DUS News Digest

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Constructech

In the past few months, one area of infrastructure construction that has really picked up speed is rail projects. In May, the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, www.dot.gov, Washington, D.C., announced nearly $80 million in grants have been delivered to states as part of a high-speed and intercity passenger rail program. In June, The Federal Railroad Admin., www.fra.dot.gov, Washington, D.C., announced it will begin accepting applications for $2.1 billion in grants to continue the development of high-speed intercity passenger rail corridors.

For contractors, owners, and other stakeholders on infrastructure projects, one need is for a higher level of collaboration. Software can help keep everyone up to date on what is happening on the project, while also giving team members the ability to make realtime decisions without slowing down the project.

One example is the Regional Transportation District Denver (RTD), www.rtd-denver.com, Denver, Colo., recently selected an online collaboration solution for its FasTracks transit expansion program.

The FasTracks program will entail constructing 122 miles of light and commuter railways, as well as 18 miles of roadways for bus rapid transit services. Other parts of the project will consist of redeveloping Denver Union Station and redirecting bus service to improve RTD's service routes.

RTD will use Aconex's, www.aconex.com, Melbourne, Australia, solution to collect and manage data, which will be used for each level of the public infrastructure project including design, construction, testing, as well as the initial start-up. With the Aconex Web-based solution, RTD and others involved in the project will be able to access realtime information pertaining to the project from virtually any location.

"An online collaboration platform should save the program significant time and resources, helping us to reach our milestones faster and more efficiently, hopefully providing better risk management and the highest levels of build quality and program transparency," says Lisa Alvarado, FasTracks document control manager, RTD.

Using Aconex's platform will also enable RTD to decrease the amount of its own resources needed for training, maintenance, implementation, as well as external support, in addition to creating a faster overall implementation process. The Anonex solution will also support both external and internal record system auditing and requirements outlined by the Freedom of Information Act. Some of the solution's other offerings include risk mitigation, business continuity, and disaster recovery.

Of course, transit isn't alone—airport projects are also taking off. Following a short period of slow growth in aviation activity, the Federal Aviation Admin., www.faa.gov, Washington, D.C., forecasts airspace safety and modernization efforts will drive long-term growth and will put a greater focus on the continued investment in airport infrastructure projects. This need combined with ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) funds of nearly $1.1 billion for airports has put a greater focus on airport infrastructure these days.

One example of an airport using project-management technology is the Dallas/Fort Worth Intl. Airport, www.dfwairport.com. When a new capital development program came on the horizon, the airport was interested in Web-based, hosted technology to reduce the cost of housing the technology internally, and selected a system for capital program management.

To find out more about the Dallas/Fort Worth Intl. Airport and other projects that are Moving Forward, check out the cover story in the June issue of Constructech Infrastructure.

July 8, 2010

By Rick Anstey, Denver Infill Blog

The newly enhanced dewatering system was approved and fired up while I was away. It is fully functional and work on the project has resumed with amazing progress in a short time. I will report more on the dewatering system in a day or two.

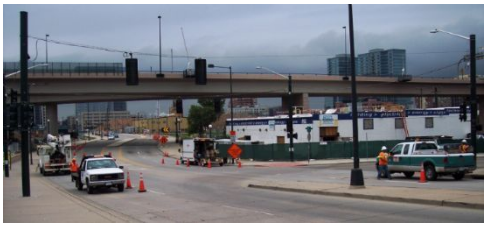
In the photo below, you can see that construction of the bus terminal structure is underway. At a pace of 300 cubic yards per day, a six-inch thick mud slab is being poured. It provides a solid surface upon which the Kiewit crew can work. A water-proof membrane will be installed over the mud slab, and a three- to four-foot thick concrete foundation (aka floor of the bus terminal) will be poured on top of the membrane. The thickness of the floor varies depending on the location. The membrane will prevent the need to pump ground water after the project is complete.

Also notice in the photo the foundations for two escalators and one elevator. As I previously mentioned, the other three holes (the ones with upright sheet pile) are for under-floor utilities. The crane has taken its place on the stone track on the left side of the hole, as seen at the top of the photo. Since I took this photo yesterday, workers have started installing concrete forms along the right side of the mud slab. The forms appear to be about four feet high and will be the outer edges of the bus terminal floor.

Here's a closer, but still too distant, shot of work on the mud slab. Notice the machine at the bottom center of the photo. It uses the same GPS technology that the bulldozer used to ensure exact elevations.

Work continues on the light rail tracks and station. In the upper right corner of the photo below, you can see an additional foundation that was poured since my last update.

There is no observable progress from the outside of the temporary Amtrak terminal other than the new traffic light that is being installed (see below) at the corner of 21st and Wewatta streets. It will enable Amtrak passengers to stop traffic as they walk from the terminal to the temporary loading platform across Wewatta Street. Inside the terminal, DRG Construction workers are installing drywall and utilities.



Thank you to Hunter Sydnor and Joy Wasendorf of Kiewit for providing most of the information in today's update.

Finally, there have been reports of a sly worker showing up after nearly everyone else has left the job site at the end of the day. Last evening, I finally got a photo of him or her as you can see to the right of and below the cone in this photo. He or she has a very close resemblance to a fox. (Sorry about the resolution that was lost in the cropping process.) It's good to know that there is a sharp eye on the project after the workday.