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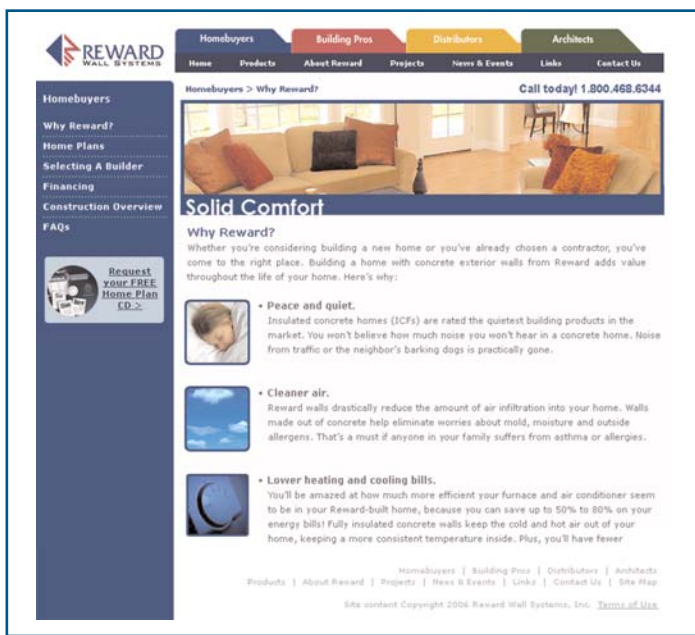
Reward's Web Site Gets an Extreme Makeover

A new look, easier navigation and more information add up to an extreme makeover for Reward's web site, found at www.rewardwalls.com.

Long considered one of the ICF industry's most complete and helpful web sites, the Reward site has been a prime example of the old saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." And for that reason, the redesigned site contains the same great information, but reorganized, making the site easier to use and the information easier to find. And if a picture really is worth a thousand words, the Reward site is loaded with words because we are adding many spectacular new photos, too.

The home page features four main sections—Homebuyers, Contractors, Distributors and Architects—containing the information these four audiences will want access to the most often and the fastest. Each section is color coded to help site visitors stay oriented. The Homebuyers section is blue; Contractors, red; Distributors, gold; and Architects, green. Also located on the home page are six sub-sections—Product, About Reward, Projects, News & Events, Links and Contact Us. And site visitors have instant access to Reward's comprehensive product manual and a complete list of our code approvals by taking advantage of the Quick Links section on the home page.

Regular visitors to Reward's web site will find an expanded Product section with a product tour. This is a virtual tour of Reward's iForm™, where the visitor mouses over a variety of callouts, each one bringing up an explanation of how that particular feature of the form functions.



"We have always had great content on the Reward web site," says Brandie Allen-Rezac, vice president of marketing. "What we set out to do with the new site was to keep the same depth of information while we made it more current and refreshed the look. With the new site, we feel we've accomplished these goals plus we have made the site more user friendly."

The new Reward web site goes live in late July. ♦

Another rBase™ Option at Reward

A new type of rBase has been added to Reward's ancillary product line. rBase Steel is a self-contained, all-in-one system for bracing, alignment and scaffolding. It differs from Reward's original rBase, now called rBase Aluminum, in that the strongback is steel rather than aluminum, and the turnbuckle screw is at the base of the turnbuckle system rather than in the middle. But the key difference is that it is all contained in one unit, making it easy to store, transport and utilize.



All parts of rBase Steel are attached to the frame, and it folds into itself, so there are very few loose parts and virtually no assembly required. The brace has an adjustable, built-in, spikeable walkway with a storable safety rail bracket required

Continued on page 4

index	R-value & Sound Dictate ICF Building.....	2
	Butterfly Palace & Rainforest Adventure	2
	Hutterite Hog Barns	3
	Home Plan CD—Expanding on Success	3
	From the President.....	4
	Technical Tips	5
	Sandra Signing Off	6

R-VALUE AND SOUND DICTATE ICF FOR MINNESOTA OFFICE BUILDING

A location just off of the intersection of two busy highways made sound abatement a big issue for the owners of the Country Side Terrace office building in Little Canada, Minn.

According to Dan McGraw, project manager of ETS Dan McGraw Homes of Little Canada, several elements factored in to the decision to use Reward ICFs. With a name like Little Canada, it's obvious that high R-value and energy efficiency would be important. The foam and concrete alone in iForm provide a static R-value of 22, but an effective R-value of 32+ when factoring in the low air infiltration and concrete mass. Add that to a Sound Transmission Rating range of 41 to 65, and you have a virtually soundproof structure that is impervious to outside temperature change.

