

# UNITED STATES DIPLOMACY CENTER CONSTRUCTION UPDATE



*The United States Diplomacy Center (USDC) will be a 40,000 square foot museum and education center*

## Summer 2014

The construction of the U.S. Diplomacy Center is entering into the mobilization phase, at which time the fencing enclosing the entire perimeter is up. A pedestrian covered ramp way will be constructed on the north side leading from the street to the three doors under the portico; access to this entrance will be open as usual.

In mid-August the security pavilion will be razed and the equipment transferred to the new security trailer which was delivered to the site on July 16. The exact switchover date is yet to be determined in which the security trailer will be fully operable.



Talking steel and glass: left to right are Tyler Swartzwelder, Gilbane project manager; Steve Lee and Hany Hassan of Beyer Blinder Belle; Saul Mednick, Crystal Steel; Kahn Tanali, structural engineer.

While the visual experience of seeing the transformation of the forecourt public space into a construction site is an inspiring one, there are many U.S. Diplomacy Center project team activities behind the scenes that would make a hyper-beehive look calm. There are now ongoing review meetings about steel assembly systems, glass curtain wall talk-a-thons, and marble quarry wanderings!

First the steel and glass: the sub-contractor, Ferguson Neudorf will be fabricating the glass and working with a steel firm, Crystal Steel, to provide the beams and extrusions. It is likely in November a mock up section of the building, a full 30 feet high, will be subjected to a thorough performance testing at a leading architectural testing laboratory in York, PA.

On a test site, the mock up structure will be pummeled by extreme wind conditions, rain and sleet. Wind? Yes, created by a jet engine or propeller on a tripod which will blast hurricane like wind at the enclosed test structure. This testing will validate the integrity of the design, its water proofing, and in this case to correct any rainbow effect which can happen with a glass buildings. A successful design has no fogging of the glass, no water leaks, and no rainbows.

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A standard test method for structural performance of exterior windows, curtain walls, and doors by uniform static air pressure difference. This will be a similar test performed on a small scale mockup of the U.S. Diplomacy Center.



Patrick Roach of Ferguson Neudorf and Steve Lee of Byer Blinder Belle talk structure.

Besides steel and glass, the U.S. Diplomacy Center will install a beautiful marble floor as specified by Beyer Blinder Belle and approved by the Commission of Fine Arts. A site meeting is set for mid-August to review slabs of marble at a quarry near Knoxville, Tennessee. The U.S. Diplomacy Center project team will examine the marble blocks and give notice to the marble artisans to cut the chosen marble pieces into the appropriate size and shapes. At a later time, the quarry workers will arrange the marble to reflect a 10,000 square foot footprint of the first floor. Beyer Blinder Belle architects

and designers will walk on the layout as if it were a chess board to move pieces around to where they look best.

The exterior footprint around the new U.S. Diplomacy Center will also have new pavers, a generic handsome grey marble with a sand blast finish, that will complement the glass jewel box.



A quarry like this will have U.S. Diplomacy Center marble slabs waiting to be chosen, cut, puffed, and brought to Washington DC.

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