Crucial Collaboration

Alternative-delivery projects continue and may soon become more prominent

By Eda Galeno

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Design-Build May Play a Critical Role in Stimulating the Economy Post-Pandemic

Tensions are rising across the nation due to the COVID-19 situation and its wide-reaching effects. While the pandemic is leaving its mark on every industry in some manner, construction professionals are adapting quickly to keep many projects on track with an increased emphasis on safety.

“Like many businesses throughout the Southeast, the AEC community is experiencing varied impacts from COVID-19, with the severity differing by market sector,” says Melannie Wright, president of the Design-Build Institute of America (DBIA) Florida Region and business development representative at RS&H. “Some are experiencing project disruptions, and others are capitalizing on the opportunity to accelerate project schedules while vehicular and passenger travel counts are significantly reduced. The Florida Dept. of Transportation is accelerating $2.1 billion in critical infrastructure projects at the direction of Gov. Ron DeSantis.”

Wright also cites a recent DBIA poll indicating that the AEC community is working to keep personnel safe while meeting project requirements and performance expectations in this constantly evolving environment.

“During this difficult time, what has been most inspiring is the manner in which our employees are uniting to share best practices, embrace new ways to communicate, empower our teams and assist our communities,” says Pete Tuffo, president of Suffolk Construction. “We are currently reaching out to see where we can make a positive impact, whether it is by donating masks and gear to hospitals or assembling temporary medical facilities to handle the influx of patients—both of which Suffolk has been able to do in some of the markets where we do business.”

Moving forward, Tuffo cites workers’ health and well-being as the top priority. As such, for sites that have remained open per the local jurisdictions, Suffolk has implemented increasingly stringent safety measures. “We are continuously refining our protocol in alignment with CDC guidelines and the changing situation to ensure the safety of our people and trade partners,” he says.

The Role of Design-Build

According to Crowder Construction President BJ Christman, current design-build projects are overall getting bigger and more complex. “We are seeing owners continue to embrace collaborative delivery as a way to meet schedule and budget goals as well as social and environmental initiatives,” he explains. “All of this is leading to partnerships between firms to meet client needs.”

Christman notes Charlotte Water’s selection for the Stowe Regional Water Recovery Facility (WRRF) as a recent example. Goals for this $200-million progressive design-build project included small business utilization and development, community art features and energy-efficiency initiatives, all while meeting environmental requirements, operational and maintenance needs, and schedule and budget priorities on a reclaimed brownfield site. “Very few organizations can do all this alone,” Christman says. “Charlotte Water selected the Crowder + Garney Joint Venture in partnership with Hazen and Sawyer Engineers to execute this landmark project in North Carolina.”

This type of collaborative project delivery could be crucial in construction post COVID-19. TJ Lallathin Jr., vice president and design-build manager for DRMP, believes that design-build will become an even more important method in 2021. “Once we move into the recovery phase of the pandemic and have a better understanding of how our local, state and federal governments plan to allocate stimulus money, design-build will be a key method to procure, design and construct projects across the transportation, health care, and industrial markets quickly and efficiently to get Americans back to work and strengthen our nation’s infrastructure.”

As we eventually transition from response to rehabilitation, Wright sees a critical role for design-build in stimulating the national economy. “If we look back throughout history, design-build has been at the heart of rebuilding efforts in times of crisis across the United States and in Florida,” she says. “Whether a natural disaster like a hurricane or financial crisis like the Great Recession, design-build has helped communities recover more quickly.”

Today, in the COVID-19 battle, many DBIA industry partners have been among the first to answer the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) call for help in building emergency alternate care facilities nationwide. In fact, according to USACE, most of its planned projects in the eastern United States will utilize design-build.