Project Profile

- Little Canada, Minn.
- 17,400 square feet
- Slab on grade
- Wall height: 17-foot 4-inch total
- Exterior finish: Nova Brick attached directly to the iForm walls
- Asphalt shingle roof
- Pre-treated window bucks for mold protection
- HVAC: two zones per unit and four total units

The 17,400-square-foot structure was the third built by the company using iForm™ ICF walls. "I don't think I will build with anything other than Reward ICFs if I can help it," says McGraw. "Reward ICFs are user friendly and much easier to train my crews on. There isn't a high learning curve with Reward. Reward's engineer, Kelvin Doerr, also helped us with the building inspection."



Walls more than 17 feet high and 75 odd-shaped windows were challenges easily overcome with iForm. "Because of the height of the walls," McGraw explains, "we had to make sure they were absolutely straight as we poured. By gang-stacking the rBase™ [a bracing, alignment and scaffold system available from Reward], we successfully poured the walls in just two separate pours and met the tolerances required for the walls to be square and straight. For the windows, we simply cut the ICF forms to the shapes we needed."

Country Side Terrace was awarded second place in the 2006 ARM (Aggregate and Ready Mix Association of Minnesota) awards. ♦

Butterfly Palace and Rainforest Adventure

Designing and building an 18,000-square-foot structure that creates a natural environment for a tropical rainforest and more than 1,000 species of tropical butterflies would be a daunting task if not for Reward ICFs, a state-of-the-art roof glazing system (U.S. Patent Number 6131363) and an innovative air-handling system. According to Diana Herschend, project director/owner, it was Robert Phillips, architect of Innovative Green Housing Systems Inc., who wanted to use an ICF building system, and they both were thrilled that Reward Wall Systems was available. "It is an important component of an innovative design we hope will drastically reduce energy costs," says Herschend.

Project Profile

- Branson, Mo.
- 18,000 square feet
- 38-inch -plus wall height
- Synthetic Stucco ext. finish
- Drywall interior finish
- Reward Distributor: WCI. Inc.
- Green House Roof Glazing System
- General Contractor: Metro Design & Construction Inc.
- 10-inch -15-inch iForm

She and Phillips did consider other ICF systems, but those didn't have a 10-inch concrete core, and because of the wall height they were unable to achieve the structural strength with concrete masonry block. Reward provided a solid concrete wall and the structural strength needed for walls more than 38 feet high. The complexity of the engineering made ICF a little more difficult for this project, but the final result is a building that is excellent structurally and one that provides the R-value needed. "Although the complete energy saving outcome will not be known until after the summer," says Herschend, "we are hoping to revolutionize how green houses are built."

Because of ICFs, the interior is completely isolated from the outside air temperature. In addition, the technically innovative roofing and air handling system allow easy control of the interior temperature and air quality. Besides the walls of this structure, Rewards ICFs also were used to form an insulated air duct system. Inside a 3-foot by 3-foot column built with Reward are two separate air ducts, one containing heated air, the other cooler outside air. Allowing the outside air to be warmed by the heated air creates an efficient air-handling system and balances the air temperature.

The Butterfly Palace is the second structure Phillips has designed with Reward Wall Systems. The first was a 5,000-sq.-ft. home in Colby, Kan. This home features 4 feet footings, 10 feet basement walls, a storm cellar and 21 feet ceilings on the main level.

"Reward is one of the very few products that can be used both below and above grade," says Phillips. "It's highly insulated and very durable." ♦



Hutterite Hog Barns



The Eaglesham Colony Hog Barn is a 70,000 square-foot structure that houses 500 sows from farrowing to finishing. This state-of-the-art facility is the only structure of its kind in western Canada.

Reward Wall Systems was selected for this hog barn project because of its high R-value and low air filtration. Simon Wurz, Colony manager, says, "We knew we were going to have to move a fixed amount of air throughout the building and with a higher R-value, the cost of replacing the heated air will be less." Eliminating air filtration to curb the possibility of contamination and the ability to control the interior temperature were also factors in the selection of Reward product.

During the construction phase of this project, unforeseen circumstances caused one section of rafters to come down. Had the walls been constructed of traditional wood framing, they would have been destroyed. As it was, the Reward walls stayed standing.

