

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Southwestern Illinois Commercial Contractors

Egyptian Workspace Partners works with Poettker on new HQ

By DENNIS GRUBAUGH

Poettker Construction Co. last year built a beautiful new structure to house its corporate headquarters in Breese, Ill., but when it came to inside trimmings, the company turned to the expertise of Egyptian Workspace Partners in Belleville.

Company President Kevin Baltz said his firm worked directly worked with Poettker family members, including President Keith Poettker, Vice President Ryan Poettker and Vice President Kim Luitjohan, to determine their furnishing needs, colors and décor and to evaluate how things would fit and be placed in the building.

“It was a total success,” Baltz said of the partnership, which he said was key to the result.

The work, which ranged from selecting products to doing the electronic drawings (including 3D perspectives), had to accommodate 100 employees housed within the three-story structure.

“The building in itself was very unique because it was built with a very open plan to mimic the architecture of the country, like a barn, to fit into the landscape of the farm area,” Baltz said.

“We also did their Charlotte, N.C., facility, which was for a staff of 10. We did that to mimic basically what we did in Breese. Same product, same colors and we worked with them to fit that into the space they selected out there.”

That included coordinating the products and delivery on everything from sit-to-stand desks, modern restroom dispensers,

cubicle space, lounge areas, technology and sound masking.

“In essence it’s what we do every day, but each client picks different things. From that point on it’s about gaining trust and getting clients to know you’re putting the right products in front of them,” he said

Egyptian Workspace Partners starts with planning long before the ground is broken on new building projects, assisting with ideas on such challenges as where power and data can be installed to making suggestions on changes to space, like doorways.

“We’re very much a consultant,” Baltz said. “Furniture is not an afterthought. We try to tie the people, the furniture and the technology together. That’s really the strong point.”

On the other hand, his company can react to four-week delivery for people just wanting to replace furniture, depending on deadline. Steelcase is the lead product line for Egyptian Workspace Partners.

Brett Baltz, who is Egyptian’s director of supplies, said his firm can add to the welcoming, comfortable atmosphere that clients want to project, not just for their customers but for their own employees.

“Organizations know talent is at a premium. They know that workplaces play an important role as to whether employees work there or not. The way a building is designed really speaks to the way a company tries to attract talent and cares about its workers — and the tone they set for how they want to do business.”

Pandemic halts or delays projects for about a quarter of contractors

The coronavirus pandemic has caused more than one out of four contractors to halt or delay work on current projects, according to a survey released today by the Associated General Contractors of America. The survey results show how quickly market conditions have changed compared to data showing a majority of metro areas added construction jobs through January. Association officials noted that a relief bill the Senate is considering includes some favorable tax and loan provisions. But they said the bill also needs new infrastructure investments and improvements to the new paid sick and family medical leave measures.

“The coronavirus pandemic has the potential to undermine what had been a very robust construction market, threatening the livelihood of countless workers and the viability of many firms,” said Ken Simonson, the association’s chief economist. “Providing additional tax credits and loans will help, but contractors also need the certainty that comes with infrastructure funding and improvements to the new paid and family leave measures.”

In an online survey conducted by the association between March 17 and 19, 28 percent of the 909 respondents replied yes to the question, “Has any owner, government agency or official directed you to halt or delay work on any projects that are either active or expected to start within the next 30 days?” In addition, 22 percent of respondents said a supplier had notified them that deliveries would be late or cancelled.

Contractors listed numerous types of delays and shortages. Nearly one out of five (18 percent) cited shortages of required government actions or personnel, for instance to issue permits or certificates of occupancy, conduct inspections or lettings, or make project awards. Sixteen percent noted a shortage of materials, parts or

equipment, including workers’ personal protective equipment such as respirators. Eleven percent reported a shortage of craft workers as individuals self-quarantine or stay home to care for others.

Underscoring how rapidly market conditions have changed, the association also released data on construction employment changes between January 2019 and January 2020 in 358 metro areas that showed how strong the market was two months ago. A majority—200 areas (56 percent)—added construction jobs, while 95 areas lost jobs, and 63 metros had no change. Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, Texas added the most construction jobs from January 2019 to January 2020 (12,400 jobs, 5 percent). The largest construction job decline occurred in Baton Rouge, La. (-6,500 jobs, -12 percent).

Association officials said the newly released Senate relief measure does too little to help the increasingly hard-hit construction industry. They noted that the tax and loan provisions in the measure will help offset declining demand. However, they urged Senate leaders to include new funding for infrastructure projects and to protect the retirements and health care of construction workers in multiemployer plans. They also called for additional fixes to measures enacted earlier this week that force employers to front the cost of newly mandated paid family and sick leave measures.

“The Senate proposal offers a good start to helping offset the sudden drop-off in work many contractors are experiencing,” said Stephen E. Sandherr, the association’s chief executive officer. “But without real investments in new infrastructure, compensation for contractors’ lost work and up-front funding for paid sick and family medical leave, it does too little to help the industry and its nearly eight million employees.”

Construction business leaders call work essential

The chief executive officer of the Associated General Contractors of America, Stephen E. Sandherr, and the President of North America’s Building Trades Unions, Sean McGarvey, issued the following joint statement urging government officials to exempt construction work from regional, state and local work shutdowns:

“Government officials at all levels should treat the construction industry and the work it performs as vital and essential to the critical industries that must remain in operation. Construction workers provide an invaluable economic service, maintaining and improving the nation’s infrastructure, including critically

important energy and communication systems, roads and bridges, and social infrastructure, including police, fire and health care facilities.

“Construction workers’ unique skills are essential now and in the coming weeks to construct, maintain, and repair critical infrastructure, and to build temporary health facilities and retrofit and expand existing ones.

“Labor and management construction industry partners continue to monitor and provide guidance on all recommended health and safety job site precautions for construction workers so that proper measures are deployed to ensure a safe work environment for those on the job.



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INTERIORS
Furniture, Flooring, Architectural Walls, Artwork



SUPPLIES
Office, Facility, Breakroom, Toner



TECHNOLOGY
Managed IT, Datacenters, Phone Systems, Security

IMPACT Strategies Completes
HSHS Medical Group Building in Troy



Fairview Heights-based IMPACT Strategies recently completed a new medical clinic for HSHS Medical Group in Troy, Ill.

IMPACT was selected by the Romano Company to construct the facility. This is the fourth project that IMPACT Strategies has built to support the growth of HSHS Medical Group.

The 5,197 square-foot, single story location will serve as a general practice medical office for HSHS Medical Group. The new facility includes office space, a reception area, seven exam rooms, nurses’ station, a break room, space for lab work, and more.

IMPACT worked with Utz + Associates Architects and Netemeyer Engineering Associates on this project which was completed in December 2019.

IMPACT Strategies provides client-focused construction management, design/build, and general contracting services.