During hardships, design-build projects can bring fast, efficient and cost-effective recovery to communities in need. While the current circumstances are both unprecedented and unpredictable, Wright says one thing is certain: Design-build teams are resilient, innovative and collaborative, and they are built for delivering in times of crisis.
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Design-Build Team Delivers New Live Performance Venue at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino

The new Hard Rock Live performance venue recently opened its doors as part of the $1.5-billion expansion and renovation to the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood in Florida. Designed by Klai Juba Wald and constructed by the Suffolk-Yates Joint Venture, it now serves as the epicenter of South Florida entertainment, complete with unobstructed sightlines and world-class acoustics. The Hard Rock Live component of the expansion project was completed under a design-build delivery method by Suffolk-Yates alongside architect partner ScenoPlus.

Hard Rock Live totals 225,000 sq ft with capacity for up to 7,000 patrons. The stage configuration is among the largest in the country at nearly 8,000 sq ft. While the venue provides spacious dimensions, it also offers an intimate experience between the audience and the performers on stage. The custom acoustical treatments both inside and outside of the venue add to the overall guest experience.

To execute on this lofty vision, Suffolk-Yates facilitated early and constant communication among the project stakeholders to ensure complete clarity of expectations. As the design progressed and decisions were made, the budget was updated in real time to allow for continuous cost control. This collaborative approach was incredibly important, particularly for a few key scope adjustments, including the addition of an orchestra pit and stage riggings to accommodate larger performances. Because the team was in complete alignment from day one, Suffolk-Yates was able to deliver the project within the original budget without compromising the client’s vision. For more project details, visit www.suffolk.com.

Delivered by the Suffolk-Yates design-build team in partnership with architect ScenoPlus, the new Hard Rock Live performance venue at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood in Florida features an 8,000-sq-ft stage and capacity for up to 7,000 patrons.

Adapting During Times of Crisis

During these unprecedented times of COVID-19, businesses across the construction industry are in unchartered territory as they navigate the future impact of the pandemic. Wayne J. Griffin Electric is no different. For more than four decades, the company has prided itself on leadership that stays ahead of the curve and maintains an exceptional standard of safety. To face the current challenge and ensure the protection of both its team members and clients, the company’s normal rigorous protocols have been expanded to include national guidelines. Like many other companies bracing against uncertainty, Griffin Electric continues finding ways to adapt and stay strong.

The company’s ability to remain resilient in the face of turmoil is a testament to its dedicated employees who have put forth tremendous effort each day since the national crisis began. It is their loyalty and determination that has allowed Griffin Electric to push forward. No one knows what the future holds, but the company remains guided by the motto of “Work with the Best. Be the Best.” Griffin Electric is committed more than ever to “Doing Its Best” to fight through these hard times and take care of each other in all it does.

Griffin Electric has expanded its already rigorous safety protocols to include national COVID-19 guidelines, ensuring the protection of both its team members and clients.
Collaborating to Complete Orlando’s Beltway

The design-build team of DRMP and The Lane Construction Corp. are set to deliver the missing link in the beltway surrounding Orlando, Fla., namely Wekiva Parkway Section 8.

The Wekiva Parkway is a 25-mile limited-access toll facility. Section 8 is the final piece of this beltway that ultimately connects I-4, S.R. 417 and S.R. 429 with a new systems interchange.

The new systems interchange design connects these three major roadways, which will relieve traffic congestion as well as provide improvements to operations and safety for the traveling public, all while reducing long-term maintenance costs for the Florida Dept. of Transportation’s District Five.

DRMP serves as the lead designer for this $255-million, 2.63-mile design-build project running from Orange Boulevard to the east of Rinehart Road. Work includes 2 miles of reconstruction along I-4 to accommodate future express lanes for I-4 Beyond the Ultimate, 20 new bridges and two bridge widenings. Bridge types include a combination of single- and multi-span bridges, concrete Florida I-beams and steel plate girders. The project is expected to be complete in 2022.

Section 8 is the final piece of the Wekiva Parkway in Orlando, Fla. Once complete, it will connect I-4, S.R. 417 and S.R. 429 with a new systems interchange to relieve traffic congestion, improve operations and safety for travelers, and reduce long-term maintenance costs.
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