



The Block Connection

Customer Delight
Since 1920



ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS & DESIGNERS

Issue 123

FEATURED PROJECT

Engineering Innovation Building at UIC



Block Electric recently finished the new 57,500 square-foot Engineering Innovation Building at University of Illinois Chicago campus. This 18 month project was supervised by Jerry Martin. The building will house engineers investigating phenomena on a scale from the very large—bridge and highway components—to the exceedingly small, such as nanoscale components that will drive the next generation of thermal batteries.

The chemical engineering and civil and materials engineering departments will occupy the new building, which is home to the Chicago area's only high-bay structural research laboratory, which enables engineers and industry profes-

als to develop and test large and heavy infrastructural components. The chemical engineers in the building will continue to lead research work on projects including developing artificial leaves that take carbon dioxide directly from the atmosphere to make synthetic gas, microbial fuel cells, and cancer detection technology that uses microfluidics devices.

The \$43 million building at the corner of Morgan and Taylor Streets highlights UIC's investment in its rapidly growing engineering programs. Enrollment at the College of Engineering has almost doubled in the last 10 years to more than 5,000 students.

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Vice President's Message



"So, when is the next recession coming?" This has been a common question I have been hearing lately and many people are wondering,

how could the economy possibly sustain 10 years of consecutive growth? This is obviously a question that doesn't have a straight answer, but looking at the big picture, we can hopefully determine what's actually going on in our industry today.

Over the last 10 years, it's been no secret that the construction industry has struggled to find skilled laborers amongst all trades. Around the mid-2000s there was a "College boom." Then, during the recession, there was a lot of talk that in order to survive a downturn in the economy, you must have a college degree. This has scared people away from the trades, which is one of the main reasons our industry has a weak supply of labor today.

During this time, the construction market in the Chicagoland area has continued to grow, which has led to a high demand of work that has been difficult to fulfill.

The upcoming additions of O'Hare 21, the Lincoln Yards development, and ongoing apartment/office high rises will keep Cook County busy over the next several years. Also, probably the most underrated of all is the amount of job and population growth that Will County has experienced over the last year.

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Vice President's Message

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Big businesses are seeing a lot of potential and are steadily moving into the area. It has shown, as the overall State's population is declining, the Will County area is growing in population.

The largest booming industry since the recession has been none other than Technology. Since 2013, there has been more than \$18 Billion in Technology invested into the construction industry. The Tech giants have finally started making headway into construction and for good reason — our industry has notoriously lagged behind others in technological advances.

The leaders in Silicon Valley are hedging their bet on tech assisting the construction industry with their high demand of work and short supply of workers to get it done. So far, it has paid dividends. These tech advances have made our jobs safer, more efficient, and most importantly for our customers, decreased the amount of days it takes to complete a project.

Block Electric is doing its part in keeping up with the industry trends of today and what we see in the forecast for years to come. Together, we can never stop innovating and should always be looking to find ways to make things better to achieve our ultimate goal of **Customer Delight**.

— SCOTT BLOCK
Vice President, Block Electric



Spotlight On: Larry McCormick FOREMAN

Foreman Larry McCormick continued a family tradition when he began the residential apprenticeship program in 1987. He completed the commercial apprenticeship program before starting with Block Electric in 1996.

"I grew up with electricians in my family," Larry said. "My late father, Jim McCormick, was a union electrician and retired from Block Electric. I have two older brothers, Chris and Jim, who work for Block Electric."

According to Larry, everyone at Block Electric is very professional and "great to work with", from the field to the office. "I have worked with and met many talented electricians since starting at Block Electric," Larry said. "There has been many advancements in technology during the years. I have learned many new concepts including the Trimble Unit. I first used this at The Silver Cross Hospital job."

While Larry is currently working at the Will County Courthouse in Joliet, the project he

enjoyed the most was the Pistol Range and Humvee Rollover Building at the Marseilles National Guard. "It was a very interesting project with fiber optics for the targets and lightning protection for the ammo building," Larry said.

When Larry isn't busy working, he and his wife Gina enjoy spending time with their family. The couple, who has been married for almost 30 years, live in the country east of Grand Ridge, Illinois, and have two children—Alicia, 29, and Tyler, 26. They also have two grandchildren—Van, 3, and Killian, 2.

"We love spending time with our children and grandchildren," Larry said. "We travel to New York two or three times a year to visit with our son and his family."

Larry also enjoys jogging and cycling, and doing projects around the house.

A fun fact about Larry that not many people know is that he was on the Farmers Tug of War Team during high school and after graduating. "We were National Tug of War Champs," he said. "My late father was the coach."

After high school and prior to beginning his career as an electrician, Larry worked at Prairie-dale Farms, a large hog farm outside of Grand Ridge, Illinois. He also worked at Farm and Fleet in Ottawa, Illinois.



