



50 Years of Craftsmanship

2008 will be the fiftieth year for recognizing exceptional craftsmanship performed on South Florida building projects. The program, started in 1958 by what was then the Broward Builders Exchange, is a one-of-a-kind awards program that honors the individuals who actually do the work or are responsible for the outcome of the installation.

Nominations are received each year from general contractors, design professionals, owners, employers and anyone who witnesses work that exceeds all expectations. *"It surprises me every year that more subcontractors don't take advantage of nominating their employees for the exceptional work they perform,"* says Awards Chair, John Custer, *"I think some employers feel it is up to the foreman or project manager to make nominations and therefore don't take it upon themselves to*

make sure their employees get nominated."

This year being the fiftieth year everyone, including employers, are urged to nominate exceptional work done in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties between June '07 and June '08. In anticipation of an increase in the number of nominations the deadline has been moved up from August 1, to July 15, to allow more time to catalog all nominations before the Judges meet.

"If everyone gets into the habit of taking a digital camera with them when they walk South Florida construction projects and document the job that truly stands out, then all deserving craftsmen have a better chance of being recognized," says Co-Chairman Mike Fee.

Nomination rules and forms will be mailed later this month and you can go on www.casf.org to down-

load the form itself.



2007 Craftsmanship Award Winners

Member News

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Developer Argent Ventures has selected **Miller Construction Co.** as construction manager for the major renovation of Miami's former Omni International Mall, creating an upscale mixed-use complex.

In the project's first phase, Miller will convert the top four floors of the Omni structure into 320,000 sq. ft. of Class A office space.

Suffolk Construction Company, was selected by Training Magazine as a finalist in the "Training Top 125", which is considered the most elite ranking among Fortune 500 companies for training and development. Suffolk's specific rank will be unveiled in February 2008 during a gala sponsored by the national publication.

The *Construction Specifications Institute (CSI)* will begin offering its Construction Documents Technology (CDT) Certificate exam digitally in 2008.

CDT candidates will be able to choose from two exam timeframes in 2008: March 31-April 5 and September 22-27. Candidates will register for the exam through CSI (www.csinet.org) and then choose from approximately 400 test sites in cities throughout the US and Canada.



Omni Rendering



Mobile Field Management for the Jobsite

Each month Construction FOCUS features a CASF member company, selected by drawing a business card from among those attending the monthly networking breakfast. The next breakfast, sponsored by Turner Construction Company, will be held on Wednesday, January 16, 7:30 a.m. at Shula's Hotel in Miami Lakes.

Although Vela Systems is not based here, South Florida has embraced its mobile field management software like no other region of the country. Visit a construction site in the South Florida area today and it's likely that you will see construction managers, architects and owners walking the site, not with a roll of

plans and a notebook under their arm, but instead carrying a Tablet PC. Adam Omansky came up with the idea for Vela while working on a luxury hotel project in Budapest for an architectural firm. During the project, Omansky was frustrated that it took three days to get field inspection information into his firm's computer systems, especially when he saw so many other industries using mobile field technologies to automate and accelerate similar processes. UPS delivery drivers, rental car returns, even parking enforcement - all were using mobile device to eliminate paper, improve accuracy and increase productivity. Omansky thought that the AECO (architecture, engineering, construction and owner) industry needed a similar technology

solution. He found a business partner, Josh Kanner, a technology startup veteran, and together they started Vela Systems in 2005.

The principals believed that mobile solutions had not caught on in the AECO industry for a number of specific reasons. On a work

site, people need to be able to:

- ♦ View Maps: It is impossible to view a site map on a tiny PDA screen.

- ♦ Write notes in their own handwriting: Rarely is there a comfortable spot to sit down in the midst of construction.

- ♦ Work without an Internet or electrical connection: In the past, too many devices depended on constant Internet connectivity and lacked long-lasting batteries.

Vela's mobile field software works on any standard PC, but is usually installed on a rugged, long battery life Tablet PC so that those on a work site can make notes right on the screen just as they would on a paper document. While on site, people can also update punch lists and insert virtual pushpins onto maps to mark issues that need to be resolved. And when they get back to their trailer or office, they can synch all the new information up with the central database that Vela maintains, ensuring all parties are updated quickly and get to work on tasks immediately.

Vela Systems is headquartered in Burlington, MA, but with Vela on more than 25 projects in area, South Florida continues to be its fastest growing market, with projects such as Grovenor House, Opera Tower, 500 Brickell, Axis, The Cipriani, The Trump Royale, The Blue at Doral, and Marina Blue. Vela Systems joined the Construction Association this year and attends the many networking events.

