



PROCESS VERSUS RESULT

by Ed Davenport

Construction is a dynamic industry. Almost every job is different, every site is different, management styles change, management people change, building systems change, trade people change, and project delivery methods change. All this change is what makes construction fun and exciting. It has also distracted our focus in the masonry industry. The distracted focus to which I'm referring (and which we can't afford) is **productivity**.

The masonry industry must become more productive in order to survive. My best guess would put us currently operating at somewhere around 35% to 40% efficiency. This will not sustain us in the very competitive construction marketplace. Other businesses have had similar challenges (Toyota) and

have overcome them. It is usually done a little at a time, but continuous improvement must be the focus.

It upsets me when I try to discuss this issue and I receive comments like, "The trade people's bodies are wearing out too young now. All you want to do is destroy them earlier." The people that make these responses are uninformed and irresponsible toward the masonry industry, and have chosen to be a part of the problem and not a part of the solution. We, as an industry, cannot continue to confuse "working harder" with "working smarter."

Please understand that I am fully aware that masonry is a physically demanding industry and not a career that just anyone can handle. The workers must safeguard their bodies and I am most respectful of those that do take care of themselves.

Let's examine a Process versus Results example; I want to lay 225 block today. Thus, 225 block is the result I am seeking. A series of processes leads to the achievement of the desired result. It is difficult to reach this level of production if there are roadblocks (poor processes). For example, what if there is not mortar

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Clyde Cosby preps stone at U of M Ambulatory



Arches at Kalamazoo Transportation Center

**KALAMAZOO
TRANSPORTATION CENTER
Kalamazoo, MI**

Hello, again, from Kalamazoo! Thus far, this project has been both challenging and rewarding. To date, restoration of this historical Intermodal Transportation Center (the center has been the hub for intercity transportation since 1887) is approximately 50% complete and the new unit masonry is approximately 60% complete.

Some of the challenges we have encountered have been scaffolding for the chimneys and the arches. Also, it has been tricky to work in and around the steel with the required detailed brick work. However, standing at the entrance, looking through all of the arches, fills you with awe. And knowing that you are also restoring an important part of Kalamazoo's history gives you a great sense of pride.

I would like to thank everyone who has come together as a team on this project, making both phases work together, hand in hand. I am looking forward to seeing the art we have created after completion.

Ed Pinto, Project Foreman

**EATON RAPIDS SPORTS
COMPLEX ADDITIONS
Eaton Rapids, MI**

This job is a nice combination of burnished and split-face block. It includes a total of six dug-outs, four for visiting teams and two for home teams, and a 36' by 38' concession building. At the time of this writing we are just finishing the dug-outs. The interior walls of the concession building are also erected. By the time this newsletter goes to print, the job should be finished.

I would like to thank the entire crew for doing an excellent job on this project.

**Mike Ward,
Project Foreman**

**KOHL'S STORE
Grand Blanc, MI**

We started this job the week of August 13th with a small crew due to a lack of a building permit. During the past two weeks we have built the crew to 32 people. We have approximately 5 weeks to complete

the load-bearing walls. With the help (teamwork) of many of our other jobs, we have managed to man this job up with the key manpower needed to meet our customer's demands. Thanks to everyone who has helped get this job off to a good start.

**Jim Hall, Greg Hall, Tim Oskey,
Project Foremen**

**GRAND BLANC MIDDLE SCHOOL
Grand Blanc, MI**

The job consists of 270,900 regular block, 7,548 burnished block and 139,867 utility brick. The job started in March of this year. We started laying brick on April 28 and that part of the job has been completed. The interior partitions should be complete by mid-October. By using the Best Practices for striking, pointing and patching, and caulking, we have produced excellent workmanship with high production numbers.

Cooperation with our co-subcontractors has resulted in a smooth work flow. We are grateful that George W. Auch Company gave us the opportunity on this project.

**Charlie Hemingway and Eric Fraim,
Project Foremen**

**FIRST STREET LOFTS
Flint, MI**

Restoration of First Street Lofts is continuing. The initial demo of the first two floors is complete. Approximately 90% of the tuckpointing, patching, and washing is completed as well, with great results (the owners are very happy with the outcome).



Harry Reynolds at Kalamazoo Transportation Center

FOCUS ON EXCELLENCE

by Bill Plummer, General Field Superintendent

In this issue of *The Davenport Difference*, I'd like to pass along some positive comments and observations about our fine crew of Mason Tenders.