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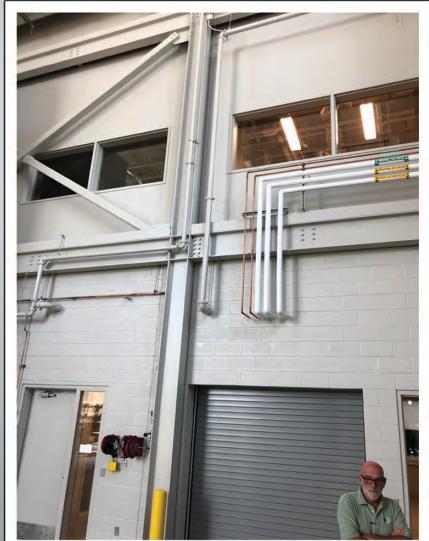
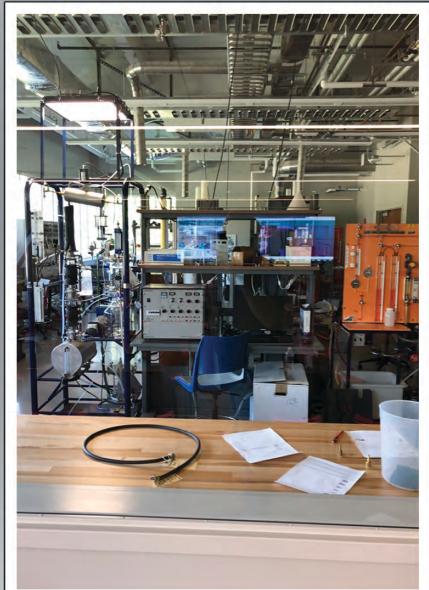
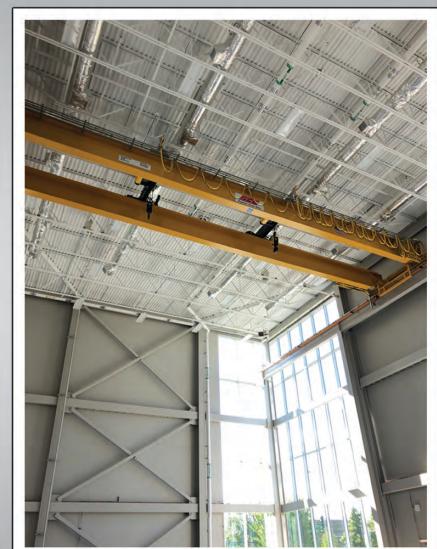
"The College of Engineering has experienced explosive growth in enrollment in the last few years, outpacing growth in demand for engineering programs nationally," said Michael Amiridis, Chancellor of the University of Illinois at Chicago. "The new building supports our unprecedented growth, provides unique learning opportunities for students, attracts top academic talent, and strengthens our ties with local business, industry, and other partners to drive innovation in engineering in the Chicagoland area."

The Engineering Innovation Building's high-bay structural research lab is a unique facility in northern Illinois. Here, researchers and government agencies will be able to develop and test

large-scale structural components and determine how they behave under various loads and conditions. The bay rests on a six-foot-thick reinforced concrete slab designed to support massive pieces of infrastructure and features a 30-foot-high L-shaped reactive wall. Its equipment includes hydraulic pumps and actuators that can deliver varied dynamic loads to assess the stability of structures and to shed light on optimal designs.

"The UIC College of Engineering is well on its way to becoming a top-five public, urban engineering college, and the new Engineering Innovation Building represents another big step in that direction," said Pete Nelson, dean of the College of Engineering. "The new building

