

# READING EAGLE BUSINESS WEEKLY

- HOME
- BROWSE BY DEPARTMENT »
- BROWSE BY INDUSTRY »
- PEOPLE
- SNAPSHOT
- OPINION »
- AGENDA
- MULTIMEDIA »
- SUBMIT NEWS

Browse: Home / GoggleWorks' guts of steel

Published February 28, 2012

## GoggleWorks' guts of steel

The apartments project uses an unusual steel framing process.



The GoggleWorks Apartments construction project in Reading uses a building process that relies on an arrangement of prefabricated steel boxes on each floor.

By Kathleen Shannon  
Reading Eagle correspondent

The wraps on the new GoggleWorks apartments on Washington Street in Reading will be long gone by early summer. In the meantime, the \$16.7 million building remains swathed in plastic to keep workers warm.

The plastic also has been covering up an unusual construction process based on a metal framing system. Instead of a typical structural steel framework filled in with masonry blocks and wooden planks, it has prefabricated metal framing and walls that stack in place made by ClarkDietrich Building Systems, an Ohio-based provider of steel construction products and services.

Eric Burkey, president of Reading-based Burkey Construction Co., the project's general contractor, said the walls are set in place and the cold-formed steel joists and metal deck are set before the walls are placed on the floor above. The wall panels

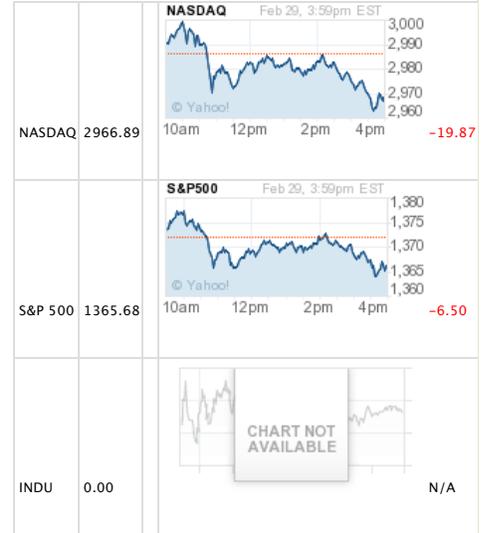


Evan Van Ness, a plumber from MBR Construction Services in Blandon, works among the steel frames that were used for the construction of the GoggleWorks Apartments.



### MARKET GLIMPSE

View list of local stocks >>



2012-02-29 17:30

literally sit one on top of the other and carry through

Copyright © 2012 by the Board of Trustees of the Reading Eagle. Powered by WordPress, Hybrid, and Hybrid News.

"This kind of system has been around for a while," Burkey said. "It just hasn't been used a lot."

He's using it because of cost considerations.

Lee Olsen of Olsen Design Group Architects in Bern Township, architect for the project, initially planned to use concrete, but that would have cost more than was budgeted, and he was asked to provide less expensive options.

Olsen sent investigative teams, including Burkey and retailer Albert R. Boscov of the nonprofit Our City Reading, to research projects using ClarkDietrich structural systems in Cleveland and Baltimore. He was happy with what he heard.

"While the wall thickness is less than with traditional building materials, the sound rating is the same," Olsen said.

Burkey said he likes it because it's environmentally friendly: There is minimal waste with steel products designed to mesh, and it's recyclable.

Olsen said the switch saved \$800,000 to \$1 million.

Nader Elhadj of the Mid-Atlantic Steel Framing Alliance in Fairfax, Va., said there are many advantages to a metal framing system, not just costs.

"It's totally insect- and termite-proof," Elhadj said. "Another great aspect is that it's pre-punched for both electrical and plumbing work, making it much easier for subcontractors."

He echoed Burkey's comments about recyclability, saying that steel has no memory and can be reused multiple times.

Burkey said he never worked with this kind of system before and acknowledged there are some drawbacks.

