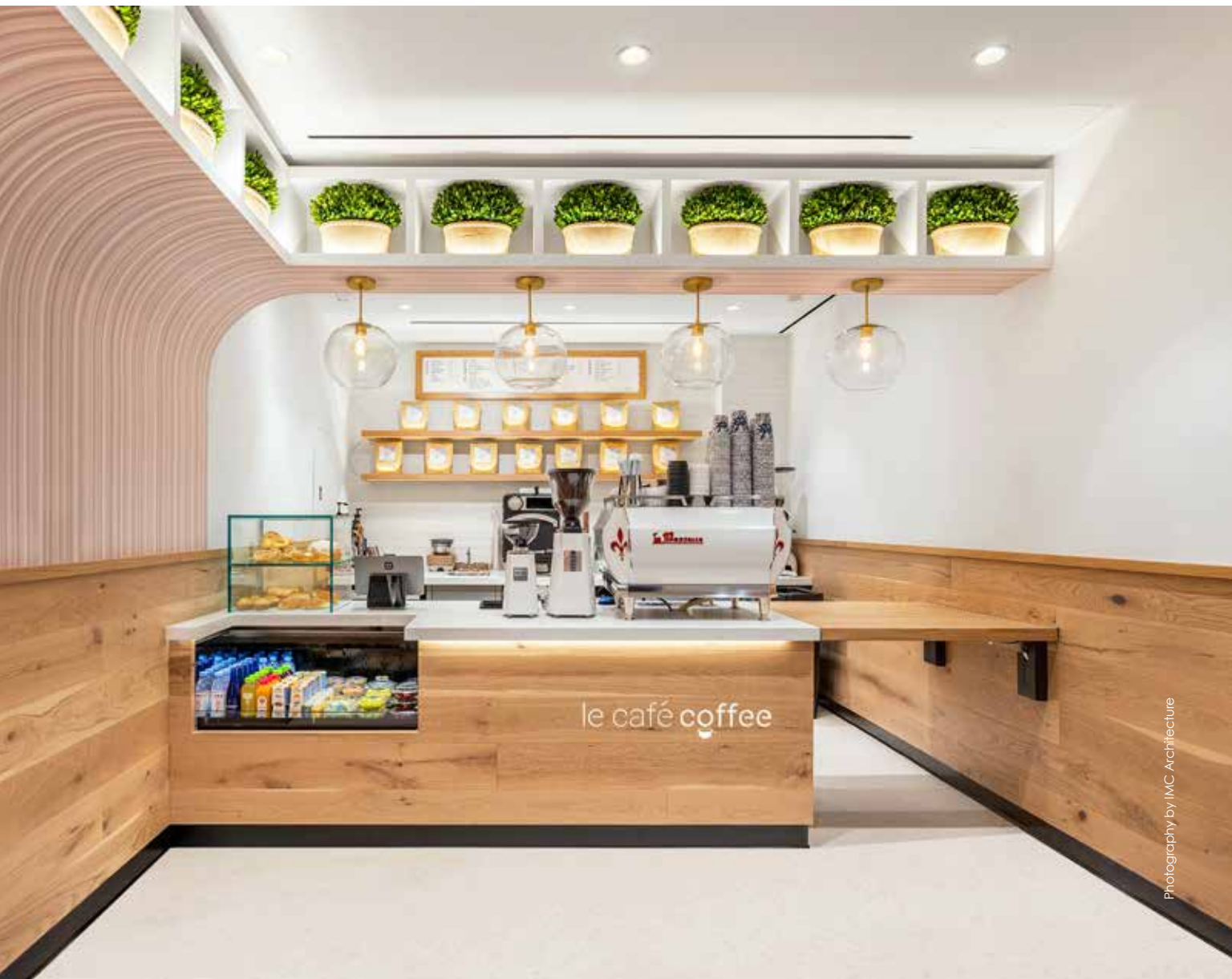
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The teamwork factor

Three principals established Brooklyn, NY-based IMC in 2015: Eugene Mekh-tiyev, AIA, LEED GA; Jonathan Imani, AIA, NCARB; and Dominick Casale, AIA, NCARB. Working mainly in the highly regulated urban environments of New York City and the greater New York area, the

founders believe compliance and creativity aren't mutually exclusive.

In addition to architectural work, the firm offers interior design services as well as zoning and permitting consulting through its affiliate, CORE Consultants.

The firm works predominantly in the commercial, workplace, multi-family, education,

retail, hospitality and worship markets and is one of the pioneers of the modular design and construction technology in New York's multi-family industry. The studio's portfolio features in excess of ten million square feet of architectural design and consulting projects, totaling more than \$2 billion in construction value. **CK**

Roberto De Los Rios, an associate at Brooklyn, New York-based IMC Architecture, is an architect and designer focused on commercial, residential, and institutional markets. He has 20 years of architectural experience and holds a Bachelor's degree from the Architecture and Design Faculty at the Pontifical Bolivarian University in Medellin, Colombia, and a Master's degree from the University of Maryland in College Park, MD.



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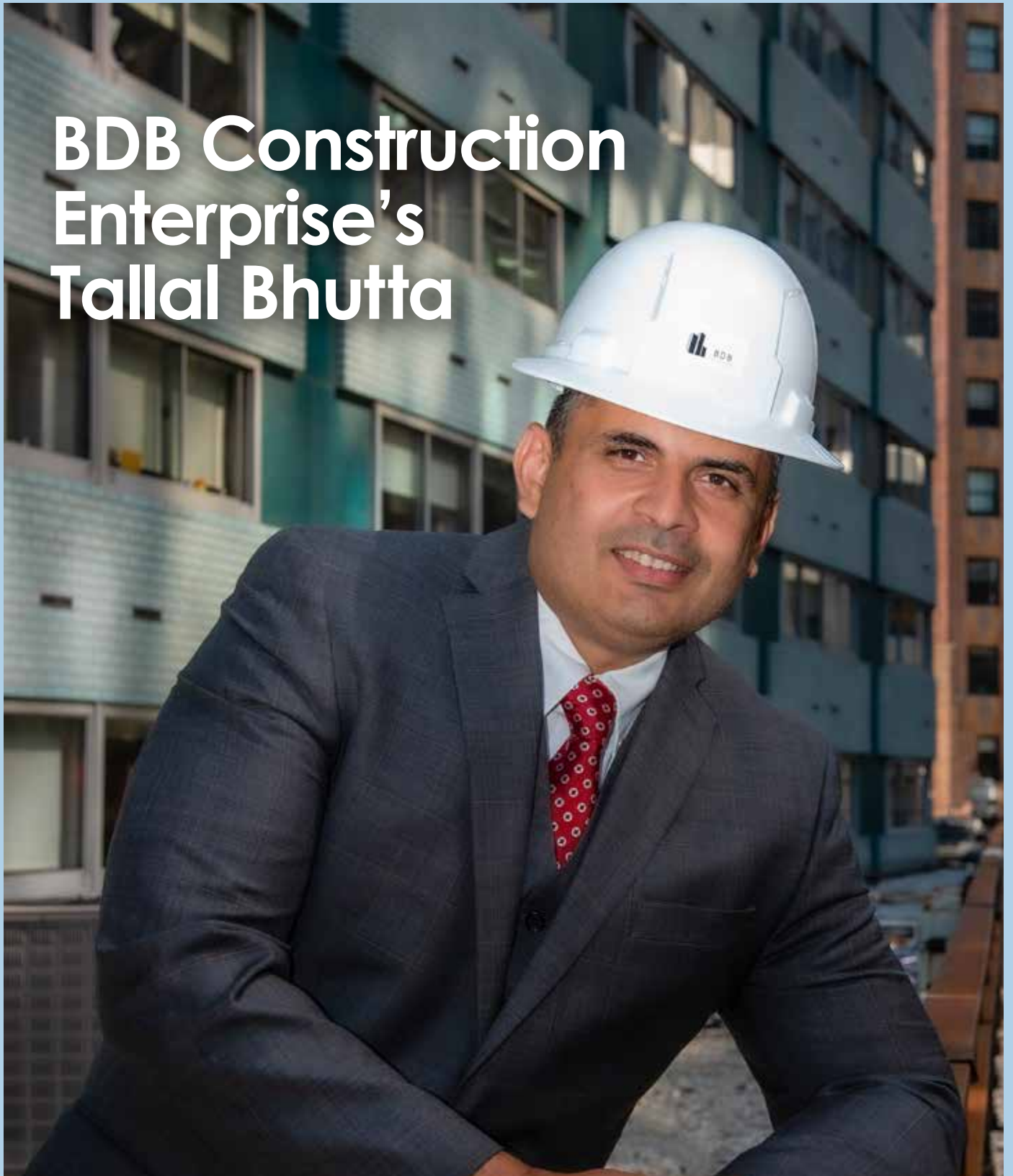
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CIRCLE NO. 39

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

PROFILES

BDB Construction Enterprise's Tallal Bhutta



Meet BDB Construction Enterprise's

Tallal Bhutta

Tallal Bhutta is a construction engineer and founder of BDB Construction Enterprise in New York City. An expert on a variety of construction and development topics, Bhutta is increasingly in demand for his leading expertise in quick-to-market conversion initiatives.

Give us a snapshot of your brand.

BDB Construction Enterprise is an innovative building construction, conversion and renovation company located and growing in the northeastern United States. We're known for repeatedly exceeding our clients' expectations related to budget and schedule by possessing a very integrated approach to project delivery, which ensures high quality results in a faster and tightly controlled process.

We typically get involved in the earliest project phases, from predevelopment to schematics, and work as our client's partner from conception to completion.

What type of clients and markets are you targeting?

We've got a vibrant business serving owners interested in converting or renovating their buildings, from the 1,355-bed adaptive reuse of a historic high-rise hotel to the 24,000-square-foot reimagining of a three-story warehouse to become a new mixed-use complex centered on a church.