Probably the first thing that stands out to most people when they come in contact with our Mason Tenders is their positive outlook and great attitudes. Additionally, their attention to the safety aspects of the job and the care with which they treat the equipment is a testament to both the training that is given and the conscientious application of that training by our Mason Tenders.

Also, the attention to detail that is exhibited by this collective group of men and women is exemplary, and the consistency of their efforts is nothing short of amazing. It is common for people who are new to our company to rave about the high-quality of the work being done by our Mason Tenders.

Mason tending is an often overlooked and under appreciated aspect of our business. On behalf of the entire management team at Davenport Masonry, Inc., I would like to express our heartfelt **THANKS!** and appreciation for a job consistently well done! ■



Oakwood Hospital in Dearborn

HURRICANES, DISCO, AND SUPPLY AND DEMAND

by Kyle Lochonic, Project Manager

As the damage caused by hurricane Katrina produced further strain on the supply side of petroleum products, already high gasoline prices have soared. The effects of these prices on the average worker will be felt hard. Increasing the price of gasoline \$1.00 per gallon for a construction worker driving a pickup truck averaging 16 miles per gallon, with a 40-mile commute to the jobsite, will deduct an additional \$25.00 per week from the worker's pocket. This represents approximately 5%



Kohl's Grand Blanc

of the after-tax earnings. Increase the distance of the commute or the price of gas and the situation only gets worse. At the current \$3.00 per gallon price for gas, the fuel alone for this 40-mile commute represents 15% of after tax earnings of this average worker. Add in the cost of owning and maintaining a vehicle and the picture gets even bleaker.

These high costs come at a time when the worker's financial situation is already stressed. A historically low volume of work has hampered yearly wage increases. Rising health insurance costs have

absorbed a high percentage of any wage increase causing a "flatline" of the workers take-home earnings for the last few years. The rising fuel prices will affect all businesses adversely, and lead to an increase in the rate of inflation causing price increase in many necessary consumable products. Add in an expected dramatic increase in home heating cost and you start to paint a bleak picture.

Fortunately (if you can call any of this fortunate) there is some hope. This situation is not without

historical precedent. Some of us are old enough to have lived through the 70's; a time of high gas prices (even shortages), high inflation and record unemployment. While a lot of the 70's we'd rather forget (like disco), some of the lessons we learned can help us today.

During these periods, work is harder and harder to obtain. Bid prices go lower and lower

as an increased number of competitors (created during the previous boom years) vie for a decreasing volume of available work. The economy and a loss of market share will take its toll. Financially stressed employers will be forced to travel farther and farther in search of work. Employment will decline to levels of "key" workers, and traveling for work will become less the exception and more the norm.

A lesson well learned during the last period of pain was the value of car pooling. Michigan is a state

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THE BID DOCTOR

As the old saying goes, when the country gets an economic cold, Michigan gets pneumonia, only this time it's with complications." Gary Gosselin, Journal Register News Service

Well, the trend continues into the second half of 2005. The numbers aren't where we would want them to be and we see work going at no profit or even worse - below cost. At this time we don't see any signs of the market getting better this year or during the first four months of 2006. There still are a good number of projects coming out for bid, however the size of the projects has greatly diminished. We still have over 50 projects being tracked that are anywhere from two months to a year from being let out for bid. We are being very selective in the projects we are bidding as we try to maximize our chances of getting a project without putting the company at financial risk. We are realizing that we must change our procurement methods to adjust to the current recession to continue to stay profitable. We are having some success in this endeavor which is a cultural change for us.

We have made an interesting discovery along this path. It is much easier to procure work once our operations side of the company is experienced first hand by a customer. We now have repeat costumers that want to use Davenport Masonry, even if we are not the low bidder, because we can provide value to the customer with a high quality end product, while meeting or exceeding the project schedule. **This is solely due to the hard-working, organized crews in the**

field. These people are Davenport Masonry's most powerful marketing tool. In a recession, when it is hard to procure profitable work, having repeat customers will help Davenport Masonry survive these tough times. Hang in there and keep up the good work!

