

Utah Construction & Design

November 2021

In the (Red) Zone

The Ken Garff Red Zone at Rice-Eccles Stadium is a scintillating example of high-level teamwork between A/E/C firms.

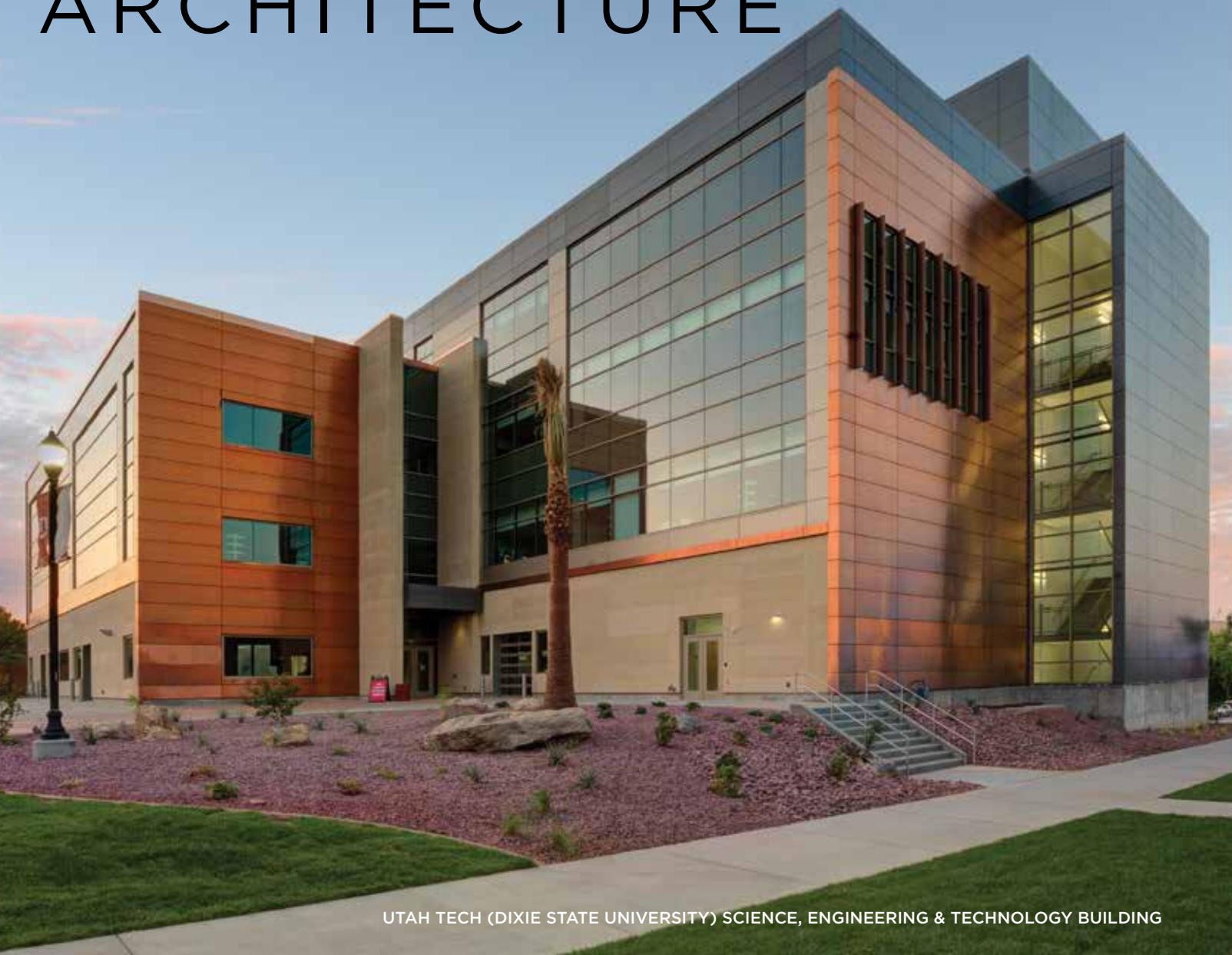
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Brandon Fugal Q&A
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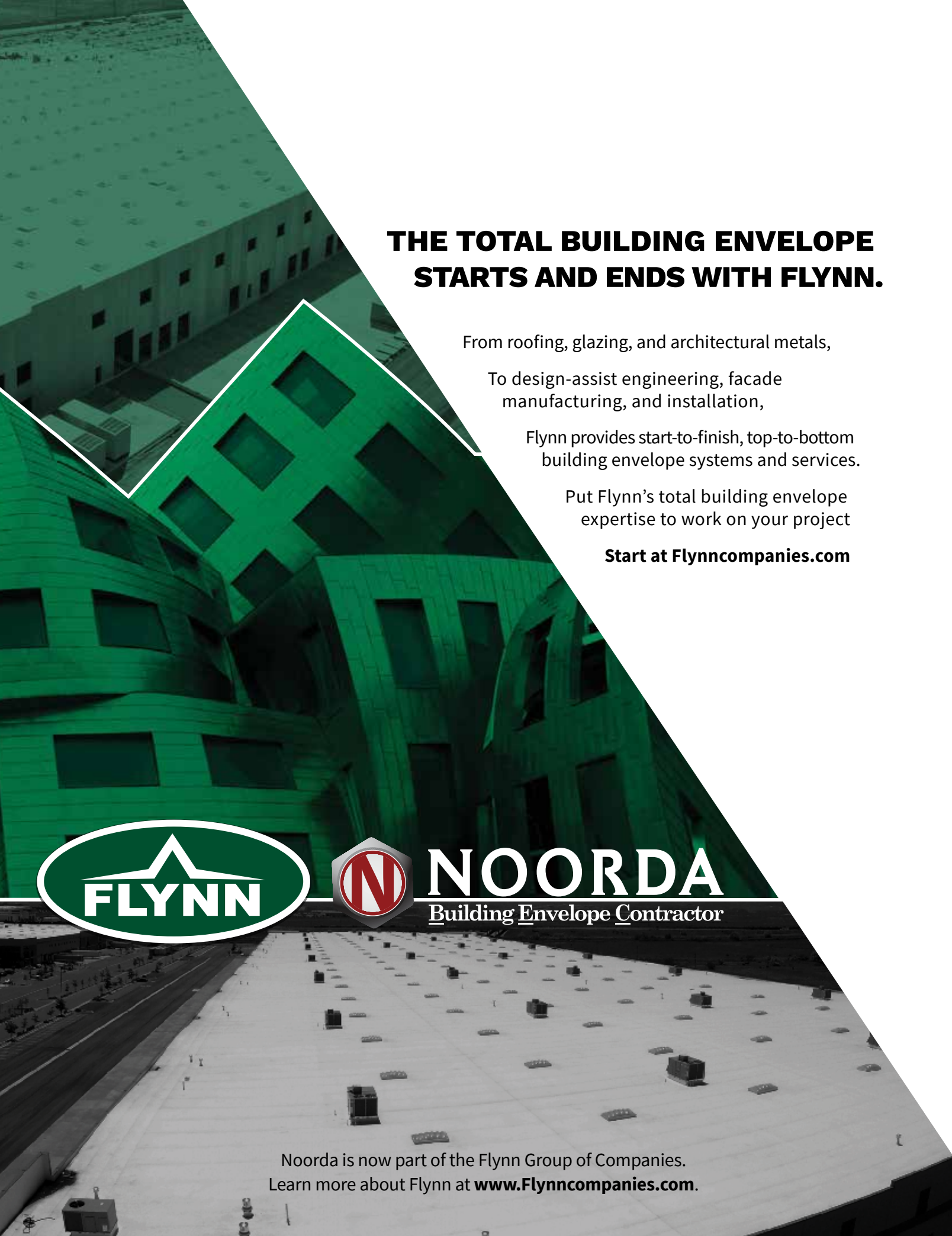
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Utah Construction & Design

- 6 Publisher's Message
- 8 A/E/C People
- 12 Real Estate: Industrial
- 14 Structural Steel Trends
- 16 ULI Utah 2021 Trends Conference

Features

- 18 **Eye of the Tiger** Colliers Chairman Brandon Fugal's work ethic and drive has vaulted him to the top of the commercial real estate leasing market in the Intermountain Region.
- 22 **GSL Electric 40th Anniversary** Sandy-based electrical contractor has a well-earned reputation for delivering quality design-build work.
- 26 **Face Forward** UVU's Scott C. Keller Building & Campus Gateway offers the look and feel of a high-tech corporate office environment.
- 32 **U Know It!** The University of Utah's \$85 million Ken Garff Red Zone at Rice-Eccles Stadium enhances fans' game-day experience while providing the Utes football program with unbelievable new spaces to pamper players and staff and wow future recruits.
- 42 **Stone-Cold Challenges** Local stone/tile contractors and distributors working hard to overcome challenges of product availability, soaring transportation costs/delays and lack of manpower.
- 46 **South City Rising** South Salt Lake's first Class A office building offers tenants exquisite finishes, while serving as another example of the City's continued makeover.
- 56 **AIA Utah 100th Anniversary** Architects reflect on what the 100-year mark for the Utah Chapter of the American Institute of Architects means to them and the local A/E/C industry.
- 60 **UDOT 2021 Conference** Executive Director Carlos Braceras delivers inspiring keynote address to UDOT employees, transportation consultants and vendors.

On the Cover: Aerial view of Rice-Eccles Stadium at the University of Utah, which underwent a complex nearly two-year, \$85 million renovation of its south end zone during 2020-21. Dubbed the Ken Garff Red Zone at Rice-Eccles Stadium, the project boosted capacity by more than 5,600 seats to 51,444, including exciting new premium seating options for Ute football fans. (photo by Endeavour Architectural Photography)

Table of Contents



26



32



42



46

The Value of Mental Health

I've been a big sports fan for as long as I can remember—I credit my older cousin, Steve Calder (four years my senior), for his influence in launching me down that proverbial track. It was in 1976, at the age of nine, that I started choosing my favorite professional teams [Raiders, Reds, 76ers, Flyers – all championship caliber teams at the time, and they remain the teams I root for in each respective sport, except for the Jazz now being my favorite NBA team], and also reading the Salt Lake Tribune's sports section religiously, as in *every single day*. It's reason No. 1 I ended up gravitating to a career in journalism, deciding by age 11 or 12 that I wanted to be a sportswriter.

1976 was also the year I became fascinated by the Olympics, with the Montreal Olympic Games happening that summer. I vividly remember Bruce (now Caitlyn) Jenner winning the gold medal for the United States in decathlon. Four years later at the Lake Placid Olympics was the iconic 'Miracle on Ice', as the U.S. Men's hockey team shocked the mighty Soviet Union 4-3 in what is widely considered the greatest upset in sports history, en route to winning the gold medal.

Watching both the winter and summer Olympic Games every four years became a family tradition that still brings back cherished childhood memories.

This past summer, I eagerly tuned into as many events as I could during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics (delayed a year by COVID-19), and I admit it was a *lot* more than in the past, given the plethora of network and streaming options that now exist. It was an awesome, inspiring Olympics, and more than anything, I found myself enthralled with the many great personality profiles that NBC churned out each day.

Perhaps the most fascinating—and simultaneously tragic—story of the entire games was USA Gymnastics megastar and four-time Olympic gold medalist Simone Biles' decision to withdraw from all but one event (the balance beam, in which she won a bronze medal).

Biles said the two primary reasons she withdrew from five of six events—she was the prohibitive favorite to claim gold in all of them—were 1) a case of the 'twisties', where the athlete "literally cannot tell up from down," she said, and 2) mental health challenges.

Biles posted on social media after bowing out of the women's team all-around final July 27 following her first apparatus, "I truly do feel like I have the weight of the world on my shoulders at times. I know I brush it off and make it seem like pressure doesn't affect me, but damn, sometimes it's hard, hahaha! The Olympics is no joke!"

Neither is the seriousness of modern-day mental health challenges, particularly since the pandemic smacked society upside its head last year with a two-by-four [not to mention the polarizing state of the current hyper-partisan political landscape, but that's an entirely different nasty swamp I care not to wade into at this time].

Biles is one of several high-profile professional athletes to admit to grappling with their mental health in recent years.

Swimmer extraordinaire Michael Phelps, a 28-time Olympic medalist (including 23 gold medals) and perhaps the greatest Olympic champion in history, said he contemplated suicide in 2014 after being cited for a second DUI, leading him to create a documentary titled 'The Weight of Gold', which he narrated and co-produced. Phelps was absolutely brilliant during his role as an NBC commentator opposite host Mike Tirico during the Tokyo Olympics, and his insight into what Biles was dealing with was unparalleled.

Other athletes who have spoken publicly about their depression issues include current NBA stars Kevin Love of the Cleveland Cavaliers and DeMar DeRozan of the Chicago Bulls, and NFL wide receiver A.J. Brown of the Tennessee Titans, who said in an interview November 18 that he had battled suicidal thoughts, nearly taking his own life last November, before close friend and fellow NFL receiver Elijah Moore came to his rescue and talked him off the proverbial ledge. The two were teammates at Ole Miss in 2018. These are people blessed with incredible talent, fame and fortune, yet they still struggle at times understanding their purpose in life.

The reason I bring this up in this column is that I've had my own mental health challenges the past two years, which led to taking time off from *Utah Construction & Design*, as some of you may have noticed. It's hard to pinpoint when my downhill spiral started, but I can attest that once you fall into that pit, it's a bugger getting out.

I hesitated going 'all-in' with this commentary on mental fitness [my first Publisher's Message since December 2019] and putting my cards on the table, so to speak [seven-deuce unsuited], but I was inspired to address the topic after hearing Carlos Braceras, Executive Director for the Utah Department of Transportation, deliver a straight-up *awesome* keynote address during UDOT's 2021 Conference October 26 (see page 60).

I consider Braceras to be one of the most gifted—and genuine—public speakers in Utah's entire A/E/C industry, and he spent several minutes addressing the importance of mental health and his concern for the well-being of UDOT's 1,800-plus employees. (Continued on page 63)



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Utah Construction & Design Magazine
2075 S. Pioneer Road Ste. B
Salt Lake City, UT 84104
O: (801) 924-8788
www.utahcdmag.com

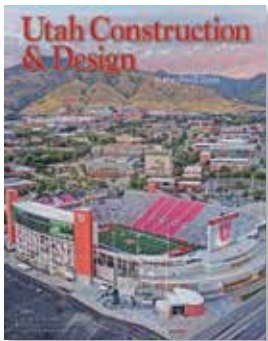
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Utah Construction & Design is published eight (8) times a year. Postage paid in Salt Lake City, UT. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Subscriptions: \$64.00 per year. Subscribers: If Postal Service alerts us that magazine is undeliverable to present address, we need to receive corrected address. Postmaster: Send address changes to 2075 S Pioneer Rd. STE B, Salt Lake City UT 84104. To subscribe or contribute editorial content, or for reprints, please email support@utahcdmag.com. For Advertising rates/Media Kit, please email lmarshall@utahcdmag.com.

Vol. 9 No. 7

Coming in December issue of *UC&D*:
Most Outstanding Projects of 2021

Utah Construction & Design

UC&D '2021 Most Outstanding Projects' Awards

Utah Construction & Design (UC&D) is proud to announce its list of **2021 Most Outstanding Projects**. A panel of five industry professionals handed out awards to 38 projects from almost 90 submissions, including the Ken Garff Red Zone at Rice-Eccles Stadium, which earned the coveted 'Project of the Year' award. A recap of each of the award-winning projects will be included in the December issue of *UC&D* and shared on social media as well as our website.

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CATEGORY

Project of the Year
Adaptive Reuse
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Commercial/Office Over \$10 M
Commercial/Office Under \$10 M
Community Impact
Community/Cultural
Concrete/Tilt-Up
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Multi-Family
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Solar
Specialty Contracting - Electrical
Specialty Contracting - Masonry
Specialty Contracting - Mechanical
Sports/Recreation
Tenant Improvement
Water/Wastewater

PROJECT

Ken Garff Red Zone at Rice-Eccles Stadium
theCHARLI
Utah Valley University (UVU) Pedestrian Bridge
Alpha Warranty Services Office Building
PrinterLogic
Salt Lake County Kearns Library
Mid-Valley Performing Arts Center
Soleil Technology Park - Stonebridge Building 1
Novva Data Center
AGC Training Center
Arch Nexus SLC
Revere Health St. George Campus
Utah Tech University Science, Engineering & Technology Bldg.
I-15 Davis-Weber Express (SR-232 to I-84)
SR 198: Upgrades & Preservation, MP 6-13
Empire Residences
201 Mountain View Park
Lehi High School Rebuild
ARUP Building #4
Tyson Foods Case Ready Plant
Park Avenue
The Magnolia
South Jordan Fire Station 64
North Area Relief Sewer
Jacobsen Construction Corporate Headquarters
Groove Entertainment Technologies Office Building
Orem Family Fitness Center
WSU Outdoor Adventure and Welcome Center
East Ridge Elementary School
USU Biology & Natural Resources Building Renovation
Ovation Sienna Hills Retirement Facility
Clover Creek Solar Farm
Clover Creek Substation
Alpha Warranty Services Office Building
Snowbird Combined Heat & Power Facility
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Weave Corporate Office & Interiors
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IMS Masonry
VBFA
Hughes General Contractors, Inc.
Babcock Design
Alder Construction Company

Utah’s A/E/C Industry Teeming with Personnel Activity and Awards; Brad Staker Remembered

The Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Utah has hired **Diana Miron-Valadez** as its new Director of Member Engagement & Communications.

Miron-Valadez most recently worked as an Administrator for the National Association of Women Business Owners SLC, where she navigated all aspects of a non-profit organization from working alongside board members, facilitating business workshops, creating and hosting business social events, fundraiser and other administrative duties.

She also previously worked for Senior Charity Care Foundation, where she completed her AmeriCorps services. Her role as an Outreach-Coordinator allowed her to connect with the underrepresented senior community by offering free dental services. Witnessing real change became a true passion that guided her to volunteer/work in other community organizations like Comunidades Unidas, Wasatch Community Gardens, SLC Latino Outdoors and NAWBO SLC.

AGC of Utah President/CEO Rich Thorn said Miron-Valadez will bring fresh new ideas to the Chapter on association management, activities and member outreach, and that her experience with trade associations has allowed her to hit the ground running in this new assignment.

She graduated from the University of Utah with a Business Administration degree in 2020.

Michael Nadeau of **Meridian Engineering, Inc.** was honored earlier this year with the ‘Surveyor of the Year’ award from the Utah Council of Land Surveyors during the UCLS 2021 Conference.

