

# WALL PANEL VISIONARIES

Through innovation and expertise, Midwest wall panel firm provides lean and integrated construction services

by Robyn M. Feller

**U**nited Building Solutions (UBS) is doing something unheard of in the wall panel industry: tearing down the figurative walls between the design and build communities—all the while literally revolutionizing the way contractors can save time on schedules and reduce overall construction costs in the process.

Midwest-based United Building Solutions, along with Wall-Panel, is a two-part company that combines the manufacturing of cold-form metal framing, partitions and walls with in-house engineering, design and virtual modeling to provide something truly unique for the commercial construction industry.

Vice President & Director of Engineering, Kurt Frey, and Director of Project Management, Ryan Williams, are spear-

heading the business endeavor and, after merely a year in business, are seeing impressive results from the company's distinctive approach.

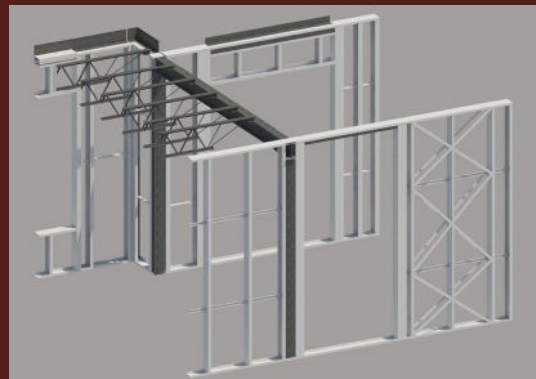
As Kurt explains, "GCs will hire mechanical, electrical, and plumbing contractors on a design-build basis to work with the architect on a lot of projects. The idea behind what Wall-Panel/UBS offers is to get into the process early with contractors and architects to deliver a kind of design-build service that includes structural components, wall panels, structural engineering design—whatever is needed. We are delivering an old-fashioned single-source application."

## FINDING THEIR IDENTITY

As the company finds its footing, they are defining themselves by bringing technology, collaboration and flexibility

### CASE STUDY: Iowa City Apartment Building

Wall-Panel/UBS not only provides wall panels to general contractors but can see a project through all phases. In the case of a 7-story apartment building in Iowa City, they were dubbed a "super sub" on the project. The team took the engineering design from the ground up to provide the cold-form metal framing design, the structural steel design and subcontractor services to providing the panels, the structural steel and the erection of those components.



Wall-Panel/UBS provided the six levels of CFMF above the precast podium in this Iowa City apartment complex. Virtual model shown incorporates CFMF, steel assemblies and floor joists.

IMAGE COURTESY OF CHANDEL NINMANN

together to make their clients' projects a success. Some of the services provided include: multi-trade coordination, virtual modeling, structural steel and cold-formed metal framing integration, prefab construction and engineering services. Wall-Panel/UBS, in fact, brings a wealth of expertise based on decades of hands-on experience to each project. Whichever construction engineering discipline is called for, the company's senior team is there throughout the process to advise, consult and collaborate in any capacity that's relevant and appropriate—a specialty that other wall panel companies just don't provide.

## FILLING THE GAP

In today's construction industry, we battle an unfortunate labor shortage day in and day out. One of Ryan and Kurt's business goals with Wall-Panel/UBS is to not only provide engineered wall panels and components for projects but also to look at expanding the amount of work that can be prefabricated in a



Exterior CFMF wall panels being installed on a three-story school addition, Waunakee, Wis.



Drone view of a seven-story CFMF multi-use project, Green Bay, Wis.

climate-controlled facility and installed on site with an efficient and economical crew. As Ryan explains, "The idea is to embrace the whole lean construction technique that general contractors are always talking about. We're providing those initial design services up front, in hopes of getting brought to the table sooner so we can incorporate value-added solutions while driving down project cost and reducing the overall project schedule."

## SEAMLESSLY INTEGRATED QUALITY AND COST SAVINGS

Ultimately, Wall-Panel/UBS' unique collaborative services provides contractors, architects and building owners a revolutionary way to

navigate the process of Integrated Project Delivery.

Lean and integrated construction offers the building industry a number of meaningful benefits. As planning, coordination and execution can be a daunting challenge, the team will partner closely with you in developing custom solutions that are value-engineered from the start.

The Wall-Panel/UBS team of experienced professionals can help design, plan and build your next project for success. According to Kurt, "We exist for one reason: to help architects, engineers, and construction professionals complete their lean, integrated project on time, under budget, and without hassle."



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