

Welcome Center Wows



Completed this year, the new Delaware Welcome Center Travel Plaza replaces a 1960s-vintage travel plaza, the only travel plaza along the Delaware stretch of I-95. HMS Host, headquartered in Bethesda, Md., developed and operates this facility under terms of a 35-year lease from the state of Delaware. The two-building complex includes the main center and a separate Sunoco fuel station and convenience store developed separately and operated by Philadelphia-based Sunoco Inc.

HMS Host wanted to create a unique design statement for the pace-setting plaza and the contemporary blend of form and function executed in stone, glass, and metal roof and wall systems. With its distinctive curvilinear roof, generous expanse of glass curtainwall and contemporary mix of food and other services, this facility is anything but the typical grab-and-go for food, fuel and a visit to the restroom. This makes for a memorable stop for travelers on one of the nation's busiest north/south superhighways.

The 42,657 square-foot (3,963 m²) contemporary building is inspired by concepts associated with the monumental rail transportation stations of the last century. The vaulted high ceiling over a dynamic core space and dining area are the pivot point for support and fast-service food businesses to the side. CENTRIA, Moon Township, Pa., supplied pre-coated metal coil stock that Union Wholesale Co., Wilmington, Del., roll formed and installed on site. CENTRIA also supplied the Structural Standing Seam Roof Systems SRS 3 Curved and the wall

construction was made up of a CENTRIA FormaBond metal composite wall system in tandem with buff-colored stone veneer and polished architectural block.


CHA Inc., Albany, N.Y., served as the overall project manager and provided civil engineering and landscape architectural design. The New Jersey and Philadelphia offices of Environetics served as the project architects and structural, mechanical, plumbing and electrical engineers. Wilmington, Del.-based EDiS Co. was the construction manager-at-risk. The finished facility has been submitted for certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

EDiS was given only nine months to complete a project that would normally require a 13-month schedule. The contract called for completion by July 1, 2010, although the plaza was fully operational on June 24. This was achieved despite losing 97 days to rain.

Even under normal conditions this project would present a challenging schedule. Therefore, EDiS applied BuildingBlok, a new web-based construction management system, as an important tool for managing the project, which had 18 sub-contractors. Change orders, alone, were reported as 66 items worth a total of \$800,000 by July when the facility was operational but final work was still wrapping up. The change orders stemmed mostly from unforeseen site conditions involving unknown amounts of fill containing the original center's construction waste and VOC contamination from years of fueling operations.

EDiS had collaborated for two years in developing the BuildingBlok construction management system from what was originally

a web-based punch list tool developed by IT entrepreneur Justin Nolan. Using the EDiS operations as a development basis, the technology evolved into a comprehensive web-based system that puts all those involved in a project—owners, architects, engineers, managers and sub-contractors—on the same secure webpage that is updated throughout the construction process. All construction documents are handled through the BuildingBlok system and field tests have shown more than a 75 percent reduction in completion time.

Motorists traveling up and down I-95 have already made this facility a popular respite. 

Delaware Welcome Center Travel Plaza, Bethesda, Md.

Project architect: Environetics,

Philadelphia, Pa./Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

**Project manager: CHA Inc.,
Albany, N.Y.**

**Developer/Operations: HMS Host,
Bethesda, Md.**

**Construction Manager/ BuildingBlok
construction management system: EDiS,
Wilmington, Del.**

www.ediscompany.com, Circle #59

Manufacturer: CENTRIA,

Moon Township, Pa.

www.centria.com, Circle #60