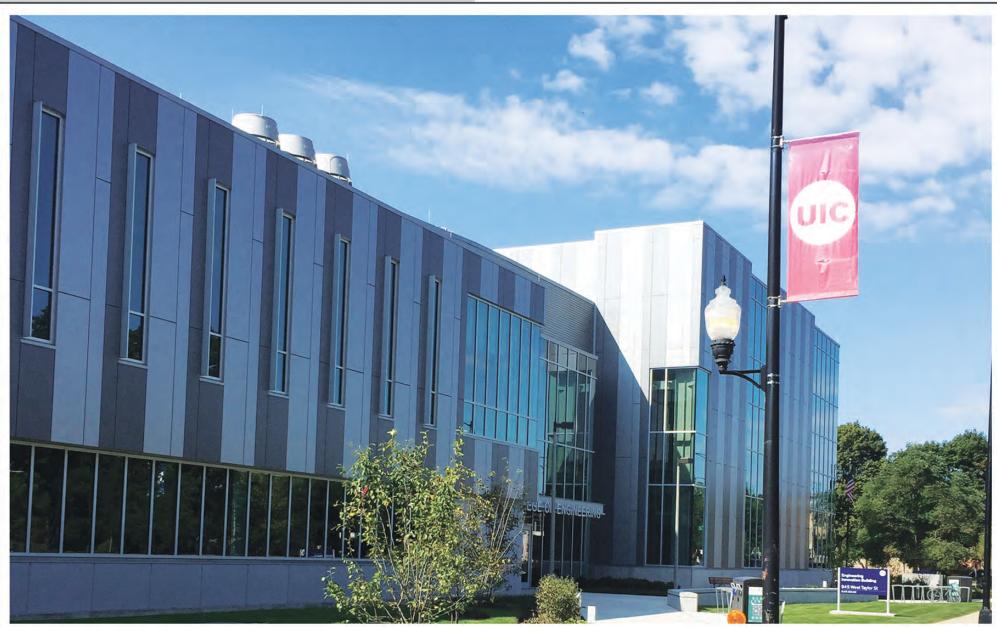
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enables us to offer our students unique opportunities to learn in a state-of-the-art space that also will support Illinois companies who are eager to hire our students.”

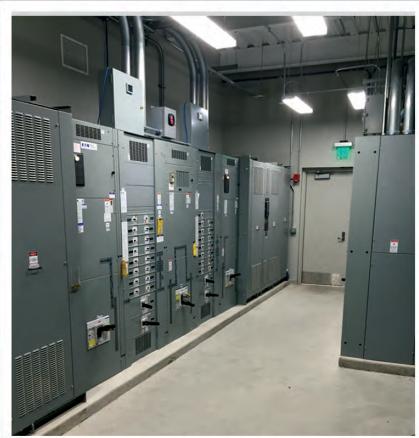
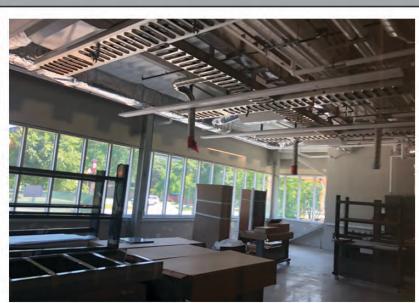
UIC is looking forward to using a one-of-a-kind high-tech classroom that overlooks a unit-operations lab that serves as a model chemical plant, where students can observe real chemical operations as they learn the related concepts.

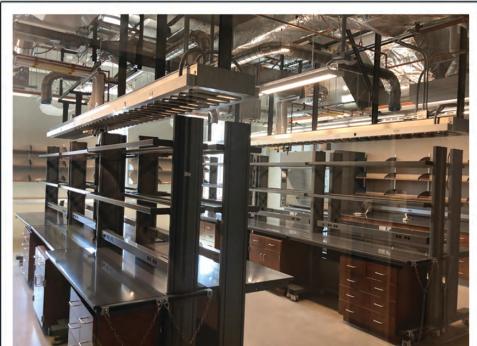
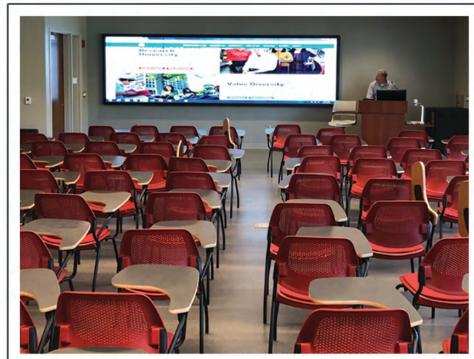
Chemical engineering’s research portfolio at UIC has become significantly stronger in the last few years. “We are addressing the world’s water and energy crises via our research in membrane purification, artificial photosynthesis, molecular photovoltaics, thermal batteries, and fuel cells,” Berry said. “We are also leading the work on drug delivery, cancer detection, biocompatible surfaces, complex fluids, 3D printing, and nanoelectronics. The department has world-class talent, and now it will have world-class facilities.” In addition to facilitating research, the building’s labs will support a new undergraduate concentration in molecular nanotechnology that the College of Engineering plans to launch in fall 2020.

This project had a little bit of everything which made it interesting. Everything from 50 foot high research bays, 5 foot thick concrete slabs, exposed ceiling research labs and 5 kv feeds to existing manholes.

The building is expected to be LEED Gold certified later this year.

Jerry Martin, has over 30 years’ experience in the electrical industries and it doesn’t matter what challenges we throw at him, he always seems to accept them, rise to the challenge and ultimately succeed.