Project Profile

- Eaglesham Colony, Alberta, Canada
- 70,000 square feet
- 12-foot wall height
- Sheet metal exterior finish
- Agliner interior finish
- Reward Distributor: Southern Stucco, LTD

According to Wurz, he also chose to go with Reward for the hog barn because he was so impressed after building a multifamily structure with Reward. "We were very impressed with the speed of construction," he says. "In our area, November is winter and we started to build on November 11. In three weeks we had the roof on."

Wurz is committed to building with as high an R-value as possible and hopes to use Reward Wall Systems for many future projects. ♦

Home Plan CD—Expanding on Success

Reward's Home Plan CD, released about a year ago, has been a huge success. But we're making it even better by adding 20 new plans from Custom Creations to the original CD's 58 Design Basics plans and 18 Home Design Systems plans.

The new CD is more user friendly, with pause and play buttons that allow you to stop the presentation if you are interrupted and then later pick up again where you left off. We've also improved the navigation on this new enhanced version.

Potential clients can find and select the plan of their choice, confident that it can be built with ICF walls. Our interactive search tool allows homebuyers to select the number of stories, bedrooms and bathrooms they want and then view all plans in the chosen category. Viewers also will learn why their new Reward-built home isn't just better than traditional construction, it's better than those built using other brands of ICFs. A visually pleasing, fast-moving presentation allows homebuyers to see for themselves the great benefits of a Reward-built home.



Built around the theme "Build Different. Build Better. Build Forever," the Reward Home Plan CD emphasizes what potential customers respond to best:

- **Build Different.** Allows them to browse and select plans based on the features they value most.
- **Build Better.** Demonstrates the comfort and cost-savings that generate long-term value and pride of ownership.
- **Build Forever.** Emphasizes the durability of their Reward ICF home and its ability to eliminate allergens, mold and noise.

Reward Wall Systems offers two packaging options for the Home Plan CD:

- **CD Sleeve** – Self-contained and attention-getting, this option includes brief messaging and the CD. This inexpensive option is ideal for a lead-list mailing or home show giveaway.
- **Deluxe Packaging** – The deluxe case not only protects the enclosed CD presentation, it also includes additional sales material. It's the perfect leave-behind for a first-time meeting or as a follow-up communication to homeowners who need a little added incentive to build with you. Either way, you'll see results with the Reward Home Plan CD.

So far Reward has responded to nearly 5,000 requests for the Home Plan CDs from homebuyers, contractors and architects. Construction Supply Centers of New Holland, Pa. has been using the Home Plan CD as lead fulfillment for trade shows and advertisements.

"We use the Reward Home Plan CD as a handout at the home shows and trade shows in which we participate," says Dennis Gerdel, architectural consultant for New Holland Concrete in New Holland. "We find them helpful with prospective homebuyers because they demonstrate so well that no matter what type of home they want, it can be built with ICF walls." ♦

From the President

by Ed Storm



Reward Wall Systems Inc. is entering into a new phase of computer technology—one that will increase our speed, efficiency and accuracy in processing and tracking orders for our customers.

Since 1998, when most of our customer transactions were still handled by fax and a very rudimentary database, we have steadily increased the level of computer technology we use. Think of the difference in speed between filling out paperwork by hand, walking it to the fax machine, waiting for the fax to process and then waiting for the acknowledgement that it had gone through, compared to filling in information by computer and pressing “save.”

We are currently building an integrated, multiple function information management system with the sole purpose of improving our communication. For example, as our customer service staff inputs the customer's order details, the system automatically configures the forms on the trailer. The trailer configuration is then used to create the order details. Meanwhile, if the staff member has questions about the customer's previous orders or projects, that information is immediately available by just pressing a few keys—the transition between databases is seamless. These programs reduce the time spent configuring trailer loads and automatically create the orders for the appropriate plants, including shipping date and trailer number for quick and easy tracking.

Our emphasis on information technology has allowed us to manage significantly higher volumes of data each year without additional staff members—keeping our overhead costs in check, which helps us control our costs to our customers. And most important, our order accuracy rate runs in excess of 99 percent! Our systems also allow for excellent checks and balances on quantities and billing amounts, which increases speed and accuracy for our accounting department as well.

Reward has long led the ICF industry in outstanding customer service, and efficiency in utilizing computer technology is just one more example. We continue to watch for ways to improve our service and will incorporate any new developments that will enhance those efforts.

