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Masonry interests affirm block construction economy, speed

February 22, 2021 Concrete News

Sources: Block Strong, Orlando, Fla.; CP staff

Block Strong, a public awareness-gear partnership between the Florida Concrete & Products Association Inc. and Florida Concrete Masonry Education Council Inc., taps current Pennsylvania State University research to inform multifamily project specifications. Stakeholders especially note a) how construction materials can be an afterthought when developers and real estate investment trusts define the financial position of an investment opportunity; and, b) when materials are factored into the equation, masonry construction is often overlooked due to the perception that concrete costs more and takes longer to build with than other materials.

In a sampling of Orlando and Tampa project activity, Penn State's August 2020 study, "Initial Cost of Construction, Multi-Residential Structures," identifies bottom line and scheduling factors for developers and REITs to bear in mind. The cost of masonry construction (\$207/square foot) was below conventional wood frame (\$211/square

foot) and light gauge steel framing (\$211.50/square foot). Additionally, advanced staging techniques, shell contractor processes, and local sourcing have significantly trimmed the time it takes to build with concrete block.

"All things being equal, a concrete block, multifamily project will more than likely sell for more, per square foot, than a similar wood frame project," says FC&PA President Matt Sitter. "Multifamily developers are also discovering they can reap the benefits of concrete block—resistance to storms, termites, fire, mold and mildew—without sacrificing speed."

Another important factor that multifamily developers, along with apartment hunters, need to consider is noise reduction. Concrete walls can greatly cut down on excessive noise—one of the top three tenant complaints—due to its noise abatement qualities. Block reflects noise from the outside, insulates from sound moving through walls, and isolates sound from coming out of an apartment or condominium. Not only can this benefit help reduce noise complaints to the building owner or management, but it cannot be matched by other building materials. — www.BlockStrong.com

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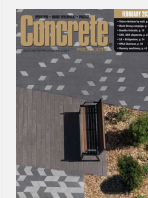
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