There is much more of this work in the market now, including to create more multifamily residential offerings and to revamp underperforming office buildings. BDB Construction Enterprise also is very active in conversions and renovations.

In addition, we have grown our business with residential projects including apartment buildings and condominiums. While the bulk of our activity is in New York, we have requests coming in from other states.





How does your work cater to today's end-users?

In today's construction market, every other project is behind schedule or over budget due to poor planning and execution. Your magazine does its readers a service by helping to reverse this trend, sharing trade secrets and new processes and technologies to speed construction and control costs.

Our work is focused on this: delivering projects on time and within budget. We've instituted best practices in project management and coordination, along with recommending a consultative role where the general contractor helps review design decisions for timetable impacts, constructability issues and possible cost reductions.

How is your construction strategy based?

BDB has pioneered novel methods of predicting challenges, effective ways of dealing with unforeseen conditions, approaches for addressing changes in work scope, and improvements in owner-contractor coordination. Other areas of expertise include breakthroughs in design coordination as well as the use of widely preferred construction approaches such as design-build and integrated project delivery (IPD), even in markets where they are rarely used.

IPD is a way to streamline the various project players, make early decisions to speed the first phases of work, and understand the best possible outcomes as early in the project cycle as possible. We also have a library of materials that are available within a tight timeframe, so we know what can be delivered during our projects' timeframes, from flooring to boilers and beyond. We are also known for a very hands-on approach.

What are some of today's biggest challenges?

Uncertainty is a big challenge. Conventional design-bid-build processes consistently fail to deliver projects on time. We need to come up with strategies to avoid that from happening, and educate owners to make that happen. Also, the dynamic between architects and owners is often very poorly managed and sets up the construction process for delays and cost overruns.





It is often marked by conflict and flawed communications—not the basis for a successful building experience! BDB's mission is to cut through the red tape and the traditions in project delivery that simply don't help. Another issue today is time to market: Business cycles are shrinking and consumer tastes can evolve rapidly. Time is money in the real estate world, and everything we do is focused on saving time.

What are the biggest challenges in construction or renovating a building?

Hidden conditions and uncertainty, unforeseen circumstances of varied kinds—since all of these occur in every construction undertaking, why don't we work to uncover and address those ahead of time? So that's a major focus, working to predict as much as we can in the earliest phases. That helps us with our greater mission: Finishing on time and within budget. That's what we are good at.

Another issue is the revising of plans and architectural drawings. It takes a long

time, so we have created processes that let construction planning, sequencing and procurement proceed while the design team is completing their documentation.

How are you working to promote sustainability?

To be candid, while our building conversions and renovations reduce carbon emissions dramatically as compared to demolition and constructing new buildings, I have never been promoting sustainability. If it's a key goal for our clientele, we show them how to build healthy, energy-efficient and durable projects.

That's sustainable. Beyond that, too much of the hype around sustainability is design nonsense, and I avoid that. It's often greenwashing, and I don't want to have anything to do with it.

Sustainability may sometimes be essential to our clients such as FOUND Study, a developer and operator of buildings converted for new uses as student housing. These projects save substantial energy and reduce carbon emissions by thousands of

tons. Universities no longer need to build new dorms.

So I applaud FOUND Study for saving thousands of tons of carbon emissions by essentially repurposing existing buildings—defunct hotels, half-empty office buildings, and the like.

For construction, we use only healthy finishes and energy-efficient systems such as heat recovery for HVAC. We always recycle any materials that can be used by others downstream, and we encourage best practices in green building design.

What do you see as some of the biggest challenges in construction, moving ahead?

The big challenge remains helping owners through the process. In every project, establishing trust and being a true partner—those are the keys to success, and we all know they're not ubiquitous qualities in our industry. But when you achieve them, when you have mutual trust and are seen as a partner, we can work even faster and meet budgets every time. Trust is a big challenge.



Are you optimistic about what you see in your building and construction sectors?

Yes, absolutely. Conversions are the wave of the future. BDB Construction Enterprise both renovates hotel properties but we also convert buildings away from hospitality used to become university dormitories, which in most markets is in the same building class.

We also see a national conversation about converting office structures and other commercial buildings to residential uses. We need more housing, and more affordable, attainable housing, and converting hotels and offices to residential, for example, is a way to achieve that goal.

What trends are you seeing?

Speed is a key trend. Our clients aren't offering us more time to get our projects done. They are focused on the time value of money, their investors' interests, and the need to get projects online and on the market fast, to get revenue streams started. It wasn't like this years ago, but today, it's the first question we hear: "When can you finish this?"

Another trend among our clients is a rejection of the old process of working with change orders. We hear about projects by others where there is a complete work stoppage, practically on a weekly basis, due to a dispute about a change order. We don't need this, and there are better processes than lurching from one dispute to another.

Again, it comes back to trust. Trust and flexibility in the building team are essential.

BDB is always on the owner's side, working as partners rather than as typical vendors.

Where is your business headed?

We're finding more and more organizations and real estate companies that are seeking construction companies that meet budgets and exceed scheduling expectations. We're headed toward more of those clients.

Yet the projects, while most are renovations or conversions, are quite varied. With the classic Marriott Midtown hotel, which we converted to student housing, we had a gorgeous building with excellent bones and marble finishes. It is very well built.

On the other hand, we have projects like the Elizabeth building, which had broken window sills and heads, making it inefficient to operate and uncomfortable for tenants. Yet, like the old Marriott, it is a landmark, in fact a national historic landmark listed by the National Parks Service. So we had to work very carefully and within the federal and state standards for a landmark façade.

Tell us what makes your brand unique?

First, we work with the owners as a partner. It's not the typical owner-vendor relationship—it is about establishing trust and the basis for an effective partnership. BDB is seen as an innovator but not a pie-in-the-sky dreamer. We are realists, and our breakthroughs are focused on solving challenges faced by our clients in the real world, and on meeting the needs of their customers, too. ■

One-on-One with Tallal Bhutta



Describe a typical day.

I'm up early and off to visit our project sites. After a latté, I'll meet with the project managers on the sites, and work through any new issues or surprise conditions that have arisen. Usually, we have meetings with clients to update them on the work, and sometimes we have permit filings or inspections to discuss.

Lunch is typically a brown-bag affair, with a client or project team. I visit with construction crews to share best practices or work out solutions on some afternoons, and handle paperwork either remotely or back at our headquarters in Staten Island, New York. When I get home, dinner with family and friends is the big reward for another long work day!

What was the best advice you ever received?

I credit my uncle, who taught me to focus on the big picture. He was also my mentor, and his comment about the bigger picture is always with me whenever I'm in the middle of a project. So that's where my focus stays. Projects have surprises and changes that arise suddenly, but we need to see the big picture and keep the work moving forward.

My uncle was a waterproofing contractor, and he tried not to worry about smaller issues. He also encouraged my move into studying engineering, which brought lots of new opportunities.

What's the best thing a client ever said to you?

The client for one of our largest new conversions of a high-rise hotel to student housing said to me recently, "I wish I could clone you and take you to all our projects in every state." That was a nice compliment—and I hope to grow with that client also.

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IN COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION

The 'Heming'

Inside DC's modern
building marvel







The 'Heming'

Inside DC's modern building marvel

By Juan Torres, Project Executive, Skanska

The completion of Heming, a luxury mixed-use development in McLean, Virginia, marks another milestone for Skanska, a leading global development and construction firm. Located at 1800 Chain Bridge Road, this 28-story architectural marvel is a testament to the construction expertise and commitment to quality that has become synonymous with Skanska's projects.

Heming is part of one of the largest developments approved in Fairfax County, situated in the Scott's Run neighborhood, a rapidly growing area. Heming's central location also ensures its accessibility to the broader Washington, DC region.

A Glimpse of Heming

Heming's 28 stories hold a total of 410 residential units, but it doesn't stop there. The development also features 38,000 square feet dedicated to food, beverage and lifestyle-oriented retail spaces, making it a vibrant hub for residents and visitors.

One highlight of Heming is the 360-degree views that offer a panoramic vista of the 6.5 million square foot Scott's Run development as well as landmarks in neighboring Washington, DC.

A remarkable feature of Heming is the 27,000 square foot private outdoor terrace, which serves as a bridge between the public accessed areas and modern urban living. This space features a large pool deck with cabanas, community garden

and grill stations, providing residents with a place to unwind and soak in the serenity of nature.

To ensure convenience for its residents, Heming offers a 24-hour concierge service focused on hospitality.

In the vicinity of Heming, you'll find Platform Avenue, a private street designed to enhance connectivity within

the community. Additionally, a public, terraced plaza known as The Levels, is flanked by retail spaces, destined to become a vibrant focal point for neighborhood gatherings and special events.

As a contractor, Skanska was brought in to assist with the execution of due diligence prior to finalizing the land acquisition. Additionally, the ownership project team

Heming's design caters to various needs with studios, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and even two-story three-bedroom units with private patios, a rare offering in the multi-family housing market.





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organized a visioning session that included architects, marketing firm, research and management teams and the contractor.

This was an opportune time to understand the developer's overall vision and the target market. Early team collaboration, prior to the design stage, helped mitigate a number of potential issues that could have impaired the project's overall vision.

Heming's design caters to various needs with studios, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and even two-story three-bedroom units with private patios, a rare offering in the multi-family housing market.

Sustainability at the Core

Sustainability is a core value for Skanska. The company has set an ambitious target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 within its operations and across its value chain and that commitment is evident in the design and construction of Heming, which is pursuing Fitwel certification and is LEED Gold certified. It also is the first residential building in Northern Virginia to achieve WiredScore Platinum certification, setting a standard for other residential buildings and new developments.

To further promote sustainability, Heming offers EV charging stations and dedicated parking for low-emission vehicles. The building incorporates biophilic design principles, integrating plants and greenery throughout all amenities, including a community garden. The floor-to-ceiling windows maximize natural lighting, while integrated smart access control,

security systems, and connectivity ensure residents enjoy the latest technology for a seamless living experience.

