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Inaugural Issue 2017



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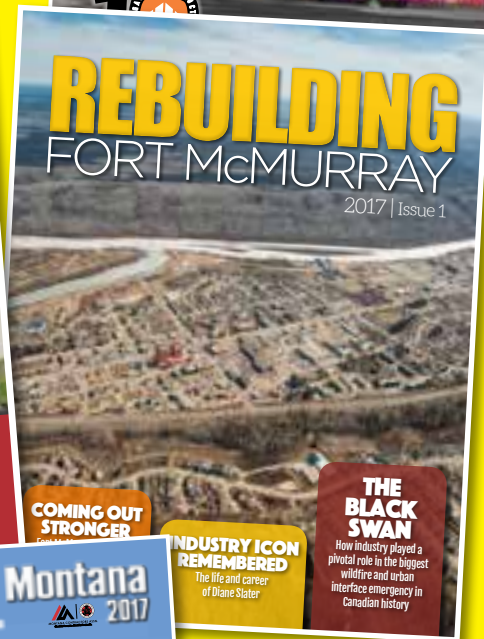
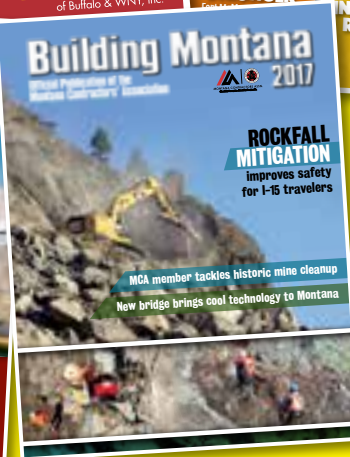
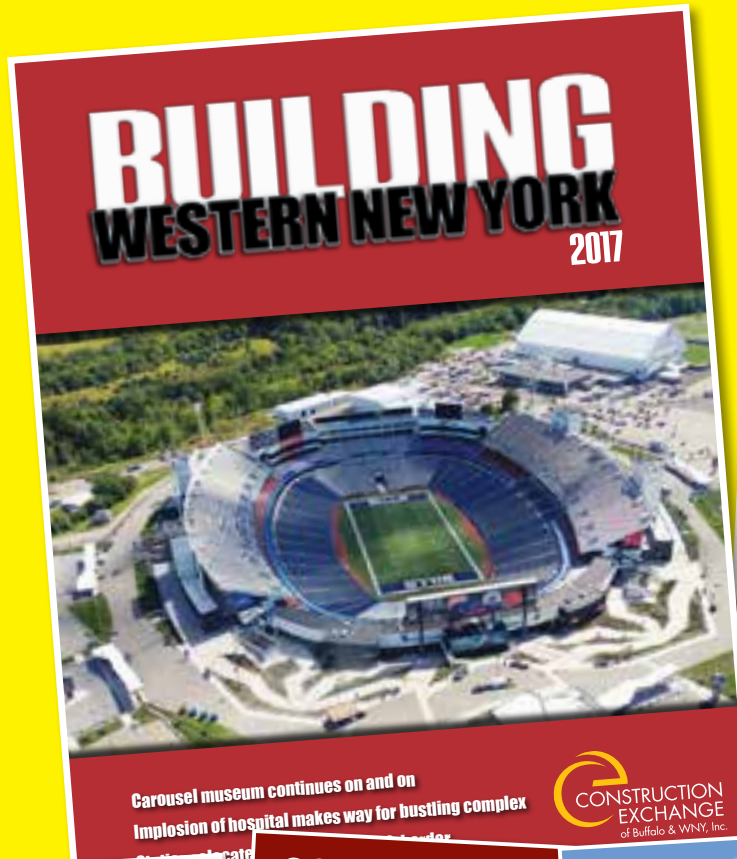
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MESSAGE FROM THE OWNER OF THE BUILDERS EXCHANGE OF WISCONSIN (BXWI)

AMY HARPER

Greetings!

On behalf of the Builders Exchange of Wisconsin (BXWI), I welcome you to the inaugural issue of our official publication, *Wisconsin's Construction Beat*. As industry has been growing steadily over the years, the main focus of this publication will be to highlight projects going on in the state, as well as issues construction firms may be facing statewide.