Recently Awarded Projects

Boysville HCCS – Adrian, MI

Kohl's Store – Grand Blanc, MI

1,500 Brick
18,000 C-Brick (12"x4"x16" Smooth Colored Block)
8,000 Split-face block



Projects In Progress

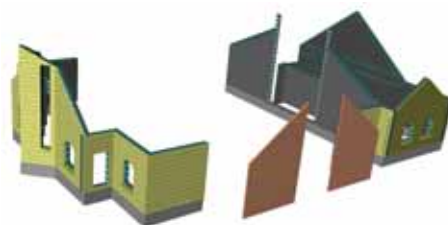
Bixby Medical Center – Adrian, MI

11,191 ea Modular Brick
1,400 ea CMU
250 CF Limestone



Gloria Dei Lutheran Church – Tecumseh, MI

6,000 ea CMU
3,140 SF 4" Limestone veneer



Eagle Ottawa – Auburn Hills, MI

New office building
50,000 Modular Brick
1,500 CMU
2,900 Split-face



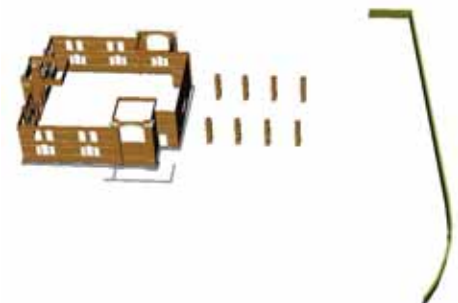
Eaton Rapids Central Administration Building– Eaton Rapids, MI

60,000 CMU
25,000 Ground Face CMU Veneer
1,500 Structural Glazed Facing Tile
2,000 Split-face CMU Veneer



5/3 Bank – Rochester Hills, MI

New office building
52,000 Modular Brick
2,500 CMU
300 CF Limestone
2,000 Retaining wall block ■



Davenport Project News

Continued from page 2

Mock-ups of the exterior panels have been submitted to the National Parks Service to receive final approval. Next up will be the new unit masonry to secure the new windows. The exterior panels will begin soon as well, to be followed by the new cornice work.

Jim Iltis, Project Foreman

OAKWOOD MEDICAL CENTER - NORTH ADDITION Dearborn, MI

Our work on the new addition is almost complete. The final stones are being installed and will be finished within the next two weeks. A screen wall for the outdoor tank storage area near the existing loading dock will follow. There is a second phase of the project within the existing building which should be underway by mid-October. Our scope in this area includes CMU rated walls and some alterations to existing masonry walls, totaling approximately one month of work.

With the end in sight and all the hard work about to come to an end, we still are focused on our customers, Barton Malow, SSOE and of course the end users, Oakwood Hospital. Our mission;

always listen, understand our client's needs, and then meet their expectations with superior performance. I certainly hope the entire management team at Oakwood enjoyed the experience of having a mason contractor dedicated to these principles, I know we have enjoyed working for them.

Tom Ward, Project Foreman

EAGLE OTTAWA Auburn Hills, MI

This is definitely not "just another job." This project is our first with the Burton-Katzman Company - a premier builder with a rich history, now in their 3rd generation, headed by Peter Burton and Robert Katzman. Our companies share the same commitment to quality, value and concern for our clients. Our goal is to become their primary mason contractor and we look forward to earning their trust and business through delivering consistent quality, on-time, with the attention to detail they expect and deserve.

This project is a two story office building for Eagle Ottawa, a global leader of automotive leather. It calls for the lower belt below the windows to be

done in decorative split-face block, while the upper portions are to be brick veneer with soldier accent belts. The site is in great shape, well-organized and properly graded. It is easy to see that the General Contractor understands the benefits this offers to all subcontractors and the overall schedule.

We have just started this project and it will be finished shortly after this newsletter is published. On that happy note, I'll thank our crew in advance for a great job. Keep up the good work!

Tom Ward, Project Foreman

EATON RAPIDS TRI-PURPOSE BUILDING Eaton Rapids, MI

This building will be used for daycare, Head Start, and adult education. The project consists of 56,000 block, 26,000 architectural block and 800 glazed tile. We are currently running a 14 to 16 person crew and will probably add more as interior areas open up. This job should be finished around deer season.

Don Locker, Project Foreman ■

PROCESS versus RESULT

Continued from page 1

on the boards when it is needed (remember the stopwatch adventure last year?). If the mortar quality is sub-standard, productivity suffers. If the scaffolding is not configured correctly, production will again be adversely affected, and I could go on and on with examples until my computer runs out of storage space. Every time we have an operational glitch, our production suffers and our competition (other building systems) benefits.