Overcoming Challenges with Innovation

Constructing a project of Heming's scale is not without its challenges. The exterior facade for instance is made of aluminum

composite panels that use 70 percent less aluminum than conventional plates, all while being stronger and lighter than steel.

The construction includes a 24-story residential tower, with post-tensioned concrete construction. This tower sits atop a four-story, mild reinforced concrete podium and two and a half levels of underground parking.

To maximize the spans between the columns, the structural engineering team used thin, seven-inch post-tensioned slabs for the residential floors. This approach not only saved costs but also reduced the amount of embodied carbon in the building.

The unique design of Heming's glass box space, which houses two dedicated resident club rooms, presented another challenge for the structural engineering team. To make the space work seamlessly with the glazing, structural engineers coordinated with curtain wall and cold form steel

manufacturers, ensuring a perfect fit for the architect's vision.

Heming's construction journey began in September 2020, in the midst of supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic. Skanska's internal Strategic Supply Chain group played a crucial role in overcoming market uncertainty with strategic procurement. A notable example was the procurement and storage of mineral wool insulation six weeks prior to installation.

By planning ahead and collaborating with supply chain partners, Skanska managed to mitigate delays and costs related to material and equipment supply chain disruptions.

A Commitment to Inclusivity and Community

Heming's design caters to various needs with studios, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and even two-story three-bedroom units with private patios, a rare offering in the multi-family housing market.

It also takes pride in its commitment to diversity and community. The development includes 53 units as part of Fairfax County's Workforce Dwelling Unit Rental Program, promoting inclusivity and ensuring accessibility to the area. Skanska's focus on blending Heming seamlessly into the Tysons and McLean neighborhoods reflects their commitment to enhancing the community.

Heming is more than just a residential development; it's a gateway to modern urban living. With a commitment to sustainability and innovative design, Heming is set to have a transformative impact on the McLean and Tysons communities.

As the Washington, DC, region continues to grow, projects like Heming are essential in creating a vibrant, interconnected and sustainable future. ■

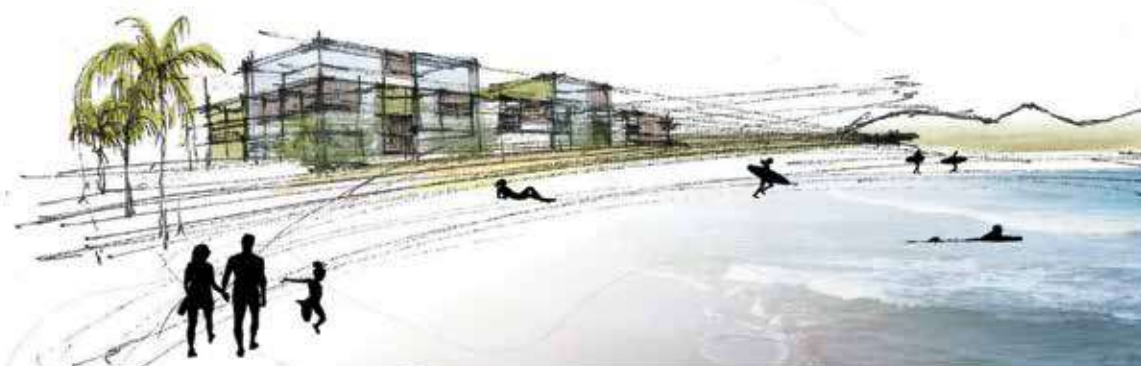


Juan Torres is a Project Executive for multinational construction and development company Skanska. He is a former Lieutenant in the Civil Engineering Corps and SeaBees of the US Navy.

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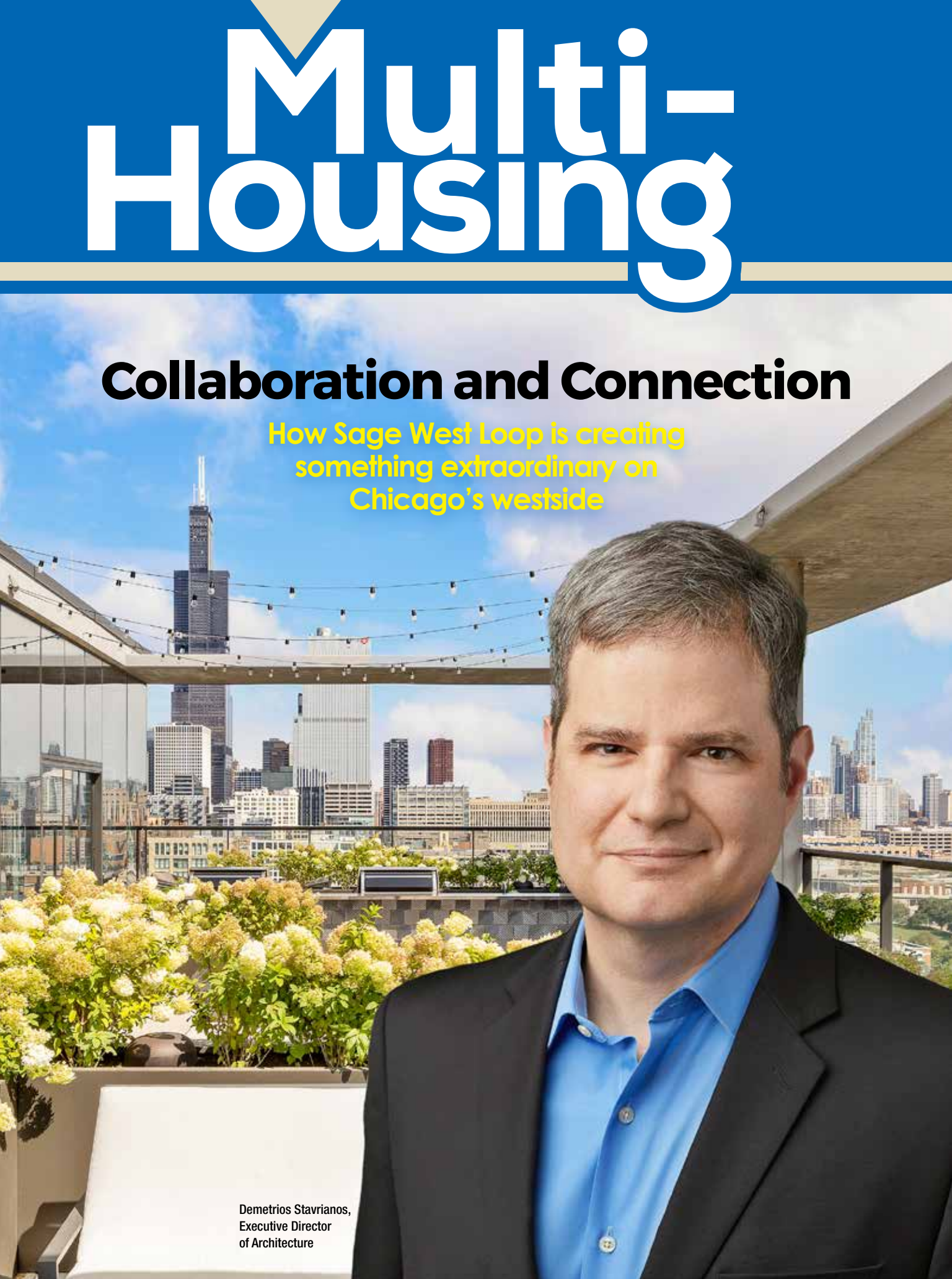
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Multi-Housing

Collaboration and Connection

How Sage West Loop is creating
something extraordinary on
Chicago's westside

A man with short, graying hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a dark blazer, stands on a rooftop terrace. Behind him is a lush garden with yellow and white flowers. In the background, a city skyline is visible under a blue sky with scattered clouds. The Willis Tower is prominent on the left side of the skyline. String lights are strung across the terrace area.

Demetrios Stavrianos,
Executive Director
of Architecture

Collaboration and Connection

How Sage West Loop is creating something extraordinary on Chicago's westside

By Demetrios Stavrianos

Chicago is characterized by its ability to evolve, and there's no better proof than the West Loop's ongoing transformation from meatpacking district to culinary mecca. Now home to top companies like Google, Twitter, LinkedIn, Uber, Pepsi and Cisco, the neighborhood serves high-demand jobs alongside gastronomic experiences.





Renowned educational institutions including Kellogg School of Business, Booth School of Business, Feinberg School of Medicine, Pritzker School of Medicine, and Pritzker School of Law, round out the district and make it an ideal gathering place for students, professionals and epicureans.

Neighborhood transformations happen in part by design and part organically, and even in the West Loop, there are still gaps. The partners at Tandem, themselves Chicago natives, wanted to fill that gap by helping to transform the West Loop into a 24-hour destination.

They purchased and entitled two properties along the west Van Buren Street corridor, just west of Greektown and north of the University of Illinois, Chicago campus. Fronting on the Eisenhower Expressway at 1125 W Van Buren, Avra West Loop was the team's first residential addition to the neighborhood.

Completed in early 2021, Avra was the culmination of a successful collaboration between Tandem, design consultant KTGy, and Antunovich and Associates, which acted as the architect of record (AOR).

Building off the fruitful relationship started with Avra West Loop, when the time came to start on the second phase of the development at 1044 W Van Buren, Tandem hired KTGy to provide the architectural design services, and collaborated with Antunovich and Associates serving again as the AOR on the project now known as Sage West Loop.

One of the team's most important goals was to connect the new building with its bustling urban environment. We did this through thoughtful programming, and aesthetics informed by the rich neighborhood context. A three-story, brick clad podium base warms the portion of the building pedestrians interact with the most. The brick also texturally connects the new tower with the historic buildings in the neighborhood.

Stepping back and rising another 15 stories, the upper residential floors





are clad in an aluminum exterior glazing system with architectural metal panel “ribbons” applied vertically to the facade. The corten-colored panel is inspired by the historic industrial past of the West Loop, complementing the brick-color tones at the building’s base.