In this first edition, we are pleased to showcase recent projects that will shape Wisconsin for years to come, from the Wisconsin Entertainment and Sports Center in Milwaukee to the Fox Cities Exhibition Center in Appleton to I-41 construction connecting our entire state.

Since I bought the BXWI from my mother in 2015, staff and I have implemented a few changes as to how we report on projects. It was not an easy decision, but something we felt was important for the future of the Builders Exchange. Though we've met some resistance, we have received many glowing reviews about the new format. Thank you for your continued support and consideration during this new season. Our team is excited about the change and is hard at work to make project finding and reporting better than ever for BXWI subscribers.

We also have two affiliate exchanges that resell our online planroom to their members – La Crosse Builders Exchange and Wausau Builders Exchange. The partnership, initially with four other exchanges, was created nearly 15 years ago so the other exchanges didn't have to find and purchase their own planroom software.

Unfortunately, the other two exchanges have closed their doors, as have many exchanges in Wisconsin. In this dark time, we hope to be a light for the construction industry. Only a few physical planrooms remain. We are a necessity for this industry and hope to be the best resource to find local contractors for years to come.

A new way to bid

The BXWI joins the Virtual Planroom Network to expand online bidding opportunities to members

BY SHAYNA WIWIERSKI

Builders Exchange of Wisconsin (BXWI) members may have noticed a change to the its website in November 2016. Not only did the site get an overhaul, but there's a new way for members to bid and track projects.

The Virtual Planroom Network is a voluntary collaboration of local builders' exchanges, including BXWI, that have agreed to combine bidding information into a single platform so members can see projects in multiple locations with a single login. The planroom contains detailed information required by construction professionals to bid on a project efficiently. Not only can contractors bid for projects in their own builders' exchange (BX), but the planroom enables them to view projects reported by other BXs if they are bidding in other states as well.

The software was first developed in 2011 after the Texas-based Virtual Builders Exchange, LLC (VBX) saw a need for more robust technology and changes to the software they were currently using. Brenda Romano, chief operating officer for VBX, and her business partner developed the platform for their use, then decided to form a new entity, Virtual Planroom Network (VPRN) to collaborate with other exchanges across the United States in need of the same technology. The software was officially launched in Texas in late 2013, with VPRN's multi-tenant platform making its debut in January 2016. Currently there are 13 exchanges within the system.

"Now contractors don't have to leave their home to see information from other exchanges. So, if I'm bidding in Wisconsin and Michigan, I only need to log into one piece of software to see both states," said Romano.