Nadeau serves as Meridian’s Survey Division Manager and has worked for the firm for more than 18 years as a Project

Manager and Survey Coordinator on numerous projects for some of Utah’s largest owners, including the Utah Department of Transportation, the State of Utah Division of Facilities Construction Management, Salt Lake City Corp., PacifiCorp and the LDS Church. He has vast expertise in management, design support, surveying, mapping, right-of-way design, and construction oversight.

He has contributed to the industry in many ways during his career, including serving as Adjunct Professor at Salt Lake Community College and Utah Valley University, Chairman of the Surveying Program Advisory Committee at SLCC, Chairman of the Western Federation of Professional Surveyors (WFPS), WFPS Director for the Utah Council of Land Surveyors (UCLS), Past Chairman of the UCLS and Active Member of the National Society of Professional Surveyors (NSPS), and the International Right-Of-Way Association (IRWA).

Tonya Schneider recently joined the staff of **CCG’s** Salt Lake office, where she will serve as a Client Development Manager. She has more than nine years of experience working professionally in Utah’s A/E/C industry, primarily for architecture firms.

She most recently worked for two years at Salt Lake-based Method Studio, and prior to that spent six-plus years at EDA of Salt Lake. Her experience includes designing parking garages, high-rise buildings, assisted living facilities, higher education projects, sports complexes and recreation centers.

Schneider earned a Master of Architecture from the University of Utah in 2012.

Gustavo Zamora was recently hired by CCG as part of the firm’s Client Development team. A native of Los Angeles,

he attended BYU-Idaho in Rexburg, graduating with a Bachelor of Interior Design, before moving to Utah 14 years ago.

A commercial interior designer by trade, he spent more than a decade designing religious, corporate and education projects. He also has four-plus years of interior design sales experience with both flooring and commercial furnishings.

NAIOP, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association, in November named **Angela Eldredge** of Salt Lake-based **Price Real Estate** to serve on its National Board of Directors.

Eldredge will work with NAIOP’s National Board and Executive Committee to guide the direction of the organization that caters to developers, owners and related professionals in office, industrial, retail and mixed-use real estate.

Eldredge is a member of NAIOP’s Utah Chapter and has served in various roles including President.

“I am honored and excited to be serving on the National Board for NAIOP,” said Eldredge. “My involvement with the board has deepened my relationships with our amazing local commercial real estate community. I look forward to serving and being a part of the great work that NAIOP corporate does for all chapters.”

Eldredge was named COO of Price Real Estate in 2019, after previously serving as Director of Business Development and Leasing.

Newmark recently appointed **Nick Wood** to serve as Executive Vice President, Head of Industrial & Logistics Services. Wood will be responsible for the strategic direction of the firm’s industrial business, further augmenting the business line capabilities, infrastructure, and

recruitment, with a focus on enhancing client service.

Wood joined Newmark in 2019 and will continue his role as Market Leader of the Salt Lake City region, which also includes Boise, Idaho and Reno, Nevada.

“I am excited to expand my role to lead Newmark’s Industrial & Logistics business line and have the opportunity to work alongside our best-in-class professionals across our platform to enhance client offerings and capabilities,” said Wood.

Wood has an extensive real estate background with experience spanning nearly two decades. Prior to his current management role, Wood was a brokerage professional with a focus on agency leasing. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Weber State University.

Transportation engineering firm **Lochner** recently announced that **Travis Wilson** has joined its Salt Lake office as an Associate Vice President to lead the marketing and project pursuit efforts for the firm’s West, Midwest, and Aviation groups. Wilson has more than 16 years of experience in marketing and business development in the A/E/C industry, both locally and nationally.

He is a graduate of Weber State University and is a Certified Professional Services Marketer (CPSM) through the Society of Marketing Professional Services (SMPS). Wilson is active in giving back to the A/E/C industry through serving on various boards, mentor programs, and speaking engagements.

HNTB Corporation has named **Dominic Spaethling** as its new Salt Lake City office leader. In this role, he will lead a team of more than 40 transportation infrastructure and architecture professionals.

With more than two decades of experience in transportation, Spaethling is an industry expert in multimodal solutions, and he has played a vital role in expanding the SLC office presence, including supporting the recent Utah Transit Authority contract for program management services. As office leader, he will be responsible for the operations



Diana Miron-Valadez



Michael Nadeau



Tonya Schneider



Gus Zamora



Angela Eldredge



Nick Wood



Travis Wilson



Dominic Spaethling



Jessica Hoffman

and growth of the office and oversee the delivery of complex infrastructure solutions for highways, light rail, bridges, and more in the Utah region.

Previously, Spaethling served as HNTB’s Northwest Division sales officer, helping guide the planning process and increase the sales pipeline for the region.

Spaethling earned a Masters of City Planning at the University of Pennsylvania and a Bachelor of International Relations at Brown University.

The **Utah Chapter of the American Institute of Architects** (AIA Utah) recently selected **Jessica Hoffman** of Salt Lake-based FFKR Architects to serve as its 2022 President-Elect.

Hoffman is a Senior Associate

Architect who has been with FFKR since 2000. She has experience working throughout the western U.S. and with tribal nations in multiple project types, including casinos, hospitality, office, sports, and wellness projects. Recently she has also been working on behavioral health projects for the University of Utah Huntsman Mental Health Institute.

She also heads up FFKR’s “Design Incubator,” a monthly creative event under the Professional Development Committee, meant to spark creativity with a unique challenge to provide a forum for discussion and collaboration within the firm to encourage connections between studios.

“I think it’s important to gather as a community and use each other as a »

resource and support group,” she said about her involvement with the Chapter, adding that she has served on a couple of different AIA Utah committees in the past, including serving as a Board Member Liaison for the Membership Committee board for two years, as well as the 2018 AIA Utah Conference Committee.

Hoffman also enjoys participating in the local chapters of CREW Utah and Women in Architecture (WIA).

As President-Elect, she will be in charge of the 2022 AIA Utah Conference.

“I need to get started on that—I’ll be asking my peers for help,” she said. “I’m very passionate about teamwork; I believe we’re stronger together. It’s typical to say, but it’s true. You do better when you can tap into others’ experience and specialties. AIA helps bring us together and touch the community in a lot of ways. It’s really rewarding.”



Mojdeh Azani



Jason Worthen



Madeleine Black



Bradley Staker

Mojdeh Azani was the 2020 recipient of the Elizabeth Mitchell Travel Grant scholarship, announced in October by the **Utah Center for Architecture** during UCFA’s *Archtober* 2021. It was created by members of AIA Utah to recognize Mitchell, who served as AIA Executive Director from 1990-2011.

Azani’s research topic took her to The Netherlands where she explored how design can mitigate and adapt to climate change, and how Utah can benefit from design strategies from that country to achieve goals for the *Climate Positive 2040* campaign.

Jason Worthen has been promoted to Associate Principal by Salt Lake-based **Spectrum Engineers**. Worthen is an electrical engineer who has been with the firm for more than nine years. As a member of Spectrum’s Healthcare Center of Excellence Engineering (CEE), Jason has spent the majority of his career working on hospitals and other healthcare-related facilities.

His project experience includes many notable projects for Intermountain Healthcare, including the Alta View Clinic

Women’s Services, the American Fork Hospital MRI Replacement, and various projects for Bear River Valley Hospital.

He earned a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering from the University of Utah in 2016.

Salt Lake-based architectural firm **EDA** has hired **Madeleine Black** as an Architectural Designer.

Black comes to EDA from Seattle, where she worked for LMN Architects. Originally from Connecticut, she earned a

bachelor of Urban Design and Architectural Studies from New York University before earning her Master of Architecture from the University of Washington in 2017.

“After living on both coasts, I am looking forward to exploring and getting to know the Mountain West,” said Black. “I am excited to join the EDA team and contribute to the design community here, particularly in the area of sustainable design.”

While at LMN, Black was engaged on projects at higher education campuses including the University of Cincinnati in Ohio and winning a design competition for a project at the University of California at Berkeley. She also championed a graphic storytelling initiative, explaining it as “a graphic language to enhance project presentations and competitions.”

For her UW graduate thesis, which received an AIA Honorable Mention, Black designed a project that focused on water restoration in Mexico City entitled, “Revenge of the Lake.”

IN MEMORY

Bradley Val Staker, 51, passed away unexpectedly October 12, 2021 after suffering an epileptic seizure.

Staker, whose father, S. Val Staker, founded Staker Paving and Construction Co. in 1969 in Utah, also worked in the construction industry, including running a pavement striping business, and also at the family-owned business. Projects of note he was involved with include Monarch Meadows development in Clinton, Bringham Station in Bluffdale, and the Pluralsight campus.

He was considered very much a ‘people person’ for his easy-going manner and ability to connect one-on-one with individuals, both personally and professionally.

Staker was born August 25, 1970 in Murray to S. Val Staker and Sandy L. Martin, and was the eldest of four children. Even at a young age, his love of adventure and sports was apparent, and he was always

looking for the next adrenaline rush. He would always find the humor in a situation, making everyone laugh and brightening their day.

All of this came together at Hillcrest High School in Midvale, where he was one of the first male cheerleaders. After graduating in 1988 and attending a year of college at Brigham Young University in Provo, Staker served an LDS mission to San Jose, California. He returned to BYU, graduating with a degree in psychology in 1994.

Staker’s greatest joy in life was always his family. He married Heather Hobson August 16, 1994 in Salt Lake City and they had four children. He was persistent, patient and long-suffering, but never a complainer, and blazed his own trail through life. He is survived by his wife, Heather; children, Hannah, Avery, Griffin, and Bianca; sister Kim Holmstrom (Mike); parents Val Staker and Sandy Martin (Terry). He was preceded in death by his sister, Brittin, and his brother, Ryan. ■

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Adding Value for Clients in a Demanding Industrial Market

By Ryan Flint

Utah continues to pride itself in its booming economy with major manufacturing, technology, biotech and distribution companies located throughout the state. Not only has Salt Lake City maintained its status as a major shipping hub, recently, St. George has seen major growth as a key western distribution

hub as well—all good news for Utah. As businesses continue to flock to the Beehive State and people move out of the higher cost of living states such as California, tenants looking to establish a presence along the fast-growing Wasatch Front may find it difficult to find the perfect space for them. That is where



Mountain West Commercial helped booming online grocer Misfits Market secure leases for two large industrial warehouse properties in Utah, including 100,000 SF of space in Salt Lake's Northwest Quadrant, and a massive 300,000 SF facility in West Jordan, which opened in mid-November and will function as one of three major U.S. distribution hubs for the firm. (photos courtesy Mountain West Commercial)



Ryan Flint

brokers and real-estate professionals can add value by being nimble and innovative.

One such tenant was Misfits Market, who was looking to open a western region distribution center. Misfits Market company focuses solely on breaking the cycle of food waste. They work directly with farmers and makers to rescue and sell (directly to your door) organic produce and other grocery items that might otherwise go to waste. Able to serve nearly all contiguous states, the need to find warehouse space in key logistic hubs such as Salt Lake City has become crucial to their ever-expanding business.

Mountain West Commercial's team was able to lead the company to our listing in the center of Salt Lake City's Northwest Quadrant, for its initial location, getting it on the map out West. Misfits Market quickly encountered extreme growth and our team was able to help lease an additional 41,462 SF of space close by, which totaled roughly 100,000 SF for the company in the heart of Utah's premier industrial real estate market.

Realizing it was here to stay, we further helped Misfits Market sign a long-term lease on a 300,000 SF warehouse facility in West Jordan, that will serve as the base of operations to move groceries to customers in the entire Western region. It is the third

facility of its kind in the U.S, joining other distribution centers in Delanco, New Jersey, and Dallas, Texas.

Tom Stuart Construction of North Salt Lake helped the company build out its new state-of-the-art cold storage facility with the lease. "Misfits Market was a pleasure to work with throughout the entire construction process. Their new state-of-the-art cold storage facility will help them grow to their fullest potential," said Casey Call, Project Manager at Tom Stuart Construction.

Chris Roybal, President of the Northern Utah Economic Alliance, noted in a recent Utah industrial market report, that with over 215 million SF available in the state of Utah, there is only a 2.6% vacancy rate. "In one of the country's hottest industrial markets, it's important to have key brokerage firms like Mountain West Commercial. Ryan's group has not only executed key transactions but also assisted our economic development team in marketing our great state."

Due to Utah's strong economic growth and the immigration of companies coming into the state from all over the country, there is a need to get creative. Utah's infrastructure and top-tier talent of developers and contractors have made it easy for companies wanting to land here.

With this demand, owners, contractors, designers, and brokers have needed to be nimble and creative to add value and continue providing opportunities for our clients and their growing needs. As agents, using strategic creativity has been a win for our clients' needs. For example, we have repurposed old Kmart buildings into storage units and previous Office Max locations into office/flex space.

As long as Utah remains a good state to do business, the call for industrial space will remain in high demand. The question is, can we remain nimble and innovative to support those needs along the way? ■

Ryan Flint, SIOR, is a Principal at Mountain West Commercial Real Estate, with almost a decade of experience. He can be reached at rflint@mtnwest.com or visit mtnwest.com.



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DuraFuse Frames and Earthquakes; Providing Resilience, Economy and Performance

By Justin Marshall

Let's imagine it is the day after a major earthquake. What do you expect when you walk into your building?

From an engineering perspective, the severe demands on a building due to a design-level earthquake (500-year return period) does not allow for economical design of the building and contents to remain undamaged. The basis of the design earthquake is the largest earthquake a region is likely to experience in a 500-year period. This represents a 10% probability of an earthquake of that size occurring in a 50-year window (the typical life expectancy of a building in the code). Current building codes provide minimum design requirements that result in controlled damage and collapse prevention with the primary objective of preserving life, commonly referred to as life-safety design. The structural system absorbs energy through controlled damage in specific building elements. Repairing this damage following a major seismic event may not be economically viable.

The 2011 Christchurch, New Zealand earthquake is an example where numerous structures experienced damage and did not collapse. These structures met code expectations to protect life through controlled damage, but repairing the damaged structures was not economically viable.¹ This event and the prolonged recovery resulted in a new line of thinking for earthquake-resistant design.

A transition towards a higher performance standard with a goal of improving infrastructure resilience has begun. This new performance target includes ensuring structures meet life-safety design while also maintaining

occupancy and functionality. Eliminating damage and maintaining full functionality through major earthquakes can be attained through strategies such as base isolation or specialized damping devices. These strategies add cost and complexity to design and construction, which may be justified by the need to maintain critical post-earthquake functionality.

Another way to achieve post-event functionality is using typical structural systems (braced frames, moment frames, or shear walls) with inherent repairability. Two of these systems are buckling-restrained braces and special moment frames (SMF) with replaceable structural fuses. For both systems, the elements that dissipate energy through damage (structural fuses) are replaceable without shoring or replacing the building gravity load support system.

SMFs provide numerous structural and architectural advantages. Design



Figure 1: Experimentally-tested DuraFuse Frame (top) and Reduced Beam (bottom) moment connections.



Justin Marshall

and detailing of SMFs in accordance with the building code ensures that damage is confined to the beams in the regions adjacent to the beam-column moment connections. At this connection, the beam and column are connected using bolts or welds such that the beam cannot rotate without causing the column to also rotate. During a significant seismic event where the beams are damaged, this damage can be controlled but likely requires beam replacement. One option to avoid these expensive and time-consuming post-earthquake repairs is using a SMF with a replaceable structural fuse.

The DuraFuse Frames (DFF) moment connection is the only connection with a replaceable shear fuse that is qualified for the highest seismic hazard. Figure 1 shows images of the DFF connection and a Reduced Beam Section (RBS) connection after completing qualification testing. Note that the DFF connection would only require the bottom flange plate to be replaced while the RBS connection has severe damage to the beam.

In addition to the unmatched repairability, DFFs are economical and meet all performance requirements. Figure 2 shows the DFF connection and identifies the components. Plate components are typical steel grades and shop fabrication consists

of standard processes. This results in a fully field-bolted connection that can be quickly erected. The DFF innovation is the bottom flange fuse plate. The fuse plate cutouts are specifically designed to set the connection strength and provide deformation capacity such that all other components remain undamaged. The fuse plate replacement only requires unbolting the damaged plate and replacing it. The cover plates efficiently increase the frame stiffness. This additional stiffness allows for smaller column and beam sizes. Since yielding occurs in the fuse plate, more efficient beam sizes can be used and less beam lateral bracing is required.

The DuraFuse Frames design team assists the Engineer of Record in developing an optimized, DFF design. After finalizing the design, DFF provides stamped connection

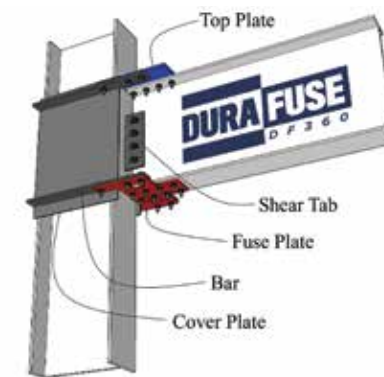


Figure 2: DuraFuse Frame connection configuration with component identification.

schedules, connection details, and design calculations. There is no cost to explore a DFF design option on any project. The DFF design team acts as an extension of the structural engineer to assist in designing a frame optimized for weight, fabrication, and erection. To demonstrate the post-event functional recovery benefits, Haselton Baker Risk Group² completed a seismic performance assessment and reported a 65% reduction in cost and time required to repair a building after a major earthquake.

The first three DuraFuse Frame projects were constructed in Utah, including the Salt Lake Community College Student Center on the Jordan Campus. There are currently several other buildings under construction or about to be constructed in Utah, California, Washington, and Nevada. As a general quantitative guideline, steel moment frame buildings using DuraFuse Frames resulted in:

- Up to 10% decrease in fabricated steel frame weight in the lateral system due to increased frame stiffness and optimization of beam and column design
- Up to 70% reduction in quantity of lateral bracing of the moment frame beams
- Increased erection speed and reduced erection costs due to all-bolted assembly and reduction in lateral bracing

In order to better answer the question of the state of buildings after a major earthquake, it is likely that future building codes will include provisions to require post-earthquake occupancy and functionality targets. The objective of increasing infrastructure resilience and preventing a major earthquake from becoming a catastrophe is the next step in building resilient and sustainable infrastructure. Many options are available to structural engineers to meet these design requirements. Replaceable components such as buckling-restrained braces and special moment frames with replaceable structural fuses provide economical options that meet life-safety performance requirements and post-event functionality targets. ■

Justin D. Marshall, PhD, PE is the President of DuraFuse Frames. He is a licensed Professional Engineer and has a PhD in Civil Engineering from Virginia Tech. Prior to his current position he was an Associate Professor at Auburn University in Auburn, AL. If you would like additional information or have questions about DuraFuse Frames, he can be reached at justin.marshall@durafuseframes.com.

