



Project of the Year

Vivint Smart Home Arena Renovation

Every couple of decades a project is created in the Beehive State by the talented design and construction professionals in the A/E/C industry that transcends the normal platitudes associated with a particular building, or perhaps high-impact highway or infrastructure project.

Just over a quarter century ago on October 4, 1991, the then-Delta Center – a mammoth six-level, 743,000 SF square building in downtown Salt Lake – was opened to the public at a cost of \$93 million, fulfilling the ambitious vision of local business and community icon Larry

H. Miller. Beyond serving as the home of Miller’s beloved Utah Jazz (purchased from 1985-86 for \$22 million), it also serves as the de facto hub for many of the city’s highest profile music, entertainment and community events.

Like any high-use public facility that experiences the wear and tear of 25+ years of human traffic for games, concerts, etc., the Miller Family knew a major (read: pricy) renovation was in order for the building now called Vivint Smart Home Arena to ‘keep



(exterior photos courtesy Dana Sohm, all others courtesy Oakland Construction)

up with the NBA Joneses' – no small task in today's billion-dollar world of professional basketball. Vivint Arena is currently the sixth-oldest NBA facility and will move up two spots to fourth once the Milwaukee Bucks' new arena is completed in fall 2018, and the new home for the Golden State Warriors opens in 2019 in San Francisco.

The project's hefty price tag - \$125 million

(\$80 million construction cost) – illustrates the sizeable 'cost of doing business' for owners of NBA franchises. (By comparison, the Bucks' arena is estimated at \$500 million, the Sacramento Kings' Golden 1 Center – which opened in 2016 – was \$450 million and GSW's Chase Center is a whopping \$1 billion).

The sheer cost is astounding in its own right, but the real eye-popping statistic is

that the entire renovation – spanning all six levels – was completed in 129 days, a number that simply defies conventional logic when it comes to construction scheduling.

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime type project," said Bret McDonald, Sr. Project Manager for Salt Lake-based Okland Construction, who along with General Superintendent Fred Strasser kept the job humming >>





virtually around the clock. “Our scheduler was working full-time just updating our schedule, which was 135 pages long. There was just no room for error. You cannot make up time on a schedule like that.”

Okland began working with architect SCI from Toronto in November 2016 and spent the first four months on planning and procurement, as items such as new escalators and a complex retractable seating system required long lead times. Construction crews did some initial construction work like closing down the front entry in March before jumping full-bore into work in May after the Jazz were eliminated from the first round of the playoffs.

This scope of work normally would have taken 18-to-24 months and required 3,000 workers from 80 different subcontractors

working double shifts from 5:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. seven days a week to meet the tight schedule.

“It doesn’t compare to anything we’ve done,” said Jeremy Blanck, Project Executive for Okland. “We were in uncharted territory. We had to get in, get started, and then make every day as efficient as you could. By the end of July we felt comfortable we’d make it.”

Blanck said Okland partnered with electrical subcontractor Hunt Electric of Salt Lake and mechanical subcontractor Palmer Christiansen of Salt Lake for the prominent infrastructure aspects of the renovation, which included major changes in function and form at each of the building’s six levels, highlighted by the installation of nearly 20,000 new, fully-upholstered cushioned seats.

The vertical circulation of people was a prominent issue that needed to be addressed, as stairwells and elevators would get overloaded before and after events. All club seats were moved to Level 2, and additional vomitoriums were added leading into the arena to improve traffic flow. Ticket boots were moved from Level 1, which now functions like a true ‘back of the house’ with space for offices, entertainers and their crews, referees, and others. Deluxe suites received significant facelifts, and fresh new designs dot public concourse spaces, including four new anchor concession areas added in each corner.

“We are genuinely happy with the way it turned out,” said Steve Miller, Vice Chairman of Larry H. Miller Group of Companies. “If we hadn’t of done anything but with what we did in the bowl with >>







new chairs and seating, it would have been a success. The fan experience now is just amazing...as I look at the arena from Level 6 down, we literally did something significant on every level.”

Miller reflected on the day the Jazz held its Public Open House (Sept. 26) and the new ‘J-Note’ statue was unveiled, and how emotional and special that day was to the entire Miller family as matriarch Gail spoke about the impact of this building on Utah’s community over the years.

“The reason that was an emotional day...it caused us to think about how significant that building has been in our family’s life, and lives of millions of Utahns,” said Miller. “Think about all the events that have happened there, the Olympics, big concerts, the circus, rodeos...it’s been a gathering place for many people. In looking at it from our family’s perspective...we’ve hit the ‘reset button’ and have created another generation’s worth of memories that have yet to be created. History has a way of repeating itself.”

“The Jazz were great to work with and we had a very comfortable working relationship and trust in each other,” said Blanck. “Brad Holmes (Sr. Vice President of Real Estate and Construction for Larry H.

Miller Real Estate) was great at leading their team and getting answers we needed. (Utah Jazz President) Steve Starks was great to work with...they always had our backs and wanted to help everybody on the team be successful. It was a collaborative approach. There is a strong sense of community there; everybody who worked on this project took pride in that. Look what you can do when you come together for a common cause and make something really happen.”

Owner: Larry H. Miller Sports and Entertainment

Lead Design Firm: SCI

Design Consultant: ICON

General Contractor: Okland Construction

Civil Engineer: CRS Engineers

Electrical Engineer: BNA Consulting Engineers

Mechanical Engineer: ME Engineers

Structural Engineer: Wilson & Company

Electrical Subcontractors: Hunt Electric (Prime), Cache Valley Electric; Rydalch Electric

Mechanical Subcontractors: Palmer Christiansen, Mechanical Service & Supply, Western Mechanical

Other Specialty Contractors: A+ Elevators, Able Access Elevator, Alarm Control, All

Metals Fabrication, Alliance Energy, AMFAB Steel Specialties, AMP Coating, Arc n’ Spark, Architectural Building Supply, Architectural Components, Balser Construction, Boswell Wasatch Mill, Brailsford Cast Stone, Caldwell Caulking, Calpipe; Ceiling Systems; Certified Fire Protection, Certified Testing; Colonial Flag; Commercial Kitchen Supply; Dean L. Webb & Assoc.; Designteam, Inc.; Final Touch Painting, Fisher Painting; Fondell Woodwork, G.E.M. Buildings; Grow Painting, H&L Construction, Harris Rebar, Hearth & Home, Hussey Seating Co., IMS Masonry, Intermountain Plantings, JBP Companies, Jeff Lloyd Construction, K&L Technologies, Kone, Inc., Lloyd’s Draperies; Malcolm Drilling; Metal Line Fabrication; Metro Tile; Midgley-Huber, Midwest D-Visions Solutions, Millcreek Tile & Stone, Moffat Plastering, Mollerup Glass, Moz Designs; Nasatka Barrier; Noorda Architectural Metals, Overhead Door of Bountiful; Penhall Co., Playspace Designs, Premier Powder Coating & Custom Fabrication, Rocky Mountain Wall Covering, Seda Seatings, Sheet Metal Specialties, SME Steel, TID, United Subcontractors, Valley View Granite, Walton Concrete Protection, Waterproofing West, Western Sheet Metal.