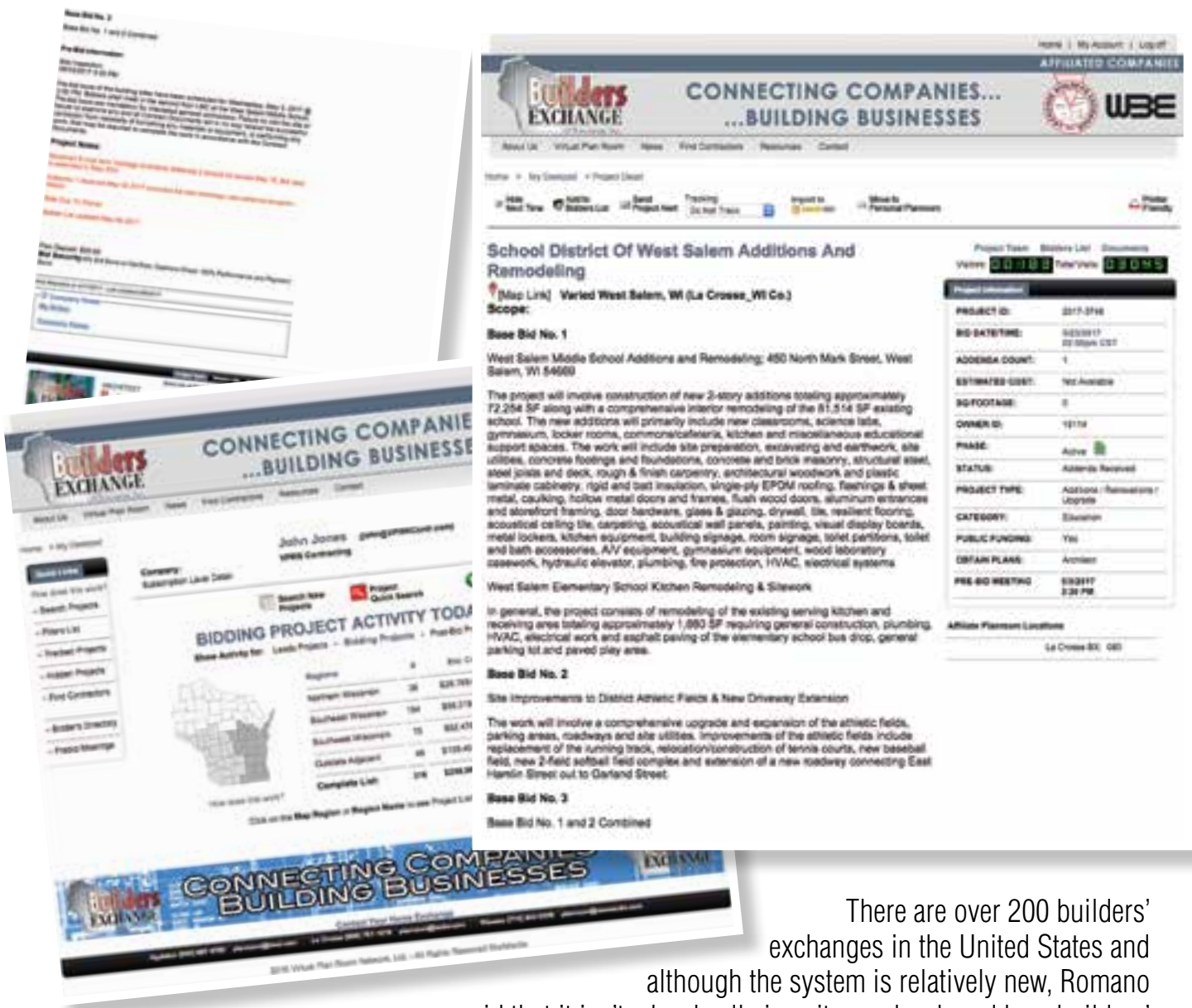
The biggest key feature with the Virtual Planroom Network is the single login to multiple locations. Once you subscribe to the system, you can elect to join multiple builders' exchanges and see information in one location.

"It's similar to a banking system. I have a local bank branch, but if I travel I like to manage my accounts from where I am, so I find the local branch," said Romano, adding that it's creating a new level of collaboration and standardization between builders' exchanges. "We're making it possible for local contractors to work in multiple markets and have the same level of service wherever they go."

There are over 200 builders' exchanges in the United States and although the system is relatively new, Romano said that it isn't a hard sell since it was developed by a builders' exchange, not a software developer. The intention was to give independent organizations the ability to voluntarily collaborate while ensuring the construction industry can access local exchange services quickly and easily.

Once you log into the system, you'll land on Deskpads, the homepage, where states are broken up by regions. For example, Wisconsin has three different regions within the state, as well as the outstate adjacent region, to choose from depending on where contractors want to work. From there, users will access a list which will show the number of projects available on that day for bidding, they can then be sorted by when the bid is due, the location, or filtered to allow contractors to zone in on the specific work they would like to do. Click on a project name that interests you to get specific details such as how big it is, the date the bids are due, the project design team, the contact info, all the bidders, etc. along with immediate access to plans and specifications.

Setting filters is simple. "As an example, if you're a concrete contractor, you can set up a filter to look for only commercial construction projects privately owned in specific counties that include concrete in the specifications. You can also choose to receive a nightly bulletin which



There are over 200 builders' exchanges in the United States and although the system is relatively new, Romano said that it isn't a hard sell since it was developed by a builders' exchange, not a software developer.

lists new projects entered that day that meet your specific needs. You may also add yourself to the bids list," said Romano. "If anything changes to a project a subcontractor is following, they will get notified immediately."

