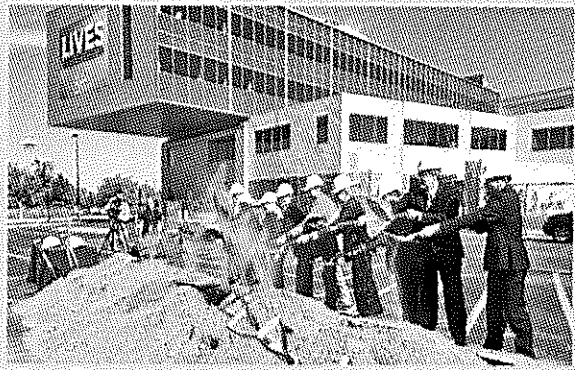


PROJECT start



MSU officials broke ground October 8 for the school's new \$39-million Aerospace and Engineering Sciences Building.

Metro State Aerospace Engineering Sciences Building Takes Flight

After a presentation on technology by former astronaut Leroy Chiao, and a panel discussion on diversity featuring heavyweights in Colorado's aerospace industry, Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU) officials broke ground October 8 for the school's new \$39-million Aerospace and Engineering Sciences Building.

This means a return for GH Phipps to the Auraria Campus for a project that will help bolster the school's educational mission in partnership with Colorado's growing presence in the aerospace industry.

The building, prominently sited on Auraria Parkway, will house programs in the aerospace sciences; civil, electrical and mechanical engineering technology; computer information systems and computer science, and industrial design—courses related to Colorado's current push to promote STEM education.

Before the actual groundbreaking by school officials and guests, MSU President Stephen Jordan announced that the building will house the state's only Institute for Advanced Manufacturing, as well as a "flexible" fourth floor that will include equipment from advanced manufacturers.

The Aerospace building, designed by Anderson Mason Dale Architects, is slated to meet standards for LEED-Gold certification. Construction is expected to begin this month and finish in July 2017.



Rendering by AndersonMasonDale Architects

The new building will house programs in the aerospace sciences.

NEWS briefs

Construction Costs Increase Slightly During Q2 2015

From April 1 to July 1, "the national average increase in construction cost was approximately 1.15%," said consultant Rider Levett Bucknall on October 2, based on its quarterly survey of 12 cities.

"Honolulu again experienced the greatest increase...almost 2.8% for the period. All other...locations experienced inflation between 0.8% and 1.25%," the report said.

The U.S. year-over-year increase was 5.3%, up from 4.3% a year earlier. "Our Comparative Cost Index tracks the 'true' bid cost of construction, which includes, in addition to costs of labor and materials, general contractor and subcontractor overhead costs and fees (profit). The index also includes applicable sales/use taxes that 'standard' construction contracts attract."

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COMMENTARY

AEC Firms Prepare for the Revolution in Well-Being

By Rich Friedman

In a recent article, we posed a question that unleashed a firestorm of feedback: Is the way we work still working? Judging by the response—more than any topic we've covered in 10 years—the answer is no. It's not working.

Why are so many leaders burned out—and so many emerging leaders rethinking which ladder they want to climb? How can AEC and environmental firms evolve and thrive as the industry's technology, generational expectations and definitions of leadership are changing?

Companies like 1,900-person architecture firm Perkins + Will, Chicago, and HDR, Omaha, which won a Nebraska Governor's Award for its wellness program, are putting resources behind fostering a healthier staff. Yet, emerging leaders and those who manage them say physical wellness is just a start. Flexibility, life balance and more sustainable workloads loom equally large for those coming up the ranks.

Peter Warr, a researcher at the Institute of Work Psychology in Sheffield, England, identifies five keys to well-being at work: contribution, conviction, cultural fit, commitment and confidence. In some ways, the AEC industry is uniquely well suited to offer all of these, but it may require big changes to fully get there.



Rich Friedman

with 50-person environmental engineering and consulting firm Epsilon Associates in Maynard, Mass.