The juxtaposition of materials in the façade three-dimensionally captures the movement and activity seen on the street below. Crowning the top of the building is a delicate concrete perimeter canopy, helping define the outdoor rooftop terrace and architecturally punctuating the vertical flow of the tower.

After establishing a strong design connection with the neighborhood, the team then turned to programming to help complete the picture. Amenities are strategically placed

within the building. Retail space, residential lobby and a leasing office are sited on the first floor, blurring the line between public and private by providing a transition from tranquil retreats into the din of the neighborhood. More private functions such as a dog run, pet grooming station and building services are located on the remainder of the first floor.

All parking is located on the second and third floor of the podium. The top of the garage podium incorporates lush landscaping and private residential terraces. These spaces are semi-permeable and allow residents to catch the wafting smell of fresh-ground coffee from a comfortable and shaded seating area.





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Completed in April of 2023, Sage West Loop offers an extraordinary living experience in a dynamic neighborhood brimming with culture, culinary delights and career prospects.



The top floor provides the greatest visual permeability offering large expanses of glass to provide panoramic views of the city skyline. A sky lounge, game room and demonstration kitchen as well as two outdoor terraces give residents the opportunity to interact with each other while also providing more intimate spaces to unwind.

A full-service fitness center and yoga studio are located on the top level with unobstructed views. In addition, responding to the way many people now live and work, residents can more formally work from home in coworking space with private rooms available for their use.

Finally, the team knew that it was imperative that the new development encourage residents to explore the West Loop's abundant green spaces. With a neighborhood Walk Score of 94 and a Bike Score of 93, we wanted to discover neighborhood parks, such as Union Park on Randolph Street, Skinner Park on W. Adams, Mary Bartelme Park on S. Sangamon St., and Heritage Green Park on W. Adams a breeze.

Completed in April of 2023, Sage West Loop offers an extraordinary living experience in a dynamic neighborhood brimming with culture, culinary delights and career prospects. A development like this cannot be judged by pure economic success. What I do is about making special places. I want to set a tone and create an environment that leads people to make new friends and dear memories. It's about contributing something back to the city that we love and believe in. ■

As Executive Director of Architecture, Demetrios Stavrianos brings more than three decades of experience to KTG's growing multifamily, residential, and mixed-use portfolio. Mr. Stavrianos is an accomplished leader with architectural design capabilities, drawing from his previous experience as lead designer and residential studio director to build collaborative teams.

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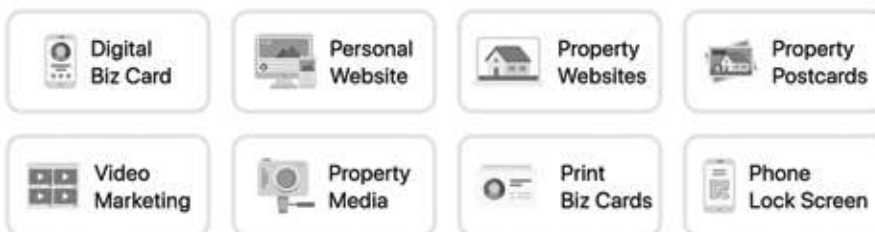


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Into the Triangle

Creating a modern and sustainable emergency operation center



Into the Triangle

Creating a modern and sustainable emergency operation center

By Stephen Devon

Chatham County, North Carolina has quickly become one of the fastest-growing regions in the state, tracking steady population increases every year for the last 12. Seated at the heart of the Research Triangle, Chatham County long served as a quiet suburb, but its proximity to outdoor recreation and urban amenities has created a consistent draw for transplants particularly in the last few years.







From 2019 to 2020, alone, the population grew by 3% and county officials estimate those numbers to double from 76,285 to 152,570 residents by the year 2035.

This rapid and substantial jump in population has prompted immediate and strategic responses from local authorities, who have been quick to recognize the urgent need to fortify essential infrastructure such as roads, schools, and hospitals to accommodate and prepare for the influx of new residents. This proactive approach aims to ensure that the county's development aligns seamlessly with its new population.

As part of these essential improvements, RMF Engineering, in collaboration

with SCHRADERGROUP, was responsible for Chatham County's new Emergency Operations Center (EOC), a state-of-the-art, new-construction facility designed to centralize emergency services and enhance the county's response reach in a crisis.

RMF provided comprehensive mechanical, electrical, and plumbing solutions for the new center, bringing expertise in energy management, HVAC, lighting, security, fire protection, and access control engineering. Leveraging its experience in complex utility generation, storage, and distribution projects, RMF also designed an extensive duct bank system to support the new EOC's IT demands, working with local utility provider,

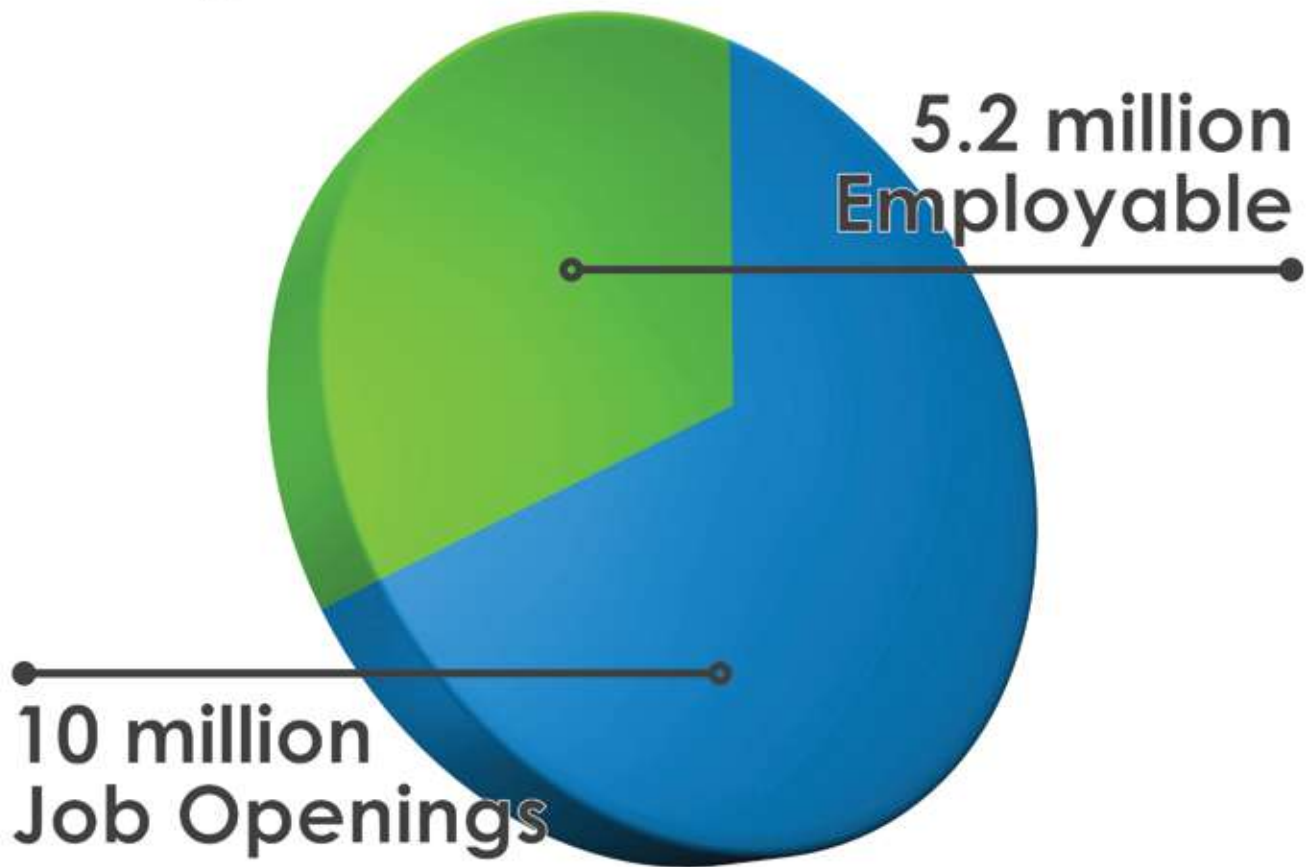
Duke Energy, for electrical power provision and communications cabling to the site.

The Design

Located on a purpose-bought site intended to consolidate Chatham County's municipal buildings, the cutting-edge, new facility integrates the operations of the county's Emergency Management and Emergency Communications Agencies, providing dedicated spaces for briefings, call center operations, training, and essential amenities.

SCHRADERGROUP's modern and sleek architectural design focused equally on the important job of the center to serve Chatham County in times of crisis and on

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the wellbeing of its staff. Recognizing the considerable amount of time EOC personnel spend indoors, often seated at computer screens for the majority of their workdays, SCHRADERGROUP's design incorporated expansive aluminum windows positioned around the building to capture as much natural light as possible.

The layout prioritized well-lit hallways, inviting break rooms and quiet spaces, enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the facility while underscoring the critical importance of its staff being as well cared for as the community.

The layout prioritized well-lit hallways, inviting break rooms and quiet spaces, enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the facility while underscoring the critical importance of its staff being as well cared for as the community.

RMF and SCHRADERGROUP worked together to ensure the resilience of the center—which must withstand the rigors of extreme weather conditions and natural disasters, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, lightning strikes, and snow and ice storms. The team worked through multiple layers of redundancies for its utilities, as well as its technology and data infrastructure, to appropriately plan and size the architecture for the equipment that would be required to support both its primary and backup mechanical, electrical and distribution systems.

The resulting site included both a main building and an ancillary structure, designed to house emergency supplies, vehicles, and equipment.

The program was organized such that the ancillary building and a portion of the office spaces are rated for winds up to 200 miles per hour, while the heart of the EOC—the IT room and Operations Center—is hardened to withstand even greater wind speeds to protect its most critical infrastructure. Consequently, the design ensures that no matter the emergency, Chatham County's new EOC will remain online and fully functional in service to its residents.