Although builders' exchanges have been signing on quickly to add the service to their offerings, it's been a bit of a learning curve for the users interacting with the software. Romano said that any time a member is asked to change from one system to another there's a 90-day stakeout.

"In the beginning, no one likes change. Every organization that has gone through the transition goes through a 90-day baptism, if you will, for their members to adjust. Once they get it though, we get wonderful feedback. They appreciate

that it's now usable, interactive, and works with a variety of browsers."

Now that the plans are online, it's much easier for contractors to submit their bids, not only in their home states, but across the country as well, saving companies both time and money.

"One of the things that is misunderstood is the degree of time spent bidding on projects. Whether privately or publicly, an average subcontractor loses more bids than they get awarded. They constantly have to bid and secure new work in order to stay in the business," said Romano. "The system we have allows subcontractors to free up their time or zero in on the information they are interested in."



Dive in!

St. Norbert College opens new and improved \$26-million fitness facility

BY SHAYNA WIWIERSKI

Formerly the Schuldes Sports Center, the brand-new Mulva Family Fitness & Sports Center at St. Norbert College includes a state-of-the-art fitness center and a 25-yard swimming pool.

Students at De Pere's St. Norbert College got the perfect summer send off this year when the Mulva Family Fitness & Sports Center opened in early May 2017.

The facility, formerly the Schuldes Sports Center, received a \$26-million expansion and renovation that included a state-of-the-art fitness center — the size of half a football field — as well as a new 25-meter, eight-lane swimming pool.

"Almost 40 years ago we built a conventional indoor athletic arena, which was where our volleyball and basketball games were held. We never really had a serious fitness center on campus or a pool, or any other health-related amenities that more modern students are looking for as part of the college experience," said Thomas Kunkel, former president of St. Norbert College. "For some time, we knew we needed to expand and modernize the facility, so a couple years ago we undertook that to be a priority."

The new building, which was constructed around the existing facility built in 1979, added 50,000 square feet, bringing the space up to 129,400 square feet. Also housed in the center are new administrative offices for the athletics staff, health and wellness services, and the addition of a second floor.

Miron Construction Co., Inc., the general contractors on the project, worked closely with the architect, Performa Inc., to complete the center on time and on budget. They added onto three sides of the building: the main addition on the east side, where the pool — provided by Neuman Pools from Beaver Dam, Wis. — is located; the south side, which features a two-story addition with the upper level housing the health and wellness area; and the west side, featuring the new main entrance lobby and the athletic offices on the upper level.

"Some unique features of the project are all related to the pool addition," said Andy Derksen, senior project manager for Miron Construction. "The views out of that side of the building are looking at the Fox River; there's lots of glass. In the pool area itself, there is an elevated viewing level to watch swimmers and competitions. The fitness center on the north end has all glass so you can look at the pool itself and also out of the building onto the Fox River on the east side."

The project started in March 2016 with the goal of being completed in May 2017. Since the facility houses the college's basketball and volleyball programs, St. Norbert

The new center was built around the existing facility and features two floors, the second of which surrounds the pool.



was trying to hold the disruption to those teams to just one season. As a result, this past year the teams didn't play any games on their home court (they played at other schools across town), and the coaches and weight-room activities had to temporarily move into a different building on the St. Norbert campus. Kunkel says that it was a bit of a logistical initiative on the scale of a military operation; quite complicated and a quick build.

Other complications involved details surrounding the addition of the pool.

"Anytime you have a pool in the mix, your systems, especially HVAC, the chemical balance, humidity, everything is complicated by a couple factors. We were really appreciative that our contractors did such a great job on a tight deadline," said Kunkel. "They finished early so we could give that present to our students."

The present he's referring to is the fact that the fitness facility opened on May 1. Miron finished ahead of schedule so

The center was completed on budget and opened slightly ahead of schedule so the senior class could use the facility before they graduated.



the senior class, which graduated on May 14, could use the center exclusively for the first three days as a thank you for their patience.

