

BEST OF 2007 AWARDS

Port of Entry, Champlain, NY

AWARD OF MERIT: Public Works/Facilities/Buildings

Construction began on the \$31 million Port of Entry in Champlain, NY in May 2005 and was completed by December 2006 – a period of time that was not without its share of challenges.

The new facility is a 1,196,463-sq-ft. space for built for nine commercial inspection booths, including Radiation Portal Monitors, Fast and Secure Trade Systems, as well as associated canopy and approach roadways. A new truck staging area with associated drainage infrastructure and new access ramps and roadways from the USS/Canadian border intersection with I-87 were also constructed. Additionally, progressive collapse, bullet resistant assemblies and LEED certification were incorporated into the project.

The new Port of Entry also includes a two-story cargo processing building, and eight bay cargo inspection warehouse as well as office space occupied by Federal Services Administration, Customs Border Protection, Food and Drug Administration, Fish and Wild Life Service and several private broker firms.

During construction, design changes were made to the project that unintentionally accelerated construction plans. The base bid plans called for a SBS Bituminous roof system which could only be installed in warm weather. The plan was changed to accommodate colder temperatures by using a TPO system. As a result, the project acquired three months of float and the Port of Entry in Champlain was fully operational on January 20, 2007, two days earlier than expected.

Construction managers The Pike Company and Hill International collaboratively formed The Pike Hill Joint Venture specifically for the project because of Hill's experience working with GSA, said Norman Rockefeller, project manager of



The Pike Hill Joint Venture.

During the erection of the three-phase, 44-month project, the team was constantly revising the design of the cast-in-place concrete knee walls until the required color and finish was obtained. The team also controlled cracking as well as bug-holes and honeycombing by using a defined vibration process. Since the Port of Entry is the fourth largest cargo inspection facility on the United States' northern border, each construction activity has to be coordinated with nearby GSA, CBP, FDA, FWS, USDA and NYSDOT, so not to disrupt the traffic flow of the 1,400 trucks it inspects and processes each day. Construction took place adjacent to the previous Port of Entry with operation 24-hours a day, seven days a week. The challenges involved were not simply limited to the construction process. "One of our biggest hurdles we faced was that government projects are built with a Design Excellence Program [which is a streamlined two-step architect/engineer selection

Key Players

Owner/Developer: U.S. General Services Administration, Region 2

Owner's Representative/Construction Manager/General Contractor: Hill International Inc.

Architect: Smith-Miller & Hawkinson Architects

Engineers: ARUP and HNTB Corporation

Contractors: Bette & Cring Construction Group and The Pike Company

process] which involved a lot of materials we've never used before," said Mark Bollin, project director at The Pike Company.

The new facility, located on 27-acres of newly acquired land in close proximity to the previous Port of Entry, is designed to unify existing and new structures to reflect the official and importance of the gateway. <<