Continued from page 1

by OSHA. The walkway ledge allows for a kick-plate safety board. rBase Steel is available in 8-, 9-, 10-, and 12-foot units.

“Our intent is to continue to look for ancillary products that enhance the Reward product line,” says John Moylan, vice president of sales. “Both rBase systems offer unique advantages, which gives our customers more options to fit their needs.”

For pricing and ordering information on either rBase Aluminum or rBase Steel, please call the Reward Customer Service Department at 800-468-6344. ♦



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Technical Tips

Wood or Steel Frame Floor Attachment Options

When it comes time to attach the intermediate floor into your Reward ICF structure, you have a choice of several different floor systems and installation methods. One of the most common types of floor systems is steel or wood frame, and if that is your choice, you have two main types of floor-to-wall connections: side set load bearing and load bearing.

Side Load Bearing Floor-to-Wall Connections Simpson StrongTie

Simpson StrongTie manufactures an ICF ledger connector for side load bearing connection. For wood or steel frame floors it consists of two separate parts. The first, called the ICFLC, is inserted into the iForm™ prior to concrete placement. This 14-gauge part will become embedded into the concrete wall as the concrete is poured, and a 16-gauge metal flange will remain flush with the iForm face. The second part, called the ICFLC-W, holds a wood ledger board. Six special screws that come with the ledger connector system go through the ICFLC-W, the wood ledger board and into the ICFLC. Wood joist hangers are then fastened to the ledger board, for the joist trusses to sit in. When light gauge steel frame floors are used, the ICFLC-W is not required. The metal ledger is directly attached to the ICFLC.

ICF Connect

ICF Connect manufactures another type of connector for side load bearing connection. It consists of light gauge metal plates that are inserted through the iForm foam panel and embedded into the concrete wall. Two separate stamped flat metal sheets are installed through the foam before placing concrete. After the concrete cures, another stamped bearing bracket is wrapped around the wood or steel joist, and six screws fastened to each side of the joist connect the joist to the ICF connector. This method eliminates the need for a ledger board.

Anchor Bolt

Using anchor bolts is the original and most traditional method of attaching wood or steel frame floors to ICF walls by means of side load bearing connection. A ledger board is attached to J-bolts that are embedded into the concrete wall. The J-bolts can be installed by temporarily screwing the ledger board to the iForm with the J-bolts placed through the board and into the concrete core, or by utilizing the anchor tunnels, or by using scrap plywood or OSB sheets to temporarily cover the cutouts at each J-Bolt location.

Load Bearing Floor-to-Wall Connections Ledge Form

Reward's ledge form provides a load bearing surface for connecting the wood or steel frame floor to the iForm wall. Either the 11-inch and 13-inch ledge forms can be turned to the inside face of the building to provide a 4 1/2-inch ledge as a bearing surface for a wood- or steel- framed floor system. Be aware, the ledge will be visible in the basement area. If this is not desirable, use top chord load bearing wood trusses to conceal the ledge.

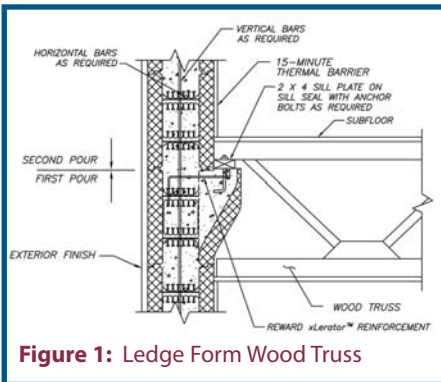


Figure 1: Ledge Form Wood Truss

13-inch to 9-inch iForm transition with the Taper Top

Using Reward's taper top form is another load bearing method of connecting the wood or steel frame floor to the iForm wall. When a 13-inch iForm is used for the basement walls and then transitions to the 9-inch iForm for the first story above-grade walls, the 13-inch taper top reinforced with the xLerator™ can be used on the top course to provide a bearing surface. A 2 x 4 top plate is anchored to the top of the 13-inch taper top, and the wood or steel frame floor is then fastened to this top plate.