Flexible Redundancy

RMF's design for the building's MEP systems not only accounted for day-to-day

maintenance and emergency operations, but also for Chatham County's future growth needs. To ensure the facility remains operational in the face of the most severe weather events, RMF worked with Duke Energy to bring multiple feeders to the site, allowing the building to be served from a back-up if one experiences an outage.

Backup power is supported by a standby diesel generator and docking station, guaranteeing uninterrupted functionality. From there, the distribution system was divided and tied to a manual bypass transfer switch to allow the operations and IT areas to run independently from support spaces.

RMF's design for the uninterruptible power supply (UPS) system for the IT room and Operations Center required close coordination with IT consultants to “right-size” the battery back-up based on the power and raceway demands. RMF also incorporated battery powered lighting, which activates instantaneously during an outage.

Generators and other large backup systems can take up to 10 seconds to restore lighting, which can feel like a long time to occupants if a space goes completely dark. These battery fail-safes give the building a critical edge in responding to an emergency situation.

Each system is tied back to a grounding system that is also connected to a lightning protection system to shield the building from the effect of a strike and diminish any damage should one occur.

Providing further flexibility for the future, RMF and SCHRADERGROUP collaborated closely during the initial planning phases to allow for just enough space within the architecture to house the necessary mechanical equipment and accommodate projected growth expectations. This strategy ensures that the center is able to evolve alongside changing demographics, code updates, the introduction of new technologies, and the like.

Through these collaborative efforts, RMF Engineering and SCHRADERGROUP delivered a groundbreaking new Emergency Operations Center for Chatham County. The innovative design—which equally considers resilience, agility, wellbeing, and future expansion—stands as a testament to their collective dedication and forward-thinking approach to serving the community's needs into the future, setting a new standard in the realm of emergency response initiatives. **FC**



Steve Devon is a Senior Project Manager and Electrical Engineer in RMF's Baltimore Buildings Division. He has extensive experience in electrical design for both new construction and building renovations/additions. With more than 40 years of consulting engineering experience, he has developed a diverse background in a variety of projects from conceptual design through construction phase services.

The Retail Contractor

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WINTER EDITION • 2024

NEWSLETTER

Digital Marketing for Retail Contractors

Last fall, RCA we hosted a Digital Marketing roundtable, a knowledge-sharing event that featured speakers from member companies and a architecture and engineering firm that are leveraging technology and digital marketing strategies to position their companies in the retail construction market.

Our presenters were **Lisa Macneir**, Director of Business Development, Scheiner Commercial Group, Inc., **Brie Gunderson**, Marketing Director, Elder Jones, Inc., and **Jessica Werkowitz**, Director of Marketing & Communications, CESO, Inc. They each had a different perspective on and experience with the use of digital marketing to meet the specific needs of their company.

Macneir discussed her approach to selecting an outside consultant to boost Scheiner Commercial Group's online name recognition and reputation. She shared her process for evaluating the type of digital marketing that would best meet the company's needs. After considering search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, content marketing, email marketing, and mobile marketing, she decided to focus on social media. Scheiner does not have in-house marketing; finding a partner that would extend the company's mission was key. In selecting a marketing company, she considered whether the company had the time to focus on Scheiner's needs, how much time she had to dedicate to the effort, and the return on investment. Macneir selected a marketing company to work with on a 90-day trial basis. After that time, Scheiner realized a 237% increase in LinkedIn page visits, 200% increase in impressions, 40% increased in engagement, and 560 additional followers.

Macneir recommended finding a company that will provide detailed analytics, is focused on our industry and has indicated they have time to dedicate to your needs.

Gunderson explained that Elder Jones manages all of their digital marketing in-house. Her team focuses on the company's website, social media, and email outreach. About five years ago, Gunderson oversaw a complete overhaul of the company's website, ensuring that it made the right first impression and reflected the quality of work that Elder-Jones is dedicated to. The site is thoroughly reviewed on a quarterly basis to make sure it remains current and relevant.



Elder-Jones' outreach plan includes a bi-weekly project feature posted to the website and social media, and social media posts about events attended, community give-backs, staff outings, holiday greetings, the company newsletter, and everyone's favorite honorary office dog, Jax. The in-house team manages a LinkedIn page and X (Twitter) account. The company has realized a 600% increase in social media followers since 2018. Gunderson noted, "Our greatest success is on LinkedIn. That's where businesses are going to connect." She also noted that posts that feature clients are good for relationship building.

Gunderson shared some best practices, including connecting your website with your social media and showing social fields on your website; including hashtags to boost exposure; tagging clients; sharing client posts; and sharing the links with staff so they can like/comment/share to amplify the messages. Gunderson works closely with project managers to stay up to date on project status and keeps in touch with the office staff to learn about company milestones and accomplishments.

Werkowitz talked about working through the "noise" of digital marketing to determine what will work best for you; one size does not fill all. Werkowitz's advice is a **think audience first** approach to shape the framework of your strategy. CESO focused on 12 markets and when developing strategy they define the target audience, develop an understanding of their needs, outline solutions for challenges, and then position the company as a trusted source of information.

"One of the key initiatives for any successful digital strategy is your website," said Werkowitz.



RCA's mission is to promote professionalism and integrity in retail construction through industry leadership in education, information exchange, and jobsite safety.



She shared CESO's structure, which includes a focus on thought leadership and project examples to demonstrate expertise. CESO's team ensures the company's visual and verbal messaging are consistent and that all materials share the same brand aesthetic.

LinkedIn is the only social media platform that CESO uses. The marketing team has a well-defined content calendar that allows them to be intentional with their posts, be highly organized,

and to avoid redundancies. Analytics allow them to see detailed information about the people who are interacting on LinkedIn and visiting the website. Werkowitz said CESO has started to focus on video as an integral part of their digital strategy, which can draw more attention than written information.

A recording of this session is available to members in the members only section of the RCA website.

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President's Message

Eric Handley, COO., William A. Randolph, Inc. (RANDOLPH)



Starting a new year is always an exciting time, as we have an opportunity to reflect on the past year while making new plans and setting goals for the year to come. Getting focused and motivated to head into the new year can be a challenge, especially after the holidays, but it is such an important part of making

the personal and professional change that is necessary.

Our individual companies all face significant challenges in recruiting talent, training and retaining our existing teams, and developing future generations of skilled trades and construction professionals. The RCA is taking on these challenges and intends to leverage the strength and broad representation of our organization to make a difference and promote the industry. Our Workforce Development and Construction Training Committees are working on very impactful events and training that will be made available to member companies and we look forward to providing more information about these initiatives at the annual conference.

Speaking of the conference, this year's agenda and speakers are once again top notch. Last year we had record attendance and positive feedback on the content and format. This year, we have taken the suggestions that were made and have done our very best to make this event even better. I strongly encourage you to attend and to bring a broad cross section of your company as there is something for everyone to take away from this meeting.

It's an exciting time to be a part of the RCA. We have newly elected board members, new advisory board members, new committee members, and new member companies that will all be working together to put in motion the ambitious plans and goals that the RCA has set to accomplish this year.

You know the saying, "If it doesn't challenge you, it won't change you". I look forward to a year full of taking on our industry challenges and working together to make the necessary changes for our companies and the RCA to thrive in 2024.

Our Workforce Development and Construction Training Committees are working on very impactful events and training that will be made available to member companies.

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Dean Olivieri 2001
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K. Eugene Colley 2006-2008
Matthew Schimenti 2008-2012
Art Rectenwald 2012-2014
Mike Wolff 2014-2016
Robert Moore 2016-2017
Brad Bogart 2017-2018
Rick Winkel 2018-2019
Steve Bachman 2019-2021
Ray Catlin 2021-2023

RCA Membership

RCA members must meet and maintain a series of qualifications and are approved by the Board of Directors for membership. They have been in the retail construction business as general contractors for at least five years; agree to comply with the Association's Code of Ethics and Bylaws; are properly insured and bonded; are licensed in the states in which they do business; and have submitted letters of recommendation.