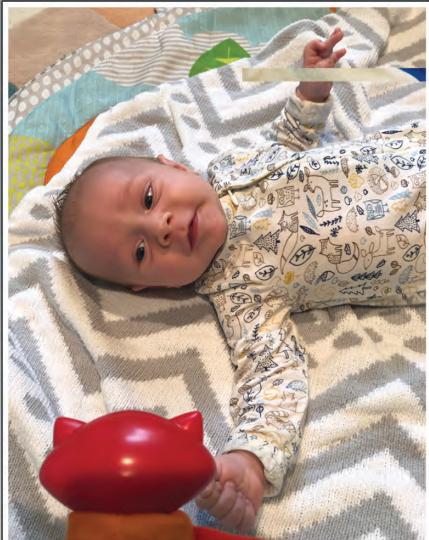




Block Electric Announcements

Welcome Paxton John Block

Congratulations to Michael and Erika Block on the birth of their son. Paxton John Block was born on Sunday, June 16, 2019 (Father's Day). He weighed 7 lbs., 6 ozs. and was 19.5 inches long.



Congratulations to Block's new Journeyman

Congratulations to Francisco Luna, who became a Journeyman on September 10, 2019.

FOCUS ON SAFETY

Improper Use of Extension and Flexible Cords



by Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Am I In Danger?

The normal wear and tear on extension and flexible cords at your site can loosen or expose wires, creating hazardous conditions. [Flexible Cords] Cords that are not 3-wire type, not designed for hard usage, or that have been modified, increase your risk of contacting electrical current.

How Do I Avoid Hazards?

- Use factory-assembled cord sets.
- Use only extension cords that are 3-wire type.
- Use only extension cords that are marked with a designation code for hard or extra-hard usage.
- Use only cords, connection devices, and fittings that are equipped with strain relief. Remove cords from receptacles by pulling on the plugs, not the cords.
- Continually audit cords on-site. Any cords found not to be marked for hard or extra-hard use, or which have been modified, must be taken out of service immediately.

Block Electric's Safety Policy

It is our policy to provide all employees with a safe, healthful, and hazard-free work place. The intent at all times is to comply with the provisions of the Williams-Steiger Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSHA).

Block Electric recognizes that accident prevention and efficient production are interrelated. We further recognize our responsibility to provide adequate training, safeguards and safety equipment for each employee. In turn each employee bears the responsibility to comply with all safety regulations and the use of required safety equipment. The safety and well being of our employees has been and will continue to be of primary importance.

Our EMR is .82 and our Contractor Score is 2390. Phil Casto is our safety director.

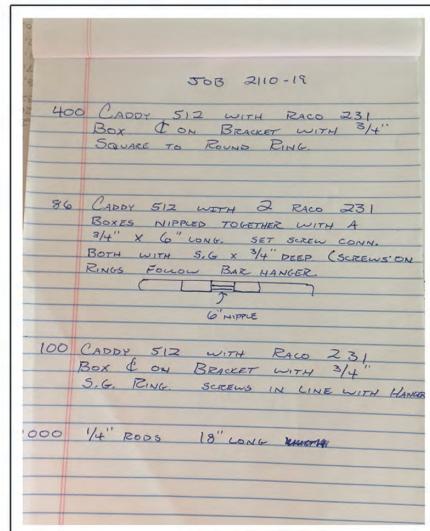
NEW IDEAS NEEDED...WIN A VISA GIFT CARD!

New Products, Tools and Prefab Assemblies

Prefab Order Form.

| Caddy H23 Box Bracket | |
|---|----------------------------|
| JOB NAME: | CSH HIGHLAND JOB # 2110-19 |
| FOREMAN: | Rick Madison |
| DATE: | 9-13-19 |
| QUANTITY: | 500 |
| Catalog Number: Box Type & Depth: Ring - 16 or 20: Ring Depth: | |
| Raco 231 1900 2 1/8 16 3 1/4" | |
| Type Fittings: Size & Location of Top Fittings: | |
| CADDY H23 16 Holes X | |
| Size & Location of Top Fittings: Type Fittings: | |
| CE= Steel Compression EMT SS=Set Screw EMT | |
| ents or special instructions: | |

General Foreman Sends Prefab Information to Luke Simpson.



Prefab Finished Product of Order.



WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We are looking for fresh and innovative ideas for new products, tools and ongoing prefab assemblies to feature in future issues of the Block Electric newsletter.

In an effort to make our jobs run more efficiently and be more cost-effective, we are looking for your suggestions regarding which tools can be used in your day-to-day work to make your lives easier.

There are no right or wrong answers. We're looking for any and all products and ideas to share with the team.

Congratulations to Rick Madison for your featured prefab this quarter!

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

If your idea is featured in the Block Electric newsletter, you will receive up to a \$50.00 Visa gift card.

Prefab Finished Product of Order.



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Block Electric Company is an Equal Opportunity Employer

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