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Quick time: Leggat drives build-out to fast finish

In Boston, where construction projects take an enormously long time to get permitted and built, one company is defying the odds.

Commodore Builders is finishing in 15 days a project that usually takes 12 weeks to complete. The 10,000-square-foot project is a complete interior remodeling of **Leggat McCall Properties LLC's** offices at 10 Post Office Square. Not only is the project being done lickity-split, but Leggat is also using technologies to design and build an office that meets the highest green standards.

"We've never been involved with a client who has driven the process the way Leggat has, not just from a schedule standpoint, but from a LEED standpoint," said **Andy Fraser**, Commodore's vice president and principal.

According to Fraser, who is also a project executive in charge of Leggat's build-out, the Boston real estate company wanted to do something innovative.

When Leggat's president, **Eric Sheffels**, told staff they would complete the company's new offices in four weeks, everyone laughed. So Sheffels decided to up the ante and opted for three weeks. After that, everyone stopped laughing, he said.

Sheffels said his staff thought he



REAL ESTATE ROUNDUP

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Michelle
Hillman

had gone off the "deep end," but he said he wanted to prove that not all projects have to be behind schedule or over budget.

The challenge for Commodore is to get the job done without keeping workers on the site all day and all night or on weekends.

"Anybody can work around the clock and get something done like that," said **Dave Conner**, project manager at Commodore. "The goal for this project was to figure out how to sequence it without having to work 24 hours a day."

To meet the expedited deadline, Commodore preplanned each day on the job and set up 15 one-day schedules, said Conner. All of the subcontractors were brought into the job early and filled in on what Commodore and Leggat were trying to accomplish.

Commodore's day-by-day playbook and the unique materials that were selected for the job have enabled the project to go smoothly, Fraser said.

For instance, the wiring is being run under the floor rather than through the walls. They're also using prefinished wall panels rather than dry-wall, and a raised floor has allowed for the HVAC to be installed under the floor rather than overhead. Those measures, and advance planning, have saved time. However, Conner said, the schedule could be thrown off if just one nail is out of place.

"It wouldn't take much to throw off the schedule," Conner said. "(The) good news is I think the first week was the most difficult. I think being through that we are through the hardest part."

Since Commodore workers will spend less time on the job, the amount of man-hours billed to Leggat will be inevitably less. Fraser estimated that Leggat would save about 10 percent on the entire job. Commodore is not allowed to release the cost of the job until it is complete on Sept. 26.

Commodore did allow for a week buffer in the schedule to give Leggat enough time to move office furniture, supplies and employees from the third-floor to the 13th floor of One Post Office Square.

To keep track of Commodore and Leggat's progress, interested viewers can log onto www.15days.tv.

When asked about the likelihood

of the office being completed on time, Sheffels said, "Oh, we're going to make it."

Heading off homelessness

Members of the Massachusetts chapter of the **National Association of Industrial and Office Properties** raised a record-setting \$145,000 for **Heading Home**, formerly Shelter Inc.

Held on Sept. 11, the 20th annual NAIOP Charitable Golf Tournament brought out 500 commercial real estate professionals for a day of golf, networking and fundraising. The tournament was sponsored by **Eastern Building Services**.

The money raised this year brings the chapter's total donations over the past two decades to more than \$1.25 million, making NAIOP the largest single contributor to Heading Home of Cambridge. Heading Home was founded in 1974 and works to end homelessness in Greater Boston. According to Heading Home's Web site, on any given night there are more than 5,000 homeless individuals in Greater Boston.

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