² (<https://sp3risk.com/>)



(photo by Endeavour Architectural Photography)

ULI 2021 Trends Conference Sets Attendance Record



Jack Uldrich, author of the 2020 book *Business As Unusual*, was the keynote speaker at ULI Utah's 2021 Trends Conference at Grand America Hotel in Salt Lake City (courtesy ULI Utah).

The Utah Chapter of Urban Land Institute (ULI Utah) continues to expand its presence in the Beehive State, as more than 450 professionals from the Real Estate and local A/E/C industry descended on Grand America Hotel October 27 for ULI's 2021 Trends Conference.

Attendees were treated to a full day's worth of entertaining speakers and informative breakout sessions, in addition to welcome networking opportunities, as the industry continues its return to a sense of pre-pandemic normalcy.

More than 35 industry leaders covered topics including innovative solutions to Utah's affordable housing crisis, the need for better water conservation measures, the latest in life sciences technologies, the growing single-family build-for-rent market, trends in industrial evolution, and the future of responsible growth and development.

The event was also highlighted by keynote speaker Jack Uldrich, a global futurist and best-selling author who challenged the audience to be forward-

thinking and stretch beyond traditional means and methods when considering practical development.

ULI Utah has made significant progress in recent years in both membership and monthly activities. Led by Executive Director Rachel McIllece and current Chair Ibi Guevara, VP of Business Development and Marketing for Salt Lake-based Hunt Electric, the Chapter now boasts nearly 350 members, up nearly 100 from 2019, when Guevara was installed as Chair. Her three-year term will conclude in July 2022, with Robert Schmidt, President of Provo-based PEG Development, slated to take over as Chair.

Guevara expressed her passion for ULI Utah, saying that her time as Chair has been highly rewarding on a personal and professional level.

"It definitely has given me the opportunity to connect with people and bring value to our clients," she said. "The values and mission of ULI is relevant to the development community as a whole, and we're bringing great initiatives to our community in both the public and



ULI Utah Chair Ibi Guevara (left), VP of Business Development and Marketing for Hunt Electric, and ULI Utah Executive Director Rachel McIllece.

private sectors."

Guevara has developed a well-earned reputation in Utah's A/E/C community during her 17-plus years at Hunt Electric. She is known for her outgoing personality and strong work ethic and is a fixture at various industry networking events. A native of Romania, Guevara said she is proud of the growth of ULI and the evolution of the annual Trends Conference.



One of the breakout sessions was Water: Constraints and Opportunities for Development in Utah, moderated by Alan Rindlisbacher (far right), Director of Community Strategy for EDCUtah. Panelists included (left to right): Nathan Bracken, Partner, Smith Hartvigsen; Todd Stonely, Assistant Director of Planning, Utah Division of Water Resources; Jeffrey Davis, Senior Hydrogeologist, Barr Engineering.

Last year the conference was a hybrid in-person/virtual meeting due to pre-vaccine pandemic unknowns.

"The way we did it was well-received," said Guevara. "The panel conversations were conducted in a safe manner and we

were able to attract 300 attendees. We were limited, but still successful."

This year's conference had robust attendance, which Guevara attributes to the efforts of ULI Utah's executive leaders. "I love to see how many people I've worked with get

involved," she said. "It's fun to bring in friends and make new friends as well. We have some amazing committee members and management that I'm excited about working with. Rachel has been a tremendous asset and partner in making this happen. It was key to have someone with the same energy and passion as I did about growing ULI and spreading the word about our mission and getting more people involved."

Of the trends conference she added: "It's an anticipated event that folks look forward to—our main goal is to bring topics and information to our members, particularly information about what's happening in the future. We want to talk about new trends that change the way we think, plan, and design. It's forward thinking."

"Ultimately, ULI is an educational resource and research organization," Guevara added. "Once you become a member you can gain access to data, research and case studies for projects and initiatives, not just nationally, but worldwide. ULI is a global organization." ■

MHTN Architects

is Pleased to Announce
the Appointment of

Matthew Hieb
Madeline Petersen &
Vincent Olcott

as Directors



Eye of the Tiger

Brandon Fugal's second-to-none work ethic has driven him to the top of the commercial real estate leasing market in the Intermountain region, and he has no intentions on slowing down.

By Brad Fullmer

Over the past three decades, Brandon Fugal, 48, Chairman of Colliers International in Utah, has earned a reputation as a hard-driving, no-nonsense commercial real estate agent. His name is so ubiquitous along the Wasatch Front, it's hard to drive around without seeing it on signage slapped at the top of a swanky office building or large-scale industrial property for lease. Call it the "Fugal Effect," but it's ultimately a testament of his drive to be the best at what he does.

Earlier this year, Fugal was named Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM) Utah Agent of the Year and 2021 Office Broker of the Year, awards he has won numerous times in the past. In 2020, Fugal leased 1.4 million SF of space; this year, he's on pace for 1.35 million SF. Over his career, he's leased 15 million SF totaling more than \$7 billion in transaction volume.

Fugal was raised in Pleasant Grove, the great-grandson of Niels Fugal, who started underground/utility contractor Niels Fugal Sons Company in 1924. He graduated from Pleasant Grove High in 1991, and immediately launched his career one month later, focusing on office brokerage and large, master planned mixed-use projects. He served an LDS mission in Hawaii from 1992–1994 and completed his first transaction—from Oahu—while on his mission, finalizing a contract he had entered into before his two-year service, via a "brick phone."

Fugal's interests—beyond dominating Utah's commercial real estate market—extend into reaches beyond the realm. He has an affinity for collecting historical religious books, rare documents, and Hollywood movie/pop culture memorabilia, having curated a lucrative stash of both genres.

He makes no apologies—he likes what he likes and is committed to the best along every front.

Fugal plies his trade from the fifth floor of Colliers' Utah headquarters in Millrock Park North in Holladay, leading a team of 250 professionals across the Intermountain West. He has offices in downtown Salt Lake City, Pleasant Grove, Ogden, and St. George as well as offices in Idaho, Colorado, and Wyoming. He said Colliers is the number one commercial real estate firm in the Intermountain region, specializing in office, retail, industrial, multi-family and land development.

From his stately office, Fugal has one of the most pristine, expansive views of the Salt Lake Valley, stretching from the University of Utah to Sandy, where he hosts clients from all over the world. Views of the majestic Wasatch Range to the east are unmatched. On an international level, Colliers manages more than two billion square feet of space and is the third largest commercial real estate provider globally, with 500+ offices and 17,000 employees in 68 countries.

Fugal's personal office houses part of his treasure trove of collectibles. It includes a copy of Oliver Cowdery's *Book of Mormon* (1837 second printing), a 1611 first printing of the King James Bible, Joseph F. Smith's *Hawaiian Book of Mormon*, J.P. Morgan/ Chase stock certificates from the Civil War era, Keanu Reeves' suit from the movie *John Wick*, prop pieces from the 2006 James Bond movie *Casino Royale*, and perhaps the coolest item of all: a life-size, dead nuts replica of the Terminator robot.

He also acquired "Skinwalker Ranch"



in 2016 from aerospace tycoon Robert Bigelow, a 512-acre Uintah County property renowned for its propensity of paranormal activity/being a UFO hotspot. Fugal has made that particular passion into a History Channel program, *Secrets of Skinwalker Ranch*, now into its third season.

He's an interesting guy, needless to say.

UC&D: What made you first think about a career in Commercial Real Estate?

Fugal: In 8th grade, my father [Dan] received a book on Lee Iacocca [*Iacocca, An Autobiography*, June '86]. He's the father of the [Ford] Mustang, and we can also blame him for the Chrysler Minivan. Reading that book in junior high sparked an interest in me for business. By my junior and senior years in high school, I had my own



Brandon Fugal, Chairman of Colliers International (left), stands next to a life-size replica of 'The Terminator' robot in his office at Millrock Park North in Holladay. Beyond his passion for commercial real estate, Fugal has an enviable collection of movie/pop culture items and historical books/documents. Innovation Pointe in Lehi (pictured) was completed in Fall 2018 (project photo & rendering courtesy Colliers).

subscriptions to the Wall Street Journal and Business Week, and I was obsessed with learning how the economy works and who are the captains of industry. By the end of my senior year, I was determined to identify a career path that would afford me the opportunity to work with entrepreneurs, business leaders, and community leaders, and I identified commercial real estate as the most effective path.

I was ahead of my time both in terms of utilizing technology to forecast the market and assist clients—and at a time when Utah was just beginning to see the growth of its tech sector and other evolving industries. I spent the majority of my first year in business developing a proprietary database tracking inventories and companies populating the Wasatch Front. The database formed the foundation of my current practice and our focus on developing proprietary market intelligence.

I absolutely love this business. I believe commercial real estate is the best business on the planet. We have the opportunity to work with key decision-makers from

virtually every sector of the economy, from hyper-growth startups to Fortune 500 companies.

UC&D: Who were your early influences? Who do you credit for helping you "get the ball rolling" on your career?

Fugal: The greatest influence and mentor is my father, Daniel Fugal [former CEO of Pleasant Grove-based Niels Fugal Sons Company, who passed away in September at age 73]. My dad instilled in me a work ethic and principled approach that has served me every hour of every day. I didn't grow up with money or wealth, as the family business was struggling at that time. It was only after I was established with my commercial real estate business that the family construction business experienced explosive growth and success.

UC&D: You seem like a very driven guy. What is your daily schedule like?

Fugal: I work typically 16–18 hour days,

Monday through Friday, and have done so for over 25 years. It's a combination of diet Mountain Dew, adrenaline, and a love for the community and having an impact on our skyline. I absolutely love working with entrepreneurs, visionaries, and community leaders on the most exciting projects of our time. I am usually in the office until after midnight most nights of the week and don't go to sleep until 2:00 or 3:00 a.m., and wake up between 7:00 or 8:00 a.m. I consistently work 80- to 100-hour weeks. It's crazy.

UC&D: Did you like to play Monopoly as a child?

Fugal: I loved Monopoly, although I was more of a Dungeons and Dragons [D&D] fan as a kid. I grew up playing D&D and taking karate lessons, and as a child of the 80s, being raised on a steady diet of *Star Wars*, *The Terminator*, *Close Encounters [of the Third Kind]*, and Chuck Norris.

UC&D: Is there a specific "mantra" or "code" that you try and live by? »

➔ Q&A with Brandon Fugal

Fugal: The Golden Rule—treat others as you would want them to treat you. I never take anything for granted and start every day programmed to feel like it is my last day or I am perpetually unemployed. The most frightening days of my life are typically days following closing my biggest transactions, as I realize that I need to go right back out and fill the pipeline with new business and assignments.

UC&D: *Beyond money, what do you define as being successful?*

Fugal: I think success in general has very little to do with money, it has more to do with being recognized as an expert or authority in one’s occupation. I maintain close relationships with everyone from my high school teachers to mission companions who have a great impact on my life and world view.

UC&D: *In that same vein, what does it mean to earn the CCIM Agent of the Year and 2021 Office Broker of the Year Awards in the same year?*

Fugal: The recognition is humbling, especially given the fact that we have so many incredible professionals in our commercial real estate community. I consider myself truly fortunate to be working with so many good people. Relationships are everything to me, and my clients become like family to me. It’s an incredible honor.

UC&D: *Utah has been an incredibly solid market since the recession ended in 2011–2012. That was only a decade ago. How has this past decade been for you and the commercial real estate business in general?*

Fugal: As we emerged from the Great Recession, we have been fortunate to be positioned in what I believe to be the most dynamic secondary market in the United States. Utah has transitioned from being recognized as the crossroads of the West, to now the crossroads of the world. The pioneering spirit that established this great state is alive and well today in not only our tech community, but in



Zions Bancorp is the owner of the Zions Tech Center, a 400,000 SF technology campus in Midvale slated to finish in mid-2022.

construction, manufacturing, life science, and financial sectors.

UC&D: *The pandemic has been an interesting time for sure. How has it affected your business from March 2020 until now?*

Fugal: We immediately implemented safety protocols within our offices that remain to this day, and we have helped advise clients relative to establishing proper workplace procedures. All of us have been through hell. There have been days where I was the only one here during the pandemic—it’s unprecedented. The fact is, we’ve never experienced anything like this. I believe that as we move through this pandemic, our work spaces will become more important than ever. The ability for companies to recruit and retain key talent will be largely dependent on the quality of their facilities and environment. I’m looking to the future with great hope.

UC&D: *What makes Utah such a great place to work? What factors make it conducive for the design and construction industry to prosper?*

Fugal: Quality of life, access to a dozen world-class resorts, with close proximity to the recently upgraded Salt Lake International Airport. We also have

an impressive institutional base with Utah Valley University, The University of Utah, Brigham Young University, and Utah State [University] leading the way, relative to technology transfer and fueling growth. We also continue to have a very young, highly educated, industrious workforce. Utah remains one of the most attractive locations in the world for human resource and also boasts the highest concentration of multi-lingual talent in the country.

UC&D: *How closely do you work with architects, engineers, and contractors, and how do you view your relationships with these professionals?*

Fugal: I treasure the relationships we have and the work we do on an hourly basis with the leading architects, contractors, and consultants in the state. Economic development is a team sport and requires cooperation across a diversity of disciplines.

UC&D: *How early in the process do you get involved with a project and when does that Colliers sign go up?*

Fugal: We are involved with most projects from inception, all the way through to full development and ultimately sale, in many cases. Being involved with every stage of the development cycle and process provides us with a unique perspective.

UC&D: *What advice would you give to someone who is just starting out in commercial real estate or maybe contemplating getting involved with the business?*

Fugal: Commercial real estate is a difficult business. The sales cycle typical to most transactions is long and the risk is high. That said, the rewards can be great, and the opportunity to truly change and influence the skyline can be quite gratifying.

UC&D: *Housing prices/rent have skyrocketed in the past five years, especially in the last two years. How does the commercial leasing world compare?*

Fugal: While the commercial real estate market has not observed the same insane levels of appreciation and activity as observed in the residential sector, growth continues and activity outpaces most competing markets across the country.

UC&D: *What are your thoughts on 1) the Inland Port and 2) the Point Redevelopment (soon-to-be former Utah State Prison site)? How closely are you following these developments and how much energy does your team focus on them? What kind of preliminary things are you doing as a firm?*

NOTABLE COLLIERS PROJECTS

Project Name	Location	Square Feet
Innovation Pointe	Lehi	600,000
Zions Financial Center	Midvale	400,000
Mountain View Village	Riverton	200,000
Soleil Technology Park	West Valley	200,000
Irvine Office Park	Draper	190,000
Freedom Commons	Provo	150,000
Utah Valley Tower	American Fork	150,000
University Place	Orem	100,000

Fugal: The Inland Port will become more critical than ever as a primary point of distribution and logistics for the Western United States. Significant users such as Amazon continue to expand their footprint and momentum is expected to continue to build. The most strategic infill site in the United States, in my opinion, is at the Point of the Mountain, which is the approximately 700-acre prison site, which is poised for future redevelopment. This land assemblage is strategically positioned and central to the entire Wasatch Front. The success and development of that project area will help put Utah on the map more than ever. We are working with a number of significant anchors and expect that construction will commence over the course of the next few years on an accelerated basis.

UC&D: *How long do you see yourself continuing to grind hard? How come you’re not sitting on a beach in Aruba sipping on a frozen beverage?*

Fugal: In order to achieve extraordinary results I believe you have to put forth extraordinary effort, and I have no intention on relaxing my pace. You have to make hay while the sun shines and the sun is definitely shining on our market and industry. I’ll take little mini-vacations—I will escape for an occasional long weekend. I didn’t even celebrate much of a honeymoon [Fugal remarried in September] due to so many obligations looming. I’m fortunate to have a very supportive wife who shares my enthusiasm and love for my clients.

UC&D: *So how does Utah compare*

right now with other states/markets you work in?

Fugal: Utah is well-positioned as the most diversified market in the country. We stand to benefit from what I believe will be a decentralized, distributed approach employed by large corporate occupiers. I am so fortunate to be surrounded by incredible partners and skilled staff who help us execute. You are only as good as the people you surround yourself with, and I have surrounded myself with some of the finest professionals in the market.

UC&D: *What else makes you tick?*

Fugal: My passions outside commercial real estate include the scientific research I am conducting at Skinwalker Ranch, the most scientifically studied paranormal hotspot on the planet. I was approached by government scientists six years ago with the opportunity to potentially purchase the 512-acre ranch in northeastern Utah [Uintah County] from elusive Las Vegas billionaire Robert Bigelow. Although I was a healthy skeptic, I believed the opportunity to bring scientific rigor and discipline to investigate the paranormal claims could potentially prove to be the greatest science project of our time. It is without question the most unique real estate-related endeavor I have ever encountered and is the subject of my docuseries on the History Channel, *The Secret of Skinwalker Ranch*. It is a private “Area 51.” I visit the ranch every month, usually by helicopter, and have had my own stunning UFO sighting in broad daylight on the ranch, with multiple witnesses present. ■



Quality, Loyalty, Legacy

How GSL Electric has built upon opportunities and thrived in the face of challenges since 1981.

By Emma Penrod



Good work can build a company’s reputation and attract new customers, but if the experience of GSL Electric is any indicator, it may also be a solution to today’s current labor crisis.

Founded in 1981 as an independent electrical contractor, GSL Electric—short for Great Salt Lake Electric—quickly built a reputation for quality design-build work in the commercial and industrial sectors. They capitalized on the electrical engineering expertise of Craig Taft, who founded the company alongside Guy Moore and Don Taft. Over the past 40 years, the company has stuck by its commitment to quality customized electrical work, inspiring loyalty in the employees such as Tom Ewing, current GSL Electric President, who would eventually assume management of the company as it established an employee stock ownership plan.

Ewing joined GSL early in his career, as a second-year apprentice, in 1987. The company had a reputation for treating and paying its employees particularly well, Ewing said. But that wasn’t the only factor that motivated him to join the company—the company also had a reputation for holding employees to high standards of performance.

“The idea is that people try hard to meet the expectations of those around them,” Ewing said. “Because expectations are high, we hold ourselves to that standard.”

High standards were similarly influential in bringing current GSL CEO Lance Capell to the company. Capell, who had spent his career to that point working in business management, had worked with GSL when remodeling properties he

managed. When Moore approached Capell in 1991 about changing careers and bringing his management skills to GSL, it was the quality of GSL’s work and employees that convinced him to take the leap.

“They weren’t very big,” Capell recalled, “but they seemed to have real potential and momentum going, and I could see they could use someone of my background to help them with that. I felt it was almost like a startup opportunity for me really. I could see the potential for a good career with them.”

Capell began his work with GSL in the same industry where the company found its initial footing: at a mining operation in Nevada. While mining remains one of the company’s mainstays—GSL has worked with Kennecott since 1983—the company quickly branched out to work on a variety of projects that required customized electrical solutions.

