

Meow Wolf

Category 4: Best Building Project – Specialty Contractor (Under \$2M)

Contractor: ICI, LLC

This cutting-edge attraction brings a new and unique gateway for the art world. The building itself brought a whole new meaning to a unique project with plenty of obstacles to overcome. Located just outside of Downtown Denver, this 90,000 square foot location will be the biggest Meow Wolf to date and will feature interactive art from over 110 local artists.

Meow Wolf was a high-profile project that provided unique challenges, but the contractors and all their employees embraced these challenges without hesitation. Everyone was excited to be on this project. The specific location made installation challenging at all levels. The team had to produce a five story structure surrounded on all three sides by overpasses for major thoroughfares within the Denver Metro area. ICI's scope on this one-of-a-kind project included pre-manufactured cold formed framed panels, complete with sheathing, and a peel and stick air barrier. Additional scope included cold formed exterior metal framing, sheathing, air barrier, and slab edge firestopping.

There were 64 metal panels, each 44 feet tall, with sheathing and air barrier attached. These massive panels had to be craned to the third floor and set in place, all while being within 10 feet of the active highways. Notably, these panels were the longest to be manufactured to date by the supplier and had to be engineered to not only be structurally sufficient, but also able to be picked up off the truck and turned upright without buckling. The panels innovative pressure-sensitive adhesive bonded directly to the substrate and allowed seamless one-pass installation with no down time. To save time and money, the panels were fabricated and assembled off-site by Douglass Colony in a factory-controlled warehouse in Commerce City, CO. Using these panels made the enclosure of the building go several times faster than it would have if traditional practices of framing, sheathing, and air barrier being installed in the field were used. This also decreased our team's exposure to working next to the overpasses. These panels had several pick points that had to be carefully fastened and managed in order to be properly secured and swung into place. Our crews were working in boom lifts as well as on top of the structure while

installing the panels, so teamwork and communication was a must during this installation. An additional obstacle occurred when moving the panels to be put into place with the crane all while being careful not to hit the overpass, which could have caused major damage to the roadways. The whole process would be completely stopped if any wind was present. Winds as low as 5 mph would move the panels that attached to the crane, enough to make it impossible to get safely through the space between the roadway and building. It could potentially swing over the heavily trafficked roadways making it extremely dangerous. Chris Rittierodt, ICI Superintendent, handpicked his team for this project. He knew the strengths of each person and aligned those with what this unique project required. Chris said, "I've set tons of panels before, but nothing this tall and not this close to a huge roadway. I love experiencing different challenges and taking on new, difficult projects is why I do what I do."

Shane Bitler, ICI's Meow Wolf Project Manager, has been on many jobs throughout the Denver Metro area in his 7+ years of experience. He says, "Watching the process of the panels going into place, from them being picked up off the truck, to our team getting each one into place, was my favorite part of this project. It was such a unique process, so I watched it happen as much as I could. This goes to show just how impressive our installation team really is."

This building also has three radius corners with radius parapet and soffits that had to be built to precise measurements for the metal panel exterior skin to be installed by other contractors. Extra steps were taken to ensure a successful completion, like the pre-planning of the metal panels to guarantee they were built as precisely as needed for easy installation. ICI also worked with a radius track manufacturer to order track that gave exact radiuses needed, as there was track bending in two dimensions at some locations and in a very tight radius. It was extremely beneficial to have the bottom and top tracks already built when they arrived, so the team was not trying to produce these degrees of bends onsite. This made the field installation more efficient and reduced the possibility of errors, which proved that the extra time spent in the planning phase was well worth it. Merced Marquez, ICI Superintendent, was supervising the soffits and radius on this project. He said, "this was my most challenging, but rewarding job yet. We were given two months to get all this part done, so with that time pressure and the difficulty of the design, it challenged our team every day. We had great communication with the GC and made a

plan each morning, so we all knew the expectations for that day. I was extremely proud of what the team was able to accomplish in the short amount of time we were given and the location of the building.”

Julie Maxwell-Vasquez, ICI Safety Director, was excited to be a part of Meow Wolf and said, “I believe that everyone knew that this project required us all to step up our game if we wanted to go home safely. ICI is committed to safety regardless of what project they are on, but this specific one posed a lot of unique and extra safety challenges.” The entire project team participated in a lot of planning that addressed safety, quality, and production. An extensive amount of pre-planning and safety precautions were taken in formulating a plan in which to install the panels between ICI’s team, the general contractor, the panel manufacturer, and the crane operator. Safety emphasis was not only directed at the site workers, but also for the public as well. Daily stretches and huddles before starting work, weekly and monthly safety meetings, and regular safety walks with all the contractors on the project were routine safety precautions that were taken to ensure the safety of everyone involved. The planning efforts that were put into place were contributing factors to this project being completed without a recordable injury. ICI performed just under 7,000 man hours without a single recordable injury and no lost time injuries were reported in a total of 98 days on the jobsite.

ICI treats each project as a stepping stone to the next by creating strong relationships with our partners based on teamwork, trust, pride, safety, and the ability to overcome obstacles. Meow Wolf was no exception to these high ICI expectations and Turner Construction, the general contractor, knew that when choosing ICI for the job. Aaron Laird, Turner’s Construction Executive states, “ICI installed prefabricated exterior panels on the Meow Wolf core shell building in Denver. Their preconstruction and field operations teams did a great job ensuring that every detail was covered in regard to the engineering and installation activities. The project was a difficult one because of the site logistics and the installation went off without any issues. The field staff and the project management staff were very communicative and easy to work with.”

Our team was very involved from the beginning, dealing with the tightness of the site, the crunched schedule, panel manufacturing, panel installation, the radiused track fabrication discussion and installation. The teamwork between all players involved was what really made

this project successful. Meow Wolf will be a great addition to Denver and the surrounding area's entertainment industry and ICI was proud to have such an important role in watching this come to life.