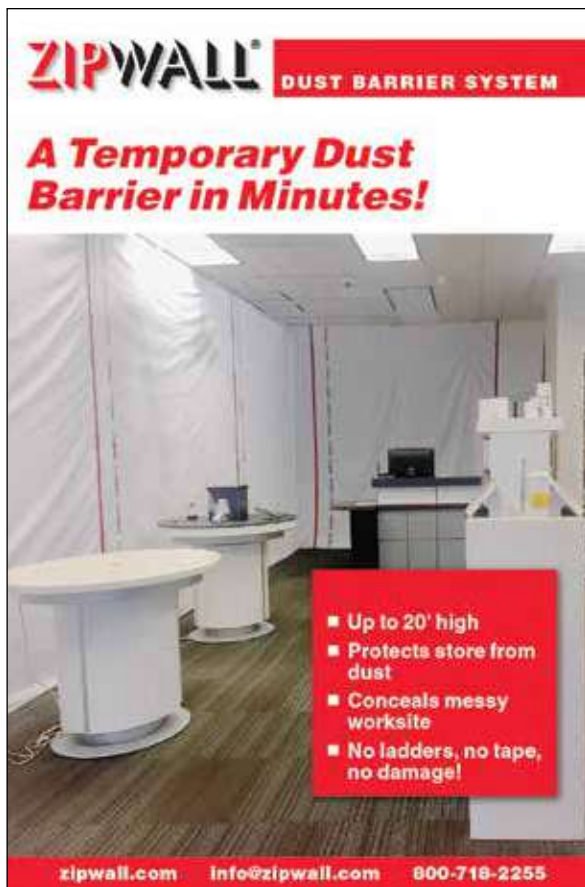
COMPANY	CONTACT	PHONE	STATE	EMAIL	MEMBER SINCE
Acme Enterprises, Inc.	Jeff Lomber	810-499-7127	MI	jlomber@acme-enterprises.com	2009
Atlas Building Group	Brian Boettler	636-368-5234	MO	bboettler@abgbuilds.com	2017
Bogart Construction, Inc.	Brad Bogart	949-453-1400	CA	brad@bogartconstruction.com	2008
Buildrite Construction Corp.	Bryan Alexander	770-971-0787	GA	bryan@buildriteconstruction.com	2013
Buch Construction	Greg Kozero	301-369-3500	MD	gkozero@buch.us.com	2022
Commercial Contractors, Inc.	Kenneth Sharkey	616-842-4540	MI	ken.t.sharkey@teamcci.net	1990
Commonwealth Building, Inc.	Chris Fontaine	617-770-0050	MA	cfontaine@combuild.com	1992
Connor Construction, LLC	Benjamin Connor	856-599-1765	NJ	bconnor@connorconstructionllc.com	2021
Construction One, Inc.	Bill Moberger	614-235-0057	OH	wmoberger@constructionone.com	2015
David A. Nice Builders	Brandon Nice	757-566-3032	VA	bnice@davidnicebuilders.com	2011
De Jager Construction, Inc.	Dan De Jager	616-530-0060	MI	dandj@dejagerconstruction.com	1990
Desco Professional Builders, Inc.	Bob Anderson	860-870-7070	CT	banderson@descopro.com	1995
Diamond Contractors	Lori Perry	816-650-9200	MO	loriperry@diamondcontractors.org	2015
Division 9 Commercial Inc.	Cheryl Montour	770-919-9941	GA	cmontour@division9inc.com	2021
DLP Construction Company, Inc.	Dennis Pigg, Jr.	770-887-3573	GA	dpigg@dlpconstruction.com	2008
E.C. Provini, Co., Inc.	Joseph Lembo	732-739-8884	NJ	jlembo@ecprovini.com	1992
Eckinger Construction Company	Philip Eckinger	330-453-2566	OH	phil@eckinger.com	1994
EDC	Christopher Johnson	804-897-0900	VA	cjohnson@edcweb.com	1998
Elder-Jones, Inc.	Justin Elder	952-345-6069	MN	justin@elderjones.com	1990
Encore Construction, Inc.	Joe McCafferty	410-573-5050	MD	joe@encoreconstruction.net	2018
Engineered Structures, Inc.	Mike Magill	208-362-3040	ID	mikemagill@esiconstruction.com	2016
FMGI Inc.	Darin Ross	678-903-2200	GA	darin.ross@fmgi-inc.com	2022
Fortney & Weygandt, Inc.	Mitch Lapin	440-716-4000	OH	mlapin@fortneyweygandt.com	2013
Fred Olivieri Construction Company	Dean Olivieri	330-494-1007	OH	dean@fredolivieri.com	1992
Frontier Building Corp.	Andrew Goggin	305-692-9992	FL	agoggin@fdllc.com	2018
Fulcrum Construction, LLC	Willy Rosner	770-612-8005	GA	wrosner@fulcrumconstruction.com	2014
Go Green Construction, Inc.	John Castellano	412-389-2577	PA	john@ggc-pgh.com	2017
Graves Construction	Anthony Graves	949-467-1799	CA	anthony@gravesconstruction.com	2022
Gray	Robert Moore	714-491-1317	CA	ramoore@gray.com	2005
Groom Construction Co., Inc.	Dwight Groom	781-592-3135	MA	dwgroom@groomco.com	2023
H.J. Martin & Son, Inc.	David Martin	920-494-3461	WI	david@hjmartin.com	2016
Hardesty & Associates	Scott Hardesty	949-723-2230	CA	scott@hardestyassociates.com	2020
Harmon Construction, Inc.	William Harmon	812-346-2048	IN	bill.harmon@harmonconstruction.com	2017
Healy Construction Services, Inc.	James Healy	708-396-0440	IL	jhealy@healyconstructionservices.com	1996
Immel Construction	Pete Smits	920-468-8208	WI	psmits@immels-builds.com	2018
International Contractors, Inc.	Bruce Bronge	630-834-8043	IL	bbronge@icibuilds.com	1995
JAG Building Group	Matt Allen	239-540-2700	FL	matta@jagbuilding.com	2019
James Agresta Carpentry Inc.	James Agresta	201-498-1477	NJ	jim.agresta@jacarpentryinc.com	2013
Jirsa Construction	Jennifer Jirsa	847-836-1321	IL	jjirsa@jirsaconstruction.com	2022
Kerricook Construction, Inc.	Ann Smith	440-647-4200	OH	ann@kerricook.com	2012
Lakeview Construction, Inc.	Kent Moon	262-857-3336	WI	kent@lvconstruction.com	1998
M. Cary, Inc.	Bill Tucker	631-501-0024	NY	btucker@mcaryinc.com	2014
Management Resources Systems, Inc.	Doug Marion	336-861-1960	NC	dmarion@mrs1977.com	1992
Marco Contractors, Inc.	Martin Smith	724-741-0300	PA	marty@marcocontractors.com	1994
Market Contractors	Kerry Lobbestael	503-255-0977	OR	kerry@marketcontractors.com	2019
National Contractors, Inc.	Michael Dudley	952-881-6123	MN	mdudley@ncigc.com	2018
Pinnacle Commercial Development, Inc.	Dennis Rome	732-528-0080	NJ	dennis@pinnaclecommercial.us	2012
Prime Retail Services, Inc.	Donald Bloom	866-504-3511	GA	dbloom@primeretailservices.com	2014
R.E. Crawford Construction LLC	Jeffrey T. Smith	941-907-0010	FL	jeffs@recrawford.com	2011
RAYWEST DESIGNBUILD	Greg West	910-824-0503	NC	greg.west@raywestdesignbuild.com	2021
Rectenwald Brothers Construction, Inc.	Art Rectenwald	724-772-8282	PA	art@rectenwald.com	1996
Retail Construction Services, Inc.	Stephen Bachman	651-704-9000	MN	sbachman@retailconstruction.com	1998
Retail Contractors of Puerto Rico	Sean Pfent	586-725-4400	MI	spfent@rcofusa.com	1996
Right Choice Development & Construction	Danielle Wright	832-567-9648	TX	danielle@rightchoicedev.com	2023
Russco, Inc.	Matthew Pichette	508-674-5280	MA	mattp@russcoinc.com	1995
Sachse Construction and Development Corp.	Jeff Katkowsky	248-647-4200	MI	jkatkowsky@sachseconstruction.com	2009
Scheiner Commercial Group, Inc.	Joe Scheiner	719-487-1600	CO	joe@scheinercg.com	2012
Schimenti Construction Company, Inc.	Matthew Schimenti	914-244-9100	NY	mschimenti@schimenti.com	1994

(Continued on page 5)

Shames Construction Co., Ltd.	Carolyn Shames	925-606-3000	CA	cshames@shames.com	1994
Singleton Construction, LLC	Denise Doczy-Delong	740-756-7331	OH	denisedelong@singletonconstruction.net	2012
Solex Contracting	Gerald Allen	951-308-1706	CA	jerry@solexcontracting.com	2015
Sullivan Construction Company	Amanda Sullivan	954-484-3200	FL	amanda@buildwithsullivan.com	2012
Taylor Brothers Construction Company, Inc.	Jeff Chandler	812-379-9547	IN	Jeff.Chandler@TBCCI.com	2014
TDS Construction, Inc.	Robert Baker	941-795-6100	FL	inbox@tdsconstruction.com	1994
Thomas-Grace Construction, Inc.	Don Harvieux	651-342-1298	MN	don.harvieux@thomas-grace.com	2012
Threecore, LLC	Ray Catlin	972-800-2910	OH	ray.catlin@threecorellc.com	2021
Tilton Pacific Construction	Robert Schroeder	916-630-7200	CA	rschroeder@tiltonpacific.com	2023
Tom Rectenwald Construction, Inc.	Aaron Rectenwald	724-452-8801	PA	arectenwald@trcgc.net	2010
Trainor Commercial Construction, Inc.	Brian Trainor	415-259-0200	CA	brian.trainor@trainorconstruction.com	2012
Tri-North Builders, Inc.	David Brown	608-204-7227	WI	dbrown@tri-north.com	2015
Triad Retail Construction	Jay Dorsey	281-485-4700	TX	j.dorsey@triadrc.com	2013
Vision General Contractors of GA, LLC	Tony Durand	770-769-4674	SC	tonyd@viscongc.com	2021
Warwick Construction, Inc.	Walt Watzinger	832-448-7000	TX	walt@warwickconstruction.com	2008
Weekes Construction, Inc.	Hunter Weekes	864-233-0061	SC	hweekes@weekesconstruction.com	1990
Westwood Contractors, Inc.	Mike McBride	817-302-2050	TX	mikem@westwoodcontractors.com	1990
William A. Randolph, Inc.	Tony Riccardi	847-856-0123	IL	tony.riccardi@warandolph.com	2011
Winkel Construction, Inc.	Rick Winkel	352-860-0500	FL	rickw@winkel-construction.com	1990
Wolverine Building Group	Michael Houseman	616-949-3360	MI	mhouseman@wolvgroup.com	2012
Woods Construction, Inc.	John Bodary	586-939-9991	MI	jbodary@woodsconstruction.com	1996

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New Advisory Board Members

RCA's Advisory Board is comprised of representatives that work in retail markets including specialty, big box, restaurants and department stores; attorneys; developers; and architects/engineers. Advisory Board members are appointed by the President and serve three-year terms. During that time, they actively assist the RCA Board of Directors in identifying key industry issues and formulating policies and programs designed to positively impact those issues. A list of our current Advisory Board and the companies represented by the Advisory Board over the years can be found at retailcontractors.org/advisory-board.
Meet RCA's newest Advisory Board members.

Stahler McKinney

Stahler McKinney is a senior consultant in FMI's strategy practice. He advises a broad range of clients throughout the built environment, including contractors, architects, engineers, technology suppliers and construction materials producers.