Their work led them to jobs on a variety of landmark Utah projects, including the



Craig Taft, Co-Founder



Lance Capell, CEO



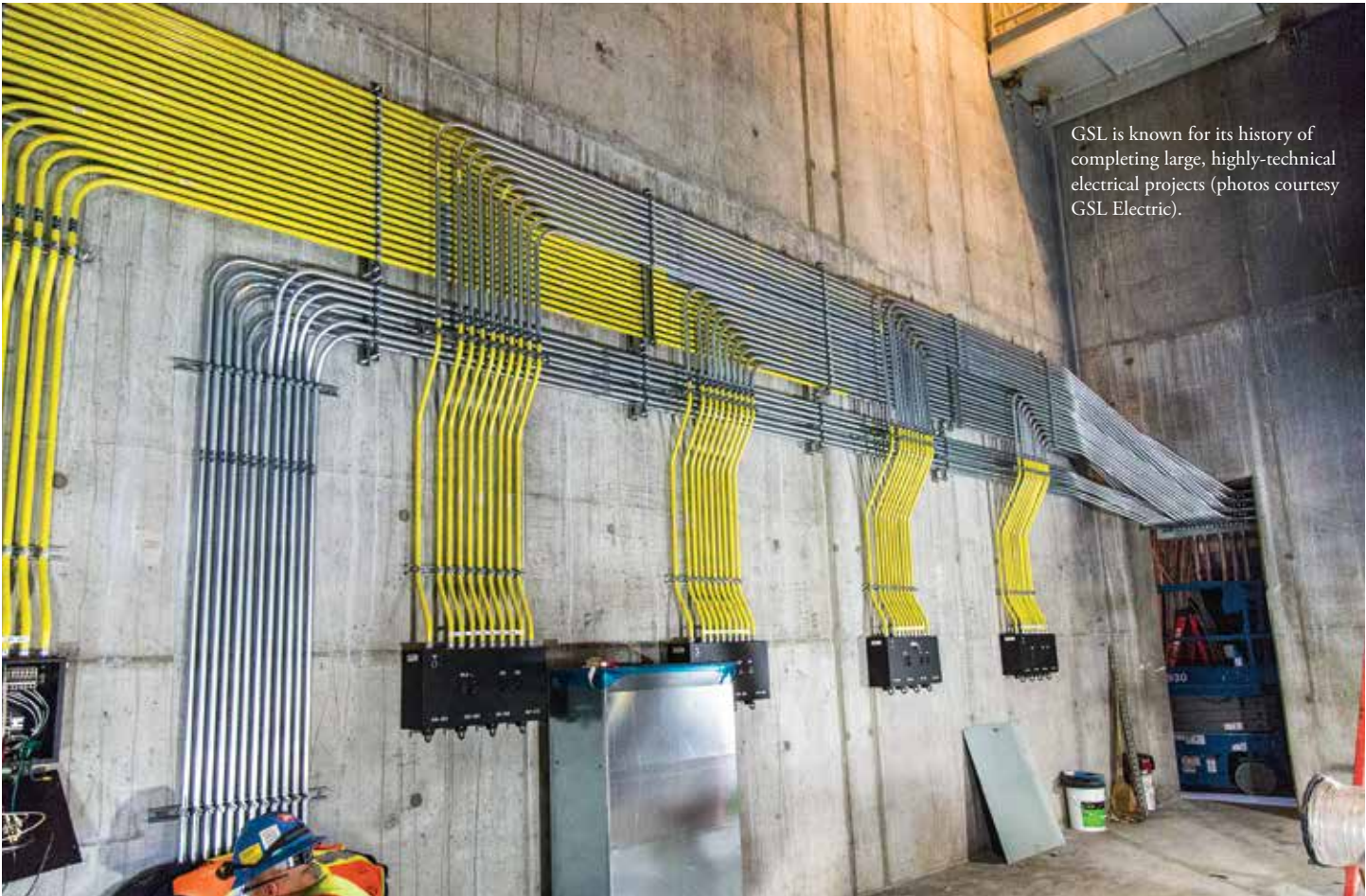
Tom Ewing, President

first expansion of the Salt Lake City Airport, and the downtown conference center for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—a project that was, at the time, the largest electrical permit ever issued in the state of Utah, according to Capell.

The conference center led to several additional projects for the LDS Church, Ewing said, including work at the Church History Library in Salt Lake City and the Nauvoo, Illinois Temple. They’ve also

worked throughout the years on a variety of civic projects, such as water treatment plants, and have taken a recent interest in commercial data centers, Ewing said.

“One of the strengths GSL had all along is we’re a pretty diverse company in terms of the work we do,” Capell said. “Not only are we diverse in the work we do—we’re licensed to work in 10 western states. Depending on the economy, we can shift gears and go if there’s opportunity >>



GSL is known for its history of completing large, highly-technical electrical projects (photos courtesy GSL Electric).



in another industrial sector or other states.”

As the company’s founders began to retire, beginning with Guy Moore in 1994, senior members of the team with aspirations of ownership reviewed their options. Buying into the company was the conventional path, but Moore had a broader vision, according to Capell. In 1996, Moore and Craig sold 60% of the company to a coalition of employees who pooled their funds to finance the transition to an employee ownership model.

“[Moore] wanted to help the people

who were helping to build the company and give them opportunities,” Capell said.

By 2015 the remaining founders began to retire, and in 2018, GSL became 100% employee-owned.

“When we revisited the company’s strategic planning in 2017, we felt like it was to the company’s benefit and the employee’s benefit to offer them the same opportunity we’d had years before,” Ewing said.

The first few years after the transition to the ESOP proved challenging for GSL. The company took on several large, demanding projects with unfavorable

contract terms, and found itself overextended as a result. Though difficult at the time, Ewing and Capell agreed the company is now better for the experience, having adopted a new approach to evaluating potential projects.

“A lot of it is being a little more cautious about how fast we’re growing, what types of projects we take, and how much risk is associated with those projects,” Capell said, explaining that the company implemented several new guidelines for evaluating new projects, including keeping the total percent of their workforce dedicated to a

single project below 40%.

The company wants to keep growing, Capell said, but has also learned it has to take steps to protect itself.

Despite having taken a hit during the Great Recession and again in the late 2010s, GSL is now in a better financial position than at any point in the company’s history, Ewing said. The company currently has about 350 employees and aims to grow to 500 within the next few years.

Ewing doesn’t believe their goal is too far out of reach, given the growth they anticipate in their Las Vegas office in the years to come. Their southern market never fully recovered from 2008, Ewing said, but now appears to be on the cusp of a more rapid recovery.

“Prior to the recession of 2008, Vegas was growing so fast that their infrastructure was ahead of the growth,”

Ewing said. “Then the market crashed, and they were so overbuilt it took a long time before they had infrastructure needs.”

Were it not for the slow infrastructure market in Las Vegas, and the labor shortage in Salt Lake, Ewing said he believes GSL could already employ 500 workers with ease.

With economic recovery and a federal infrastructure bill setting the stage for growth, the current focus at GSL is promoting the company’s ESOP in order to retain existing employees and recruit new ones.

“I think our opportunities are in front of us—there’s a ton of work out there—but we need more electricians and they’re really, really hard to get,” Capell said.

This is especially true within the company’s managers, Capell said. GSL is currently planning the transition to its

third generation of leadership as current executives retire over the next 5–10 years.

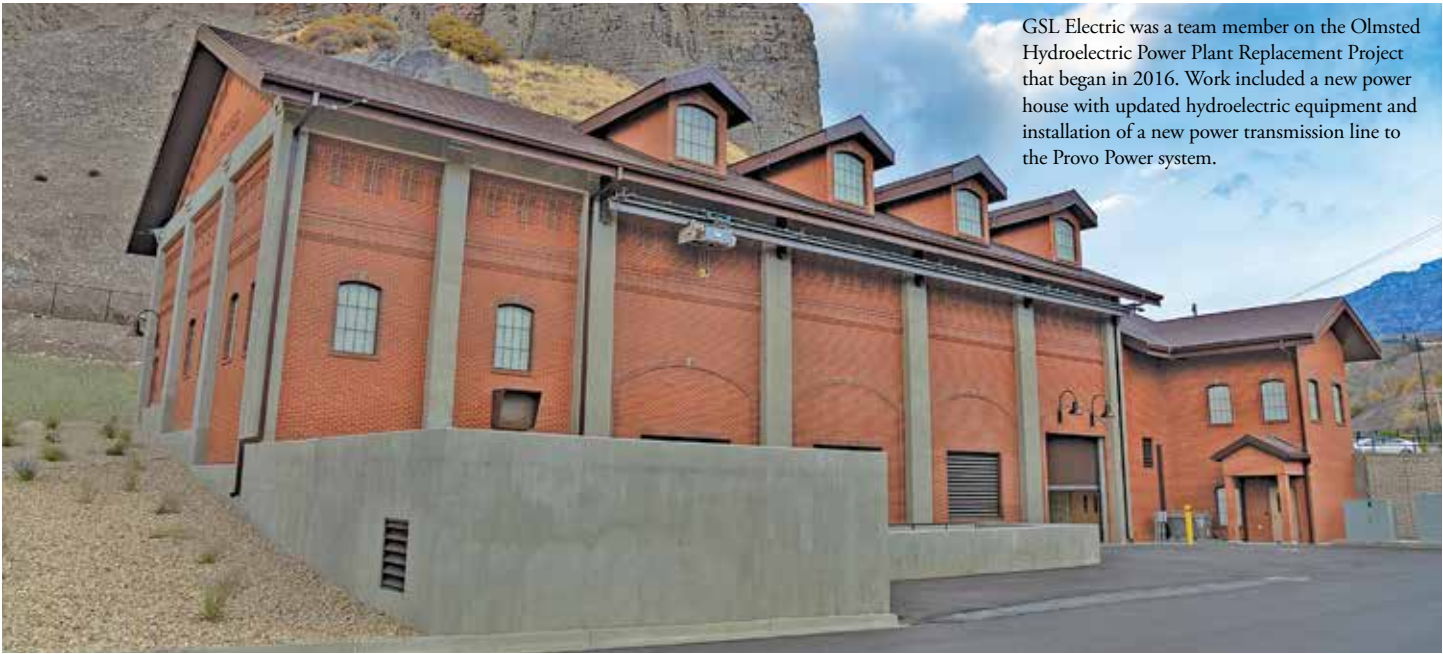
“It’s an exciting time for GSL,” Capell said. “There’s opportunities for advancement, there’s opportunities for ownership—great things are happening that you don’t see everywhere.”

But more than meeting their earnings and growth goals, Ewing said, he hopes to see GSL continue to build a legacy of quality, and of being the kind of company that inspires loyalty by offering work that makes employees proud of their profession.

“I would like to see [GSL] doing \$100 million of profitable work a year, with 500 employees,” he said, “but more than anything I’d like those employees to be proud of being here, to be proud of the trade they chose as a career. I love our employees; I want them to have no regrets for being here.” ■



The Conference Center for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City is one of many iconic projects GSL has been part of.



GSL Electric was a team member on the Olmsted Hydroelectric Power Plant Replacement Project that began in 2016. Work included a new power house with updated hydroelectric equipment and installation of a new power transmission line to the Provo Power system.



FACE FORWARD

The Scott C. Keller Building & Campus Gateway at Utah Valley University supports the campus' business school, resembling modern, high-end corporate spaces.

By Taylor Larsen

How can you put the best face forward as the future of the the biggest public university in the state?

You build a timeless building at the entrance. This was Utah Valley University’s unique choice, and, with a project like the Scott C. Keller Building & Campus Gateway, they delivered

“It’s a once in a lifetime project. It’s a dream,” said Dr. Jacob P. Sybrowsky, Associate Dean of the Woodbury School of Business. “It started up with an understanding of who we are and what we’re trying to accomplish” as a business school. “It’s a projection of where we want to be.”

Appearance/Features

Where they want to be is at the forefront of education in business, accounting, and finance—with a high-class building to

match that commitment to learning. It started on the exterior. UVU has been changing their aesthetic more and more: away from the concrete brutalism of its early days, more toward red brick and now storefront and curtain wall glass. With the Keller Building, the new aesthetic—especially in glazing—was taken to nth degree.

The façade is timeless, with most of the building covered in glass and notes of aluminum composite metals. The steel beam structure and spandrel glass was a great design choice by Todd Kelsey, Project Manager for the architects at Method Studio, and his team.

The steel-beam structure and spandrel glass panels helped to give the building its all-glass look. It allows for the building to show off a unified front while

steering under the maximum of 30% of the exterior glass mandated by DFCM’s High Performance Building Standards.

Making the roundabout from the school, it’s almost necessary to do a double take to make sure we aren’t passing Class A office space in Silicon Slopes—this building could easily fit on any new corporate campus on the Wasatch Front.

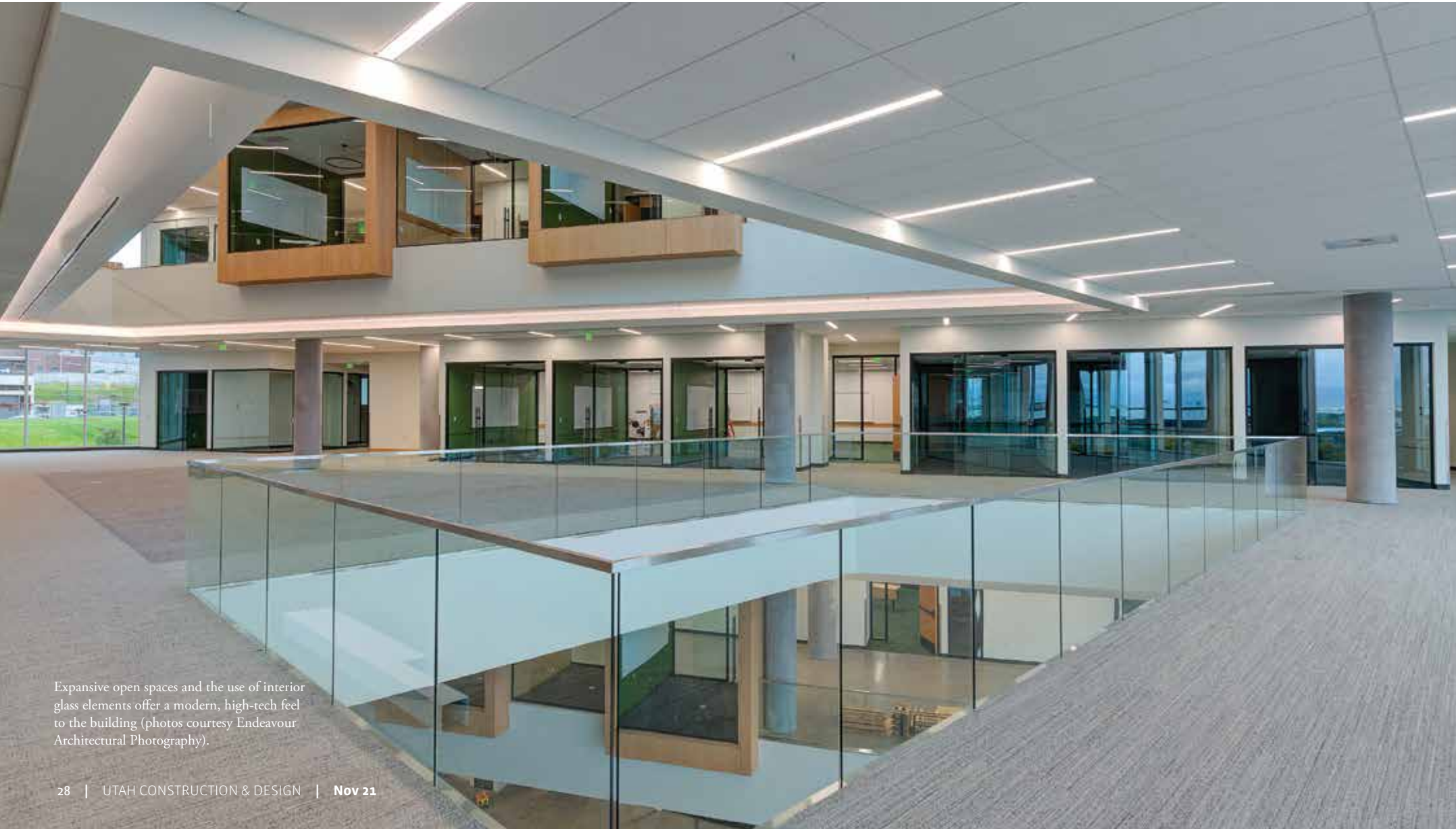
Entering the building is much the same. The opening areas and staggered floors are Kelsey’s unique design choice that created a breathtaking entry to the building and gateway to campus. Instead of aiming for a four-story atrium, construction teams led by Layton Construction and Project Manager Cody Hurst installed a horizontal smoke shutter on the second floor to bring the design of that area to fruition.

The entire project team spent years figuring out what they wanted out of the building while maintaining flexibility, according to Hurst. Multi-purpose auditoriums have an accordion partition that can lower or raise to split the sections or create more space. Its acoustical features ensure it’s a high-end area not just for a class lecture, but maybe a renowned guest speaker for an event.

Collaboration & Innovation

Team-based learning is a theme, with over 100 collaborative spaces in the building for students to complete projects and succeed as a group—a concept students will be sure to see more of throughout their professional lives.

Each of the nearly 30 classrooms are tiered for learning. AV components and TV



Expansive open spaces and the use of interior glass elements offer a modern, high-tech feel to the building (photos courtesy Endeavour Architectural Photography).

screens in certain spots in the class make sure everyone has a perfect view of the professor’s slide deck or video.

Spaces like the Innovation Center and Bloomberg Lab with its stock ticker let visitors know where they are: a business building. Wayfinding elements help to further that goal of easy movement. Uniform floors across levels two through four help, too. Offices, classrooms, and study spaces are all in the same spot on each level,

Collaborative neighborhoods are right outside faculty offices in the Keller Building, continuing UVU’s desire for professor accessibility. Dr. Sybrowsky reported that this setup was met with near-unanimous support from the nearly 100 members of the business school’s faculty.

For faculty, “We did an extensive survey of registrar data and combined that with faculty surveys about where they liked to teach,” said Kelsey. Because of that data, teachers in forgotten corridors of a building are a thing of the past.

And it’s obvious why as the tour continues—each and every office receives plenty of light. Copious interior glazing and efficient design created what the project team described as “light corridors.” The

Associate Dean had the group stand in a certain spot and show off how a look in every cardinal direction gave a view outside of the building. Views to Utah Lake, the nearby Wasatch Range, or even across UVU’s expanding campus.

Speaking of expansion, the building is two buildings in one, continuing the university’s connected nature via a long corridor that spans the distance between the Gateway Building and Keller Business Building. The Gateway Building then connects to the Browning Administration Building and Woodbury Business Building, and will house the upper echelons of school management, with President Astrid S. Tuminez and other leaders occupying third floor offices there.

