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2008
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PROJECTS

Setting a standard

Metropolis Hotel raises bar on hospitality

Tuests of the Metropolis Hotel in Eau Claire will find each of its 105 rooms uniquely decorated and named.

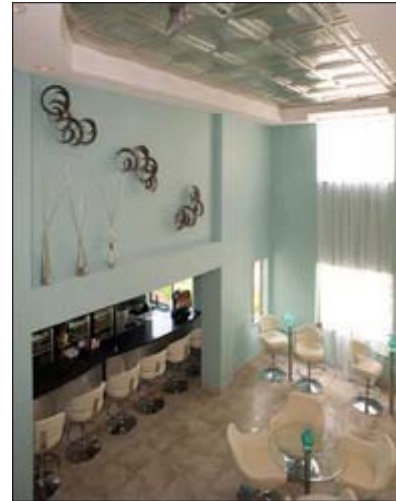
But it's the heated and electrical innovations that guests can't see that make the hotel unparalleled.

"The Met" is Eau Claire's only upscale hotel of its size and is attached to co-owner Mark Steil's other ventures: Action City, a complex packed with arcade games, go-karts, batting cages and mini-bowling; and a 30,000-square-foot water park set to open this year.

But along with bringing the Eau Claire community a different kind of hotel, Steil also wanted to set the Met apart with a high standard for conservation, said James Schwingle, engineer and project manager with Ramaker & Associates Inc., Sauk City.

The hotel has an on-site boiler plant that shifts heat from areas where it isn't needed to areas where it is, Schwingle said. It also includes an electrical system that keeps only essential or designated

The Metropolis Hotel



items turned on when guests leave their rooms.

The system has the power to turn off electronics and fixtures such as televisions and lights.

Schwingle said the project team needed to utilize a trial-and-error process while installing the hotel's heat and electric systems.

The problem, he said, was figuring out how the heating and ventilation systems would best work at different times of the day throughout the three-story hotel.

Engineers, for example, wanted the ability to shift heated water in the afternoon from a section of the building where it's not being used to the restaurant where it might be busy.

Schwingle said the heat and electricity distribution features, along with the addition of a lounge and restaurant, inflated the initial price tag for the hotel from about \$2.5 million to \$6.5 million.

But ultimately, he said, the hotel will save on utility bills.

— Justin Kern



Photos submitted by Fran Huse of Huse Design

PROJECT ESSENTIALS

Location: Eau Claire

Submitting company: Ramaker & Associates Inc., Sauk City

Construction manager: Mark Steil Builders, Eau Claire

Architect: Architectural DesignGroup Inc., Menomonie

Engineer: Ramaker & Associates

Owners: Mark Steil, Tom Hahn and Kerry Kjelstad

Project size: three floors, 105 rooms

Project cost: \$6.5 million

Start date: August 2007

Completion date: May 2008