

PLAINS TALK



PEER REVIEWED COMPANY



Casper WPE: Poplar Wine & Spirits Begins Urban Renewal

Did You Know?

• The Old Yellowstone District of Casper, Wyoming, was once an economic hot spot! Retail businesses once thrived along Yellowstone Highway in the West Central Corridor, located near downtown. Businesses also supported the Amoco Refinery in other parts of the area. The area declined over time due to shifting traffic patterns and more recently, the closure of the Amoco Refinery. Now...it's set to make a comeback! See article at right. (information from www.casperwy.gov)

Plains Talk is a quarterly publication of West Plains Engineering, Inc. in which we highlight a few of our most interesting projects. Your comments are welcome at any of our locations listed on the back cover of this newsletter.

• For the past several years, City leadership, staff, and countless community volunteers have envisioned the redevelopment of the Old Yellowstone District in downtown Casper, Wyoming. The Casper Urban Renewal Agency created a comprehensive master vision in 2002

that examined how to revitalize the Old Yellowstone District by encouraging the reinvestment by property owners in the area, the utilization of infill and mixed-use developments, the upkeep of historic buildings through tax incentive programs, and the recruitment of complimentary commercial and residential businesses to fill the needs of target customers in the downtown area.

From that master vision, City leadership determined an implementation plan



An architectural rendering of the new Poplar Wine & Spirits (above) which kicks off an overall plan for urban renewal.



Character sketch of potential "Town Square" in the Old Yellowstone District.

to make the vision a reality. The transformation of the Old Yellowstone District into a vibrant and healthy business/residential/entertainment district has been guided by the foresight of City Council members and the City of Casper staff. Those visionaries have assembled a full-time team, timeline, and resources for its redevelopment vision.

One of the first projects being constructed in the Old Yellowstone District is Poplar Wine & Spirits. Co-owned by brothers Mike and David Reid, Poplar Wine & Spirits is a full service retail liquor store, with a focus on fine wines. In fact, their store carries over 650 different wines. They also provide wine, beer, and liquor service for many public fundraisers, functions and weddings. Currently they are in a building that serves only as a retail store and warehouse.

continued, p.3

Sioux Falls WPE: VGM Homelink, Waterloo, Iowa

• VGM Homelink located in Waterloo, Iowa provides equipment and services to patients, case managers and insurance companies. They are a major corporation recognized throughout the United States. A new 60,000 square foot addition was desired to house a call center along with office space for the continued growth of the company.

InVision Architecture served as the project architect and West Plains Engineering provided mechanical/electrical design services. Ron Gardner Construction Company was the General Contractor for the project.

The building construction consisted of three stories with a two-story link connection to the existing facility. A 12,000 square foot call center located on second floor utilized an open structure, overlooking balcony along with a “cloud” type lay-in ceiling to give the call center a unique feel. The two-story link connection served as a break area for employees. A mixture of open structure, lay-in ceiling and “cloud” type ceilings provided a unique challenge for ductwork and piping.

The HVAC system consisted of Variable Air Volume (VAV) rooftop units, Fan Powered Boxes (FPB) and VAV boxes to maximize temperature control throughout the facility. The building was all electric to take advantage of rebates provided by the local utility company. Electric in-floor heat along with pedestal electric heat provides supplemental heat around the perimeter. The FPB’s and VAV’s were located above “cloud” ceilings where possible to minimize noise and maintain a clean viewable space for the occupants. Spiral ductwork along with fabric duct provided proper air distribution to the space. Wireless thermostats were used to allow for easy relocation upon potential



remodeling of the office space.

The call center has a 2-1/2” raised floor with electrical utilities serving from below, a 50 seat theatre, 3-story main entrance atrium with a 3-tier track lighting system with decorative lights, an employee grill, lounge, an illuminated entrance



canopy, and a lighted pergola for employee use are some of the unique features of the project. Electrical lighting highlights include many indirect/direct fixtures, indirect linear pendants, exterior building facade lighting and many contemporary architectural fixtures. Lighting has been designed to provide a statement both inside & outside the building. The view of the lighting at night is stunning. A 1200 Amp, 480 volt service was extended from an existing building to provide power and one step down transformer to provide 120/208 volt distribution. 480 and 208 volt panels were provided on

each floor. Lighting was primarily served at 277 volt. A complete addressable fire alarm system was provided with a new control panel that will eventually serve the original two buildings when their systems are upgraded. A paging system was provided along with perimeter access control system. A complete voice/data infrastructure was installed with fiber optic connections to the original buildings. Provisions were made for future digital LED banners for employee information.

About the Author:
Jeremy Goodroad is a Mechanical Designer in the Sioux Falls Office. He has 4 years experience and has been with WPE for two and a half years.



Casper WPE: Poplar Wine & Spirits Brings Urban Renewal, continued

However, the Reids had a desire to expand their business to include a wine bar and larger retail and warehouse spaces. They purchased land just south of their current location in the Old Yellowstone District, which was cleared of run-down houses and trailer homes.