"The seniors on campus have been hearing about this building the whole time they've been here... It was exciting to see the students get in there and enjoy it," said Kunkel.

Now that the center is open to all students, the college hopes that it will be an attractive feature for college applicants.

"You ask these students to come live with you for four years; it's their home away from home," said Kunkel, who added that this facility will now place them at an advantage compared to others down the road. "We preach to them that it's important to educate your mind, body and soul, and we do well on the mind and spirit part, but we were taking our responsibility a little less seriously about the body part. It's imperative to have a serious fitness facility to do that." 🍌



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The link

US 41's new interstate designation and upgrades make for a better connection

BY BAILEY HILDEBRAND-RUSSELL



September 26, 1968 – New Highway 41 west side beltline officially opened with Lt. Gov. Jack Olson and other dignitaries at ribbon cutting.

PHOTO CREDIT: NEVILLE MUSEUM



October 5, 2016 – New I-41 corridor officially opened with Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch and other dignitaries at ribbon cutting.

Anyone living near US Route 41 through Wisconsin knows the crucial role the highway plays in day to day life. Though the 200-mile stretch has seen many changes since its beginnings, its role has always been to connect two of the state's most important economic regions – the southeast and the Fox Valley. Route

41's new designation as an interstate in Wisconsin along with significant upgrades means it can continue to serve that purpose properly for many years to come.

Paving on the original US 41 was complete in 1930, according to the Wisconsin Department of

Transportation (WisDOT). The highway on its current alignment on the west side of Green Bay was completed in the late 1960s, with the grand opening held Sept. 26, 1968. While the highway saw many upgrades over the years, those were unparalleled to the recent reconstruction of 31 miles of highway in Winnebago and Brown counties that brought the highway up to current interstate standards and helped prepare for future growth in the region. Environmental studies for the project were underway in 1999. Ten years later, construction in Winnebago County began in 2009 and was completed in 2014. In Brown County, construction ran from 2011 to 2016.

Over half (56 per cent) of Wisconsin's population lives in areas connected by the US 41. The highway is also crucial for industry as well, with 57 per cent of manufacturing facilities and 52 per cent of retail and wholesale businesses in Wisconsin also residing along the

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The new I41/I43 system interchange in Brown County.

route. Highway 41 also brings in \$3.3 billion tourist dollars, according to counties that the US 41 runs through.

Tom Buchholz, I-41 program manager, said before work began the pavement had reached the end of its useful life.

"The existing traffic volumes have grown that the highway was reaching its capacity," he said in an email.

"Traffic was experiencing backups and slow-downs in the a.m./p.m. peaks. Friday night traffic up north and Sunday night traffic returning from northern Wisconsin destinations would experience travel delays."

Friday nights were particularly problematic. Highway 45, a tourist route for northern Wisconsin travelers, would be backed up at the diamond interchange. Meanwhile, drivers on Highway 29, a four-lane facility across Wisconsin, would constantly experience congestion.

To accommodate heavy traffic, expansion to six lanes from four

was completed. Workers upgraded interchanges to handle a higher capacity. Upgrades included lengthening on and off ramps, adding additional lanes and incorporating multi-lane roundabouts. The goal of the 44 roundabouts incorporated in the plan is to encourage drivers to slow down, reducing the severity of

collisions. According to studies by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, roundabouts contribute to 90 per cent less crash fatalities, 76 per cent less crash injuries, a 30 to 40 per cent reduction in pedestrian crashes and 10 per cent fewer bicycle collisions. To help drivers get used to the new roundabout system, WisDOT







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The Lake Butte des Morts Causeway, originally opened in 1955, required upgrades to support higher traffic volumes. Crews built the new eight-lane crossing by widening the causeway to the west.

created the Take It Slow informational campaign focusing on four major safety tips: taking it slow, yielding to the left, not passing and choosing the correct lane.

"I-41 provides a safe transportation system," Buchholz said. "Construction of multi-lane roundabouts at interchange ramp terminals for improved traffic flow and reduction of severe traffic will serve traffic well into the future. Providing bicycle and pedestrian opportunities across 41 will help improve transportation."