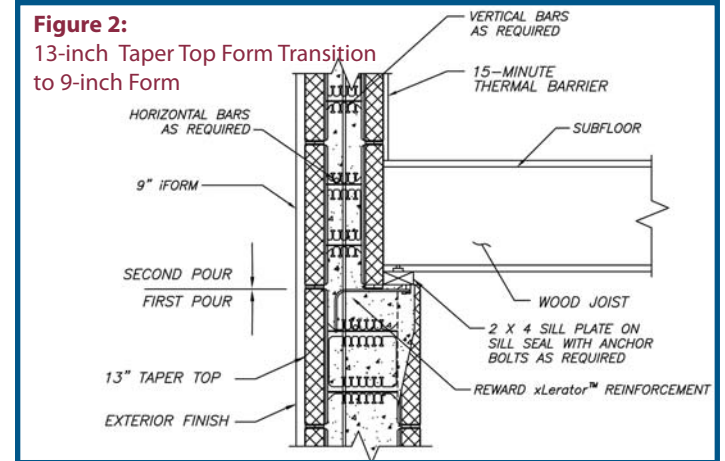


Figure 2: 13-inch Taper Top Form Transition to 9-inch Form

This method cannot be accomplished when transitioning from the 11-inch iForm to the 9-inch iForm because there is not enough concrete-bearing surface.

Moisture Management of Wall Assemblies

Good design, good construction practices and appropriate choices of materials are the keys to avoiding moisture problems with any wall system. There have been an increasing number of lawsuits over wood frame construction when moisture has caused the wood framed walls to rot—especially when the wood framed walls are finished with exterior stucco systems.

ICF construction is much less vulnerable to these issues because the ICF wall assembly is a solid wall system and not a cavity wall. The wall system consists of EPS and concrete, neither of which is sensitive to moisture the way wood is. In fact, the EPS panels offer some resistance to moisture. However, even though the ICF wall system is more moisture resistant, if conditions are right, moisture still can penetrate through the wall and create problems.

There is no single cause of moisture problems. All of the conditions in the following list must be properly addressed to ensure your structure is moisture-free:

1. Proper flashing installed at windows, doors or deck ledgers
2. No stucco installed below grade
3. Proper window design and installation
4. Exterior or stucco systems that do not allow the wall to dry; the wall should breathe on the exterior and be permeable
5. Unacceptable high indoor humidity, greater than 45 to 50%
6. Interior finish that does not allow the wall to breathe; the wall should breathe on the interior and be permeable
7. No polyethylene sheeting installed on the exterior or interior
8. Proper waterproofing and drainage allowed for below-grade walls
9. Proper choice and installation of material on the transition area between below-grade waterproofing and above-grade finishes ♦

Sandra Signing Off By Sandra Wigdahl

Almost nine years to the day when I first set foot inside the corporate office of Reward Wall Systems Inc., I will be walking out the door for the last time and into retirement. It's a different door now, and a vastly different company.

The company I joined in May 1997 was one with a very good product—a waffle grid insulating concrete form that at the time was one of the best on the market. But it was also a company without a business plan and little sense of direction, and Reward's business had begun to badly erode by the time I got here.

All that changed first when Hank Pfeiffer joined us in 1997 and later when Ed Storm bought controlling interest in the company in 1998. Somebody here named the period before Ed bought the company as BS (Before Storm), which probably isn't too far off the mark. Bit by bit, Ed, with Hank's help, began to peel back the layers of the onion, analyzing our products, sales model, marketing techniques, code approvals and technical information, as well as our office technology, staffing and human resource practices.

Strangely, one of the first indications I had that things were going to improve was when Ed bought us a fax machine that used regular copier paper. The one we had before used rolls of some sort of photo paper, and every time we were getting to the end of the roll, the sheets dropped off the machine in tight little curls. Since then, Ed has brought us into the 21st century—in our office equipment, the databases and other programs we use to track our business and the professional staff that runs them.

As the coordinator and copywriter of Reward's corporate newsletter, in**FORM**ation, I have had a unique perspective on the changes that have taken place in the company. My first complete newsletter was the Fall 2000 issue. Since then I have written almost 70 project profiles, introduced at least 20 individual new products or product refinements, previewed three new versions of the Reward web site and covered a wide variety of trade shows, demonstrations, conventions and technical updates. Since that Fall 2000 issue, the projects have gotten bigger and more numerous, and the stories I've covered have reflected more and more the growth of the ICF industry and the leading role Reward has taken within that industry.

For me one of the greatest pleasures of this job has been working with Reward's customer base and getting to know many of you personally. Thank you for the help you have provided me with your project photos and information. When people ask me what I plan to do when I retire, I usually say, "Nothing—that's why I'm retiring." One thing I will do, though, is to check in from time to time to keep track of the exciting changes I know will continue to take place at Reward Wall Systems Inc. ♦



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