Find out more at www.velasystems.com, emailing info@velasystems.com or by calling 888-VELA-SYS.



VELA SYSTEMS

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Green Renovation is Good for Improving ROI

By Jeffrey R. Crawford, P.E.,
LEED AP, Ross & Baruzzini

Green design, which is gaining popularity for new construction, also is being successfully used for renovation projects in existing buildings and facilities, including owner-occupied and leased space. In addition to being good for the environment and for the people who work in the buildings, green design also can improve return on investment (ROI) by lowering energy costs.

The latest green design technologies can transform even the most inefficient spaces into models of high performance - from HVAC systems that provide minimal energy consumption and reduce heating and cooling loads to occupancy sensors programmed to automatically turn off lights, set back thermostats and reduce ventilation when spaces are vacant.

Although retrofitting existing space with advanced energy efficient systems can be challenging, the payoff in reduced energy costs in most cases is evident in five years or less. After that, the ROI continues to improve, especially compared to energy costs that only continue to rise.

A recent survey conducted by the *American Institute of Architects (AIA)* and Autodesk confirms that the "green" building movement is having an impact. An article in *Data Center Journal* states, "The 2007 Autodesk/AIA Green Index survey reports 70 percent of architects say client demand is the leading driver of green building and that the primary reason these owners and developers are demanding greener buildings is reduced operating costs."

According to the U.S. Green Building Council, which established the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) benchmarks for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings, working with an engineering and architectural design firm that has significant LEED experience with existing buildings will help ensure that projects are designed to maximize efficiency, while minimizing environmental impacts.

As stated on its website, www.usgbc.org, "Using the recognized, performance-based benchmark for building owners and operators



established by LEED to measure operations, improvements and maintenance on a consistent scale, it should be possible to deliver economically profitable, environmentally responsible, healthy, productive places to live and work...introducing green design into existing buildings has a positive impact on the triple bottom line of people, planet and profits."

The types of energy improvements that can make the most significant impact include the following:

♦ **Ventilation Heat Recovery.** Incorporating a desiccant-based, total enthalpy heat wheel into a building's ventilation system can optimize energy recovery from the exhaust air stream and improve indoor

air quality, while providing a very low level of cross contamination between the incoming outdoor air and the exhaust system discharge. During periods of hot weather, the wheel absorbs humidity and heat from the outdoor air, providing cooler, drier air to the building's cooling coils and significantly reducing building cooling capacity requirements. During periods of cold weather, the process is reversed. Results can be significant. Installed chiller and heating plant capacities can be reduced by as much as 50 percent, saving both money and space.

♦ **Demand Control Ventilation.** HVAC control schemes can offer significant energy savings by utilizing CO₂ sensors and/or programmed time-of-day schedules to control the ventilation supplied to a space based on actual occupancy. Since all spaces are not always at their maximum occupancy, the DCV control scheme saves energy by lowering the ventilation rate to correspond to the actual occupancy of the space, while still ensuring the right amount of ventilation is provided for good indoor air quality.

♦ **Day Lighting and Occupancy Sensors.** Because lighting consumes a significant amount of energy, finding ways to reduce the use of lighting can result in significant savings. Options include maximizing natural daylight and installing daylighting sensors, digital timers, and occupancy sensors to automatically turn off lights when not needed. Occupancy sensors, which can be mounted on the wall like a light switch or installed in

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Green Building Renovation

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the ceiling, turn on lights when someone enters a room and then turn them off when the room is empty. They are most effective in spaces that are used infrequently or unpredictably, such as conference rooms, private offices, classrooms, storage areas and bathrooms.

◆ **Energy-efficient Lighting.** T8 and T5 fluorescent light fixtures with electronic ballasts are a good choice for any building retrofit to replace incandescent or T12 fluorescent light fixtures with magnetic ballasts. These types of fixtures are four

times as efficient as incandescent light and roughly 20 percent more efficient than T12 fluorescent fixtures. They also last about 10 times longer than incandescent fixtures.

In addition to the above, there are a wide range of additional measures that can be taken to conserve energy. Some of these include converting the air systems from constant volume to variable volume, installing Low-E, insulated, double pane windows coated on one or more surfaces with a shading component to reduce solar heat gain, and

incorporating wind or solar-generated electricity. Systems that collect rainwater and reuse it for irrigation or flushing water closets and urinals also deserve consideration.

The bottom line for any project is to look at energy savings in terms of a long-term solution that considers the entire building lifecycle for delivering the best ROI.

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*2007 Holiday
Kick-off Party
at the
Riverside
Hotel*



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