His focus is primarily on strategic thinking and go-to market approach, helping clients make informed strategic choices and develop plans for implementation. This is accomplished primarily through a combination of market research and business analytics, including market sizing and forecasting, stakeholder interviews, financial performance evaluation and trends analysis. Stahler also works closely with a number of industry associations.

Prior to joining FMI, Stahler was a financial advisor with UBS in Charlotte, NC.



Paul Robinson

Paul Robinson is founder and CEO of ConstructReach, a national workforce development consultancy that addressed the underrepresentation of minorities within the construction and design industry. ConstructReach partners with educational institutions, construction and manufacturing companies, and brands across the country to support diversity and organization health initiatives, build new talent pipelines, and create career opportunities for a young and diverse demographic.

After graduating with a degree in Construction Management from Kansas State University, Paul quickly ascended the ladder at Target Corporation to the position of Construction Project Manager. In 2012, he, his wife, and growing family, decided to move home to lead ministry and be tangible examples in their St. Louis, MO community. Shortly afterwards, construction leadership at Target reached out to Paul to assist in addressing its construction workforce development needs, and ConstructReach was founded.



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RCA 2024 Regional Events

These regional networking events bring together RCA members, sponsors, benefit providers, and other supporters. There is no fee to attend these events, but we ask that you register to confirm your spot.



April 11 | Charlotte

Hosted by RCA & Little Diversified Architectural Consulting
NASCAR Hall of Fame Tour & Networking Reception

May 9 | Chicago

Hosted by RCA
AIA Boat Tour & Networking Reception

June TBD | Los Angeles

Hosted by RCA
Peterson Automotive Museum Tour & Networking Reception

July 25 | Grand Rapids

Hosted by Wolverine Construction Group
Knowledge Share & Networking Reception

August 26 | Orlando

Hosted by RCA
Networking Reception at ICSC FL Conference

September TBD | Philadelphia

Hosted by Connor Construction
Knowledge Share & Networking Reception

October TBD | Houston

Hosted by Triad Retail Construction & Warwick Construction
Knowledge Share & Networking Reception

December 3 | Phoenix

Hosted by RCA & CCR Magazine
Networking Reception at ISCSC Centerbuild Conference

Dates subject to change based on venue/presenter availability.
Visit the retailcontractors.org for more information and to register.

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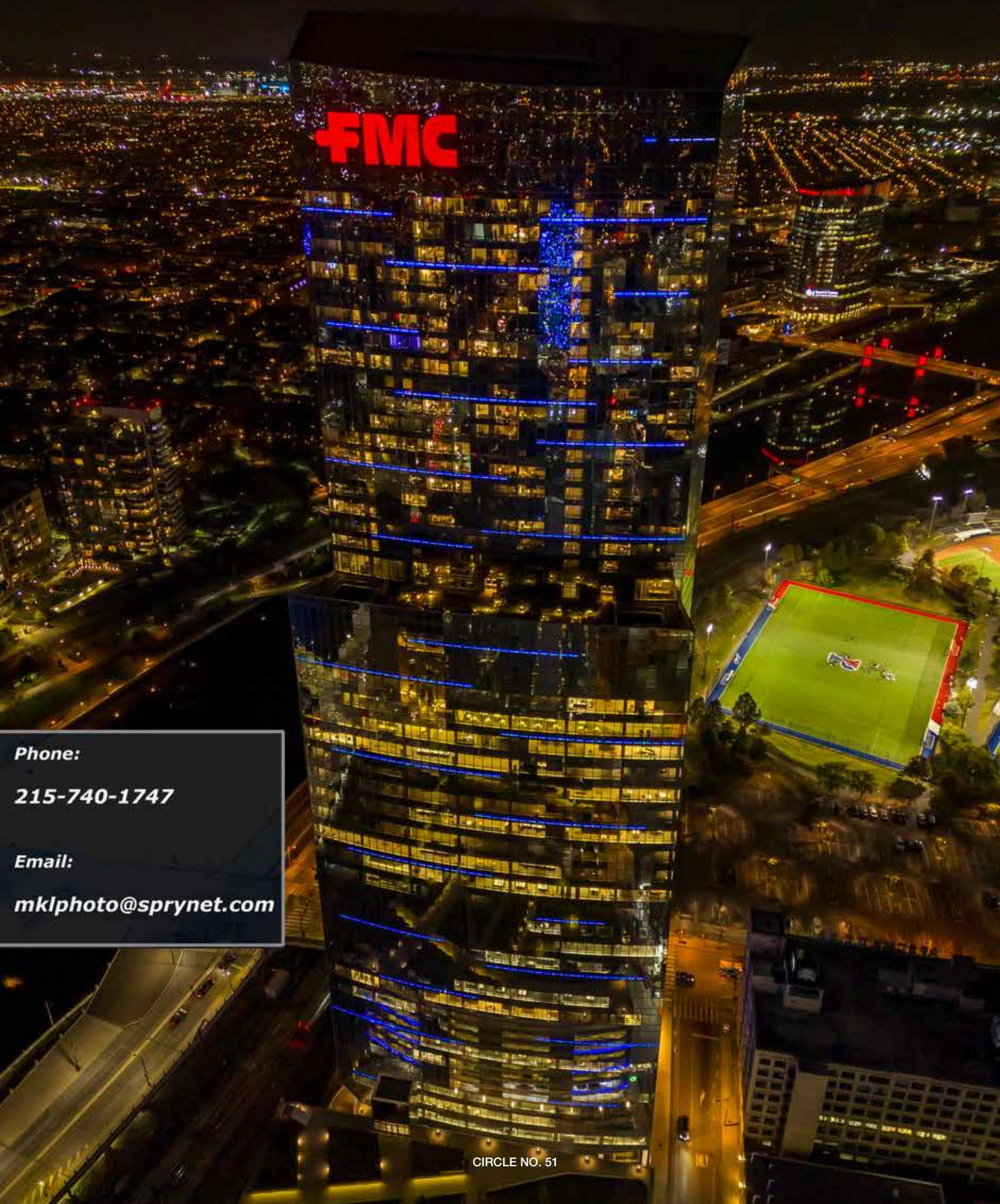


SILVER



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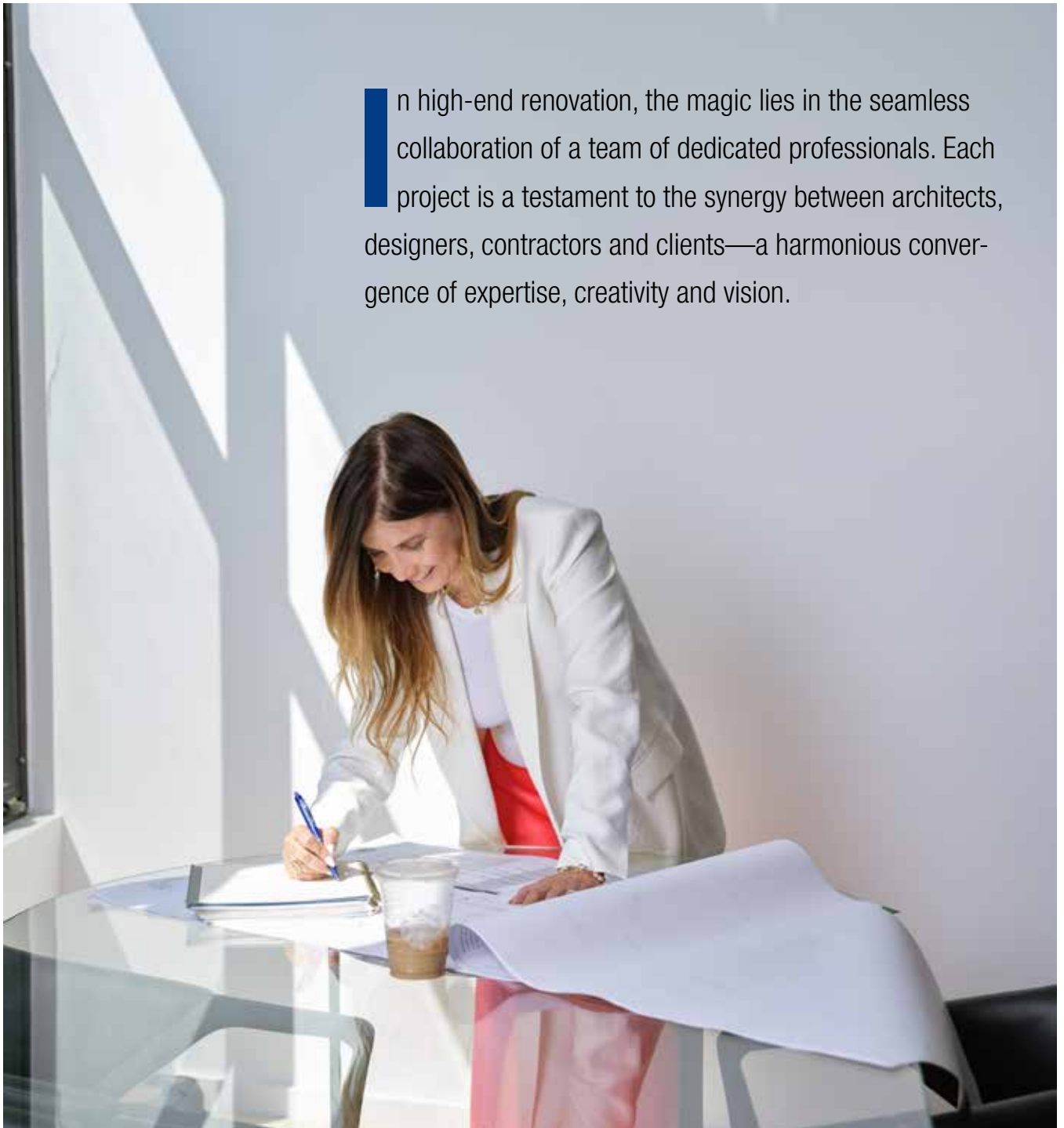
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The Art of Building Partnerships

Collaborative excellence in renovation and investment

By Leah Almog Arazi

In high-end renovation, the magic lies in the seamless collaboration of a team of dedicated professionals. Each project is a testament to the synergy between architects, designers, contractors and clients—a harmonious convergence of expertise, creativity and vision.