As the public university with the highest enrollment in the state and growing, the school looked to create a future-proof building, according to Hurst—one that could withstand the test of time in multiple ways.

The design and construction allows for wall removal in the future to expand the building if need be. “The building accommodated plenty of low-voltage AV work to keep the building agile in the face of technological changes,” said Hurst, >>

with ceilings built to specifications where future needs can be met with upgraded equipment that won't require the building to undergo significant renovation.

Another future-proof solution comes from mitigating future costs. Kelsey and Hurst both said it's one of the benefits of public and DFCM work. Future costs of the owner aren't relying on a tenant filling the building as soon as possible. Instead, their

priorities lie in creating the most efficient building.

The building shell meets that goal in air leakage with a tight building envelope—Kelsey reported that the Keller Building exceeded the state's High Performance Building Standards in air leakage, going well under the already stringent benchmark.

Said Kelsey of this goal of potentially spending more upfront to create long-

lasting, efficient buildings: "It's the best use of taxpayer money."

And perhaps that changes the outlook of the future business leaders in Utah and probably occupants of tomorrow's office space. Will they choose to create timeless buildings and longstanding businesses?

As Dr. Sybrowsky put it, it's a matter of trying to accomplish something larger than simply constructing or designing a building. The true mission is creating something built to last, a place that will act as an incubation space for students to come up with the next best ideas in today's rapidly changing world. ■

Scott C. Keller Building & Campus Gateway at Utah Valley University

Cost: \$60M

Square Feet: 203,000 SF

Owner: DFCM / Utah Valley University

DESIGN TEAM

Architect: Method Studio

Civil: Ensign Engineering and Land Surveying

Electrical: Spectrum Engineers

Mechanical: Colvin Engineering

Structural: Reaveley Engineers

Geotech: Gordon Geotechnical Engineering, Inc

Landscape: Loft Six Four

CONSTRUCTION TEAM

General Contractor: Layton Construction

Concrete & Excavation: Phaze Concrete

Plumbing / HVAC: Western States Mechanical

Electrical: Wilkinson Electrical

Masonry: RJ Masonry

Drywall/Acoustics: Pete King Drywall Golder Acoustics

Painting: Pete King Drywall

Tile/Stone: KJ Tile

Carpentry: Boswell Wasatch

Flooring: Commercial Flooring Systems

Glass/Curtain Wall & Roofing: Noorda/Flynn

Waterproofing: Guaranteed Waterproofing

Steel Fabrication: Sanpete Steel

Steel Erection: Unlimited Steel

Demolition: TID

Precast: RJ Masonry

Landscaping: Great Western

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as we close the year we'd like to say thank you to all our clients, employees and industry partners for helping us reach this milestone of 60 years. Assist us in celebrating by scanning the QR code to watch what 60 years means to us.



U KNOW IT!

Designers and contractors worked in synch to deliver a scintillating \$85-million expansion of the south end zone at the U of U's Rice-Eccles Stadium, with an emphasis on enhancing fan experience and increasing seating capacity.

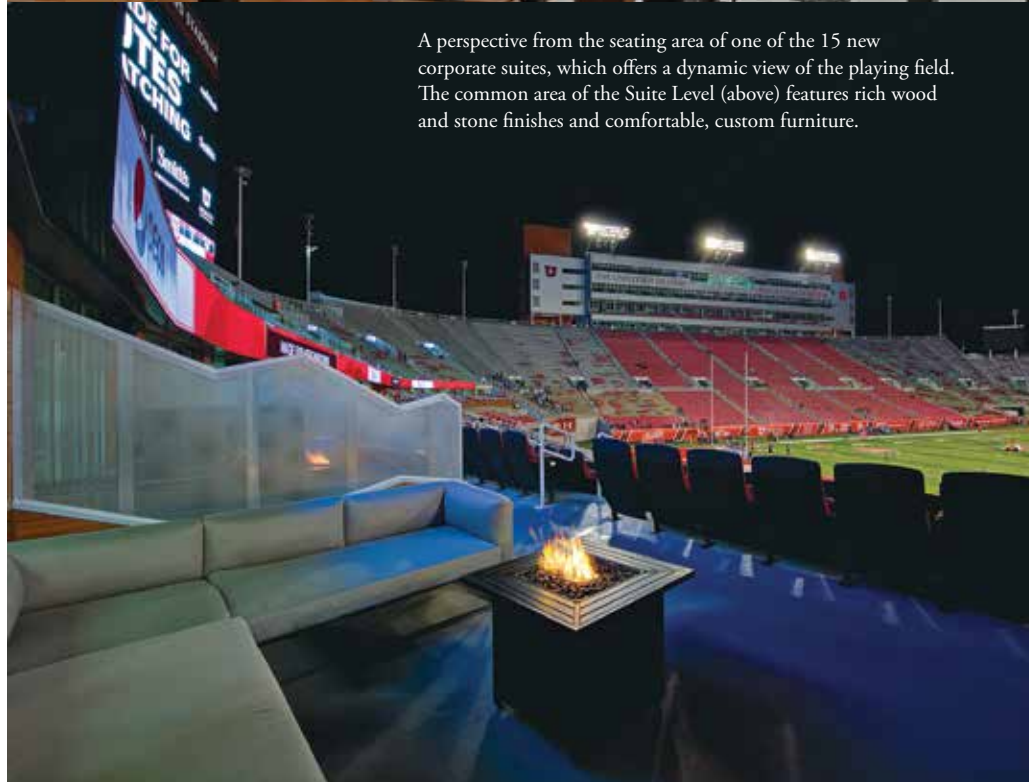
By Brad Fullmer | Photos by Endeavour Architectural Photography



Standing in the seating area of one of the 15 premium suites at the new \$85-million Ken Garff Red Zone at Rice-Eccles Stadium at the University of Utah, Jared Adamson paused during a recent tour of the massive structure and summed up the pride of everyone involved.

“This is a pretty amazing building—you don’t get a chance to add on to a stadium very often,” said Adamson, Construction Manager for general contractor Layton Construction. “The intricate nature of each of the spaces in the building is a real career-defining project that I’ll always remember. We had to be very detailed to understand the drawings, and work with the architect and the entire team to make sure we built it the way they intended with the quality they wanted.”

Adamson has every right to be monumentally proud of this high-profile, world-class renovation of the U’s south end zone, which boosted capacity by more than 5,600—from 45,807 to 51,444—placing Utah seventh among PAC-12 schools. It’s not just the quantity of additional seats that makes this project stand out, it’s also the quality of the premium seating options, according to designers from Salt Lake-based VCBO Architecture and Populous of Kansas City, who combined their expertise seamlessly to produce a stunning final design throughout several eye-popping spaces. The south end zone now includes 44 premium loge boxes (four seats per), 15 deluxe suites that are 100 feet closer to the field than previous ones, plus 1,200 chairback seats in addition to bench seats.



A perspective from the seating area of one of the 15 new corporate suites, which offers a dynamic view of the playing field. The common area of the Suite Level (above) features rich wood and stone finishes and comfortable, custom furniture.

“Something that surprised me as an outcome, and I’ve been all around the bowl: ... there is not a bad seat in the south end zone,” said Brent Tippets, Principal with VCBO. “I would buy any seat and enjoy the experience, more than even sitting on the 50-yard line. It offers a unique dynamic; it is intimate to the field. I’m proud of the fact that we upped the game for the fans, both from a seating experience, and the whole experience in general.”

“I’ve been involved in a lot of different projects here at Utah, and what makes it unique is the connection to the team, the program and the fans—it encompasses so many different people,” said Gavin Gough, Associate Athletic Director for Facilities Operations and Capital Projects at the U. “It’s a really cool project in that sense. It was a great collaboration with our partners—they all caught the vision of this project, and sometimes that’s the hardest thing.”

Incredible Diversity of Spaces

Beyond extra seating capacity, what makes this project truly special and one-of-a-kind is the sheer diversity of design elements that exists in the various different spaces within the south end zone. Each space was tastefully designed, with careful consideration for the smallest of details. Beyond dynamic aesthetics, the functionality of these various spaces is also a testament to the creativity and talent of the designers.

Among the spaces that stand out include the Layton Field Club, the adjacent “hype tunnel,” a recruiting area with two plush lounge spaces, a VIP donor lounge, brand new locker rooms for home and visiting teams and coaches/staff, a new kitchen area, a training/medical area, the Suite Level with 15 individual suites for high-end corporate donors, and a fifth-level Club Suite/Rooftop Terrace (managed

by Club Corp.) that really pops, with a spectacular wood ceiling treatment and other high-end finishes.

Jeremy Krug, Associate Principal and Lead Designer for Populous, added that the branding for this project was a major hot button item for the University, with representatives from the U’s athletic department, the design team, and the construction team visiting several other major college football programs who have also done end-zone expansions in recent years, including Oklahoma, Arkansas, Baylor and Arizona.

“The goal for this project overall was to create something that was unique for the fan base and community,” said Krug. “It’s the sense of place. We did a market study analysis and asked questions from donors and fans as to what we can do better [...] and making sure we had the right products. It was important to create a »



The home team's players locker room rivals that of any collegiate football program in the nation, featuring comfortable leather seats with hidden storage space, and players' image, name and number on each locker. (opposite) Fans can purchase tickets with access to the Julie M. & David S. Layton Field Club (top), which Utah players run through on game days on their way to the field; (bottom left) Aerial view of Rice-Eccles Stadium [new capacity 51,444]; (bottom right) Branding is a key element of the Hype Tunnel.

project that honored the Utah brand and allowed the story of the football program and community to shine through. A lot of people didn't know what loge seating was. It's an awesome opportunity to get fans closer to the field—the fan experience is elevated [...] creating an unrivaled game-day experience.”

Krug added, “I’ve been blessed to work on a few stadium projects. Each one is unique. When we [design] a college campus project, we try and entrench ourselves in game-day traditions. Rice-Eccles was already one of the most exciting atmospheres I’d seen, and the south end zone [says], ‘You have arrived, this is Utah!’”

The Layton Field Club sits at the field level and can house 900-plus fans during

game days, with football players actually running through the space before entering the stadium. It’s also adjacent to the Hype Tunnel, a space with dynamic graphics and a wall video projection system that helps get players properly “pumped up” for game day. The tunnel also includes a “branding room,” a space for recruits that can illustrate a variety of uniforms with their name that is projected on mannequins.

The 5,500-SF home team locker room is straight out of Hollywood casting, and easily one of the most visually impressive spaces in the entire building, with 90 player lockers. Black is the predominant color, with LED red letters outlined in white that spell out “Utah Football” in one half and “A Utah Man Am I” on the other half, with a large red

and white LED graphic of the Utes’ drum and feather logo in the center.

Each individual locker features a player’s photo, name and jersey number on a triangular-shaped cabinet, leather seats with locked hidden storage, and wireless chargers.

“Those lockers surpass anything at the University level or even in the professional level—they were very uniquely designed,” praised Tippetts. “It’s an incredible design by [Populous]. I can stand back and give them kudos.”

Tippetts also raved about the various club spaces, likening finishes to a five-star resort.

“It has probably the best clubs on a university-level market,” he said. “We toured

several facilities, and this is over-the-top in terms of quality and that overall experience. It’s above and beyond what [other schools] have. This is definitely premier.”

Energy Efficiency a Hallmark; Structure is Rock Solid

To heat the new stadium expansion, Layton’s team tapped into an existing geothermal well just off the building. This is a relatively rare process in Utah, especially when it comes to commercial projects, and it was designed as an all-electric building with only natural gas for cooking appliances, and no traditional gas-powered water heaters.

According to Jarrett Capstick, Principal with Salt Lake-based Colvin Engineering,

the building is served by an array of modular heat recovery pumps and 10 total compressors that are able to utilize water rapidly on game day when demand for nearly 200 showers is needed, with excess water diverted back into a secondary well or used for campus irrigation needs. Capstick said the innovative system will have a low-energy consumption use, while also being relatively easy for on-site maintenance crews to fix and maintain. Two large domestic tanks are also heated by a booster heater that can bring temperature up quickly and maintain it.

“It’s an iconic building,” said Capstick. “It’s a high-profile project that we did some cool engineering things on. I’m an energy geek so to be able to drive energy consumption and costs way down was rewarding. It’s was a very collaborative effort with all groups and the owner, which you don’t always see on a project.”

The structure of the south end zone is also quite an engineering feat. It took monumental coordination and planning to build the structure around the existing jumbotron scoreboard (installed in 2015). According to Brett Goodman, Principal with Salt Lake-based BHB Structural, it was a huge challenge to “fit the building underneath the

existing scoreboard.” The team designed a system where big concrete walls would be attached to the concrete columns holding up the scoreboard. “We did that to give us a good back that really could stiffen up the building—there are some great concrete walls coming off those columns.”

Similar to other sections of Rice-Eccles Stadium, precast concrete sections were used on the lower half, with more traditional steel bleachers used on upper seating sections. “It was difficult having all concrete tied to a huge matte footing. Having five different levels and tying into those existing restraints was also challenging. It was really to make it feel like the rest of Rice-Eccles.”

Goodman said a buckling restrained brace frame system was designed by Core-Brace of West Jordan, and is flexible enough to perform during an earthquake, with reasonably sized expansion joints. The team looked at both potential seismic movement as well as temperature movement, especially with steel up high.

Another critical aspect of early construction was having a mammoth 650-ft. by 45-ft. long shoring wall built underneath the south end zone, which required more than 400 soil nails ranging from >>

15 ft. to 25 ft. The wall pins back thousands of cubic feet of dirt and provided room for the lower area of the expansion, which houses locker rooms and common areas.

“That soil nail wall was very difficult,” said Adamson, as were most of the concrete walls, footings, and foundation sections that Layton self-performed. Because it’s not a square building, each concrete pour had many complex angles and radius sections, making the degree of difficulty that much higher.

Crews were also taxed with dealing with a huge amount of underground utilities, in addition to moving the 2002 Salt Lake Olympic Cauldron to the southwest corner of the stadium, replete with a new base and a cool new plaza that will showcase the iconic cauldron structure.

“It’s definitely among my ‘top five’ projects in a 40-year span, and probably it’s No. 1 in complexity,” said Tippetts. “You just [can’t] appreciate it. Nothing is repetitive. Every piece had to be evaluated, detailed, and re-detailed. There were so many unique aspects and complexities associated with this project, and there is a satisfaction of being confronted with these aspects, in the middle of a pandemic, with a hurricane-level wind storm, and being able to solve all those problems was fulfilling to the design team and the construction team.” ■

“Something that surprised me as an outcome, and I’ve been all around the bowl, there is not a bad seat in the south end zone. I would buy any seat and enjoy the experience, more than even sitting on the 50-yard line. It offers a unique dynamic; it is intimate to the field.”

— Brent Tippetts, Principal,
VCBO Architecture

Ken Garff Red Zone

Cost: \$85 Million

Delivery Method: CM/GC

Square Feet: 120,000 SF of interior space, 350,000 SF of concourse, rooftop and seating bowl areas.

Levels/Stories: 5 levels: Field, Mezzanine, Suite, Concourse, Premium Terrace.

Structural: Buckling restraint braces, structural steel, concrete shear walls, precast concrete seating risers, bent steel seating risers.

Mechanical/Electrical: Geothermal mechanical system, heat pumps, heat exchangers, air handlers, lighting control, motion controlled lighting, LED lighting.

Owner: DFCM / University of Utah

Owner’s Rep: Taylor Maxfield / Michael Beck

DESIGN TEAM

Architect of Record: VCBO Architecture

Associate Architect: Populous

Civil: Psomas

Electrical: Envision Engineering

Mechanical: Colvin Engineering

Structural: BHB Structural

Geotech: WC3; Earthtec

CONSTRUCTION TEAM

GC: Layton Construction

Concrete: Layton Construction

Plumbing: Archer Mechanical

HVAC: B2 Air Systems

Electrical: Wasatch Electric

Masonry: Allens Masonry

Drywall/Acoustics: Daw Construction Group

Painting: Fisher Painting

Tile/Stone: Dowland Tile

Carpentry: Associated Millwork

Flooring: Design Team

Roofing: Superior Roofing

Glass/Curtain Wall: Mollerup

Waterproofing: Guaranteed Waterproofing

Steel Fabrication & Erection: SME Steel

Excavation: Siri Contracting

Demolition: Reynolds (Staker Parson Cos.); Siri Contracting

Precast: Olympus Precast

Landscaping: Stratton and Bratt

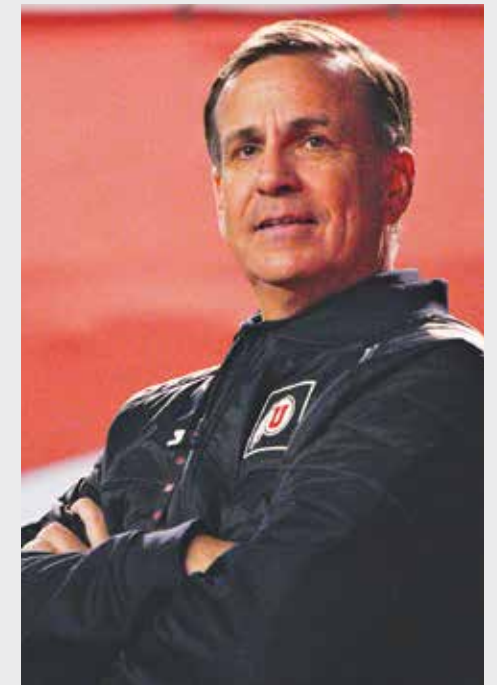
Q&A: MARK HARLAN, UNIVERSITY OF UTAH ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Mark Harlan serves as the Athletic Director for the University of Utah, a position he accepted in June 2018 after four years as the AD for the University of South Florida. Harlan arrived on the Utes’ campus just in time to help shepherd the Ken Garff Red Zone project from fundraising to final completion over three-plus years. Harlan was kind enough to respond to an email request from UC&D; his answers provide key insight into the importance of this project to the entire U of U campus.

UC&D: *This is obviously a monumental project for the University of Utah, and for the football team in particular this is the single biggest project since the stadium was originally renovated in 1998 (a project also done by Layton Construction). What does this project signify to the entire Utah athletics program?*

Harlan: The Ken Garff Red Zone at Rice-Eccles Stadium provides a world-class experience for our student-athletes and our great fans. It reflects the high priority we place on caring for the needs of our student-athletes, to provide the very best in terms of game-day facilities, as well as year-round benefits for all areas of our athletics programs. For our fans, it demonstrates our commitment to providing them the best possible experience when they attend our games, and reflects the tremendous support and passion that make it possible to significantly expand our seating capacity.