One of the differences I have noted between general industry and construction is that virtually everything in general industry is dissolved to a documented, defined process. Having a documented,

defined process seems to be a foreign concept to the construction industry. Shortly after graduating from high school I worked in a foundry. As I reflect back, I can recall that all the work tasks were a documented process. James Adrian, a noted construction productivity expert, states that the construction industry focuses too much on results and not enough on the process.

We think that we have found a viable weapon to fight this important battle. The **Best Practices Manual** that we have been developing for the past two years is Davenport Masonry's approach to developing, examining and improving our processes. The contributions to this

project have come from a huge percentage of our staff that represent every department and segment of our organization. Currently, the charge is being led by **Ned Niemi** and **Bill Plummer**. We all owe these two men a great debt of gratitude. Ned has demonstrated the steadfast tenacity needed as a facilitator to stay the course. Bill has kept the Best Practice process alive and well in the field. We all need to acknowledge their efforts and do our part to *make defining processes a part of our work life*. With these sustained efforts we will continue to raise our level of productivity and give ourselves the opportunity to increase masonry's share of buildings. ■

HURRICANES, DISCO, AND SUPPLY AND DEMAND

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based on the automobile and hence has very little mass transit available. Construction sites tend to occur in areas where none is available. We have evolved as a community where everyone has an automobile and we all use them. Sharing a ride will help significantly in reducing the cost of transportation to and from work. Some simple rules and concepts can make for successful car pooling.

1. Pick your partners carefully. You'll be spending a lot of time together, if possible chose compatible members.
2. Pick a centralized meeting location. Most expressways have designated lots. These will soon be overfilled if prices stay high. Alternative locations like church or retail store parking lots work well. Obtain permission from the owner, many businesses will allow parking for the opportunity to have you as a customer. A word from the wise, avoid taverns as this situation usually results in a negative cash flow.
3. Set a meeting time and a maximum wait time. Allow enough time so you can comfortably get to your jobsite without speeding. Show up on time so no one has to wait. Don't be the person arriving at the last minute every day. Make contact if you're not going to make it so you won't be waited for. Cell phones should significantly improve this part of the equation. Make sure everyone has a list of contact numbers.

4. Share the whole cost and driving if possible. Remember the cost of a vehicle is more than just gas. Ownership, maintenance and insurance add up. Pick a per mile cost and divide it accordingly. Pay ahead of time and on a chosen day. This way no one comes up short. If one person does all the driving, you may want to pick up part of their share for the additional work.
5. If possible, choose a high gas mileage vehicle. We all love our pickup trucks, but during these times the economy car is your friend. Four of us used to commute in a Chevette, what fun!
6. Practice common courtesy. Long periods together in a small



Eagle Ottawa in Auburn Hills, MI

- vehicle can cause stress. Excess gas release loses its humor. Reeking from a hangover and puking on your fellow passengers will likely find you walking.
7. Notify your employer. If the people in charge know that you car pool and who with, it is likely to affect their decisions on who works, where, and with whom. Most employers will actively support car pooling for the benefits of their employees.
 8. Try to enjoy your new found camaraderie. Working together

for mutual benefit can create friendships that last a lifetime.

It is likely that carpooling will become a standard for traveling. Some research scientists are predicting that we have arrived at "Peak Oil" the inevitable moment when production of oil peaks and begins to fall as the supply diminishes. While oil production is represented by a standard bell curve (i.e. if this is peak oil we'll have the same amount of oil available in 2020 as we did in 1980), oil demand continues upward as the population increases. This additional leveraging of demand over supply will continue to drive up prices for the long term.

Lessening our dependence on petroleum products with alternative transportation scenarios will only improve our future financial position. We need to not only think about carpooling and how we can support it, but also other options like fuel cells and electric hybrid technology.