"It's not flexible," he said. "Design changes are extremely hard. You can't move a door easily. But I would use it again."

Since everything stacks and meshes in place, Burkey said, it's not suitable for low office buildings with large open spaces. Spaces should be fairly small and repetitive.

He also considered a similar system manufactured by Hambro but went with ClarkDietrich because of its lower cost.

Burkey said the proposed convention center hotel in the 700 block of Penn Street also will use this type of building process.

Burkey hired a subcontractor's assembly crew from Pittsburgh that already knows the process. These workers travel to ClarkDietrich project sites and don't need any training. He has hired local workers for the GoggleWorks project, but they're not assigned to jobs unique to the system.

Jim Collins, ClarkDietrich's director of marketing, said one of the system's largest advantages is fire protection, especially between apartment units or hotel rooms.

## Business Voices

What will your business do with its workforce in 2012?

We want to hear from you >>>

### LOCAL BUSINESS TWEETS



PenskeNews: #Penske joins @CareersInGear online #job fair: <http://t.co/dTLLnEO8> | March 6, 1-7 pm CT | #truckdrivers #logistics #trucking #cdl  
2 hours ago



Kimmy\_Hendrix: Showing Sammy my hood #WhatItIs #ReadingPA  
2 hours ago



PenskeNews: Need #business truck rentals? #Penske offers a wide selection of commercial rental trucks. Try Rental Express & Save! <http://t.co/xYB91Kga>  
4 hours ago



GREATER READING YOUNG PROFESSIONALS GRYPnet: Getting ready to go over to @AlbrightCollege soon for our event tonight. If you forgot to RSVP you can still come, we will not yell at

While business is only half of what it was pre-recession, Collins said the metal framing industry mirrors the construction industry, with business gradually starting to increase.

"We're starting to see an uptick," Collins said. "Good things are on the horizon. There will be a gradual return to previous sales levels. We're picking up again."

The apartments, with 59 units on six floors, will officially be named Sen. Michael A. O'Pake GoggleWorks Apartments, honoring the late state senator from Berks County. They will be managed by the Reading Housing Authority.

Contact Kathleen Shannon: businessweekly@readingeagle.com or 610-371-5080.

### The ClarkDietrich process

At the Goggleworks Apartments, workers installed the floor for the first level (also the parking garage roof), then arranged boxes made of a steel framing in rows on the first floor, leaving room for halls and corridors. Interior and exterior walls were put in place and then the boxes for the second story were added, followed by additional floors up to the fifth. The metal framing system eliminates the need for a single structural steel framework for the entire building.

The main stairwell and elevator shaft were built by Burkey Construction on the first floor up five levels prior to any of the metal framing system going in to place.

— Kathleen Shannon

Like 5 Send Like 5

Posted in Browse by department, Browse by industry, Construction / Tagged Bern Township, ClarkDietrich Building Systems, goggleworks, Lee Olsen, Olsen Design Group Architects, Reading / Leave a response

recwordpress

### Leave a Reply

You must be logged in to post a comment.

« Previous

Next »

you!

4 hours ago



PenskeNews: RT @careersingear: Register now for the #Trucking #VirtualJobFair http://t.co/7wnHo1rP | March 6 | 1-7 pm CT | #Penske reps will be there!

4 hours ago



PennCorridor: Leaping Lizards - it's February 29th! Where will u spend ur extra 24 hours? On Penn Corridor? How very smart of you!

4 hours ago

Weekly Archive

Monthly

Tag Cloud

February 27, 2012-March 4, 2012

February 20, 2012-February 26, 2012

February 13, 2012-February 19, 2012

February 6, 2012-February 12, 2012

January 30, 2012-February 5, 2012

January 23, 2012-January 29, 2012

January 16, 2012-January 22, 2012

January 9, 2012-January 15, 2012

January 2, 2012-January 8, 2012

December 5, 2011-December 11, 2011