

WINNER

BEST  
PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

PHOTOGRAPHER / SCOTT PAULUS

## UWM RIVERVIEW RESIDENCE HALL

2340 N. COMMERCE ST., MILWAUKEE

## PROJECT CREDITS

OWNER/DEVELOPER:  
UWM Real Estate FoundationGENERAL CONTRACTOR:  
KBS Construction Inc.ARCHITECT:  
Eppstein Uhen Architects Inc.ENGINEER:  
Graef, Anhalt, Schloemer &  
Associates Inc.LEGAL COUNSEL:  
Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren SCLEAD FINANCE:  
M&I BankOTHER:  
Milwaukee County (land swap);  
City of Milwaukee (zoning);  
Redevelopment Authority of the City  
of Milwaukee (bond issuer); State of  
Wisconsin (brownfields grant)PROJECT COST:  
\$28.5 million

With nearly 1,800 incoming freshmen at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee denied campus housing in 2007, every new bed campus officials make available becomes paramount to another student's success.

Freshman enrollment at the 29,000-student urban campus has increased 45 percent over the past five years, making the new 488-bed RiverView Residence Hall on North Commerce Street, located about a mile off campus, that much more important. Besides helping fill a void for UWM student housing, the \$28.5 million project places an attractive building on a blighted site along the Milwaukee River.

Challenges to fulfilling student housing needs are plentiful, becoming even more complex and dragged out when working through the bureaucracy of a large, public institution like the UW System, said Milwaukee real estate attorney Bruce Block, who helped RiverView get built without any taxpayer dollars.

"The need was paramount," said Block, a shareholder at Milwaukee law firm Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren SC. "UWM has become more than a commuter school. It takes a long time to get a project done via the UW System."

At the time of planning and construction, Block served as president of the UWM Real Estate Foundation, an arm of the UWM Foundation and an entity established to get the project completed faster and to keep it as an asset that benefits the UWM campus.

Block, who today serves as president of the UWM Foundation, said it took cooperation from many groups to get the project completed. For one, Milwaukee County originally owned the land for possible future park use. But the county acquired the land with some federal funding, bringing another party into the mix.

Also, the city of Milwaukee was involved in zoning issues and its Redevelopment Authority helped with the bond issue. The state of Wisconsin assisted with a brownfields grant to help clean up the property for construction of the six-story building.

In the mix from the start, of course, was UWM's University Housing Department, led by director Scott Peak.

"We were desperate to build more housing," Peak said.

"It took 13 years to get the East Tower built through its normal course," he said in referring to another campus housing project.

Peak said that when the UWM Foundation made itself available to raise money for the project and coordinate construction, the housing department "led the fight" to get the project started. The UWM Foundation worked with M&I Bank, Milwaukee, on financing for

the residence hall and helped secure bonding.

Peak said the bond issue will be paid back through student rents, which cost about \$2,700 per semester.

The RiverView Residence Hall features 117, four-



PHOTOGRAPHER / SCOTT PAULUS

person suites and additional units for housing staff. Completed in late 2007, its first residents began renting in January.

One of its unique qualities is that it is UWM's first "Living Learning Community," where students can take classes and meet with faculty within the residence hall as well as participate in other activities designed to enhance their academic experience.

"It's geared toward living, socializing and learning," Peak said.

— Todd Bragstad