UC&D: *As the athletic director for the University of Utah, you’re charged with overseeing all athletic programs. Football is obviously the ‘king’ in terms of fan support/interest and as a revenue generator for the University. How important is this project >>*



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in terms of attracting/keeping attention for the general public/Ute Nation. How do you anticipate this helping with overall future revenues?

Harlan: It's significant in that it shows that we are growing. We're investing in our programs, we have tremendous support from our fans and donors, and that the University of Utah, as an institution, has tremendous aspirations.

UC&D: From a design and construction standpoint, what are you most excited about? What features/additions really stand out for you?

Harlan: The addition of the Ken Garff Red Zone at Rice-Eccles Stadium encloses the south end of the stadium bowl and provides a 360-degree concourse for fans to easily access all areas of the stadium. The enclosure of the south end zone also holds the noise in, creating a an even better home-field advantage for our team. And then everything from the fantastic home locker room to the premium seating and club spaces are spectacular, and a great enhancement to Rice-Eccles Stadium.

UC&D: What about the construction team? How would you characterize their ability to get this project completed in time for the 2021 season?

Harlan: The work of Layton Construction and all of the terrific partners who came together to make this happen is nothing short of amazing. And to complete this project on-time and on-budget through the unprecedented reality of a pandemic, is remarkable. We're grateful to see this project open in time for the 2021 football season.

UC&D: What was the overall cost? Were there any budget concerns? What percentage of money was raised from private donations?

Harlan: This was an \$85-million project and more than \$47 million was raised through philanthropic giving. We're very grateful for the terrific partnership that allowed us to address challenges as they arose during the construction process and keep the project moving within that budget.



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Stone-Cold Challenges

Product Availability, Soaring Transportation Costs, Manpower Among Stone/Tile Industry Challenges.

By Brad Fullmer

Construction materials across the board have been spiking nationally the past 18 months, another negative impact of the pandemic, and local stone and tile firms find themselves scrambling to keep profit margins from completely disappearing.

The primary culprit to soaring costs: supply chain woes via a dwindling lack of transportation options. Getting product from point A to B is often fraught with crippling delays and/or skyrocketing costs. “It’s been a real challenge,” said Dale Butler, an Owner with Salt Lake-based

Millcreek Tile & Stone. “We have products delayed for months because of lack of containers, lack of transportation from Asia. We had one order placed in March and we never did get it and had to get alternative product locally.” Butler was specifically referencing stone products, but the same challenges exist in the tile market.

“Tile probably isn’t quite as bad because most [product] comes from local distributors,” said Butler. Lead times have gone out significantly and transportation costs have gone up exponentially. It’s a bidding war for a [shipping] container. Ground transportation has similarly skyrocketed.”

As an example, Butler said the cost of a container has risen from \$2,500 to more than \$20,000, a nearly ten-fold increase. He also mentioned that on a recent paver quote, what used to be \$700 for a truckload is now \$1,800, illustrating the price increases associated with ground transportation. It makes staying profitable an even greater challenge than during a normal business climate.

“We primarily are absorbing those costs because we have a contract,” said Butler. “We’re being more careful to line item the transportation and telling clients this is subject to whatever the transportation costs are at the time of [shipping]. We’re typically working a year out or even longer on commercial projects.”

Butler, who has worked in the industry since 1984, continued: “We’re not as profitable as we want to be. We’ve had our guys working overtime the last two months—they’re authorized to work 60-hour weeks, but after about 55 your productivity goes down.”

Alan Jorgensen, CEO of Bedrock Quartz of West Jordan, echoed Butler’s concerns.

“Costs of shipping from Asia and related time constraints have become worse—from six weeks to 10–12 weeks,” said Jorgensen, whose firm is celebrating its 45th year in business since his father, Dave, started the company in 1976 out of the back of his truck, and has grown into a dynamic company that added a 125,000-SF addition in June 2020 to its 25,000-SF headquarters and now boast 150 employees. He gave an example of a recent shipping cost increase



Example of an intricate mosaic tile creation, one of several current popular trends in tile design (courtesy Millcreek Tile and Stone). View of Bedrock Quartz’s manufacturing facility in West Jordan (left), where the company transforms large slabs of natural and man-made stone into a wide range of customized products for commercial and residential applications.

from \$4,500 to \$15,000—more than triple what it once was pre-pandemic. “There are some serious concerns with global shipping lines and so many layers of problems. We need more port capacity, which takes years to build out. We need more containers. It has put pressure on distributors and caused price increase on all product.”

Labor Shortages Persist

Butler, whose firm has 55 employees, including tile setters, apprentices and helpers, plus three project managers and six other office staff members, mentioned labor constraints as another thorn that puts pressure on firms like his when trying to meet demanding construction schedules. » “There is a lack of personnel—we can’t get enough people,” he lamented. “Sometimes you get a good person every six months. Nobody wants to stick around. Sometimes they don’t even show the first day, which is disheartening. Distributors are having the same issue, and they offer a corporate job.”

Jorgensen said finding good workers requires a solid internal training program and plenty of patience as a new employee gets up to speed, adding that creating a workplace that is pleasant and rewarding is

essential. Beyond competitive wages [which have also risen significantly the past couple of years], workers demand good workplace conditions and an atmosphere they can truly enjoy.

“We have to be more thoughtful about our culture,” said Jorgensen. “We’re providing ongoing management training to accelerate their growth and [individual] skill sets. All of us need to keep elevating what we’re doing.”

Butler said labor concerns obviously aren’t unique to just his industry. Lack of skilled manpower has forced general contractors to be honest with owners about hitting unreasonable schedule goals.

“I think it’s been a learning process over the last year for general contractors,” he said. “Subcontractors have had [labor issues] for awhile; generals have to adjust their thinking and tell owners the truth [that] it’s going to be a slower process to build buildings now. Covid has had its effect. Delays have been horrendous.”

Product Diversity a Must

Jorgensen said one of the things that has helped Bedrock Quartz—which specializes in stone countertops for kitchens, »

bathroom/shower installations and custom fireplaces, among other items for homes and commercial businesses—is that it stocks over 100 types of materials.

For years, the firm specialized in laminate-type products before transitioning to various types of stone, including natural stone like granite, marble, and quartzite, along with man-made quartz products and some porcelain.

The company began experimenting with quartz in the early 2000s and quickly had to make the decision to go all-in with stone products, purchasing \$150,000 in equipment.

“When we run out of a certain product we can find something else that is close,” he maintained. “Our products are delayed, but not to the extent of other items.” It’s critical to let clients know immediately of potential delays and/or price increases. “Forward communication is key—if we know there is going to be a problem, we try to let [clients] know about it well in advance.”

Automated equipment has been a boon to streamlining production and maximizing labor overhead.

“When we started in the business, CNC [computer numeric control] machines weren’t commonplace,” said Jorgensen. “We

got our first one in 2003 and the technology and equipment that processes stone has continued to improve. We’re continuing to see even more future automation with very heavy equipment. We use cranes, vacuum lifters, carts, dollies to lessen the impact to people working on the stone.”

Powerful, high-speed water jet cutting machines are another essential machinery item utilized during the manufacturing process. Large pieces of stone can be digitally measured using laser template devices that capture a 3-D image, programmers then manipulate drawing files used CAD and CAM [computer-aided manufacturing] software, and intricate final pieces are created with much less waste and much faster speeds.

Buter, whose firm deals mainly with tile products, said larger format tile sizes are becoming increasingly popular among owners and architects. The larger tiles sizes include 12” x 24”, 30” x 30”, and 24” x 48” pieces, he said. The new Utah State Office Building in Taylorsville (a renovation of the former American Express headquarters) is an example of a current project that calls for 24” x 48” tile, along with smaller wall tile that is 12” x 24”.

The large-format sizes “are harder at installing,” Butler said, adding that preparation is critical with the larger product, where crews create their own mortar beds and custom surfaces, which allows for faster installation and a higher quality finish. “The prep work has to be perfect. We have to do a lot of prep work for both floors and walls. We actually can flatten surfaces well with our methods.”

Both Butler and Jorgensen said they are optimistic that the challenges their firms currently face with logistics and product delivery will ultimately recede, and that their respective businesses will continue to flourish in Utah’s thriving construction market.

“We get 20 bid invites a day and we’re not accepting any right now—our backlog is big and we don’t want to jeopardize our ability to react to the market, because it’s so fluid right now,” said Butler.

“The element of growing and improving is highly motivating for me,” added Jorgensen. “There is wonderful satisfaction of creating a beautiful product in people’s homes and businesses. We’re creating opportunities for our employees to grow. Our goal is to triple the size of the company over the next 10 years.” ■



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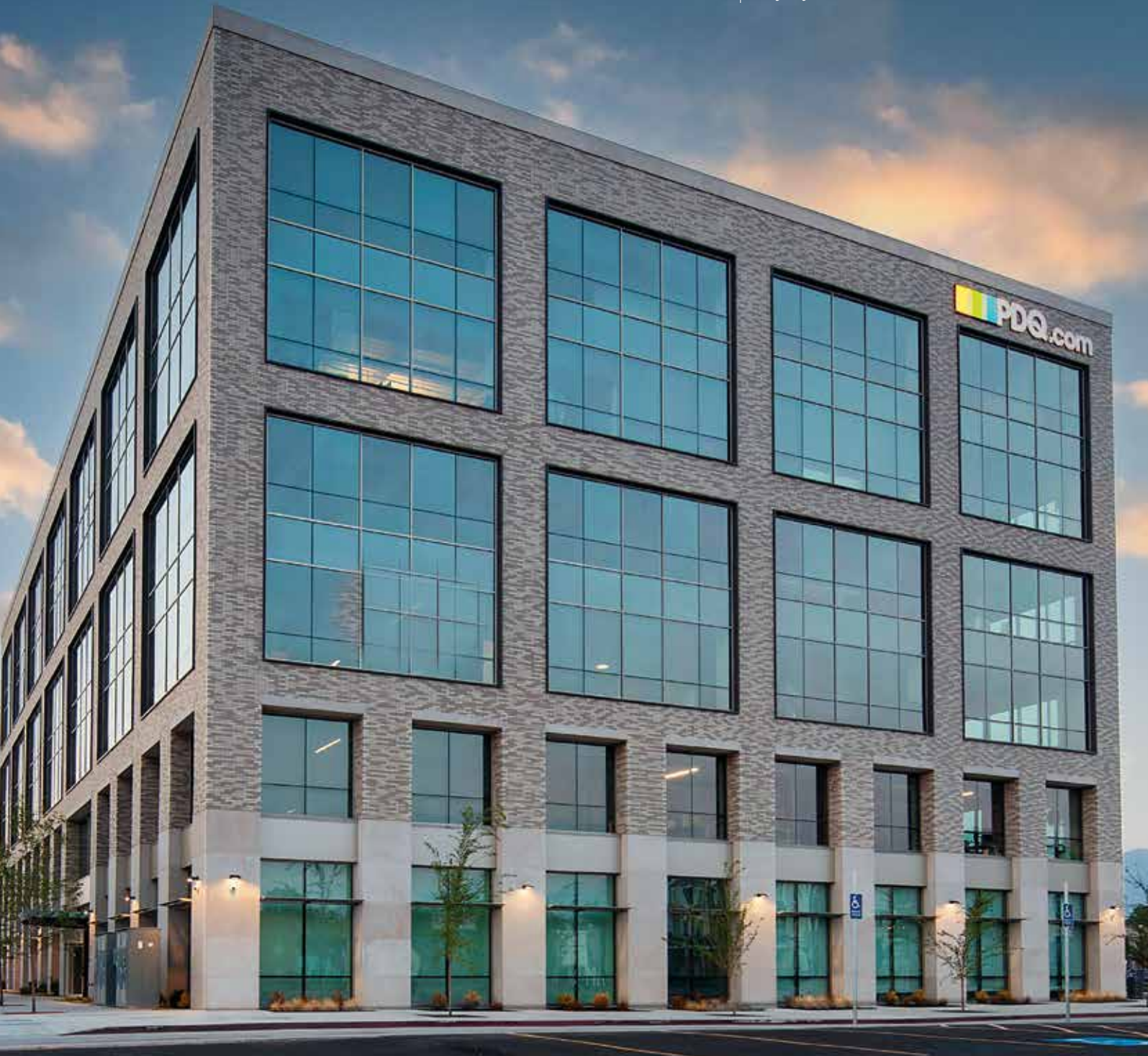
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South City Rising

South Salt Lake's first Class A office supplies tenants exquisite headquarters that fit their respective cultures and supplies the community with the first step in ongoing development.

By Taylor Larsen



South City offers sleek, highly modern interior design elements throughout its finished spaces. Prominent tenants include PDQ.com and GBS Benefits (photo pictured and right courtesy Okland Construction).



A few blocks from the crossroads of two interstates lies the South City Office Building, its neat appearance unique to the skyline, as it is one of the few buildings that rises over two stories in the neighborhood.

Getting to where it is now, the first ever Class A office building in South Salt Lake, has been a few years in the making.

"We took a hard look at South Salt Lake a few years ago," said Jonathan "Jono" Gardner, Partner for development firm and building owner Gardner-Batt. As development pushed south from downtown Salt Lake City and north from Point of the Mountain, Gardner's team found the convergence of economic growth in the Salt Lake Valley in one spot. "It only seemed natural that South Salt Lake

would be right in the crosshairs."

Getting tenants—ones who would create high-end corporate headquarters befitting of their respective cultures—came along with that vision. Today, two tenants are thoroughly enjoying their space: PDQ and GBS Benefits.

The building and its surroundings aren't just HQs, either, but the jumping-off point for South Salt Lake's emergence as a city as it looks to create a downtown.

Approach

Walking up to the building, it's certainly tall. But is it three stories, or is it six? Its handy design approach creates a visible trick that helps reduce the building's vertical scale as it floats above a sea of 18–22-foot tall

buildings on Main Street.

It's a six-story building that reads like a three-story building. That was achieved through stacked layers of windows, 30 feet by 30 feet, which encompass the building on floors three through six. Those are just above colonnades on the first and second floors.

"We worked with the City of South Salt Lake to provide a design that would fit in to the established vision for what their new Downtown could/would be," said Justin Jacobs, Principal with GSBS Architects.

The thin brick façade was value-engineered to give the shell its masonry look, which Adam Hudson, LEED Green Associate and Project Manager for Okland Construction, described as similar to laying tile on the wall. »

South City Office Building

Surrounding Scope

Some initial steps to this three-part project including building out the areas around the building.

The plaza portion on the west side between the building and parking structure is over a 120-foot long, 30-plus-foot wide section of Stormbrixx, a plastic stormwater management system with voids in it to allow water to flow through. Hudson talked up the structural strength of the product,

which allows it to hold up the weight of the plaza as it manages water retention.

Outside improvements didn't end with the plaza. Beyond the parking structure just west of the building, Hudson and Okland were instrumental in improving the Utopia Avenue road on the north side of the project. Hudson said that the city wanted to widen the road, so his team demolished the narrow, existing street to build it out wider with space for a turnout, improving the mobility

infrastructure around the growing area.

Instead of just plopping a building onto Main Street, Gardner spoke of creating a place of interest for the entire area.

That area is a "Woonerf," a street concept found in the Netherlands which means "living yard" in Dutch. Gardner wanted it to be a private/public plaza where food trucks could come and public events could be a mainstay, "where people can spill out and party."

While the exterior and its surroundings look to push South Salt Lake to a higher purpose, what about the interior?

All that Can Fit

Cultural fit was the name of the game for PDQ's three-floor tenant improvement. Ellen Nygaard, Interior Designer with GSBS Architects, looked to combine exposed mechanical systems and dark, reclaimed barnwood to give the company headquarters a "heavy metal industrial" flavor. The choice was well-received by the tenant, too.

"Their use of barn wood up against the exposed steel beams in the ceilings brings a rustic feel to a modern workplace," PDQ Founder Shawn Anderson said in his statement. "Everything flows naturally. We couldn't be happier."

"We wanted to make sure that [PDQ's] brand and their sense of humor came through," Nygaard said. And it does. Whether that is the multicolored company branding seen in various places, the tongue-in-cheek touches like the "Bike Warsh" room, the "Bored Room," or signage that asks café visitors, "Have you tried turning it off and turning it back on again?" It's 100% PDQ's space.

PDQ's three floors have all of the amenities that come with the expectations of Silicon Slopes. Nygaard mentioned that it posed a unique challenge for her—there was too much square footage. So she looked for different ways to maximize the value for PDQ.

That maximization of space began with real consideration for another element of PDQ's culture of assisting and training IT professionals via their company tradition—whiskey Wednesday webcasts. Beyond the company's high-end webcast studio, the company tricked out the ground floor with a high-end auditorium replete with company branding and those heavy metal industrial



Exposed mechanical systems and natural wood give PDQ's headquarters a "heavy metal industrial" flavor and provide a rustic feel to a modern workplace (this and subsequent photos by Paul Richer).

elements. Arktura wall panels—half an inch thick and felt-covered—help insulate sound in studio spaces. Air gaps behind the panels assist in sound attenuation of the recycled-plastic panels.

Nygaard described PDQ as a company that works hard during the day while wanting employees to enjoy their lives at the office before heading home by the end of the workday. What better way to do that than to have coffee on-site? A full-service café with a barista is just the starting point. A prep kitchen, salad bar, an executive office wing, dining areas, and gym all reside on the building's first floor, too.

A trip up the feature stair to the third-floor bar and lounge nods again to the overall design aesthetic—they include a stage for karaoke events as well as a smoke lounge. You'd be forgiven for thinking that it's a high-end speakeasy instead of a company's community space.

"GSBS spent enough time with us that they thoroughly understood our culture, and that came out clearly in the design," said Anderson. "Everything just speaks about PDQ."

Clean and Colorful

That cultural fit of a new office was essential for the upstairs neighbors at GBS Benefits, too.

Zachary Stewart, Interior Designer for GSBS Architects said, "Our process starts with visioning. 'What do you want your space to look and feel like? You want to walk into a space and know what they are about.'"

On the construction side, that meant installing "lots of glass, open ceilings, and concrete floors" according to Okland's Hudson. Diane Fullerton, Chief People and Community Officer with GBS Benefits, spoke about how that clean, professional look of polished concrete with plenty of metal and glass office reflects the standardized work they do as benefits specialists. The openness of the glazing as well as the art pieces that match the company's branding helps to bring engaging, welcoming elements to their office.

"When Zach initially sent the [art designs] to me, they all looked like beach towels," said Fullerton of the Rothko-inspired wall paintings designed by Stewart. As soon as they were a part of the bigger >>

"GSBS spent enough time with us that they thoroughly understood our culture, and that came out clearly in the design. Everything just speaks about PDQ."

— Shawn Anderson, PDQ Founder



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South City Office Building

picture, however, the art became one of the company’s favorite features.

The most exciting part for Fullerton is a simple one. “Our space is being used as it was intended,” she said. “And that intent is to be used.”

