

A SALUTE TO A POWER MOTIVE CUSTOMER

NEW DESIGN CONSTRUCTION

Denver company shines at night, and in other challenging road-building situations



Steve McWilliams,
President/Partner

New Design Construction is a full-service Denver construction company that specializes in concrete paving. Primarily a road-building company, New Design frequently takes on challenging or out-of-the-ordinary jobs. Whether that means they're fast-track, need to be done at night, or have some other element that makes them uncomfortable for many contractors, those are the jobs where New Design shines.

"We like the challenge, plus we have the experience to handle difficult jobs," said New Design founder, partner and President Steve McWilliams. "We also prefer those projects because they tend to eliminate the marginally qualified contractors and leave the rest of us on a level playing field where we all understand the job, understand our costs and understand the need to make a profit. We welcome competition and believe we have excellent competitors throughout Colorado."

New Design has a wide range of capabilities beyond concrete, including dirt work, utility work and asphalt patching.

"We do what we have to do to try to stay busy," said New Design partner and Chief Estimator Rick Suer. "If that means bidding a stand-alone dirt or pipe job, or doing some asphalt work, we'll do that. We're best known for our versatility, being able to do dirt and pipe to slipform barrier by removing and replacing concrete panels. We've worked on every Interstate and most of the other highways in Colorado and have done a large percentage of the panel replacement jobs in the state, many of them at night."

In addition to McWilliams and Suer, a third partner, Stan Odenbaugh oversees equipment and operations. "I think our strength in the

marketplace is that we take pride in what we build," said Odenbaugh. "For example, our barrier walls save lives. That's something we're serious about. We want to do the best possible job for our clients because it's also for the public good."

Approaching 25th year in business

New Design got its start back in the 1980s, when McWilliams found himself in need of a job. "Basically, I was working for a company that ceased operations in Colorado," he recalled. "A gentleman for whom we had worked had more work to do and asked me if I wanted to take it on. That's pretty much how New Design came about."

McWilliams incorporated the business in 1985 and will soon be celebrating his 25th year in business. "I can't say I really planned any of this," said McWilliams. "We've just evolved and found our niche."

Today, the company has about 60 employees. In the past, it's employed as many as 200.

"Obviously, we're dependent on the construction economy," said McWilliams. "When our work load picks up, we'll hire more people. Until then, we'll just do the best we can do. We're very fortunate in that, while we have a large fleet of equipment, almost everything is paid for."

Colorado's first economic stimulus project

New Design Construction has been involved in numerous large jobs throughout Colorado, and in particular in the Denver metro area. One such job was at Highway 58 and I-70, where New Design did all the concrete work



Rick Suer,
Chief Estimator/
Partner



Stan Odenbaugh,
Operations Manager/
Partner



New Design Construction is doing Colorado's first large job funded with economic stimulus money. It consists of replacing concrete panels on I-70 between Wadsworth Boulevard and Kipling Street in Denver. All the work has to be done at night so heavy, daytime traffic flow is not disrupted.

Here, a WA200 wheel loader and SK1020 skid steer loader remove the concrete chunks.

for a flyover connecting the two roadways. The company has an annual contract with Denver International Airport to do all the maintenance required on the land side of the airport, including Peña Boulevard. New Design also did much of the concrete barrier work for southeast Denver's massive T-REX project, which included 17 miles of I-25/ I-225 reconstruction.

This summer, New Design is doing Colorado's first large-scale job associated with the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, better known as the economic stimulus program. The company is replacing 12-foot by 14-foot concrete panels on I-70 in Denver from Wadsworth Boulevard to Kipling Street. The job is tailor-made for what New Design does best.

"It's fast-track, it has to be done at night and there are serious penalties for nonperformance," Odenbaugh explained. "Panel replacement is

a choreographed process that has to be done perfectly to succeed. There's no room for error. First, we break up and remove the old panel, then we replace the rebar and transverse bars, regrade the road base and compact it, and finally pour the concrete. Since traffic flow must be maintained during daylight hours, we can't start our work until 8 p.m. The pour has to be done by 12:30 a.m. to make certain the concrete has time to cure and harden before traffic, including heavy semis, is driving on it at 5:30 that same morning."

Quality equipment and topnotch dealer support

In order to do fast-pace work like that, New Design Construction owns and has owned more than 50 Komatsu machines, including hydraulic excavators, wheel loaders, backhoe loaders, skid steer loaders and a dozer.

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New Design Construction enjoys a challenge

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Excavators range from compact models up to a PC400 and wheel loaders range from WA200 to WA420-3.

"We've gotten outstanding performance from our Komatsu machines through the years, which is why we have so many of them," said McWilliams. "I did an analysis on one of our Komatsu wheel loaders and the ownership cost was something like \$7 or \$8 an hour. You really can't beat that. Our Komatsu units run great, for a long time, at a very low cost."

"Our Komatsus just go to work every day and produce," Odenbaugh added. "One piece I especially appreciate is our Komatsu PC228 with the zero tail swing. It really comes in handy in our highway work where we only have a single 12-foot lane to work in and there's live traffic running right next to us."

With the PC228, we're able to swing around more freely and get our work done much more efficiently."

"Equally important to the quality of the equipment is our relationship with Power Motive," McWilliams acknowledged. "From CEO Bill Blount to our salesman Tim Hoffman to the parts counter to the service technician who comes out to our jobsites, the people at Power Motive are responsive to our needs. They understand this business from the contractor's point-of-view and they take care of problems. It's really that simple. Their approach is how to best take care of the customer and that's a big reason why we've been very loyal to them through the years."

Proud to be part of construction industry

McWilliams acknowledges that the construction economy right now is difficult, but he says he's optimistic about New Design's long-term future.

"People are always going to need roads and bridges. A recent report indicated that 80 percent of Colorado's roads and bridges are deficient. Right now, money is tight and the state can't afford to do everything, but eventually, repairs and new construction will be required. When that happens, we hope to get our share of the work, and if we do, we'll hire a lot of people again."

McWilliams says he's looking forward to the time when business picks back up, and not just because it will mean more money for New Design.

"In my opinion, all of us in construction are in it because we love it. We love to build things. We all want and need to make money, but I don't know anybody who got into this business to get rich. There are easier ways to make more money with a lot less risk. But to me and others like me, nothing else would be as satisfying. It's a wonderful feeling and a sense of accomplishment to complete a project, to be able to see it and use it every day, and to know it's going to help make people's lives better. That's the real payoff of being in construction and it's why I'm proud to be a part of the industry." ■

(L-R) Power Motive Sales Rep Tim Hoffman meets with New Design Partners Stan Odenbaugh and Steve McWilliams. "We've been loyal Komatsu and Power Motive customers through the years because when we have problems, Power Motive takes care of them," said McWilliams.



Nighttime work like the I-70 job is a specialty of New Design Construction. "We do jobs that a lot of companies don't want to do," said McWilliams. "We've found we do our best work on the difficult or out-of-the-ordinary projects."

