Building Olympic Dreams

Donated Building Products Help Improve Training Centers

by Ed Cogbill
Georgia-Pacific

For several weeks during the 1992 Winter and Summer Olympic Games, millions abandoned their regular tv routines in favor of the international competitions. Some viewers may have thought about the years of training required by the athletes to compete at this level, but they probably didn’t consider-just where the resources come from to build the top-notch training facilities used by these elite athletes.

Serving more than 15,000 athletes each year, the Olympic Training Centers (OTCs) provide free room and board, training and recreational facilities, medical services and even sports science testing and analysis for all US Olympic contenders. The Colorado Springs OTC is undergoing a major renovation and expansion involving five completely new structures. The project was awarded to Lehman Smith Wiseman Architects of Washington, D.C.

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Construction Industry Heroes

To the Rescue

by Kathy B. Sedgwick

Many construction industry companies are involved in community service projects, donating materials, time and expertise to aid the economically disadvantaged and others who need special help.

Georgia-Pacific, an official sponsor of the US Olympic Games, provided company products for two Olympic Training Centers, including lumber, plywood, insulation, doors, paneling, nails and screws. In addition, Georgia-Pacific offered valuable technical support to Lehman Smith Wiseman, the architects designing two OTCs. According to Architect Kenneth Wiseman, Georgia-Pacific has gone several steps further, by procuring necessary items which are not company-produced in the interest of making the project’s money go further—items as diverse as exterior standing seam metal roofing, concrete, and rebar and plywood forms for the concrete work.

US Gypsum Company helped build the newest Ronald McDonald House, providing Durock Underlayment (Portland cement board) for the kitchen and entryway. Located in Nashville, TN, the Ronald McDonald House is one of 125 in the US, Canada, Australia and Europe, which house families of children undergoing treatment for serious illness or injury.

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in the Olympic Games is funded solely through private donations, the US Olympic Committee depends on major contributions to keep our country competitive. One sponsor of the US Olympic Team is providing the lumber, plywood, insulation, doors, paneling, nails and screws, among many other building products, to significantly improve the Olympic training Centers in Colorado Springs, CO and Lake Placid, NY. In fact, the principals of the architectural firm in charge of renovating the Colorado Springs facility were given the sponsor’s building products catalog and told to “let [their] imaginations run wild.”

This offer allowed architects Kenneth Wiseman and Debra Lehman-Smith to find unique, cost-effective applications for the donated products. As Wiseman put it, “We were thrilled with both the quantity and quality of products available to us, which is fortunate because the materials used in the OTCs need to be highly durable and relatively maintenance-free to minimize operating costs.”

For this reason, strength and stability figured heavily in the renovation/expansion plans. For example, fiberglass-faced sheathing was specified instead of conventional paperfaced sheathing, reducing the need to replace panels during harsh weather exposure.

Products for use inside the facility were also chosen with an eye towards extra performance. As a durable alternative to drywall, finished paneling will be installed in many residential and high-traffic areas of the centers because of its low-maintenance requirements and high resistance to nick and dents. The aesthetic appeal of the light-colored maple plywood paneling also led to its specification for the dining hall.

The OTC’s buildings will be constructed with lumber and sheathed in plywood. Value-added products like water-resistant tile backer will protect and enhance the bathroom walls.

Besides fulfilling structuring concerns, the donation helped Wiseman and Lehman-Smith choose products to improve comfort and performance levels for the athletes. To give the floor of the new gym the ultimate surface for training, two layers of plywood will be installed beneath the hardwood surface to create a springy, cushioning effect and minimize impact on the knees. Additionally, special insulation supplied for the new aquatics center will keep moisture from escaping the building in notoriously dry Colorado, a major benefit to swimmers who perform more effectively in a humid climate.

The architects will also make certain that the atmosphere is conducive to the needs of the athletes who call the training centers home. To reduce
noise levels, solid core wood doors and insulation will be used between floors in the twin residential buildings. In fact, top-grade insulation will yield energy efficiency throughout the 36-acre Colorado Springs site, offering greater cost control for heating and cooling. A high-quality, Type X-rated fire-resistant sheathing was also chosen to ensure safety in this well-utilized complex.

Scheduled for completion in 1993, the Olympic Training Centers will be a cornerstone to success for future US Olympic Games.

About the Author:
Ed Cogbill, manager of Georgia-Pacific Corporation’s Denver distribution center, was instrumental in the coordination of the materials donated for the Colorado Springs project, ensuring on-time product delivery. Ed began his career over 20 years ago in Georgia-Pacific’s Little Rock location. He also managed the company’s Corpus Christi branch before moving to the Denver office.

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Snowcem PMC Limited of Croydon, England donated 1600 kg of its paint to an organization providing supplies to aid Romanian orphans. The paint will be used on a special unit housing 50 children suffering from serious bone/growth disorders, a large proportion of whom are HIV positive. A team of eight will undertake full repair, redecoration and refurbishment of the unit.

Numerous companies offered help to the victims of Hurricane Andrew, believed to be one of the most powerful hurricanes in the history of the US. Andrew caused an estimated $20 billion damage in Florida alone, the most ever caused by a natural catastrophe in the US; in Louisiana, damage estimates totalled $300 million.

Here’s what some of these industry heroes have done to help Hurricane Andrew victims:

• Georgia Pacific donated $100,000 to the Florida Hurricane Relief Fund and $25,000 to the Louisiana Disaster Relief Account.

• W.R. Grace Construction Products donated approximately 250,000 sq ft of Grace Ice and Water Shield roofing underlayment for a temporary roof for the Glendale Missionary Baptist Church which functioned as a FEMA aid distribution site and provided housing for many people who lost their homes.

• Grace converted one of its concrete products admixture tankers to carry water and rigged mobile shower station which ran four days, until tent cities were rigged with sanitation and shower facilities.

• Grace contributed the time of logistics expert Paul Murphy, Grace Transportation Systems, who doubled the throughput of deliveries to the disaster area which up to that point had been plagued with distribution problems.

In addition to employees’ cash contributions and donations, the Grace Corp made an emergency contribution of $100,000 for disaster relief.

• CertainTeed Corp. sent 125 bundles of Kraft-faced fiberglass insulation.

• The Darworth Company, a leading manufacturer and marketer of home improvement products, donated 19,000 pounds of materials to help the victims of Hurricane Andrew rebuild their homes. The donation consisted of boxes of all-purpose adhesive caulk, tub and tile adhesive caulk and siliconized acrylic latex caulk, materials which will be of value to residents rebuilding their community.

• Briar Gypsum Co. sent thousands of pieces of 1/2 in. gypsum board.

• Celotex Corp. sent 700+ bundles of asphalt fiberglass roof shingles.

• Weyerhaeuser’s New Orleans division sent six 18-wheeler trucks full of OSB, plywood, studs, roofing felt and other materials.

Even months after this natural disaster, companies and organizations are joining forces to make a difference in helping victims rebuild their lives. It may take years of work to restore the areas hit hard by the hurricane, but through donations such as these, reconstruction will be easier and less expensive.