Creating active transportation routes became a priority for WisDOT. During the environmental stage, cyclists and pedestrians came forward and voiced their concerns about the 41 — at the time it was a barrier to flow and safety issue for travel. Buchholz said the



designs accommodated pedestrians and cyclists across Interstate 41 at interchanges and grade separations.

The highway was widened for dedicated active transportation lanes. Buchholz said a 12-foot multi-use path was constructed along the highway across Lake Butte des Morts to provide a connection to the Wiouwash State Trail in Winnebago County. The crossing, called the Tribal Heritage Crossing, allows runners, walkers, cyclists and in-line skaters to cross the

water safely. Along the trail, there are interpretive displays for Wisconsin's 11 Indian Tribes, lookout points and fishing spots.

In addition to honoring Native Americans living in Wisconsin, the I-41 Project also worked with individuals living in the areas to create a community-sensitive design. Residents attended workshops and shared their ideas with the design team to make sure the highway structures suited the community's

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Architecture isn't just for Architects



Crews work on the US 10/Oneida Street interchange as part of the WIS 441 Tri-County Project.



image. Not only was I-41 a highly functional transportation network, but it was also aesthetically pleasing to locals and tourists alike.

Buchholz said construction went as planned and the project was on schedule. There were few major challenges, but along the way workers had to deal with poor soil conditions

that needed to be remedied before construction could continue. He also said staging needed to be adjusted to accommodate repairs on the Leo Frigo Memorial Bridge in Brown County in fall 2013.

The budget for the I-41 Project in the two counties is \$1.4 billion. Buchholz said final costs have yet to be

determined, but WisDOT is projecting the numbers to be under budget.

The official grand opening of Interstate 41 was Oct. 5, 2016, marked by a ribbon cutting after completion of major work in Brown County.

For more information and updates, visit www.us41wisconsin.gov.



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The meeting place



Fox Cities Exhibition Center taking shape in Appleton

BY BAILEY HILDEBRAND-RUSSELL

A project 30 years in the making for the City of Appleton and surrounding communities is taking shape as construction on the Fox Cities Exhibition Center is well underway. Ground broke in September 2016 and construction is on schedule for a late 2017 completion. This facility is sure to be a game changer for future events in the Fox Cities.

According to its website, the city has

been researching the possibility of an exhibition center for nearly three decades. It was in 2010 that Fox Cities Exhibition Center Inc. was established as a non-profit organization. A feasibility study for the project began in 2008.

The first conceptual drawings were released in early 2011 and a floor plan draft was revealed shortly thereafter. Plans as to how the exhibition center

would operate began to crystalize. In a June 2011 update, Walter Rugland, one of the individuals spearheading the project, said the facility should be constructed adjacent to the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel on county-owned land. The exhibition center was to be managed and operated by the hotel.

In mid-September 2016, the official design plans were unveiled to the public. Construction began at the end of the month on the structure at Lawrence Street, Elm Street and 8th Street that will connect to the Paper Valley Hotel via skywalk. The overall budget for the project is \$31.9 million.

Miron Construction Co., Inc. responded to the City of Appleton's request for proposals, was shortlisted, interviewed and eventually awarded the role of construction manager. Fentress Architects and Zimmerman Architectural Studios Inc. designed the exhibition center, which will boast 30,000 square feet of exhibition





Workers had to excavate more than 70,000 cubic yards of material to make way for the exhibition center. A portion of the building will be below ground level beside the slope, while the atrium will sit on the hillside.

space (the structure will total 84,000 square feet across three levels). Unlike other exhibition centers and keeping the existing landscape in mind, the facility is being constructed into a hill overlooking Jones Park. A portion of the building will be below ground

level beside the slope, while the atrium will sit on the hillside. Kurt Wolfgram with Miron is the senior project manager and says excavation was time consuming.

"One of the bigger challenges was excavating 70,000 plus cubic yards

of material to allow for the exhibition center floor to be constructed at the same elevation as the adjacent park," Wolfgram explained. "With that said, we were aware of the challenge going into the project and were able to budget ample time to do the work.