Beyond break rooms and obvious spaces that are always utilized, community offices, informal meeting spaces, and board rooms, none of it is just filling space; all of it is being used. Fullerton spoke of how the change in office has been a huge win for culture, which she credits to the work of the building’s project team to bring it all together.

She also credited the work from the construction team that allowed their expansive cafeteria area the bandwidth to do company potlucks with all of the employees.

“We had an event the other day and there were six slow-cookers going,” she said. Multiple microwaves and other appliances were also in service, showcasing the power and capabilities of the electrical system.

Changing Office

With two unique office improvements, where does this leave office culture?

GBS Benefits chose conventional methods for their offices with the materials Hudson previously described. The transparency of that interior glass was important to emphasize for the company, especially in a day and age where employees want to know a company’s values.

Another growing facet of work in the 21st century is employees enjoying the workplace. Stewart proposed open offices on the corners of the two floors to help give those in each area lovely views from the expansive windows in the GBS Benefits space. The interior offices have those views, too, with circulation and branding creating straightforward wayfinding. Flexible training rooms allow the company to shift between dozens of employees in a team meeting to accommodate annual reviews for the entire office.

PDQ looked for office spaces that would keep pushing the company culture forward. In their second- and third-floor

offices, DIRT modular offices are great for flexibility as the company scales. Nygaard spoke on pulling a wall out and moving things around being an important feature for PDQ in the coming years. Much like their upstairs neighbors, Nygaard’s work bringing in a combination of interior and exterior glazing contributes a healthy amount of daylight into the interior offices and work groups.

Sit-to-stand conference room tables were another cultural fit for PDQ. Nygaard mentioned that company founders wanted to utilize those for shorter meetings that get to the point—another cultural hallmark.

Changing City

As the first Class A office space in the city, this is a huge push forward for South Salt Lake’s upward trajectory.

Gardner heaped praise on South Salt Lake Mayor Cherie Wood, who was the first supporter of the project, with the Mayor saying that the community deserved to have high-end offices within its borders. »



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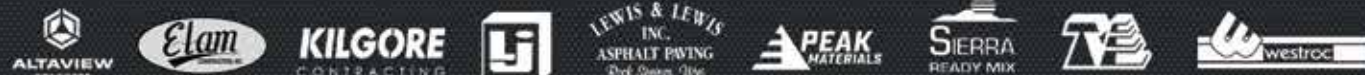
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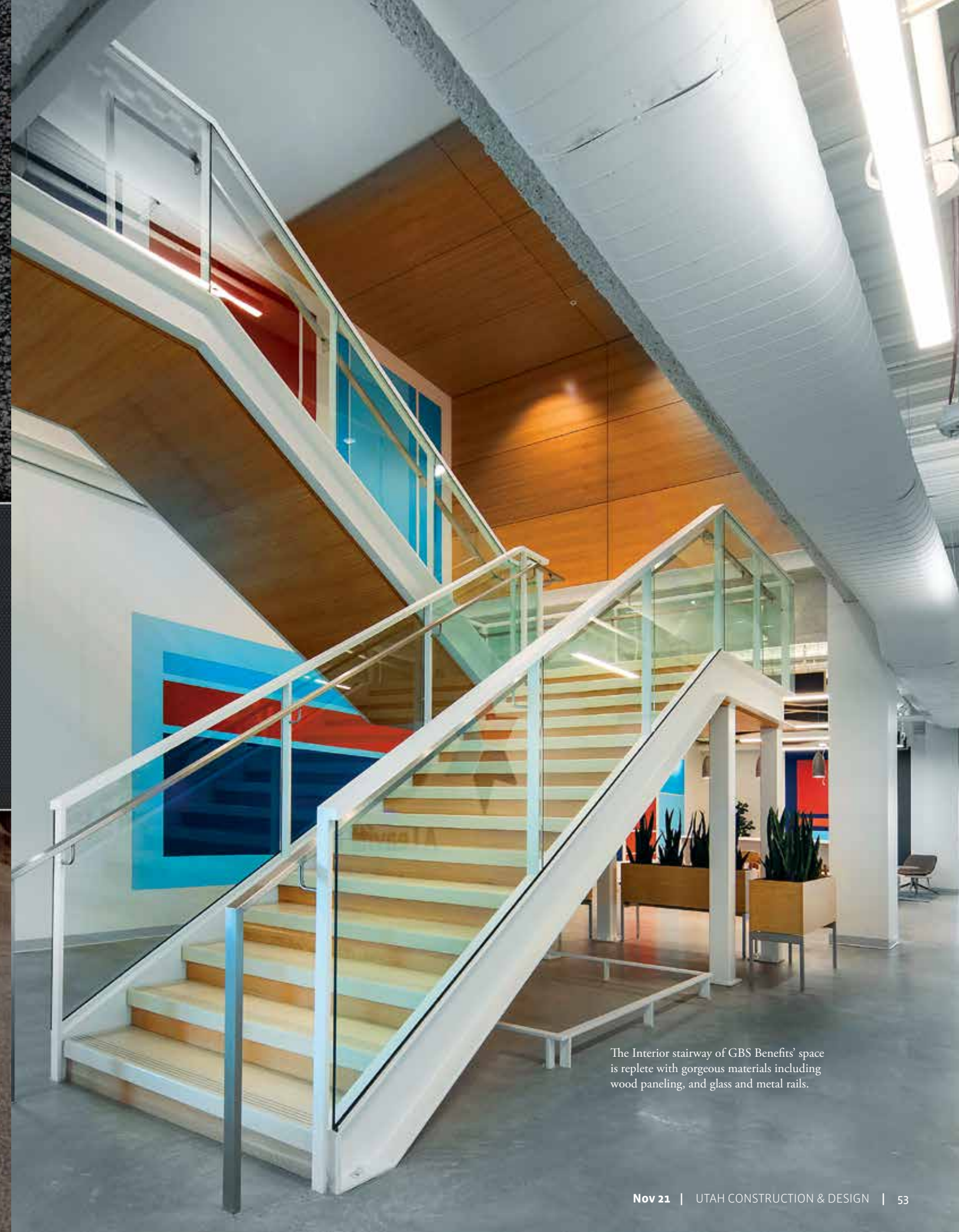
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The Interior stairway of GBS Benefits' space is replete with gorgeous materials including wood paneling, and glass and metal rails.

South City Office Building

It could be the beginning of a thriving downtown for the community. Today, two tenants have found office spaces that fit their needs and wants both now and in the future.

Gardner mentioned that each company spent well above their allowance, showcasing their desire to plant their respective flags in that spot. “What a wonderful statement to their commitment,” he said, “because they see the future here, and they see that [this area] is going to grow.”

Jacobs agreed on all counts—successful meetings with developers, city officials, and tenants has led to a great building, one that will stay timeless as the skyline goes up around it.

“It doesn’t feel out of place now,” continued Jacobs, “and won’t feel out of place when other, larger buildings go up in the coming 10 years.”

South Salt Lake is the “City on the Move,” and it’s exciting to see where it will go next. The South City Office Building is a great starting point on that future trajectory.

“We have to convince people that South Salt Lake will be the future,” said Gardner. “But it doesn’t just happen; you have to keep up the momentum.” ■

South City Office Building

Location: City of South Salt Lake
Delivery Method: CM/GC
Owner/Developer: Gardner Batt, LLC

DESIGN TEAM (CORE/SHELL)

Architect: GSBS Architects
Civil: Ensign Engineering
Electrical: JT Electric
Mechanical: PVE, Inc.
Structural: Dunn Associates
Geotech: Gordon Geotechnical Engineering, Inc.
Landscape: GSBS Architects

CONSTRUCTION TEAM (CORE/SHELL)

General Contractor: Okland Construction
Concrete: KH Love Construction
Plumbing: Reliable Plumbing
HVAC: Atlas Sheet Metal
Electrical: JT Electric
Masonry: Nicolson Construction
Drywall/Acoustics: Ceiling Systems Inc
Painting: Grow Painting
Tile/Stone: CP Build
Carpentry: Boswell Wasatch
Flooring: CP Build
Roofing: Superior Roofing

Glass/Curtain Wall: Skyview Glass
Waterproofing: Waterproofing West
Aire Barrier: Nicolson Construction
Steel Fabrication: Lundahl Iron Works
Steel Erection: Unlimited Steel
Excavation: Green Construction Inc
Landscaping: Aeroscape Landscaping

PDQ.COM TENANT IMPROVEMENT

Delivery Method: CM/GC
Square Feet: About 75,000 SF across three stories

DESIGN TEAM

Architect: GSBS Architects
Civil: Ensign Engineering
Electrical: JT Electric
Mechanical: PVE, Inc.
Structural: Dunn Associates

CONSTRUCTION TEAM

General Contractor: Okland Construction
Plumbing/HVAC: Gunthers
Electrical: JT Electric
Drywall/Acoustics: Ceiling Systems Inc
Painting: Grow Painting
Tile/Stone & Flooring: CP Build
Carpentry: Granite Mill
Kitchen: Commercial Kitchen Supply

Glass/Curtain Wall: Skyview Glass
Steel Fabrication & Erection: Glassey Steel Works

GBS BENEFITS TENANT IMPROVEMENT

Delivery Method: CM/GC
Square Feet: About 50,000 SF across two stories

DESIGN TEAM

Architect: GSBS Architects
Civil: Ensign Engineering
Electrical: Hunt Electric, Inc.
Mechanical: PVE, Inc.
Structural: Dunn Associates

CONSTRUCTION TEAM

General Contractor: Okland Construction
Plumbing: Archer Mechanical
HVAC: Atlas Sheet Metal
Electrical: Hunt Electric
Drywall/Acoustics: Ceiling Systems Inc
Painting: Grow Painting
Tile/Stone & Flooring: CP Build
Carpentry: Granite Mill
Glass/Curtain Wall: NGI-Glass
Steel Fabrication & Erection: Ry Fabrication (stairs)

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54 | UTAH CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN | Nov 21

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AIA Utah Celebrates Century Mark

Members reflect on what Chapter’s 100-year Anniversary means to the local A/E/C industry.

By Brad Fullmer



Members of AIA Utah pose with Noelle Pikus-Pace, who won a silver medal in skeleton at the 2014 Sochi Olympics in Russia, and was the keynote speaker at the final day of the 2021 AIA Utah Conference September 24.

2021 has been an eventful year for members of the Utah Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA Utah), as it celebrates its 100-year Anniversary.

The Chapter held its annual “Conference Week” September 20-24, which included an event honoring six AIA Utah “Legends” (9/21) and a combined roundtable/meeting at Okland Construction’s office in Salt Lake City (9/24) highlighted by keynote speaker Noelle Pikus-Pace, who won a silver medal in skeleton at the 2014 Sochi Olympics in Russia. Her story of perseverance and overcoming adversity was inspiring. Several past AIA Utah Presidents reflected on the significance of the Chapter reaching 100 years a part of the association and expressed gratitude for their respective involvement over the years.

Current AIA Utah President Phil

Haderlie, a Principal with Salt Lake-based VCBO Architecture, said his tenure has been eventful as the A/E/C industry continues to navigate through the Covid-19 pandemic, and he also praised AIA members for perpetually trying to design better buildings.

“We tried to honor the legacy of the past but also ask what it means to be around for another 100 years in the future,” said Haderlie. “Our whole theme this year has been to ‘connect, collaborate and celebrate.’ Celebrate the past, connect with clients, and collaborating to solve the problems we have now. AIA is very optimistic about the future and our ability as architects to tackle really big problems in the world. There is a high bar set and the message is to do our best within our normal jobs and do whatever we can do to reach these goals.”

Haderlie referenced AIA National’s

2030 Challenge and the goal of having all new buildings, developments, and major renovations achieve carbon neutral status—a daunting task that is a little more than eight years away.

AIA Utah also established EQXD—Equity by Design Committee—to meet national goals of designing projects to include all people and eliminating any unconscious bias or racial bias. “We have committees to tackle these issues and move the needle forward,” he added.

Haderlie also mentioned a tiny home design competition being held by Salt Lake City in an effort to find practical solutions to homelessness.

“It has been rewarding,” he said. “It’s outside my normal career path and specialty, but I’ve learned a lot about the housing situation in Utah.” Submissions were due at the end of October and an awards event will be held in December. “It’s



Noelle Pikus-Pace

about increasing urban density. Our design ideas may help getting this approved or getting the conversation started.”

AIA Utah also hired a new Executive Director, Michael Smith, in the middle of the year. He takes over a membership that totaled 741 members in 2020, a record number for the Chapter.

Other comments on AIA Utah’s 100th from Past Presidents came from: Jerod Maw (2020), Principal with Richardson Design Partnership of Salt Lake; Jeanne Jackson (2015), Principal with VCBO Architecture; Jim Lohse (2018), Principal with Salt Lake-based FFKR Architects.

Maw praised the EQXD Committee and the efforts being made for greater diversity and inclusion in the architectural profession. “I don’t consider myself and expert on justice and equity so we got some outside help to get this committee started. We’ve made a lot of ground and have had diverse member discussions.”

He said AIA Utah is well positioned for another 100 years of excellence and positive community impact. He encouraged AIA members to extend themselves and get more involved with the local Chapter.

“I’ve heard it said that AIA is like a gym membership—you get out of it what you put into it,” added Maw. “If you’re going to be involved, you see a benefit in it. We’re having more conversations about important issues. It’s hard to explain it to



Niels Valentiner



Frank Ferguson



Myron Richardson



Eldon Talbot



Allen Roberts



Mike Stransky

an individual unless they get involved and see it for themselves.”

Jackson, who is widely credited with the gym membership reference, said, “The 100th Anniversary of AIA Utah is a milestone for all of us practicing here in the state. For 100 years, the AIA mission to organize and unite Utah architects, while advocating for the value of architecture, has driven positive change in Utah through the power of design. My personal involvement with the Chapter has consisted of service over the year in a number of capacities I have found meaningful, including mentoring and leadership.”

Lohse said about the milestone: “100 years in the world seems sort of young, so to me, AIA Utah is still a young (Chapter). We have a lot of time ahead of us to be influential and keep progressing and helping our state get better, which I think AIA Utah does each year.”

Honoring Past AIA Utah ‘Legends’

On September 21, a combined in-person/ Zoom meeting was held to honor seven architectural “legends” who practiced in Utah: Helen Starley McEntire Norton, who is the first woman to earn a license in Utah to practice architecture in 1973; Niels Valentiner, co-founder of VCBO

Architecture; Elden Talbot of MHTN Architects of Salt Lake; Frank Ferguson of FFKR; Allen Roberts of Salt Lake-based CRSA, Myron Richardson of Brixen and Christopher of Salt Lake, and Mike Stransky of GSBS Architects of Salt Lake. The event was moderated by Fran Pruyn, former Marketing Director of CRSA. Roberts and Talbot were at the meeting in person, with videos of each person also shown.

While covering Norton’s story for AIA Utah’s Reflexion magazine, Pruyn and the AIA Utah Board were inspired to uncover more. “We realized there are many successful, retired architects living in Utah. They have rich histories, and little has been recorded about their careers that largely span the second half of the twentieth century. We thought it would be great to know them as architects better, and find a place for them in our archives, so that new generations can tap into who they were, how they worked and what motivated them.”

Each architect was asked about the ‘Evolution of Architecture’, and each agreed that technology has had the most profound change on the design industry. They also agree that buildings today are more energy efficient, more code compliant, and more >>

accessible. Valentiner said buildings have become more sophisticated and operate much better.

Talbot said, “I think the schools today are much more handsome than they were when I was designing. I attended a lot of school board meetings in my day, and I remember this district where one of the new buildings had just opened up and one of the taxpayers was complaining about the cost of that building. They knew he was coming and they showed him that it was comparable to other buildings of that type, and he said, ‘It looks too good and we don’t want that anymore.’”

Roberts talked about how technical the profession is today especially with computer-aided drafting instead of hand drafting. He said, “It’s become much more technical. When I took my architectural exams, there were 40 hours of exams [over] five days, and one exam was the big design exam. It started at 8:00 in the morning [and] ended at 8:00 at night. You designed a building. They gave you a little booklet that had the programming criteria, and by



AIA Utah paid tribute to local architect legends at an event September 21 at AIA Utah headquarters in Salt Lake City. Pictured are (left to right) former CRSA Marketing Director (and event moderator) Fran Pruyn; former co-founder of CRSA Allen Roberts; 2021 AIA Utah President-Elect Robert Pinon of MHTN; former MHTN Principal Eldon Talbot; 2021 AIA Utah President Phi Haderlie of VCBO.

the end of the day you had to have a set of drawings, floor plans, sections, elevations, outlines of mechanical systems, and all of that. That was all done by hand drafting.”

Richardson also praised new technology, saying, “Technology has dramatically impacted the profession. It impacted me. I became an architect

because I love to draw, and drawing on a computer is not very interesting, and I refused to learn to use a computer. I kind of learned how, but I never did it. And I think that is a big change, and I think it has something to do with the buildings seeming to lack a little personality. I like the idea of taking a pencil, starting with a line and not

knowing where it is going to end, and then you say, ‘Yeah, there.’ There was something about putting your hands on the paper and drawing the lines and thinking about the people walking through the spaces that I think is being lost.”

Valentiner said, “For a new architect, it is to come out and open your own door. Get experience in firms, decide what direction you want to go in, but find the niche that you can have the most influence on. That way you can grow in a firm and grow into something of significance in your career. Get as much experience as possible. I wish I had probably traveled more, maybe, the United States, maybe gone back to Europe. It would be smart to get a broader perspective of architecture and international architecture. And how people are growing and developing not only their business but their profession.”

Ferguson agreed, saying, “Get out of town. My exit from Salt Lake City to the Midwest, to Europe, to San Francisco—geez what a difference it made.”

Roberts said focus on being a better

architect and not worry so much about the paycheck. “For me, and Wally too, it was never about the money. We never thought of it as a motive or a criterion for why we do this. We practiced architecture because we had a passion for it, we loved what we were doing, and that is what drove us forward, year after year, project after project, difficulty after difficulty. So, if you decide to do it, you should do it because you love it. But once you make that commitment, I think the rewards are there, not just the financial rewards, but the other kinds of things—the soul-satisfying, spirit-elevating feelings you get from designing good buildings, satisfying clients, being a community builder, all of those things that architects

espouse and practice feed the things that are most important.”

