Cabela’s — On Schedule On Budget With Masonry

For a retailer on the scale of Nebraska-based Cabela’s, a day without customers and sales is a day of a significant amount of revenue lost. So when Cabela’s needed to get their new Post Falls, Idaho store up and running as soon as possible to assure a healthy holiday shopping season, they chose to build with masonry.

The world-famous catalog and retail outdoor recreation outfitter selected The Pointe at Post Falls, an 800,000-square-foot shopping center, for their 26th showroom location in the nation. While most of their enormous retail buildings have been constructed using precast concrete, Cabela’s went with concrete masonry units (CMU) to build the 125,000 square foot North Idaho store that opened November 2007.

According to Mark Nienhueser, Director of Facilities for Cabela’s, the choice to go with CMU allowed wall construction to begin 4-6 weeks earlier than if they had waited for precast panels to be trucked in. Tilt-up walls were also ruled out, primarily because tilt-up would make impossible the efficiency of having electrical and plumbing work happening on the interior slab simultaneously with perimeter wall construction. With CMU, the store was able to get up and running quickly. “Masonry provided a better alternative to stay on schedule and on budget – it was an economical and aesthetic decision,” said Nienhueser.

Patrick Linhart, Vandervert’s project manager on the Cabela’s job, Story continued on page 2
said that masonry construction began at the end of April of 2007, and that by June 7, the walls were completed. "The use of masonry over tilt-up sped up construction by at least a month," said Linhart. "A tilt-up schedule wasn't going to work with this project - tilt up only works if the electrical and plumbing are not in the slab."

Another reason for the CMU solution to Cabela's needs was the high quality of masonry craftsmanship and material available in the area, according to Pat Hinkle, superintendent on the project for Vandervert Construction. Hinkle said, "the high quality of work really impressed Cabela's - in this case masonry was the wisest choice." Nienhueser added, "A lot of marketplaces do not have the craftsmen in sufficient quantity to handle this scale of project. We're very satisfied with what the contractors were able to achieve with both craftsmanship and schedule."

With an average crew size of 20, Spiker Masonry was able to get 36 foot high load bearing (1900 psi gray CMU block) walls up in six weeks, according to Matt Spiker, project manager on the job. Central Premix - Sakrete supplied 51,000 8 inch split-face block for the project. Once the walls were in place, foam insulation was injected into the block, interior walls were furred out and finished, while exterior walls were painted and sealed. Spiker also installed 4,000 square feet of Cabela's unique blend of manufactured river rock product inside and out - one of the signature touches for all of their retail stores.

At the main entrance of the building, the river rock accents the extensive exterior log framing that almost completely disguises the simple block walls underneath. These natural materials combine with log trusses in varied pitches to create the look of a rustic hunting lodge. The back and side walls of the store also use timbers and roof lines in green to complement the masonry, creating a warm and welcoming feel to what could otherwise be a simple "big box" store.

Cabela's was so pleased with the results of using masonry as a primary construction method in Bismarck, that two new retail stores slated for construction this year in Billings, Montana and Rapid City, South Dakota will also be built with CMU.

Mason Contractor: Spiker Masonry