

Miletus Group, Inc. Architecture +

PRESS RELEASE

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Green build-design firms—aren't you forgetting something?

Indiana-based architectural firm focuses on a hypocritical corner of the green building industry: Its mobile offices

(Rochester, IN) Though the term “green” isn't yet synonymous with today's commercial building sector, it's suffice to say that most design-build firms take aim at structures that are as energy efficient as possible. Yet, in the months—if *not years*—it takes to complete some projects, one component escapes the blueprints: the mobile office.

In today's greener landscape, yesterday's mobile offices sit, tucked away, in the corner of construction sites, sucking away energy like an endless pack of cigarettes. Spotting the hypocrisy in this dilemma, one architectural firm—Miletus Group, of Rochester, Indiana—used its expertise in modular design and manufacturing to upend the paradigm for old mobile offices, transforming them from energy sieves into high-performance, environmentally responsible

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workspaces. Not only do the designs for Miletus' "Green Fleet" of High Performance Mobile Offices (HPMOs) cut energy consumption in half, but early adopters say HPMOs pose a cultural shift, impacting every aspect of onsite operations.

"To lean on an analogy—using old, inefficient mobile offices on today's worksites is akin to leaving your refrigerator door open," says James B. Guthrie, president of Miletus Group.

These mobile offices transform the leaky trailers that your grandfather may have worked in (think old metal desks, 12-lb. calculators and carbon copy machines) into something most Manhattan law firms wouldn't shy away from via ground-up redesign. Walls were made thicker to accommodate heavier insulation, which runs continuously from roof to walls and walls to floor cavities (also providing a quieter work environment). Old, inefficient glass was replaced with high-performance windows, and vestibules were added to entryways to keep ambient room temperatures stable amid the coming and going of workers. To further cut down on electricity costs, occupancy sensors were added to automatically deactivate lighting whenever possible, while advanced, high-efficiency heating and cooling systems replaced older technology.

The results are astounding.

While predictive modeling estimated 50 percent reductions in electricity usage, field reports from early adopters showed reductions of up to 70 percent over other mobile office units. Meanwhile, tests used to analyze air leakage showed results exceeding even the highly stringent Passive House Institute green standards. Miletus did it.

“Few organizations have implemented the sophisticated modeling and testing that we've performed on the Green Fleet in order to ensure fifty percent energy savings,” Guthrie says.

It comes as no surprise that Miletus Group would take aim at creating environmentally responsible mobile offices. The company has an astounding track record amid the green movement. In February 2012, it grabbed the spotlight by announcing it was the first offsite design-build firm to achieve carbon neutrality in all of its production facilities and offices—including a revamped, circa 1970s, 40,000-square-foot manufacturing facility that's been carbon-neutral since 2011. More than 95 percent of that facility's waste is reused or recycled. (Incidentally, the HPMOs Miletus manufactures are 100 percent recyclable.) And HPMOs aren't the company's first trophy among turnkey solutions. Following hurricane Katrina, the group showed up with its “Shotgun House Project,” including permanent, modular housing designs that were not only efficient, but culturally sensitive via architectural features that look like they could have been erected a century earlier.

Pleasant ripple effects

As it turns out, Miletus' designs extend well beyond increased efficiency. While predictive modeling may have foreshadowed those gains (though conservatively underestimating them by as much as 20 percent), nothing could predict what early adopters discovered about how HPMOs impact operations. For instance, when Genesis Property Development Inc. leased one of Miletus' HPMOs for one of its projects in Greenwood, Indiana, vice president of construction Bill Poland says it changed more than the company's energy bills. What the company needed was an onsite office for three full-time workers, with a flexible floor plan that could accommodate up to 25 people for meetings—all while maintaining optimal work conditions through high temperature seasons

and frigid Midwest winters. What his company got was a surprising boost in its productivity.

“We’ve worked out of many job trailers in the past that were hot in summer months, cold and drafty in the winter and didn’t offer configurations that were conducive to our workflows,” Poland says. “On the contrary, we found Miletus’ HPMO to be thoughtfully designed and incredibly comfortable, which impacted everything from general productivity to the day-to-day onsite activities of our company.” Upon completion of two phases of construction, Poland’s company was immediately awarded a 12-month follow-up project, which he unequivocally attributes to boosts in productivity associated with an improved work environment.

Guthrie says he sees no limits to the application of Miletus’ energy efficient modular designs. Currently, he’s working with an international collaborative that aims to deliver those concepts to India, in response to a crisis calling for affordable housing. Going forward, the group sees opportunities among sustainable modules for housing, hospitals, hotels and just about anything.

About Miletus Group

Miletus Group, Inc. is an architecture firm that specializes in sustainable building practices in onsite, prefab, and modular offsite systems. Under the direction of **James B. Guthrie, AIA**, president of Miletus Group, the team provides a range of design, building, and development services that include site selection analysis, project programming, entitlement services, urban and architectural design and documentation, architectural modularization, sustainability design and energy analysis, cost analysis, and onsite and offsite

construction. Educated at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Guthrie has lectured and written extensively about modular architecture. For more information visit www.miletusgroup.com or call 260-399-6175.

About Genesis Property Development

Genesis Property Development, Inc. was founded on the principle of developing and constructing high quality industrial and retail properties throughout Central Indiana. With over 75 years combined business and construction experience, the partners at GPD form an experienced and well-balanced leadership team. With quality construction in mind, Genesis Property Development utilizes highly specialized management techniques to provide customer-focused construction management and owner's representative services.

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