They turned to GSG Architecture to help them design an appealing building to house their new store. Jim Thomas, President and Principal-In-Charge at GSG, said the Reids asked them to design a building similar in style to some of the old buildings that existed on the Amoco property. "They felt that the historic buildings were part of the community's history and that they wanted to capture some of that history in their new building."

The new Poplar Wine & Spirits is currently under construction. West Plains Engineering, Inc. provided the electrical and mechanical engineering, working along with Lower & Co., P.C. as structural engineers. The contractors were hand selected by GSG and the Reids. The new building will consist of 2500 sq. ft. of retail space, 5000 sq. ft. of warehouse space, and *Vintage*, a 1250 sq. ft. wine bar with a kitchen and fenced in outdoor patio.

The purpose of the wine bar is to allow customers to

come in and enjoy a bottle of wine in a quiet atmosphere and to allow them to sample wines that are available in the retail store. A large, loud nightclub setting was definitely not the Owners' intention.

The retail space will be used in the same manner as it is now, although with better lighting and a little more space. The retail store currently carries slushy drinks that now have designated space behind the counter. The warehouse is also going to be used in the same way, but now has better access via an alley.

The building, composed of different types, textures, and colors of masonry block, definitely stands out as a unique building style in its new location. Once fully complete, the new and improved Poplar Wine & Spirits will breathe new life into previously unused property, but also serve as a stepping stone for the City of Casper in their transformation of the Old Yellowstone District.

About the Author:

Natalie Giese is a Mechanical Engineer in the Casper Office and has been with West Plains Engineering, Inc. for over 4 years.



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NEW EMPLOYEE — CEDAR RAPIDS



• **Becky Kramer** joined the Cedar Rapids office in September, as an Administrative Assistant. Becky has taken the last 5 years off from an office environment to raise her children. She is very excited to be

back to work. Outside the office, Becky enjoys gardening, hiking and spending time with her husband and 3 children.

NEW EMPLOYEE — CASPER



• **Ryan Wistisen** joined the Casper office in August as an Engineering Intern. He is a Mechanical Engineering student at BYU-Idaho, planning to graduate in the summer of 2009.

He has been married for nearly a year and enjoys motorcycles, sports and outdoor activities. Ryan will return to Rexburg, Idaho to continue his studies in January.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

• **Jeremy Goodroad**, Mechanical Design Engineer in our Sioux Falls, SD office and his wife, Nicole, welcomed a new baby boy named Caleb Michael on August 10, 2007. Caleb weighed in at 7 lbs and 1 oz.

TRANSITION

• **Sara Horner**, Electrical Engineer and long time employee of West Plains Engineering, has returned to our Sioux Falls office from the Rapid City office. We wish you well Sara!

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Phone: (605) 362-3753
Fax: (605) 362-3759

• 1750 Rand Road, [Rapid City, SD 57702](#)
Phone: (605) 348-7455
Fax: (605) 348-9445

• 145 S. Durbin, Suite 205, [Casper, WY 82601](#)
Phone: (307) 234-9484
Fax: (307) 234-5494

• 800 First Avenue NE, [Cedar Rapids, IA 52402](#)
Phone: (319) 365-0030
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Cedar Rapids WPE: We're Moving to a New Location!!!

• It took almost five years, but we have outgrown our current space and have decided to move to a new, larger location. Our current space at 800 First Avenue NE has been great and has served our needs well, but it is just too small for us. Our clients have forced us to grow to better serve them and, thusly, we simply need more room. We looked into utilizing some additional space within our current building but nothing looked like a good long-term solution. 800 First Avenue is a well known building in the architectural and engineering community and we'll really miss it. We will especially miss the heated garage in the winter months!

Our new office will be located at 215 2nd Avenue SE, right in the heart of downtown Cedar Rapids. It will be on the second floor of the Arnold Building, located above Ginsberg Jewelers. Our front door will be at street level on 2nd Avenue, and there will also be access from the skywalk.

We will occupy over 3,000 square feet of both individual office and open office space, remodeled to meet our needs. The space was remodeled about 5 years ago so it was possible to reuse some of the lighting, HVAC, ceilings, walls, and doors. We are planning a few addi-



Our space will be located on the Second Floor, with the street level entrance on the right hand side of the photo.

tional upgrades but getting moved in is our biggest priority so those are being put on the back burner for a little while.

Our anticipated move-in date is mid to late October of this year. Our new address will be 215 2nd Avenue SE, Suite 200, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401. Our phone numbers and email addresses will remain the same. You should also receive a postcard in the mail with our new information in the near future when we get a better idea

of exactly when we will be moving.

After we get settled in and make some additional improvements, we are planning to have an open house in the spring of 2008 to unveil our new space and to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the Cedar Rapids office.

We are grateful to our clients that have helped us grow from one person to nine employees in less than five years. We look forward to better serving our clients in our new space for many years to come.

About the Author:

Jeff Reinhart is the Office Manager and Electrical Engineer in the Cedar Rapids Office. Jeff has been with West Plains Engineering for five years.