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As of May 2017, the renderings include two playground areas, a performance stage, an interactive water feature and a warming shelter for those outside during winter activities.

Planning and preparing to dig a hole that big was one of the more unique challenges presented by the project.”

The city estimates the exhibition center will bring an additional \$6.5 million to the Fox Cities region annually through visitor and tourist spending. Wolfgram is also anticipating the extra boost to the economy.

“I think the impact on the Fox Cities will be pretty epic. The hotel rooms (occupancy) will be increased, local restaurants and shops will see increased spending. The economic impact to the area will be huge.”

Not only will the exhibition center serve the community, it will also look good doing it.

“There are two spaces in the facility — the first is the pre-function space which encompasses finishes similar to what one might find in a hotel lobby,” Wolfgram said. “The exhibition space will be a little more basic — painted

exposed ceilings with concrete floors — to serve as a neutral backdrop for events. The exterior will be a mix of a large curtain wall, metal wall panels and some masonry accents.”

The Fox Cities Exhibition Center is being constructed on culturally-significant land in Appleton on the former site of the St. Joseph Middle School and Convent (St. Joseph Parish still exists across the street). It’s also bordered by Jones Park, which has been closed temporarily to accommodate construction.

The city has not forgotten the park — it’s also being revamped as part of a larger plan. As of May 2017, the renderings include two playground areas, a performance stage, an interactive water feature and a warming shelter for those outside during winter activities.

The Radisson Paper Valley Hotel will also receive a little TLC over the next year. Renovations are underway to

spice up the hotel to better match its flashy exhibition center counterpart. The hotel was set to be renovated a few years back, but the owners decided to push updates back to coincide with construction of the exhibition center.

Construction on the Fox Cities Exhibition Center is expected to wrap up at the end of 2017, with its first event (a sales meeting) to be held in January 2018. Wolfgram says he’s excited to be involved in a project that will have a positive impact on Appleton and all of the surrounding communities in the Fox Cities region.

“Personally, I feel very honored to be part of such an important project for both the community and for Miron Construction. We, as a company, take great pride in constructing the landmarks that define the Fox Cities. The greatest joy will come in the future though, when I can tell my children that I was lucky enough to be part of such a grand project.”



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Shaping downtown Milwaukee

Wisconsin Entertainment and Sports Center to be a new hub for the city

BY BAILEY HILDEBRAND-RUSSELL

The Wisconsin Entertainment and Sports Center is the flagship project in a development that's changing the landscape of downtown Milwaukee.

The 714,000-square-foot, six-level arena is the anchor point of the city's new entertainment district. Once complete, the new home of the Milwaukee Bucks will sit between North Fourth Street and North Sixth Street between West Highland Avenue and West Juneau Avenue, just north of the BMO Harris Bradley Center it will be replacing.

Gabe Braselton, project architect with Populous, said the area west of the river has been begging for redevelopment for quite some time.

"We're within a block or so of the Milwaukee River right behind Old World Third Street in a zone that had been looking to fill that gap east to west in downtown," Braselton said. "It's our vision, our hope that it really lets this area fulfill its potential in Milwaukee, which is a great city of neighborhoods, and give a great walkable feel to an urban

setting and kind of help this little zone keep up with all the great developments going on in town."

Braselton said Populous landed the project through interviews and a design competition and is working with Wisconsin-based firms Eppstein Uhen Architects and HNTB. The Bucks selected Mortenson Construction as construction manager.

"We're thrilled to welcome Mortenson to the team as we continue to transition our collective efforts to transform and revitalize Milwaukee from vision to reality," Peter Feigin, president of the Milwaukee Bucks, said in a press release. "Mortenson is widely regarded as one of the top sports builders in the world, and their unmatched expertise will be an enormous asset as we get to work this summer constructing a world-class, multi-use facility that will be a source of economic growth and civic pride for all of Wisconsin."

