Superior Block returns to World Trade Center site, 1.7 million units in tow

Few projects will receive as much global attention as the rebuilt World Trade Center (WTC), transit hub and the new memorial garden in New York City. Securing contracts to produce the 1.7 million concrete masonry units for the massive project was a true honor for Superior Block Corp. of Brooklyn.

Company Founder and President Connie Cincotta notes that this is the third time her family has delivered concrete masonry units for WTC work. Ajax Block, the company owned by her father, Joseph Cincotta, produced the block used for the original complex in the late 1960s and early 1970s. After being rocked by an explosion in 1993, the project was reconstructed using concrete masonry units from Ajax.

Then came September 11, 2001, and the WTC vanished. When the design for the new complex was finalized, concrete masonry was again an integral part of construction. One of Superior’s longtime customers, Rad & D’Aprile, was named masonry contractor, company principal Andrew Feldman selecting the producer based upon the consistent, high quality of its product and adherence to delivery dates.

“Supplying units for the World Trade Center, just like my father did when he was in business, means our family’s legacy continues; that means a lot to me,” affirms Connie Cincotta.

Superior Block’s two Besser V3-12 Vibrapacs produced 6-, 8-, and 12-in. units specified in regular, medium and lightweight, and hollow or 75 percent solid configurations. Solite expanded shale lightweight aggregate was used for lightweight units, while another similarly processed lightweight aggregate, Greenlite, was used for “green” CMU. All concrete masonry had to meet the specifications for fire resistance that ranged up to four hours.

Production for WTC deliveries was ongoing for four years, split among One WTC, recently topped off with spire; (tentatively named) Tower Four; transit hub; and, 9/11 Memorial contracts. “The Vibrapacs were the perfect machines for an extended production run like this due to their dependability, ease of operation, and most importantly their ability to consistently produce dense, dimensionally precise units,” says Cincotta.

Plant Manager Danny Polanco equates the selection of Superior’s units for the
WTC and other projects to the attention they focus on training their plant staff. That commitment recently involved seven Superior employees travelling to Alpena, Mich., to participate in cutting edge training on electronic controls. “[Superior staff] who attended the course are experienced machine operators who learned new skills for troubleshooting to further increase production and decrease downtime for their plant,” says Director of the World Center for Concrete Technology and Dean of Workforce Development at Alpena Community College Don MacMaster.

During the hands-on session, the crew shared its involvement with the rebuilding project in New York City. Their pride caught the attention of local media, with an Alpena News interview spreading the good feeling to residents of northeast Michigan. “There’s something very special about knowing that you and your neighbors manufacture the equipment that builds and rebuilds the world with environmentally friendly concrete masonry units. Looking into the faces of the crew responsible for the production of the 1.7 million units makes what we do at Besser on a daily basis come to life,” notes Besser Co. CEO Kevin Curtis.

Superior Block has dispatched its production team to the World Center for Concrete Technology twice in the past year for machine adjustment and electronic controls training. During the latter session, local media visited the center to gain team members’ perspective on involvement in the landmark World Trade Center reconstruction.
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