

FOR ALL YOUR TREE SERVICE NEEDS!

- Tree Removal
- Trimming
- Stump Removal
- Brush Mowing
- Lot Clearing
- Emergency Service

WE SERVE THE LOCAL AREA!

Over 40 Years In Business

Carr's TREE SERVICE

FULLY INSURED
COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL
Call for FREE Estimates
218-367-3355 or 888-470-3355
Ottertail, MN
Email: carrsts@arvig.net
YOUR COMPLETE TREE SERVICE!

www.carrstreeservice.com

Welcome to Barnesville!

from your friends at the **Barnesville Public Library**

Find a warm welcome at your local library!
We offer a large selection of books, movies, magazines, events and more - free of charge.

lari
LAKE AGASSIZ
REGIONAL LIBRARY

FIND US HERE: 104 Front St. N. • 354-2301 • lari.org

Taracon Precast "A Diamond In The Rough"...

Gym, Auditorium Building Panels Made Close By

By Michael Stein

As you pass by the construction site between the Barnesville High School and Atkinson Elementary, you will note countless stacks of various material that's was steadily shipped in over the summer of 2020.

Those materials are the result of comprehensive bid packages from contract suppliers mostly around the region.

In July 2020, a major portion of the building process began with a steady stream of flatbed trucks rolling through town to the school addition site. Each of those loads contained a very large building panel.

About 80 of those panels were shipped in, removed by crane and set up side by side as the major building blocks for the new school gymnasium and auditorium on what once was referred to as the "middle block" between the schools.

What you may not know is those precast building panels were manufactured and trucked in from a mere 24 miles away.

Straight north as the crow flies, four miles from Highway 10 between Glyndon and Hawley, lies a massive operation in the middle of the Spring Prairie Hutterite Colony.

A rapidly growing company started and operated by the colony, Taracon Precast, turned out each of those building panels that make up the new gym and auditorium. What's truly amazing is that each panel is started and completed in a 24-hour manufacturing process.

According to Taracon Precast General Manager Mark Wipf, the

Spring Prairie Hutterites began making a transition from farming to the precast operation about 20 years ago.

The company grew quickly over those years from about a half dozen employees to 60 today at the precast plant. With the other divisions of the company considered, there are about 160 employees.

Six years ago, Lloyd Steinmetz joined the company as business development manager. He brought several years of experience in the precast industry to Taracon.

"When Mark asked me to come and work for them, I saw a company that had experienced phenomenal growth," Steinmetz said.

Steinmetz said there are several advantages to the precast building panels in applications such as the new gym and auditorium. Along with the one-day manufacturing turnover, each building panel is placed by a crane shortly after arriving at the site.

Steinmetz said the panels provide strength, energy and efficiency, and resiliency. All are important factors to the Barnesville School District's day-to-day operation of the new buildings.

It takes a lot of space to build these walls

Taracon's precast operation is spread over 160 acres and divided into areas for each step of the manufacturing process.

Precast concrete wall panels are constructed with a rigid layer of insulation that lays between



Taracon panels after placement at the Barnesville School Gymnasium.

"wythes," or vertical sections, of equal thickness. These panels offer all of the strength, aesthetics and insulating advantages of precast concrete all bundled into a single wall panel design.

The precast wall panels can be made as purely structural components, architectural components or as a component with aspects of both. Depending on the level of thermal control required, the insulating layer of the sandwich wall panel can be made thicker or thinner.

Once the panels are completed, they are delivered and installed quickly, which Steinmetz said allows for shorter total construction times and lower construction related financing costs.

Once Taracon was awarded the contract for the Barnesville School addition project, members of the Buildings and Grounds Committee and architectural consultants met with Taracon officials to work out the details, including the design elements that would create the most aesthetically pleasing exterior.

A complicated process? Not when you break it down

Although each panel is massive in size and weight (about 20 tons), the manufacturing process is relatively simple and could even be compared to making a gargantuan concrete

sandwich.

The Taracon crews begin the process by mixing crushed limestone rock and sand, which is shipped to the plant from area suppliers, such as Aggregate Industries.

Placing steel cables, which are stretched to a pre-determined tension, and rebar cages in the casting forms is the first major step in making a panel.

Concrete is poured in two separate steps: one for the exterior of the panel, which generally is color tinted. The other concrete pouring step is for the interior side of the panel.

The Barnesville district's B & G committee, along with the architectural consultants, took care to consider several color and design options.

"We wanted an exterior design that would look good for several years," said Barnesville School Superintendent Dr. Jon Ellerbusch. "In our site visitations of other districts with new buildings, we noted one or two that looked dated after only a few years."

The concrete pouring equipment is precision controlled by a computer program. After the material is poured, workers smooth out the layer before it left to dry.

Inside the panel sandwich is a rigid layer of foam insulation,

trusses, steel mesh, wood forms and other reinforcing material.

Steinmetz said each panel is engineered to meet stringent standards and guidelines set by the PCI (Precast Concrete Institute).

"Every time we pour concrete for a panel, a sample is taken and pressured tested up to 2,500 pounds per square inch," Steinmetz said.

Window and door openings are typically saw-cut in the field.

Changing the landscape from ag to manufacturing

Before the Hutterite colony built the precast manufacturing plant, the

land was dedicated to crop and dairy operations.

Crews are on site six days a week for the building panel manufacturing process.

"People in the colony are used to making sure things are done right," Steinmetz said. "If they start building a panel at 6 a.m., it will be ready the same time the next day."

Taracon also produces hollow-core slabs for applications such as flooring, "double tees" concrete components for floor and roofing systems, and precast concrete beams and columns.

Taracon has announced a joint operation with Oregon-based Rute Foundations to manufacture footings for wind turbine generators.

"This is going to be huge for the colony," Steinmetz said. "What's unique about this is that we will be the only company in the United States making these footings. Representatives from Rute came here and they liked our operation and our work ethic. We will be able to make these footings in a controlled environment and deliver in three days."

Steinmetz said the joint venture will employ up to 200 additional people at Taracon.

"Not a lot of people know we're out here," Steinmetz said. "And they're very surprised when they see our operation, which a client in Minneapolis called a diamond in the rough."

Quality and Affordability with every Dakota Developments home



Find several models to choose from, Nina & Rick, the Real Estate Team are here to help.

Call today and learn more.

Call 701-281-2999

Our new website: www.adamsdevelopment.com

It's never been easier to buy a new home.

Dakota Developments Construction

501 40th Ave St S, Fargo, ND 58103



Here is what the panels look like before the final layer of concrete is poured. You can see parts of the steel rebar cages interspersed throughout the Styrofoam insulation, as well as the reinforcing wood frames. A steel cage will be placed over this section before the concrete is poured.



Barnesville Animal Clinic, LLC

We are here to serve you!

**Hours: Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
1501 4th Ave NE
Barnesville, MN
218 354-2366**