The new arena and entertainment block will serve as a con-

One of the most eye-catching elements of the arena will be the sweeping zinc patina facade that begins on the north side along Juneau Avenue, curving over the entire building. (Milwaukee Bucks/Populous)

The main entrance of the arena, as seen from the public plaza and future entertainment block. (Milwaukee Bucks/Populous)



Left: The secondary entrance at the northwest corner of the arena, as seen from N. Sixth Street and Juneau Avenue. (Milwaukee Bucks/Populous)

nection to already active developments in downtown, including Old World Third Street, Water Street, The Brewery, the riverfront, Schlitz Park and the Wisconsin Center. Scott Heberlein, vice-president and general manager of Mortenson, said the company was proud to be a part of a project helping to revamp the neighborhood.

"Mortenson is proud to bring 30 years of local Milwaukee construction experience and partner with the Milwaukee Bucks to help deliver this transformative project for our community," Heberlein said in a press release. "We share in the team's excitement and commitment to provide local workers and businesses the opportunity to help us build this world-class arena."

Construction on the \$500-million arena began June 2016. The first concrete slab was poured the following December and the roof trusses went up in May 2017. Installation of the first 23-ton, 250-foot steel truss took about 10 minutes, according to Mortenson's website.

The Milwaukee Bucks arena is far from the first sports complex Mortenson has built. The Minneapolis-based company has been involved in more than 170 sports projects valued

over \$9 billion, including U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, Pepsi Center in Denver and FedExForum in Memphis.

Once complete, the Wisconsin Entertainment and Sports Center will be easy on the eyes, spicing up the neighborhood with a sleek, modern design. But that doesn't mean it will be all predictable clean-cut lines, according to Braselton.

"We created a building that set out to make a statement architecturally, but also plays on some of the architectural heritage and cultural aspects of this city, by our use of materials and textures where we felt we made a significant architectural move while still being friendly and respectful of the area around us."

The original announcement of the design on the Bucks' website stated that the exterior was inspired by Milwaukee's architectural heritage and the region's rivers, lakes and forests.

Braselton said one of the most eye-catching elements of the arena will be the sweeping zinc patina facade that begins on the north side and curves over the building. The renderings show the zinc panels will take on a wood appearance.

"It's really got a unique texture to it. It's one we think added a very clean and modern look but at the same time captures a different texture than you're used to seeing with metal skins. I think it relates a bit to the area."

Meanwhile, work is currently underway on the entertainment district block adjacent to the new arena. The block consists of a series of buildings that will serve as a connection to Old World Third Street. Designed by Gensler and Rinka Chung Architecture, a Milwaukee-based firm, the



The main entry and atrium boast 90-foot-high ceilings that all levels of the building tie into. (Milwaukee Bucks/Populous)



The Wisconsin Entertainment and Sports Center is expected to be ready in time to host fans for the Bucks' 2018-2019 season. The 17,000-person capacity arena can be expanded for other events. (Milwaukee Bucks/Populous)

structures will cater to different commercial needs, including retail, dining and even a planned year-round beer garden. A public plaza will sit at the center of the block and is expected to be used year-round for a variety of community events including live entertainment and farmers' markets. Hunzinger Construction is in charge of the new builds at the site, while Veit & Company Inc. oversaw demolition of the parking structure that once stood on the site.

"This new space will be a transformational addition to the community and a year-round hub for activity in downtown Milwaukee," Feigin said in a release. "Our ownership had a bold vision for a flexible space that will connect the neighborhood, spur additional development and empower additional local businesses to partner with us in revitalizing this portion of the city. Our fantastic design partners on this project have brought that vision to life and we're beyond excited to see this project taking shape."

Braselton said all sides have come together to create a cohesive vision for the whole area.

"There are a lot of opportunities inside the (arena) to have views out to the city, and as well as from the inside seeing in," Braselton said. "Our main entry is a 90-foot tall atrium space that all the levels of the building tie into. So, at some point, whether you're in there for an event or on the plaza or in that entertainment district, there's a bit of communication going on between those buildings that I really think helps activate both the plaza and the district and the arena itself."

The Wisconsin Entertainment and Sports Center is expected to be ready late summer or early fall 2018, in time to host fans for the Bucks' 2018-2019 season. The 17,000-person capacity arena can be expanded for other events, such as concerts. The entertainment district is scheduled for completion prior to the arena's opening.



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