Stransky said, “My advice is that you have to just be ready to say, ‘This is what I want to do, I see my niche.’ Or ‘I see my possibilities,’ and you give it everything you’ve got. I don’t think that is much different than a doctor, but doctors don’t have the impact on the public that we do. That is a huge responsibility, and if you like that, give it everything you’ve got, because it will suck up everything you’ve got—all your time, all your energy if you let it. And then you will find that you have to balance that with your other life, your family, your partners, your spouses. And you have to find a way to keep that in balance.” ■

AIA Utah 2021 Design Awards

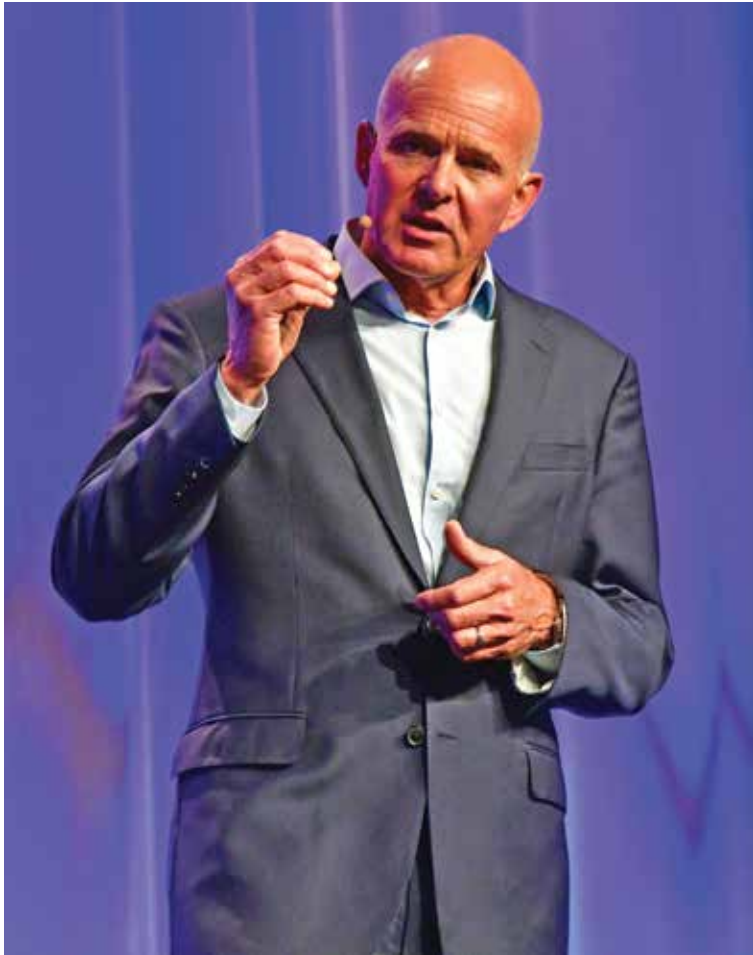
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SLCO Kearns Library	Merit Award	Architectural Nexus
Wabi-Sabi Residence	Honor Award	Sparano + Mooney Architecture
SLC Fire Department Training Ctr.	Honor Award	Blalock & Partners
Best Friends Roadhouse	Honor Award	WOW Atelier
Paragon Lofts	Honor Award	Blalock & Partners



Growing Something Good

Executive Director Carlos Braceras exhorts UDOT employees and conference attendees to identify their ‘Top Five’ greatest strengths in an effort to better themselves individually while also helping others.

By Brad Fullmer



As far as prominent public speakers go in Utah’s A/E/C industry, Carlos Braceras stands at the top of the heap in terms of delivering creative, energetic, and thought-provoking speeches.

He added to his lore during the Utah Department of Transportation’s 2021 Conference, with an inspiring, well-rounded message that encouraged those in attendance—including hundreds of UDOT employees, engineering consultants and product vendors—to identify their top five individual strengths, and use them for personal improvement, team building, and helping others they interact with regularly at work, home and play achieve higher goals.

The popular three-day event, held October 26-28 at Mountain America Expo Center in Sandy, included a plethora of vendor booths for professional services and products and a variety of informative breakout sessions on the latest in transportation-related trends, along with UDOT’s Annual Awards presentation.

Braceras’ 40-plus minute oration kicked off the conference, and offered unique

insight into his own childhood, and how his mother, Barbara, helped him overcome the challenge of dyslexia as a youth via a rigorous home reading and writing schedule.

“At the time I had no idea what (dyslexia) meant, but what I did understand is that reading seemed really hard for me, so naturally I didn’t like to do it,” said Braceras, who started at UDOT in 1986 and has served as Executive Director since May 2013. “I thought I was dumb. But my mom wasn’t the kind of person who would just accept that news and leave it at that. She wasn’t going let her son fall behind and she wasn’t going to let me feel stupid. For 2-3 hours, three times a week, I practiced reading and writing after school. This went on for years. I’m not really sure when it happened, but somewhere along the process I learned to love to read.”

Braceras said his mom let him choose what to read, such as Hardy Boys mysteries, which helped him stick to the program.

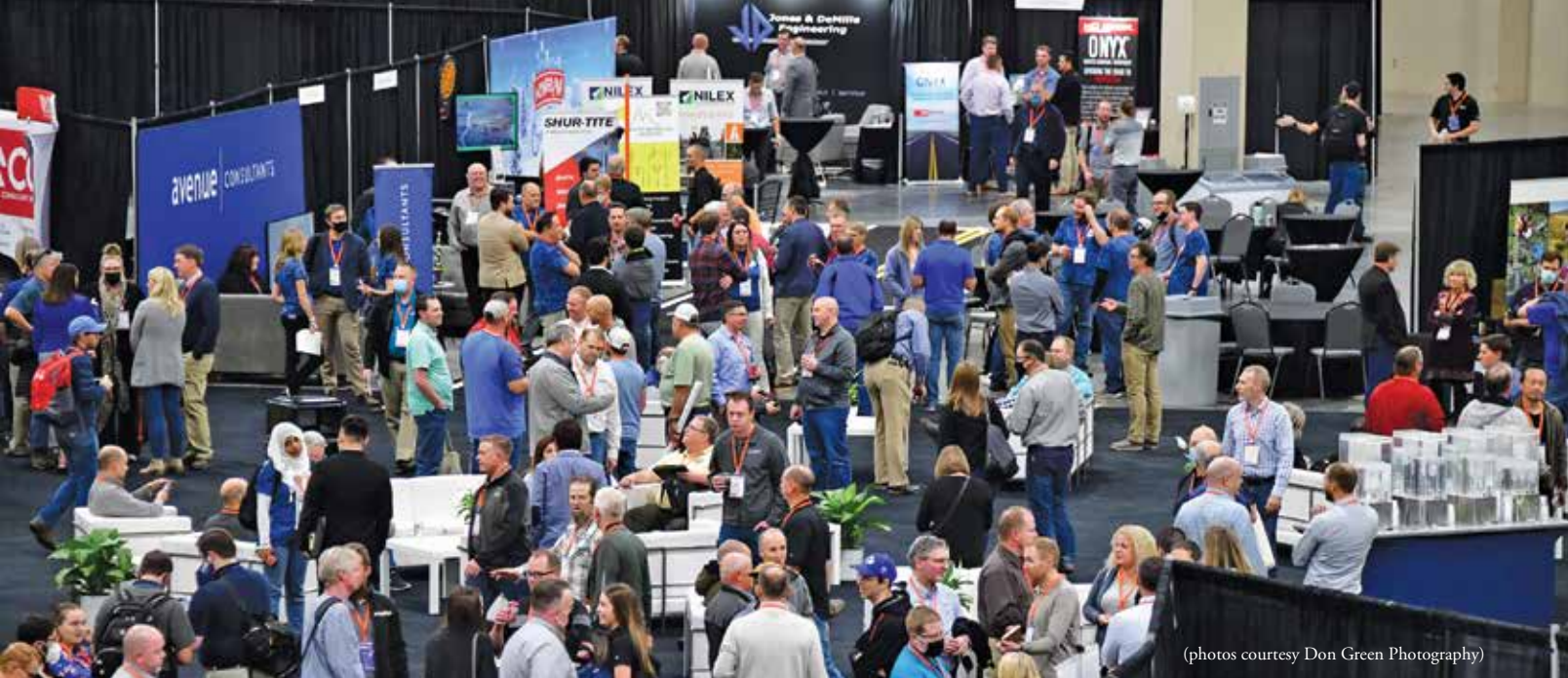
“I’m incredibly grateful for my mother for pushing me to keep reading and practicing,” he said. “I know I wouldn’t be here today if I hadn’t learned those skills. She

helped me use my strengths to overcome a challenge that really felt impossible.”

Identifying Strengths in People

Braceras said that UDOT is taking a “strength-based approach” on work being done as a department, as well as teams and individuals. He mentioned a website for UDOT employees that helps recognize individual strengths to benefit an entire organization, and likened it to growing a garden.

“In order to grow something, you need to fill that space with seeds,” he began. “Once you’ve filled that garden and it’s growing, it doesn’t have room for weeds. You’ve created something that makes the world a better place. Even if it’s a small part of the world, it matters to the people that experience it. Taking a strength-based approach doesn’t mean we ignore obstacles or pretend nothing needs to be improved. If there [are] weeds, of course we’ll get rid of them, but we don’t fixate on them. Getting rid of weeds isn’t the ultimate goal, it’s a necessary step towards growing something



that’s really good. Similarly, with a strength-based approach we ask, ‘what strengths can help us achieve our goals quickly and efficiently? What are we good at? When we focus on using our strengths to achieve our goals, we find new ideas we wouldn’t have thought of otherwise. And we absolutely have so much more fun. We’ve embedded this into the DNA of UDOT on every level of our organization.”

He said by focusing on each person’s strengths, it helps support existing values throughout the organization. Each UDOT employee was asked at the beginning of the year to identify their top five strengths. It’s an exercise he believes is applicable to the transportation community as a whole, not just UDOT employees.

“Knowing our strengths and the strengths of our teammates makes the work more fun,” said Braceras. “We seem to have a tendency to focus on what is wrong—that’s probably human nature, I get it. You can have a beautiful lawn, and have one dandelion, and what do you see? You see that damn weed. We know this from our own UDOT experience. The road could be perfectly smooth, beautiful for miles and miles, but if there is one pothole, we hear the complaints. We immediately think, ‘the other 50 miles are perfect, nobody said anything about that’. We need to be the kind of people that choose to appreciate the perfect 50 miles. We have to make a conscious choice to proactively notice the good. We need to spend more time thinking about what’s right, even when trying to solve what’s wrong.”

Recognizing Positive Attributes

Braceras encouraged those in leadership roles to actively look for ways to appreciate and offer praise to those in their stead, citing a personal example from a quarter century ago. In 1997, Braceras was working on the Legacy Parkway project and was asked by then-UDOT Executive Director Tom Warne to give a presentation at the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce.

“It was an impressive group, kind of intimidating, of 30-40 business leaders throughout the state, but Tom was the one person that made me the most nervous,” Braceras recalled. “(Afterwards) as we were walking out together, Tom said, ‘you’re an amazing presenter, because you’re so genuine’. I had never thought about that as a skill or strength. It made me feel really good. I was fully immersed in the Legacy project and knew the details as well as anyone else. I also believed in what we were doing. When I heard that comment from Tom, I understood the importance of being genuine but also understanding the material and believing in what you do. Tom made me feel confident that I could do well at public speaking. It’s a big part of my job now.”

At UDOT, Braceras continued, “we’re trying to understand what makes each individual valuable as a team member, and as a person. This will help us develop care and respect for each other. That is how we grow our values. Tom did what good leaders do—he paid attention and he noticed what I did well. He helped me feel good about something in myself that I hadn’t seen before, and shared his positive feedback in a way

that was meaningful to me. It was private, it was individualized, and it was genuine.”

He continued by asking the audience to try and notice what co-workers and associates are good at, to see what makes them light up, and to ask what they enjoy in life.

“Have a real, sincere conversation and seek to understand,” he added. “If you do this, your teams will perform better and you’re going to have more fun. More importantly, your relationships with each other will be so much better.”

The Value of Mental Health

In addition to recollections from the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympics and the tremendous amount of work that went into preparing Utah’s capital city to host that once-in-a-generation spectacle, Braceras talked about the “perfect UDOT day” and what that might mean for each of UDOT’s approximately 1,800 employees. He said having “fun”—both professionally and recreationally—is a key component to a person’s overall well-being. He mentioned being the “reigning champ” in ping pong at UDOT’s HQ complex in West Valley City, and welcomes any potential challengers.

He concluded talking about a subject that in recent years has become more and more prominent in our society—the importance of mental health. UDOT has a survey that the department wants each employee to participate in, with mental and emotional wellness being a key issue.

“We want to know how you’re doing, really,” Braceras emphasized. “I hope the >>

answer is that you’re happy. But it’s also important to acknowledge...that some of you, or the people you care about, might not be feeling all that happy right now. When you’re asked the question, ‘how are you, really?’...the honest answer might be that you’re having a hard time. If that’s the case, I hope you’re able to say this because you feel enough trust in the people around you. I hope all of you are doing everything you can to make your teammates feel safe,

respected and cared for.” He continued: “You may have seen [Utah Governor Spencer Cox’s] communication about the importance of mental health, especially during these trying times. A recent CDC survey found that nearly 41% of the respondents reported an adverse mental/behavioral health condition, such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, or increased substance abuse. I know team UDOT has been affected by

these challenges, at times in tragic ways. “The governor said as leaders, it’s our responsibility to transform the way we think, talk and address all forms of mental challenges. We need to do better at taking care of ourselves and those around us. This is where our shared values become so important. We can create a place where people feel safe, to be vulnerable, and share whatever burdens they feel. Get to understand your teammates and understand them as people. It will help us perform better as an organization, but more importantly, it can help us do a better job of taking care of each other.”

Braceras said that regardless of how employees picture their own ‘perfect UDOT day’, he’s confident that everyone has something in common. “We want to feel connected to the people around us, we want our work to connect to something bigger than ourselves, something that matters,” he said. “We want to have a sense of purpose. Each and every one of you deserves to know that you matter. I know some days it might feel hard to believe that [your work] is changing the world, but the truth is we wouldn’t be able to do this without you. You are needed, you belong, you are loved. Every one of you needs to know your work matters.

“We are making a difference in so many ways. As a team, together, we are saving lives and making lives better. And I can’t think of anything more exciting or more meaningful than that. So, let’s get out there and grow something good, and have fun doing it.” ■

2021 UDOT ANNUAL AWARDS

Keeping Utah Moving Project Awards:

Bryce Canyon Roundabout and Rehabilitation
Mountain View Corridor
I-70 & I-84 Fiber Project

Shared Vision Award:

UVU Pedestrian Bridge
Pavement Striping as a Tier 1 Asset

Joe Kammerer Memorial Safety Award:

Bob Strong
Dusty Parker
Kendall Draney

Safety Awards:

Robert Hardy, UDOT Region 1
Dayne Johnson, UDOT Region 2
Austin Menlove, UDOT Region 3
Freeman Sam, UDOT Region 4
Rod Hess, Program Development
Abdul Wakil, Technology & Innovation
Karen Paulsen, Project Development
Michael Bradford, Operations

Employee of the Year Awards:

Cheryl Marz, UDOT Region 1
Mary Ann Morehouse, UDOT Region 2
Mike Gardner, UDOT Region 3
Kyle Christensen, UDOT Region 4
Jordon Backman, Program Development
Sherrie Floyd, Technology & Innovation
Nick Clark, Project Development
Cody Oppermann, Operations
Shana Young, Administration

Leader of the Year Awards:

PJ Roubinet, UDOT Region 1



Kevon Ogden, UDOT Region 2
Andrew Jordan, UDOT Region 3
Cody Marchant, UDOT Region 4
Liz Robinson, Program Development
Kendall Draney, Technology & Innovation
Cheryl Hersh Simmons, Project Development
Greg Peterson, Operations
Diane Josie, Administration

Career Achievement Awards:

Troy Esterholdt, UDOT Region 1
Rick Debban, UDOT Region 2
Arty Johnson, UDOT Region 3
Gale Davis, UDOT Region 4
LeAnn Abegglen, Program Development
Shirleen Hancock, Project Development
Shawn Debenham, Operations
Keith Bladen, Administration

LIST OF ADVERTISERS

BHB Engineers.....2

CCI Mechanical.....31

Century Equipment.....62

CSDZ.....30

Endeavour Architectural Photography.....38

Flynn Group of Companies.....4

Honnen Equipment.....41

Intermountain Bobcat.....3

Kilgore Companies.....52

Layton Construction.....11

method studio.....58

MHTN Architects.....17

Midwest D-Vision Solutions.....40

R&O Construction.....51

Reaveley Engineers.....64

Richards Brandt Miller Nelson.....55

SMPS Utah.....48

Staker Parson Companies.....13

Steel Encounters.....59

UDOT (Zero Fatalities).....45

Publisher’s Message (contined from page 6)

“We want to know how you’re doing, really,” Braceras said. “I hope the answer is that you’re happy. But it’s also important to acknowledge...that some of you, or the people you care about, might not be feeling all that happy right now. When you’re asked the question, ‘how are you, really?’...the honest answer might be that you’re having a hard time. If that’s the case, I hope you’re able to say this because you feel enough trust in the people around you.”

He cited an executive order issued in October by Utah Gov. Spencer Cox and Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson granting all state executive branch employees four hours of administrative leave to address mental health issues. Four hours may not sound like much, but it’s a much-needed step in the right direction, and something all employers should consider.

The Governor’s website (governor.utah.gov) quoted a recent CDC survey which found that more than 40% of respondents reported an adverse mental or behavioral health condition—including anxiety, depression, loneliness and increased substance abuse. Another survey by the Society of Human Resource Management found that over 40% of employees reported feeling hopeless, exhausted or straight-up burned out by work-related concerns, with the COVID-19 pandemic at the heart of the matter. Remarkably and sadly, 37% of employees admitted not doing anything to cope with depression-related symptoms. That needs to change.

Cox stated that “as leaders, it’s our responsibility to transform the ways we think about, talk about and address all forms of mental health challenges. We all need to do better at taking care of ourselves

and those around us. We need to shift the way we talk about mental health and make sure appropriate care is more accessible. Together we can reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.”

Braceras concluded by saying, “We want to feel connected to the people around us, we want our work to connect to something bigger than ourselves, something that matters,” he said. “We want to have a sense of purpose. *Each and every one of you deserves to know that you matter.* I know some days it might feel hard to believe that [your work] is changing the world, but the truth is we wouldn’t be able to do this without you. You are needed, you belong, you are loved.”

Amen.

In closing, I want to offer my heartfelt appreciation to our team at UC&D for keeping the ship on course, namely Ladd Marshall, Jay Hartwell, and Taylor Larsen, who more than capably filled my shoes. Words cannot express my gratitude for their efforts, and their friendship. I’m ready to rock n’ roll again, and I look forward to re-engaging with many great friends and associates in this dynamic industry. I wish you all a safe and prosperous holiday season with your family, friends and loved ones. Stay healthy!

Regards,

Bradley Fullmer

If words don't carry enough weight, this will.

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