



# CONCRETE HOMES

May 2001

## Chicago Embraces ICF Technology



*This photo shows one of the 5 "three-flat" buildings in the project known as Mohawk North. Jeffrey Welsh and Gerry Ayala of Monterrey Contractors, experts at building with ICFs, recently completed this residential development within Chicago city limits.*

### **Rising energy costs, urban redevelopment, and noise pollution are driving forces**

The Chicagoland area, one of the nation's hottest real estate markets in recent years, has been relatively slow to embrace the concept of insulating concrete form (ICF) homebuilding. Fortunately, that resistance is beginning to change in dramatic fashion due to three major issues: rising energy prices, urban redevelopment, and the issue of noise pollution in the residential areas near O'Hare International Airport.

The well-documented sound reduction characteristics of ICF construction offer a viable solution to the politically explosive issue of airport noise, which has a dramatic impact on the quality of life of O'Hare's residential neighbors. Millions of dollars have already been spent to soundproof homes, businesses, and schools that lie in the airport flight paths. Additional runway construction at O'Hare, which many area businesses feel is vital to the continued economic growth of Chicago and its northwestern suburbs, will most likely not occur unless dramatic steps are taken to reduce the amount of airport noise affecting the surrounding areas. ICF distributor Tom Hanley of Energy Block Inc. is helping a local builder, United Development, meet the airport noise challenge by constructing a small development of ICF townhomes in suburban Schiller Park, which is directly adjacent to O'Hare. Besides solving problems near the airport, Energy Block has been involved in the construction of an ICF ski lodge in Fox River Grove,

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*(continued from page 1)*



***(Top) Tom Hanley of Energy Block Inc. built this ICF home in Mundelein, Illinois.***

***(Middle) This Quad-Lock ICF ski lodge is located in Fox River Grove, Illinois, was built by Tom Hanley.***

***(Bottom) Energy Block Inc. offers many different styles of ICF homes, as with this residence in Carpentersville, Illinois.***

a medical office building in Cicero, and several custom homes in western and northwestern Chicago suburbs.

Another pair of Chicago based builders, Jeffrey Welsh and Gerry Ayala of Monterrey Contractors, are experts at building with ICFs, having nearly 5 years of experience. Monterrey Contractors recently completed a residential development within Chicago city limits. The project, known as Mohawk North, consists of 5 “three-flat” buildings in an area of the city that is undergoing a housing resurrection. Mohawk North is a unique development whose occupants will comprise a broad range of income levels and races. The upper units of each building will be sold at market value, middle units will be set aside for families who qualify for low income housing programs, and the lower levels are reserved for poor families who have been relocated from Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) projects being torn down. The project is attracting a great deal of positive attention with Chicago municipal officials, as well as the local and national homebuilding industry. Mohawk North also received mention as a “hot seller” in the March 2001 issue of *BUILDER* magazine.

The economically depressed suburb of Chicago Heights has a number of vacant lots with delinquent taxes. In response, Chicago Heights has made these lots available for builders and developers interested in constructing new, affordable housing. Tom Hanley of Energy Block is working with Angel Cardenas of Cardenas Builders on ICF construction to take advantage of these abandoned parcels of land. The energy efficiency and durability of ICF construction were major factors for gaining the support of Chicago Heights municipal officials.

Continually rising energy prices, ongoing noise problems near O'Hare, and an increasing emphasis on providing economically depressed areas with affordable, quality housing, should ensure increasing awareness and usage of ICFs for residential construction in Chicagoland over the coming months and years. For more information on concrete homebuilding in the Chicago area, contact Jim Niehoff of the Portland Cement Association at 847.966.6200.

*Special thanks to Jim Niehoff, Manager, Residential Promotion at PCA for contributing to this article.*

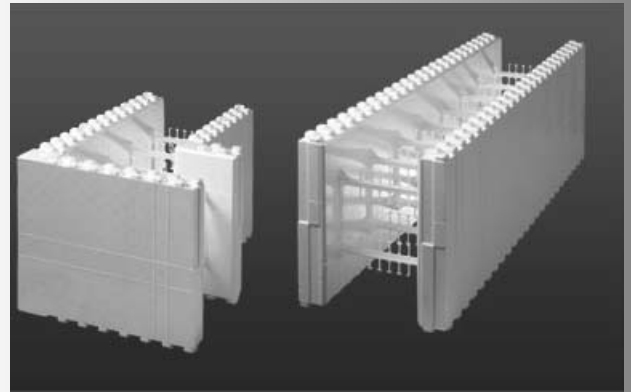


## Reward introduces flat wall form

Reward Wall Systems Inc. now offers a new flat wall forming system, iForm. First shown at the 2001 Reward convention, the iForm system will be available nationwide in May 2001. Chief Operating Officer, Hank Pfeiffer, who was instrumental in development of the new form, is pleased with the results of test projects built using iForm. "The iForm system received great reviews from the builders who used it," he says. "We are extremely pleased that the reversible design has, as we expected, made iForm easy and quick to use with less waste." He adds, "Designers and developers have an increasing awareness and appreciation of the benefits of ICF construction, and we feel the time is right to introduce a form designed specifically for larger construction projects."

"We are very excited about the possibilities iForm opens up," says Reward President Ed Storm. "Our goal was to design a form that would deliver a straight wall with minimal bracing, easily accommodate windows, doors, and other design features, and would be easy to use in any type of construction. iForm will open up markets never before tapped into by the ICF industry, and that will be good for everybody."

More information about the iForm is available at: [www.rewardwalls.com](http://www.rewardwalls.com).



*(Top) The iForm is a universal block. Flip it, reverse it—there is no top or bottom, no right side or wrong end. Corner forms work as either left or right.*

*(Bottom) The pre-molded 45 and 90 degree corners speed construction while reducing waste and expense. Both corners feature built-in corner ties that provide quick and easy fastening for exterior finishes.*



## Fold-Form LC and Owens Corning join forces to market ICFs

Officials of Owens Corning and Fold-Form LC announced the completion of plans to jointly market the Fold-Form brand ICF building system. This agreement combines the Owens Corning brand—trademarked Pink color and Pink Panther icon, well known in the building products industry—with the Fold-Form ICF system.

Under the new joint marketing arrangement, Owens Corning will offer two ICF systems to the marketplace: Fold-Form and Pink Form Xtra. Tony Garone, ICF Business Manager at Owens Corning, states "We are now able to provide an ICF choice to builders, architects, contractors, and educated homeowners. The right product for the right application, sold through the right distribution channel."

"Pat Boeshart, president of Fold-Form LC, explains, "The Fold-Form system has a 5-year track record of dependability as an ICF system. This expanded marketing venture is a testament to that fact. It also reflects Owen Corning's confidence in the future of ICF construction. Our joint efforts will help overcome some long-time hurdles to the acceptance of ICFs."

For more information visit the Fold-Form website at: [www.foldform.com](http://www.foldform.com).

## Tools of our trade



This video documents tests comparing the tornado and hurricane resistance of concrete walls to wood and steel-frame

walls. Wall panels were subjected to the impact of a 15-pound wood stud "missile" traveling at 100 mph. The frame walls failed to stop the airborne hazards. The concrete walls resisted the impact.

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