

**CATEGORY: 04 – Best Building Project – Specialty Contractor (Under \$2 Million)**

**CONTRACTOR: Heath Steel, 1730 S. College Ave #201, Fort Collins, CO**

**PROJECT: CSU Ag Ed Center, 4492 East County Road 56, Fort Collins, CO**

Heath Steel supplied and erected the 14,000 square foot metal building system for the Colorado State University CoBank Center for Ag Education. The center sits just north of campus at the college's Agricultural Research, Development and Education Center and is designed to help fill a void in agricultural education teachers for K-12 students and community colleges across Colorado and the United States.

Heath Steel teamed with General Contractor Heath Construction on this high profile project culminating a decade of dreaming, four years of planning and a year of construction. The CoBank Center for Agricultural Education encompasses more than 14,000 square feet, with customized laboratory, technology, teaching and office space. It includes a special exhibit space for the Farm Credit Colorado Agriculture Hall of Fame, a signature program of the Colorado FFA Foundation. The center will not only function as an academic space for faculty, staff, and students, but it will also serve as a community meeting space, bringing together individuals from the agricultural industry, rural communities and local schools. There is also a display of jackets donated as part of the FFA Blue Jacket Society.

The building was built on an accelerated construction schedule starting in mid-2015 and completed in late 2015. Heath Steel supplied and erected the metal building from Chief Buildings which included specialty wall panels, standing seam roof with snow retention system, insulation package, hydroswing overhead door and mezzanine. Design assistance and value engineering services were also provided as part of the contract. Project challenges included delayed start, drawing changes received after building was ordered and weather conditions which were overcome to successfully complete this project.

**Essential to educate the next generation**

“It is essential that our students help educate the next generation about agriculture,” said Ajay Menon, dean of the CSU College of Agricultural Sciences. “We know that we will have at least 9 billion people to feed globally by 2050, and so many of those people are here in this country, in our state and throughout our counties. Our college will be at the forefront of innovations that will ensure that people are fed, clothed, and healthy, and agricultural education is a key component of maintaining the longevity and viability of our industry.”

Fundraising for the center was led by the Colorado FFA Foundation, which helped raise \$2.6 million of the \$3.3 million needed for the new facility with significant private support and a lead gift from CoBank. The center sits just north of campus at the college's Agricultural Research, Development and Education Center.

## **Elevating CSU**

Don Thorn, executive director of the Colorado FFA Foundation stated at the ribbon cutting for the facility, “The new building elevates CSU, our Agricultural Education program, and Colorado FFA now that we have one of the premier agricultural education teaching facilities in the United States. Combining the teaching facility with the Farm Credit Colorado Agriculture Hall of Fame and the Colorado FFA Blue Jacket Society shows the great partnership between the agricultural industry, Colorado State University, and the Colorado FFA.”

## **Significant expansion**

The Agricultural Education program at CSU has seen significant expansion in recent years, growing from a single faculty member to two full-time faculty members and an instructor. The program is led by Assistant Professor Kellie Enns who is joined by Assistant Professor Michael Martin who focuses on agricultural literacy and agricultural history, and instructor Nathan Clark.

“This building has been a dream for me, my colleagues, and my students for many years,” said Enns. “So much time, thought, and planning went into creating a space that will position our students to go into classrooms across the state and around the country to teach agriculture to young people and inspire them to remain committed to the land and to the people that work on it.”

Heath Steel is proud to have been a part of the team responsible for building this attractive, functional facility benefitting CSU, the Colorado FFA and agricultural education in Colorado.



Building Exterior – Front of Building



Lobby and Meeting Area



Classroom & Shop Area



Entrance



Northwest Building Profile



Agricultural Hall of Fame



FFA Blue Jacket Society Wall



Donor and Partner Wall