My journey in this vibrant sector has been a narrative of such collaborations, where the amalgamation of diverse talents and perspectives creates extraordinary spaces. These endeavors are not mere construction projects but about crafting stories and dreams into tangible reality to build an IDEAL HOME that creates a better future.

Synergy of Expertise and Vision

Our projects blend our client's aspirations, the investors' strategic understanding, and our design and construction expertise. This synergy transcends conventional business dynamics, evolving into partnerships built on mutual respect, experience, and a passion for excellence.

We aim to create spaces that are not just functional and aesthetically pleasing but also reflections of the unique stories and aspirations of those who inhabit them, making each project profoundly personal and meaningful.

Bespoke Strategies in Boutique Investments

Our boutique investment strategy is marked by its bespoke nature. We work closely with investors, ensuring every project is financially viable and a personal expression. An example is the transformation of a historic building into a modern space, balancing the preservation of its legacy with the introduction of contemporary functionality.

This project exemplifies the power of collaboration, merging investor insights with our creative vision to create a space that honors its history while stepping boldly into the future.

Navigating Challenges with Collective Wisdom

Challenges are an integral part of our journey, each serving as a catalyst for growth and innovation. The strength to overcome these challenges lies in our partnership network's robust trust and collaborative problem-solving. Unexpected structural issues during renovations often become opportunities for showcasing our resilience and ingenuity, thanks to our partners' collective wisdom and support.



Celebrating Shared Success

The completion of each project is a moment of shared triumph. Seeing their vision realized, the satisfaction and joy of our clients and investors are incredibly fulfilling. These moments reaffirm our belief in the transformative power of bringing together diverse skills and visions to create something truly exceptional.

Cultivating Lasting Relationships

Beyond the completion of projects, we focus on nurturing relationships that

endure. These connections lay the foundation for future collaborations, creating buildings and communities of individuals united by shared values of excellence and innovation.

Embracing New Technologies and Continuous Learning

In an ever-evolving field, we continuously seek to expand our horizons, embracing new technologies and ideas. Leveraging cutting-edge tools and techniques enhances our collaborative efforts, ensuring our projects are innovative and impactful.



Building Spaces that Tell Stories

Each space we create is a narrative, a reflection of the dreams and stories of those who will live within its walls. We take pride in our ability to listen, interpret, and bring to life our clients' visions, making each project a unique piece of art.

The Joy of Inclusivity and Collaboration

The joy and wonder in the eyes of every family member, especially the youngest, as they explore their new space are the high-lights of our work. In these moments, we truly understand the impact of our work—not just in building structures but in creating homes that resonate with the hearts of those who dwell in them.



Inclusive Family Collaboration: A Cornerstone of Our Approach

A cornerstone of our approach is the inclusive collaboration with our clients' families. We firmly believe that every family member, including children as young as four, has a unique perspective. Their imagination and insights often inspire design elements that infuse our projects with joy and wonder.

Witnessing their excitement, like a child eagerly showing off their new room long after we have completed the project, speaks volumes more than any conventional testimonial. Their genuine delight and appreciation are the most trustworthy indicators of our success.

Crafting a Legacy through Collaboration

The art of building partnerships in renovation and investment is about uniting diverse talents and visions to craft spaces that go beyond their physical dimensions. It is a journey of collaboration, innovation and shared success—a journey towards creating a legacy of excellence that stands the test of time. **CCR**

Leah Almog Arazi, is founder and CEO of OOR, a general contractor in New York City specializing in high-end DESIGN BUILD renovations, building ideal Homes, boutique investments and innovating modern architecture. An entrepreneur and speaker, Arazi has 24 years of experience in the real estate industry, including acquisition, evaluation, marketing, finance, design and construction—both in the US and abroad. She holds a master's degree in construction management from Columbia University and a bachelor's degree in economics from the College of Management.



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Commercial Construction Data

The following is a brief report on new commercial construction projects.

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PROJECT NAME	CITY	PROJECT VALUE	SQ. FT.	CONSTRUCTION TYPE	START DATE
RETAIL/RESTAURANTS/QUICK SERVE:					
McDonald's - Glennwood Commons / Delaware	Delaware, OH	\$1,000,000.00	3,694	New Construction	Q2 2024
Popeye's / Promenade at Granite Run / Pad Site G	Kennett Square, PA	\$773,785.00	2,537	New Construction	Q2 2024
Sow to Go / Gravity	Columbus, OH	\$500,000.00	1,200	New Construction	Q2 2024
Sow to Go / GreenHouse-Short North	Columbus, OH	\$400,000.00	700	New Construction	Q2 2024
RETAIL/STORES/MALLS:					
The Shoppes at Wedgewood	Powell, OH	\$20,000,000.00	43,000	New Construction	Q3 2024
Wawa / Bartonsville	Pocono Township, PA	\$2,000,000.00	6,000	New Construction	Q3 2024
Walmart Supercenter #2613.249 Remodel / Bucyrus	Bucyrus, OH	\$500,000.00	7,052	Renovation	Q2 2024
AutoZone #9356 / Cinnaminson	Cinnaminson, NJ	\$300,000.00	7,000	Renovation	Q4 2024
RESIDENTIAL/MIXED USE:					
The Pacific Park Complex	New York, NY	\$75,000,000.00	587,200	New Construction	Q4 2024
First Avenue L-Shaped Apartment Building	Columbus, OH	\$66,000,000.00	161,048	New Construction	Q3 2024
Hillside Avenue Mixed-Use	New York, NY	\$4,200,000.00	16,671	New Construction	Q4 2024
43rd Street Multi Residential	Philadelphia, PA	\$315,000.00	3,980	New Construction	Q2 2024
HOSPITALITY:					
Ferncliffe Hotel	Melville, NY	\$75,000,000.00	442,183	New Construction	Q3 2024
Canopy by Hilton / State College Towne Centre	State College, PA	\$60,000,000.00	242,370	New Construction	Q2 2024
Woodspring Suites	Dublin, OH	\$30,000,000.00	48,860	New Construction	Q2 2024
Kyma Luxury Resort Hotel	Ocean City, MD	\$14,000,000.00	45,742	New Construction	Q4 2024
EDUCATION:					
Meinig Fieldhouse-Indoor Sports and Recreational Center (ISRC)	Ithaca, NY	\$41,000,000.00	90,000	New Construction	Q4 2024
Jackson Cheder School	Jackson, NJ	\$10,000,000.00	55,000	New Construction	Q3 2024
Brighton 14th Street Community Facility / Brooklyn	New York, NY	\$4,800,000.00	18,605	New Construction	Q2 2024
New Foundations Charter School - Building Addition and Renovations	Philadelphia, PA	\$625,000.00	103,137	Renovation	Q4 2024
MEDICAL:					
Johns Hopkins Medical Office and Surgery Center at Belward Phase 1	Rockville, MD	\$73,300,000.00	126,200	New Construction	Q3 2024
Kent Avenue Mixed-Use Development	New York, NY	\$30,000,000.00	101,000	New Construction	Q3 2024
910 E Willow Grove Avenue Mixed Use	Glenside, PA	\$5,800,000.00	18,600	New Construction	Q3 2024
W Montauk Highway Medical Office Buildings	Hampton Bays, NY	\$3,896,000.00	16,868	New Construction	Q2 2024
Essex Dental Care Office	Narberth, PA	\$230,000.00	1,149	Addition, Renovation	Q2 2024



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Making a run for it

Since the beginning of 2024, I have been hitting the pavement every day—rain, sun, thunderstorms, freezing temps—doing the running thing. I started New Year's and two months in I haven't missed a day.

These 60 year old legs have seen plenty of athletic fields, frozen sheets of ice, black diamond mogul runs or waist deep powder. Now, I have had both ACLs replaced, including using a hamstring in one and patella rubber band in the other, broken noses & bones and plenty of bruises. But, as they say, no pain, no gain. You must feel some pain to improve with anything you do in life.

My plan was to start slow and build up my legs with repetition to get ready for 365 days of hitting the pavement one day at a time. The beginning of February, I decided to record my thoughts while cooling off from my daily runs.

I offer my five-minute take on my day, what's on my mind, and a positive thought to take what you want from as they are truthful and from the heart. When put into action, believing makes for positive results.

Two months into my running, I am averaging about five miles a day with a nice pace, trying to shave off some time each day and switch up my routes from flat to hills. The goal is to run five miles a day, which is 35 miles a week, 140 miles a month, or 1,680 miles for the year.

That's walking from Atlanta to Denver, give or take. You could fly there in three hours, but you wouldn't get to see all the sights on the way.

Two months into my running, I am averaging about five miles a day with a nice pace, trying to shave off some time each day and switch up my routes from flat to hills.

It's actually very rewarding, as well as soothing, to push myself. It has become a great way to break up the morning, mid-day, late afternoon or evening. It also has been a strategic time to reflect, clear my mind and think about what there is to accomplish. Did I do my best? Was there a better way? Then, I can take what I learned, better or worse, and place it in my knowledge vault for the future.

Sure, there have been days I wanted to blow it off. The day you have that feeling is the day you really need to get it done. Now I am on my mission to plan each day to get this daily activity completed as my body craves that adrenaline rush of breathing hard, sweating, followed by a nice cool down. I will need to come up with a catchy title when I merge these videos into one long movie on disc for the history books.

So, as we finish off Q1 and begin Q2, do your best and forget the rest. Live in the moment, as there is only so much time in a day. Make every second count because you cannot get time back.

Here's to a terrific rest of the year to all, good health and prosperity and, as always, Keep the Faith, "Cheers."

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