**Category: 5 – Best Building Project – Specialty Contractor ($2-6 Million)**

**Contractor: Duro Electric**

**Project Name: Sun Valley Gateway South**

**Project Summary & Overview**

The Sun Valley Project is actually a combination of three projects combined on one job site with a focus on bringing affording housing and community to a local Denver neighborhood. The project consists of the Sun Valley Gateway South apartment complex which is a six story building with 92 housing units, a Sundry Market Tennant Improvement project to better the available grocery and market services for the community and new residents, and lastly the Gateway Offsite Lighting project to better illuminate the area and provide a safer environment for all. This project was owned by the Denver Housing Authority, and it was a very large effort that saw its fair share of obstacles, but in the end through diligence and determination our project team was able to complete this project and better our community.

Duro Electric won this project through hard bid. Our Preconstruction Manager, Kevin Eitniear, was the lead for estimating and securing this project alongside our Project Manager, Jake Jacobson, and Foreman, Dan Castro. On the I-Kota side of this project were Michael Lyons, Senior Project Manager, Jeff Farrow, Assistant Project Manager and Schuler Lee, Field Superintendent. The project itself began during the summer of 2019, Duro Electric appeared on this project site and began our underground work in November 2019. This was originally slated to be roughly a 15 month project that would conclude in September of 2020. However due to many changes throughout the lifecycle of the project including accommodating for the pandemic and learning to work safely with COVID-19 looming, the project will be completed in September 2021. The original contract value for this project was $1,752,005 for the Sun Valley South Gateway Apartment Complex, and after all change orders were executed, the final contract value was $2,155,858. The original contact value for the Sundry TI Market was $159,4115, and valued at $172,344 with the addition of fully executed change orders. Lastly, the Gateway Offsite Lighting project’s original contract value was $88,375, and the contract’s value following all executed change orders was $106,705. In totality this project was worth $2,434,907. Total labor hours for this project came to 21,187 hours. The crew for this project started with four electricians (pre-covid) originally and ramped up to about 14 at its peak.

**What challenges and obstacles were present?**

COVID-19 presented multiple challenges for this project, the site was shut down once for a COVID-19 exposure. A second time, several crews including the electrical crew was pulled from the site for COVID-19 testing. Another major challenge during the course of this project was building affordable housing while providing a high quality product while being budget conscious. Additionally, Sun Valley was prevailing wage job and in Denver requiring a 1:1 ratio for Journeyman to Apprentices.

**How did the team rise to the occasion to mitigate and overcome these challenges and obstacles?**

With regard to COVID, the team worked closely with the Human Resources and Safety Teams to keep them apprised of any employees that called out sick. Since masks were in short supply, the Duro prefabrication team made cloth masks from extra stock of Duro Electric branded t-shirts that were available in the office. Later, Duro Electric was able to purchase Duro Electric branded neck gaiters that were distributed to the job sites.

In order to have the best quality possible while maintaining a reasonable budget, the team secured a very aggressive lighting fixture package through value engineering for roughly $80,000 which in comparison was less expensive than the project’s gear package. The team also changed the secondary feeders from copper to aluminum to provide a solid look while lowering over all project completion costs. A further step was to make good use of our prefabrication department’s skills and expertise to create all the unit loadcenters for the project, a number of recepticles and devices, the fire alarm booster panels, as well as all the PVC and underground conduit.

The prevailing ratio requirement demanded that the Project Manager and field leaders were diligent in ensuring the right staff was on site at all times despite vacations, sick time, and other obstacles that are present when it comes to peoplepower. The camaraderie on this job site was a key reason for success with this aspect of the project. The team of 14 electricians remained flexible day to day to meet the need for the 1:1 ratio requirement. This sometimes meant having some electricians report to different job sites depending on the day or shuffling other Duro Electricians from other sites to assist at Sun Valley Gateway South when needed.

**Who were the key players on this Project?**

*Jake Jacobson* – Project Manager, did a fantastic job organizing and planning for this project as well as staying in constant communication with the I-Kota project team

*James Wakefield* – Superintendent, provided his expertise in completing various jobs for Duro over the last 15 years

*Daniel Castro* – Superintendent, remained very positive and kept the crew highly motivated

*Jeffrey Keys* – Journeyman, helped to train and teach apprentices so they would be successful

*Timothy “TJ” Walker* – 4th Year Apprentice, acted as the go-to person for any needs from leadership

**Special Training & Techniques**

During Safety Standdown week, the crew received specialized fall protection and head protection training from a leading third party fall protection vendor. Duro Electric made this training available for the entirety of the project, inclusive of all other crafts.

The aforementioned Fire Alarm Booster Panels created by the prefabrication team was imagined and engineered by Daniel Castro, Project Foreman. This was the first time at Duro Electric that this had ever been done. In recognition of this notable prefabrication idea, Dan Castro won Duro Electric’s Prefabrication Idea of the Quarter. This award comes with a feature in the company newsletter as well as a monetary incentive as a thank you and recognition for outstanding innovation.

**Project Safety**

This project went full cycle without any loss time injuries due to pride, professionalism, performing the work in a safe manner, looking out for their fellow team members, and increasing the level of safety awareness daily. Furthermore, the team had zero safety incidents on this job as well as no recordables. The project management team also coordinated regular Job Hazard Analysis to identify and address safety concerns, as well as routine safety audits by the Project Manager, Superintendent, and Foreman. Employees were encouraged to bring any safety hazard or near-miss to the attention of the project field leadership team. There was a high level of communication between Duro and I-Kota to identify and address jobsite safety concerns and work practices for high-hazard tasks. Duro created specific Methods of Procedure (MOP) for equipment shutdowns and change-overs.

Additionally, the Duro Electric instituted a “Safety Roadshow” where the Safety and HR teams visited each site individually to discuss safety measures, efforts, and have an open dialogue with the crews about the importance of their safety. These processes created a greater level of understanding and coordination among the various project teams.







