



BOB MOORE CONSTRUCTION

CIGNA Regional Offices Building:

A Phased Approach to Construction Overcomes Weather and an Undeveloped Jobsite

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Summary

When finished, the CIGNA Office Building in Denton, Texas would provide a dramatic new home for the company's regional operations and the company was anxious to move. With 23% of the construction days lost to the rainiest spring in Texas's history and a completely undeveloped location with no infrastructure for the building, however, the initial schedule seemed impossible. Unfortunately, the leases were ending on CIGNA's previous locations and meeting the scheduled completion date was critical.

This paper discusses the challenges to the schedule presented by significant days lost to weather and an undeveloped job site and how those challenges were overcome with a phased approach, tilt-up construction and a collaborative relationship with the project's developer.



A Phased Approach to Construction Overcomes Weather and an Undeveloped Jobsite

The CIGNA regional offices building in Denison, Texas provides a new operations center, call center and administrative facility for this nationally recognized insurance provider. CIGNA's Denison, Texas operations were previously housed in two separate buildings that offered no room for growth and were not considered "employee-friendly" facilities. The new building consolidates the business into one facility and provides a corporate headquarters-quality work environment for employees, with room to grow for the future.



The CIGNA building includes 140,000 SF of administrative space over two floors, with parking for 1,000 vehicles. It features a dramatic front entrance with a two-story 85' wide curved black glass curtainwall.

The building's interior is finished in a high-end modern design. The two-story grand lobby features 5,500 SF of space with two guest waiting areas. It is finished with polished and unpolished tile patterns and vinyl wallpaper. A monument staircase leads from the lobby to the center of the second floor. The facility also includes two elevators.

The majority of the building is comprised of offices, conference rooms, networked training rooms and call center facilities. Creating a pleasant working environment for the employees was important to CIGNA. The building design included a full commercial kitchen, cafeteria, dining area that doubles as a teleconference room and an exercise room with connected shower/dressing rooms.

A Phased Approach Overcomes Schedule, Rain and Terrain

Before this building was constructed, CIGNA operated in two leased buildings and those leases were expiring. The lease holder threatened CIGNA with severe penalties if they failed to move out prior to the end dates on the leases. For the sake of our client and CIGNA it was crucial that we finished the building on time.



Unfortunately, during the construction we experienced one of the rainiest springs in the state's history. As a result we lost 69 days – almost 23% of our construction days - to inclement weather.

Another complication to the schedule was the undeveloped nature of the property. The developer for the CIGNA project worked with the City of Denison to obtain the land where this building was constructed with an outstanding set of incentives; the challenge this presented to us was that the tract was completely undeveloped. This required a large amount of surface clearing before construction could begin. The property also had no existing infrastructure; we had to bring in roads and utilities as we built the building. Because the completion date was so critical we had to perform these task simultaneously with, rather than prior to, the building's construction.

Along with the undeveloped terrain, we also were forced to deal with a large slope differential on the jobsite. The property next to the building's rear parking lot included a large area of trees that we needed to leave undisturbed. To overcome the slope differential we built an 800 liner foot, turn-up concrete retaining wall on the rear elevation (pictured to the right). This allowed us to maintain the desired 3:1 slope and save the trees on the property adjacent to the parking lot.

To respond to the schedule issues we employed a phased approach to the building's construction, completing and turning the building over to CIGNA in four phases; this allowed their work crews to set up cubicles, office furniture, etc. in one portion of the building, even as we continued to work in another.

While this approach allowed us to compress the schedule it resulted in us having to perform additional tasks that were not included in the original schedule. For example, we turned over the second floor, north wing before the service elevator was operational, which meant that the set-up crews had no way to bring in the disassembled cubicles or desks. To address this we removed a large section of windows from the completed second floor so they could bring in their supplies with a lift.

The phased turnover of the building also required us to work in close proximity to work crews who were not under our control. Because the schedule was so critical, we were forced to complete the building in sections and turn each section over to the developer as soon as it was finished, so that CIGNA's set-up crews could build the cubicles, office furniture and other furnishings. While the set-up crews were skilled at their responsibilities they were not trained or experienced in the safety requirements of a construction environment.

As a result, for approximately one month we had to work with and accommodate untrained set-up crews that were passing through and working closely to our active construction areas. The collocation of work crews – theirs and ours – also created occasional traffic congestion around the building, which increased the potential risk of a vehicular incident.





To address this situation, our safety director briefed the leaders of the set-up crews on what would be required of their workers to maintain compliance and adherence with Bob Moore Construction's safety program and OSHA standards. This included the use of hard hats, explanations regarding safety tape and tripping hazards and other issues. Once the set-up crews began their work, our safety director and site superintendent monitored their compliance and implemented corrective actions as necessary. Our work crews were also reminded during their daily safety briefings to watch closely for the set-up crews and their vehicles.

While this overlapping of efforts sometimes necessitated "going one step back to take two steps forward," in the end it resulted in a remarkably compressed schedule for a finely finished, complex building of this nature.

Along with the phased approach, the fact that we used tilt-up construction on this project played a pivotal role in our ability to overcome the lost construction days, as this construction methodology allowed us to maximize our overlapping of disciplines and compress the schedule.

Our long relationship with the developer, CMC – Commercial Realty Group, also played a big part in meeting the schedule. CMC participated very closely during the construction; we were able to work in a collaborative approach with CMC to immediately address the various issues that arose and avoid delays.

End Results

Even with the extensive land clearing that was required, the lack of existing infrastructure at the jobsite and the 69 days lost due to weather, our phased approach allowed us to complete the project one day ahead of the original schedule. CIGNA was able to relocate to their new facility prior to the end of their leases and avoid the onerous penalties from the lease holder.

The CIGNA building is now a showcase property for CIGNA and CMC – Commercial Realty Group. It represents a major source of continuity and potential growth for the community as well. Denison is a small city of 24,000 citizens. CIGNA's operations of two hundred or more employees represented a significant source of employment for the community and it was important to the city that they kept the company – and all those jobs. With the completion of this building the jobs remained in Denison and the company has the physical space to add more jobs as their business allows.

The new building has long-term, positive ramifications for the city of Denison as well. The CIGNA building is located in a previously undeveloped area. Now, with the roads and utilities provided to this area it is more economically feasible to develop surrounding properties and grow this real estate. The city has a more legitimate opportunity to bring in additional businesses and tap into real estate that previously delivered no revenues whatsoever. rth and east Texas chapter of AGC, earlier that year.

CIGNA Office Building / Call Center

Location:

Denison, Texas

Size:

140,000 SF

Owner / Developer:

CMC / Commercial Realty Group

Role:

General Contractor

Building Type:

Office / Call Center



About This Project:

- Dramatic two story office building and call center in located just south of the Texas / Oklahoma border.
- Exterior features a dramatic, two-story radiused glass curtainwall entrance and parking for 1,000 vehicles.
- Interior is finished in a high-end modern design style, with multi-colored walls and branding throughout the building.
- The majority of the building is comprised of offices, conference rooms and call center facilities.
- The building includes two elevators, a full commercial kitchen and cafeteria, dining facilities that convert into a large teleconference facility, networked training rooms and a workout room with connected shower and dressing rooms.
- The facility was built using tilt-up construction.

