



CASE STUDY

FEDEX DISTRIBUTION CENTRE

FEDEX TAKES DELIVERY: MEDICINE HAT'S NEW DISTRIBUTION CENTRE

In southeast Alberta, about three hours southeast of Calgary, on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River lies the city of Medicine Hat. In this mid-sized town, near the Trans-Canada Highway in the Box Springs Business Park, FedEx found the perfect site for a new distribution centre.

WORK TO YOUR STRENGTHS

FedEx is in the business of logistics, but not necessarily the logistics of developing new locations, so they hired Westmoreland Company to handle the project. Westmoreland in turn hired general contractors Advance Design & Construction Ltd., a commercial construction company with a diverse project portfolio, focusing on project planning and design engineering. Advance Design and Construction's Jeff Sohn explained that Westmoreland owns the property, develops it, and leases it back to FedEx under FedEx's design parameters. Advance was also responsible for verifying building codes, design parameters, fire ratings, accesses, permits, applications, and everything else required.

Advance immediately turned to Robertson Building Systems for help designing and indicating product choices for the project. "We've had a long-term relationship with Robertson," said Sohn. "Robertson is the oldest pre-engineered steel building company in Canada. It's a name based on quality and dependability." Sohn worked on the project directly with Robertson's Alberta district sales manager, Mike Smith.

EXACTING DEMANDS

Although one might imagine a distribution centre being a simple, straightforward project, FedEx had very concrete expectations. "Owners don't just want a building," Smith said. "They want to get the right building. It's important that we communicate to make sure they get the right building that meets all their needs." Sohn agreed. "They were very specific in terms of what they prefer," he said, "What kind of doors, what kind of alarm systems, mailboxes, and a contained area for secure packages. The parking lot had to be designed in such a way that they're the same everywhere."

SORTING

To ensure they deliver on these promises and more, Robertson has always been selective about which builders it works with. "We don't sell buildings to just anybody," said Smith. "We have a select builders' network to ensure we work with quality companies and can build solid partnerships with them without oversaturating the market." Advance Design & Construction is on that list, and they're just as stringent in their requirements for their subtrades. "A lot of our

PROJECT SPECS

Project: FedEx Distribution Center

Location: Medicine Hat, AB

Builder: Advance Design & Construction Ltd.

Metal panels (roof): Double-Lok®

Roof color: Galvalume Plus®

Metal panels (wall): AVP

Wall color: Ash Gray

WHY ROBERTSON?

Robertson Building Systems works with builders and contractors to create building solutions that meet the unique demands of the Canadian commercial and industrial industries. Our team of experts leverages cutting-edge design tools and technology to support sophisticated projects, delivering proven quality and performance across our entire integrated product offering.



sub-trades are long-term relationship people,” said Sohn. Advance hired M&R Contractor Ltd. to work with Robertson, erecting the steel shell of the building, including the steel frame and sub frame as well as wall and roof insulation and panels. “Subtrades are very important to the smooth flow of the job. M&R is one we’ve had a relationship with for probably 25 years.”

COLLABORATION

To ensure a smooth schedule, Smith’s team checked the plans in detail. “We take the architectural drawings or builders’ designs and input it into our software, then give them input,” said Smith. “We had to raise the roof height by about four feet to make sure they got the openings for overhead doors and clearances they required. Minor, minor tweaks.” The building was also built to be expandable on the back sidewalls as demands in the area grow.

FedEx made excellent use of Robertson products throughout the building, beginning with framing systems. The clear span building featured a double-slope roof with offset ridge and straight columns as well as a single-slope, multi span office building with tapered columns. Robertson’s roof purlins and wall girts were used as secondary steel framing. For the walls, AVP panels were installed in Ash Gray. The roof – an exceedingly important feature where priceless packages need to be protected from Canadian weather – was completed in Double-Lok® standing seam roof panels. Chosen for its exceptional weathertightness, Double-Lok® has “much less chance of water penetration into the roof and dripping down on packages or sensitive equipment,” explained Sohn. “It’s a long-term roof,” he said. “It’s not a 25- or a 30-year roof. I mean, these roofs can last virtually as long as steel does.”

NEITHER RAIN, NOR SLEET...

It wasn’t long before these systems had to prove themselves. “The foundation went in virtually as a blizzard came across,” said Sohn. “We had some early blizzards that year. That changes the way you put in your foundation, and it affects your steel erection crew because of slippery conditions up on the building top.” The cold weather causes other problems as well. “When it gets below minus

25 the site has to shut down,” said Smith. “You have to start heating and hoarding buildings, which incurs additional expenses.”

But they were able to move ahead soon enough. “I believe it was December when we got the overhead doors in,” said Sohn. “We were able to start defrosting for development on the inside.”

PROOF OF DELIVERY

There’s even photographic proof of the struggles the construction crews faced. FedEx has stringent accountability expectations. “They have a very specific set of requirements, including processing construction and reporting,” Sohn recalled. “We had to take 35 photographs from specific spots every week, right from day one to the last day of construction when we polished the doorknob and locked the door on our way out. The level of reporting and accountability was as high as we’ve ever done for any client.”

That level of accountability also provided proof that these teams are among the best in Canada at what they do. When you have such a long history together, it’s possible to work through any weather and accomplish great things despite the challenges.

“Robertson has always come through and delivered in every way that they could,” said Sohn. “It’s kind of like the first time you dance with somebody new; you’re kind of stumbling around. But we’ve been doing this for so long with Robertson that there’s economy of movement between us.”

In fact, the collaboration and dedication between everyone involved on this project won them a Robertson Photo Award for the Warehouse and Distribution category. We pass on our congratulations to all parties!

To start your relationship with Canada’s oldest and most trusted name in metal construction, **get in touch with a representative today.**