

GREEN BUSINESS QUARTERLY

NOV/DEC 2009

USGBC
MEMBER ISSUE

Contractors & Builders
Distributors
Consultants

Cambridge CM, Inc.

Forward-thinking management, design, and construction firm invests in technology and staff to create sustainable structures



PLUS

A LOOK AT USGBC'S NEW HEADQUARTERS—
LEED V3 PUT INTO ACTION



CONTRACTORS & BUILDERS

Electrical
subcontracting

LOCATION:
Arlington Heights, IL

USGBC MEMBER SINCE:
April 2008

EMPLOYEES:
35



GURTZ ELECTRIC CO.

BY ZACH BALIVA

EMPLOYEES AT GURTZ ELECTRIC CO. IN Arlington Heights, Illinois have added something to their e-mail signatures. Beneath titles and phone numbers is a friendly reminder: "Go Green with Gurtz. Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail."

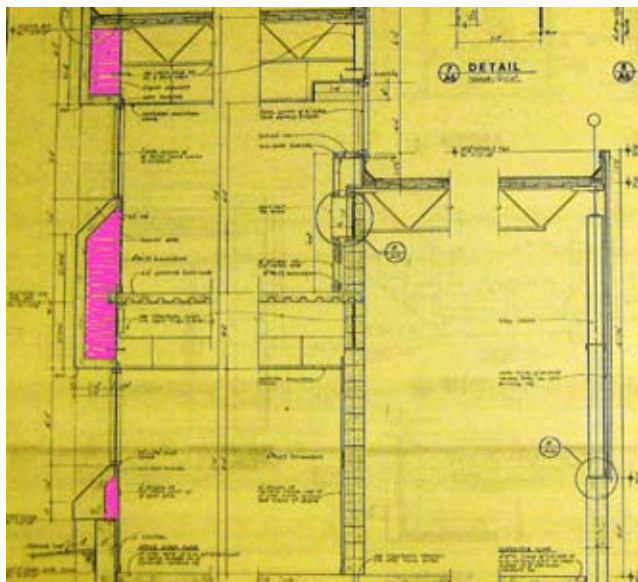
The request is a common one these days, and Gurtz's chief operating officer Paul Laskowske says it's part of a bigger green initiative launched in 2008 by company president Frank Gurtz. "He returned from a trip to Colorado," Laskowske recalls, "and when he came back, he wanted Gurtz Electric to go green." Colorado's beautiful mountains, blue skies, white snow, and green trees inspired Gurtz to change the way his business operates, and the electrical subcontractor developed a green action plan. "We were already working on several LEED projects but wanted to take proactive measures as a business to reduce our own footprint left on the environment," Laskowske says.

To help formulate the plan and make green improvements at their headquarters, Gurtz hired Rick McInnes, owner and operator of America's Going Green, LLC, as a technical consultant. Gurtz Electric joined the USGBC in April and hired McInnes to address and improve performance in their 20,000-square-foot office and 10,000-square-foot warehouse.

McInnes studied the office's original plans to identify areas for performance and efficiency improvements. "The first thing to do when looking at a building is to tighten up the thermal envelope," says McInnes, adding that he found space necessary to add 12 inches of fiberglass insulation that increased thermal resistance from R-11 to R-40. Old windows were then replaced with modern aluminum frame units. From there, McInnes addressed the HVAC system and installed high-efficiency furnaces coupled with a sophisticated control package to monitor performance room by room.

For Gurtz, going green was an all-encompassing process. Old CRT computer monitors were replaced with efficient flatscreens, compact-fluorescent lighting was installed in place of incandescent bulbs, and lights were retrofitted with occupancy sensors to reduce energy waste. The company also launched a recycling program and installed a soda fountain to reduce aluminum consumption. "A number of our general contracting customers have similar initiatives. We want to be known as a business in our industry that actively promotes and advances the green movement," says Laskowske.

Now, the company hopes that clients who consider Gurtz's competitive bids will take notice. "We developed and acted on our plan not only because it was the right thing to do but also as a potential for business within our current subcontracting [network]," Laskowske says. His company works primarily in the Chicago metro area and specializes in the installation,



“Why just build a warehouse or an office when you can really make a statement that showcases the wonderful features of green living and green business?” *Rick McInnes, Technical Consultant*

operation, and maintenance of electrical systems for commercial and industrial clients. Gurtz's green facelift has educated the company in new products and services they can now bring to their customers.

For example, Gurtz is currently researching the use of photovoltaic solar panels to supplement power in their own facilities. “That’s a potential business market that our electricians can get up to speed on and learn how to install,” Laskowske says, adding that Gurtz is considering building a new facility to store, install, or distribute PVs. That new building, currently in the design phase, will be an efficient structure built to achieve a high LEED rating. McInnes is even investigating the use of wind turbines as a power source. “Why just build a warehouse or an office

when you can really make a statement that showcases the wonderful features of green living and green business?” he asks.

Laskowske and McInnes continue the development of their green initiative. As momentum builds, they hope to have a positive impact quickly, first internally and then externally. Bill Carlson, one of Gurtz Electric's LEED-accredited electricians, is focusing efforts towards improving the firm's equipment commissioning requirements on their projects. With 35 full-time employees and nearly 500 electricians during the busy season, Gurtz Electric handles over \$80 million in contracts. The potential for influence is enormous, and Gurtz Electric Co. is proving that one company can make a big difference. GBQ

Opposite page: (Far left) Gurtz replaced its existing air-handling units with new, high-efficiency equipment and controls at its headquarters. (left) New HVAC Zonex controls being installed

Above: (left) New ductwork splits flow into building. (right) Gurtz had insulation blown into exterior walls to improve the thermal envelope of their building.

GURTZ ELECTRIC CO.

High Tech Wiring for an Automated World

Established in 1932, Gurtz Electric Co. has built a reputation as a first-class electrical contractor. This distinction is continually earned by providing high quality teams that bring solutions...before issues become problems. Owners and General Contractors know that Gurtz Electric Co. has what it takes to meet the needs of the project. Our performance capabilities range in size and scope from small industrial and commercial installations of less than \$500,000 to large, complex projects in excess of \$40 million.

The overall strength of Gurtz Electric Co.'s labor, equipment, financial and management resources is matched by very few in the industry. We staff our projects with a skilled team of project managers, superintendants, union electricians, CAD operators, estimators and administrative staff that follow through and deliver. Our experience and knowledge combined with the strength of our technical and workforce resources ensure that our projects are delivered safely, high in quality, low in cost and right on time.

SPECIALIZING IN THE INSTALLATION, START-UP, TESTING, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF BUILDING ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS INCLUDING:

- ▶ **POWER AND DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS FOR ELECTRICAL POWER INCLUDING POWER CABLES, CONDUITS, DISTRIBUTION PANELS, TRANSFORMERS, GENERATORS, UNINTERRUPTIBLE POWER SUPPLY SYSTEMS AND RELATED SWITCHGEAR & CONTROL**
- ▶ **LIGHTING AND DIMMING SYSTEMS INCLUDING FIXTURES AND CONTROLS**
- ▶ **LOW-VOLTAGE SYSTEMS INCLUDING FIRE ALARM, SECURITY, COMMUNICATIONS AND PROCESS CONTROL SYSTEMS**

77 West Seegers Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005 • P: 847.734.2400 • F: 847.734.2440

www.gurtzelectric.com