Studies show that when employees believe the organizational culture is a good fit for them, performance, happiness and well-being increase significantly. Yet many AEC leaders seem out of touch with the culture they're creating, something that is increasingly becoming a deal-breaker for recruiting. One project manager of four told him the road-warrior lifestyle that kept him away from home was not so glamorous. "It floored me that he thought I would think this was glamorous," he says.

Grant Misterly, senior project manager at an ENR top 10 engineering firm, says leaders can cultivate commitment while embracing a different way of working. "I believe that commitment to one another and the personal relationships on a team are an important part of a wellness culture," Misterly says. "Focusing on the wellness of the team so that the whole team stays happy and motivated and energized—even during stressful work periods—that's what I aim for," he says.

Family, Flexibility and Fairness

Family time is a piece of this, and that's why Perkins + Will has adopted paid parental leave to include time off for mothers, fathers and domestic partners for new birth, adoption and foster care. "It goes beyond healthcare benefits to provide a workplace culture that sends a strong message that we care about the whole person," says Brown.

But it's also time to let go of the bravado around putting in long hours at the office. Younger professionals are more focused on doing the work than being seen at work. They expect to leverage technology to their benefit, have flexibility in their schedule—and many are willing to rethink their career choices to make time for family or personal passions.

Misterly, who credits his workplace managers with embracing flexible work styles, had his own turning point recently. He turned down a great career-building opportunity because of the geographic moves, stress and travel it would entail. "I very much enjoy my job, but I also have an active family and community life, and that's just as important to me," he says.

Millennials, especially, have a changing mentality about working hard and moving up. According to "The Millennial Leadership Study," by WorkplaceTrends.com, 91% aspire to leadership roles, and half of those are women. But nearly 30% are not willing to sacrifice their life balance or flexibility for the job.

"I get emails from junior staffers at 9, 10, 12 at night," says Misterly. "They're engaged and they are working hard. They're just not at the office. I also have a seasoned engineer who comes in early, works a 10-hour day, and then turns off work. The project manager who leaves at 5 may have worked this weekend so that he can attend his child's soccer game that evening. If you're working hard and producing, it is going to be evident in what you accomplish, so you need to manage people individually and be flexible."

The opportunity for innovative firms is this: sustainability, wellness and balance are not just buzzwords. They're the new world of work. If you want to attract and cultivate the most talented professionals, and grow your business, it's time to embrace them.

Is it time for a sea change in our work culture? How can firms evolve to work smarter and attract the best talent? I'd love to hear your thoughts.

Rich Friedman, president of Friedman & Partners in Wayland, Mass., has extensive experience in strategic market planning, market research and analysis, PR and positioning strategy, and business development consulting and training for technical and marketing professionals.

"Creative well-being is important to us having energy and taking good care of oneself."

Meg Brown, Principal & Chief Talent Officer, Perkins + Will

Walking the 'Sustainable' Talk

"Creative well-being is important to us—having energy and taking good care of oneself," says Meg Brown, principal and chief talent officer at Perkins + Will. "Our profession provides design solutions that impact people's daily lives, health and comfort. Sustainability has been critical to our clients, and a component of that is wellness."

AEC firms offer creative, meaningful work with lasting impact, innovative problem-solving and an ownership culture. But the work is project driven, and sometimes, frenetic. As an industry, how well do we walk the sustainability talk?

Another principal we spoke to (on condition of anonymity) says it's often those in the middle—the leaders being cultivated—who get crushed. As principals take on more communication and business development roles (focusing less on the technical work) and junior staffers work eight hours and go home, middle-level managers are faced with the greatest pressure and work loads.

"In a typical day, they have to deal with the immediate demands of email, meetings and phone calls, but then at 5:00, they still have the report that requires uninterrupted focus to write. It's this combination of communication work piled on top of the actual production work that buries middle managers," the principal says.

Culture Is King

"Sustainable wellness comes from cultural change, and this is particularly true at smaller firms with limited resources. As junior employees see senior leaders using vacation time, leaving work on time, and exercising at lunch, the culture is able to shift in a more sustainable direction," says David Hewett, a new principal

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