Category: 6- Best Building Project – Specialty Contractor ($6 - $10 Million)

Contractor: Horizon Glass & Glazing Co.

Project Name: Pearl Place Office Development (Google Campus)

Not yet even fully operational, The Google Campus, located in Boulder, CO is already making its mark and standing out amidst the eclectic, and vibrant landscape of Boulder’s noteworthy Pearl Street. Glass completely surrounds and embraces this remarkable four story structure, letting natural light shine through from every direction, while properly placed sun-shades shield the building’s expansive, green courtyard from any harsh, direct rays. Uncontained glass handrails additionally line the fourth level, bringing together each of Google’s three connected buildings and allowing for well-earned breaks and meeting places for employees who wish to gather on their scenic patios. The unique beauty and functionality of the building, itself, somehow manages to both pop and blend in with Boulder’s unique architectural thematic culture by bringing together both worlds and adding a little touch of Silicone Valley to Boulder, Colorado.

Much in the way of innovation in conjunction with modern engineering was needed to create this work of architectural beauty. Over 40,000 square feet of very complex glazed area needed to be fabricated and installed in accordance with our contractual scope of work, also requiring extensive and careful pre-planning the construction of this building from its most early stages. Design assist was absolutely essential, and having already demonstrated our expertise on previous successful projects, we were awarded the Google project by Saunders and brought in during the early planning stages to aid in the overall design of the building’s façade. Horizon Glass originally contributed a full scale mock-up of the glazing system and tested it to ensure performance and aesthetic acceptance with the architect. In addition, we partnered with LTS Drafting, Architectural Aluminum Fabricators, Restoration Specialists Incorporated, Colorado Mechanical Insulation Inc., NanaWall Systems Inc., and Automatic Access Inc. and an entire year of pre-planning was dedicated to deliberate site logistics, schedule constraints, and overall jobsite coordination tactics. In doing so, Saunders used Horizon’s schedules and durations as a baseline in which to guide all other finished trades’ schedules.

Horizon’s own schedule was derived through incorporating newly acquired equipment, resources, and personnel dedicated to maximizing efficiency throughout the project’s tenure. Massive 10-foot wide panels of insulated glass needed to be installed around the building’s partial exterior and two mini cranes were purchased specifically for this project, so that they could effectively lift the immense weight of our materials, and install the steel loaded mullions & pre-glazed panels into place. In order to ensure accuracy of the building’s layout, a new, state-of-the-art ‘Total Station’ device was purchased and utilized to pinpoint and lay out the building’s many unique angles and elevations to precise measurements. Investments in these tools helped ensure Horizon’s success on this job and future projects of this magnitude. In addition, Horizon was able to stock the building with pre-glazed panels with the use of a tower crane, operated by Saunders, and a material landing platform. Though they were costly, the use of these resources became absolutely invaluable assets to the job as forty pre-glazed panels could now be installed in a typical single day, compared to the two weeks this would otherwise have consumed via more ‘traditional’ installation methods. However, none of these pieces of equipment or resources could have been successfully implemented without the proficiency and expertise of Horizon personnel dedicated to this project. In particular, Lead Man Scott Drury and newly appointed Field Superintendent, Frank Bueno are credited with leading the charge in the transition from pre-planning stages to the successful execution of the Google Building’s construction. Scott’s ability as a lead man was already well established in large-scale projects and was selected exclusively for this project. In addition, Frank was essential to facilitating communication between the General Contractor, our external aluminum fabricators, and other crew trades as well as Horizon’s Project Manager, Fabrication Department, and Lead Foreman. He also provided valuable administrative support for Scott as well as increased presence from senior management.

Despite the intensive amount of pre-planning, an exceptionally aggressive completion pace was still mandated - in order to meet the scheduling needs of our GC. An entire river had to be re-routed to make way for the initial groundwork being done on site. Delays and other complications in this process ‘pushed’ our schedule out from the original anticipated start date, from mid-summer, to early winter, which in turn brought forth even more complications and challenges.

Productivity is generally lower in the winter season and there are added safety concerns brought on by ice and snow. Then of course there are the freezing temperatures. These issues could only be managed by investing.. donating.. significant overtime hours to make up for lost productivity and those earlier, initial delays.

To prevent any further delays, caused by complications or potential injuries, new company-wide safety procedures were implemented in order to minimize risk. In learning and observing concepts originally devised by NASA, Job Hazard Analysis handbooks quickly became the standard on the Google jobsite as Horizon Glass crews were trained to complete these daily in order to identify any and all potential risks associated with a given task. In our approach to safety, rather than institute a ‘top-down’ philosophy, our focus involved the creation of a workplace environment where everyone – at every level - was encouraged to provide input. This kind of open leadership quickly led to the creation of the Foundations of Safety Leadership Program, spearheaded nationwide by members of the curriculum development team including Horizon Glass’s own Superintendent, Joshua Kreul. This program offers supervisors communication methods to discuss and promote jobsite safety by creating active involvement amongst crew members, teaching strategies for leading by example, engaging and empowering team members, developing and practicing safety communication skills, as well as mentoring and acknowledging all of the many ‘safety wins..!!’ This program continues to remain immensely successful in creating active involvement amongst Horizon team members, and has since been formally adopted by OSHA as an element of their 30 Hour Construction efforts. With over 30,615 hours worked on the Google Campus Project, there were (very proudly).. zero lost hours due to injury.

While the successful completion of a glazing scope ultimately valued at $6.2 mm is a very fine and esteemed accomplishment for Horizon Glass, it is not solely these monetary aspects in which we take great pride. This Google Building and Training Campus brings with it the notoriety of a worldwide, renowned corporation, name, which has now even become a household ‘verb’ (Whoever thought we would ever be ‘Googling’ anything.. or anybody..??)

Additionally - this building is poised to bring up to 1,500 new well-paying tech jobs to Boulder. In this way, Horizon’s innovation within the construction industry can help lead way to innovation within the technical industry and, perhaps, lead to something.. even bigger yet..!!