An avenue that I find most promising is the use of agricultural fuel products like ethanol, currently made from grain, and biodiesel made from soybeans. A new ethanol plant is slated to be built in Ionia County that could produce 45 million gallons of ethanol annually from 136,000 tons of grain. These types of fuel products will ease our dependence on foreign petroleum while strengthening our farming economy, not to mention the new construction jobs. This represents a win/win scenario for Michigan. So do your part, try car pooling today. ■

SUSPENDED SCAFFOLD TRAINING

by Ned Niemi, DMI Safety and Human Resource Director

On August 16, 2005, Davenport Masonry, Inc. hosted a training program presented by Safway Services, Inc. The class was titled TRN 120 - Suspended Scaffold and Compliance Training Seminar based on OSHA Rules and Regulations For Suspended Scaffolds - 29 CFR 1926.451 (d). The class was taught by John Keefe, National Sales Manager of Suspended Products for Safway Services and Greg Allen, Sales Representative for Michigan. Safway Services, Inc. is the largest scaffold services provider in North America. With over 70 company-owned branches, Safway offers scaffold sales, rental, labor services, training, engineering, design, and computerized inventory management, all in compliance with the highest safety standards in the industry.

The class had 21 attendees that included employees of Quinn Evans (a large architectural firm from the Detroit Area), P.S.I. (a testing firm), The University of Michigan, and Davenport Masonry, Inc. This training was held as a requirement for our U of M Hospital Enclosure project.

Our restoration division has a unique project that involves power washing, priming, coating and caulking the entire exterior of the University Hospital in Ann Arbor, MI. The work is being performed by using Safway Suspended Scaffolds. The job requires trained employees that adhere to the

strictest of safety requirements; and proper operation is of the utmost importance. It was an easy choice



Suspended scaffold training

to take advantage of Safway Scaffold's world class training.

The class featured a lecture in the morning which covered the many aspects of proper suspended scaffold use including terminology, rigging, inspection, and operation. John Keefe (from Safway) was very knowledgeable and encouraged questions throughout the morning session. After a break for lunch, we convened in the shop for a "hands-on" session of the scaffold and some of the accessories that would be available for our use (delivered special for our session from the Safway yard in Detroit). The featured swing stage was the Skysafe "Rigid" Modular Suspended Platform, which is a very versatile and durable modular suspended platform (and perfect for our application at the University Hospital Enclosure job).

Everyone from the different firms got a chance to work with and/or see the assembly of a platform while John Keefe pointed out helpful hints and safety pointers that would be impossible to learn from an operator's manual. This was actually the second Safway training session I have attended, and once again I was very impressed with the thoroughness of the training. If you are ever offered the chance to attend one of these trainings, don't hesitate, it is some of the best in the industry. I was glad

Davenport Masonry, Inc's. people could be a part of such a great day of training. ■

Our company website

(www.davenportmasonry.com) is a great resource for getting information on our projects, our team, and employment opportunities. The site maintenance was recently moved in-house so we can keep it as current as possible. By having a variety of information on the site, many questions that arise from potential customers (both internal and external) can be answered by reading the articles. We are committed to customer satisfaction and the website is a reflection of our commitment.

We post each previous newsletter for everyone to read. Please stay tuned to our website for information on current and upcoming projects. ■

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In This Issue... Process Versus Result, Project News, Focus On Excellence, Hurricanes, The Bid Doctor, Suspended Scaffolding Training, Reminder

REMINDER: MULTI-ACCOUNT DIRECT DEPOSIT IS HERE!

GET YOUR MONEY WHERE YOU WANT IT, WHEN YOU WANT IT!
By Betsy Zietlow

DMI now offers the option of direct deposit for your payroll check into your checking account, savings account, or **both**. You can now deposit a portion of your check into multiple accounts—part into a checking and part into a savings. You could even deposit it into different banks if you wanted. The secondary account(s), however, needs to be a flat-amount deposit on a weekly basis. *If you are interested in changing your current status—get in touch with me at 517-699-6160 or 517-230-5807.*

This tremendous convenience is gaining popularity with DMI employees every month. I would like to take this time to encourage any of you who haven't taken advantage of this convenience~it's so much easier and makes getting paid **hassle free!**

Direct Deposit guarantees that you get paid on Wednesday, no matter what! This avoids the problems of moving from job to job, mail delays, lost or destroyed checks, or working late and not getting to the bank before closing.

WHY NOT START TODAY? Just fill out an enrollment form completely, include a voided check or deposit slip, and return to the office either by mail to the address below or give directly to your foreman to send in with their weekly paperwork. If you need forms or have questions, call Betsy at 517-699-6160 or 517-230-5807.

Mail to:
Davenport Masonry, Inc.
P.O. Box 188
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