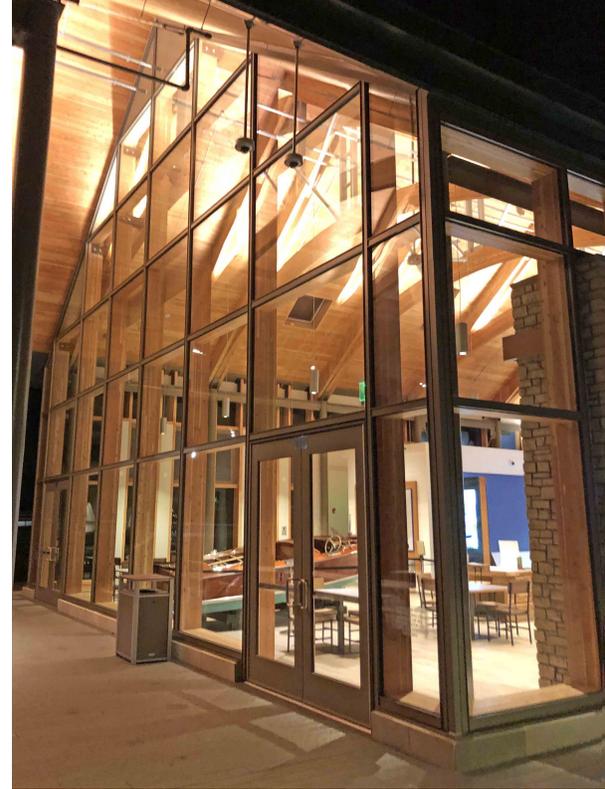




NY tourism group incorporates timber curtain wall in state-of-the-art visitor center

The North Country of New York state is as spectacular as it is rugged – full of cool blue lakes, majestic hardwood forests, and unforgettable views. The New York State Division of Tourism’s new welcome center in the region, a \$9.9M timber masterpiece that opened its doors in late November 2018, is no different. The newly-constructed tourist information hub is one of 11 similar centers constructed across the state and includes boathouse-style architecture, murals of local attractions, exhibits of local artifacts, and even an Antique Boat Museum. For hungry visitors there’s also an in-season Taste NY market featuring local fare from 60 vendors located across the state (supplemented by vending machines featuring local products in the off-season).



“Wood connects the building with the local history and the importance of craftsmanship in the building process, and is a natural material. So while creating a modern, state-of-the-art welcome center, we also wanted to keep things warm and less commercial-looking, so wood was very appealing to us.”

- Michael Joyce, architect, Stantec Architecture

The Challenge

The ubiquitous wooden boathouses of the Thousand Islands are iconic in their look and feel – tall, broad and practical, while also open, welcoming, and constructed almost entirely of rich local timber. And that, ultimately, was the challenge of constructing New York state’s North Country Welcome Center in Alexandria Bay, just a few miles downriver from Kingston, Ontario, Canada. The architects wanted the 6,846 sq. ft. visitor center’s look and feel to be drawn completely from the local surroundings: from the materials used, to the inspiration of the openness of traditional Thousand Islands boathouses, to the use of elements of the classic ribbed wooden skiffs so common in the region.

The Solution

Unicel subsidiary IC2 Technologies Inc. was contracted to supply the 3,000-plus sq. ft. gable curtain wall on the building’s west side, along with limited corner curtain walls, tall insulating glass sections in the other exterior walls, and clerestory-style windows for even more natural light. IC2 used a double-glazed Raico THERM+ timber curtain wall, framed with glue laminated Douglas fir and with aluminum caps. THERM+ timber curtain walls combine lightweight and elegant design with Passive House certification-level thermal insulation, along with superior wind resistance and greater air tightness than any other curtain wall product on the market.

The curtain wall’s Douglas fir vertical sections were clear coated to match the rest of the project’s exposed wood – which is everywhere in the North Country Welcome Center. In fact, the building is largely constructed of wood: the roof is a Douglas fir tongue-and-groove timber deck, with custom designed glue laminated Douglas fir trusses spanning 42 feet above the welcome center main exhibit space reminiscent of the ribbed wooden skiffs mentioned above. The use of wood ensured a warm, less commercial-looking building interior while also connecting the building to local history and craftsmanship.



The Results

After eight months of construction and more than a year of planning, the North Country Welcome Center opened in November 2018 to rave reviews from both tourists and tourism officials alike. IC2's timber curtain wall provides striking views both into and out of the center, allowing dazzling natural light to pour into the building while also opening up the building's interior to passersby. It also provides industry-leading thermal insulation, wind resistance and air tightness.

Participants

Timber Curtain Wall: IC2 Technologies, a Unicel Architectural subsidiary

Laminated Structure: Goodfellow

Architect: Stantec Architecture

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