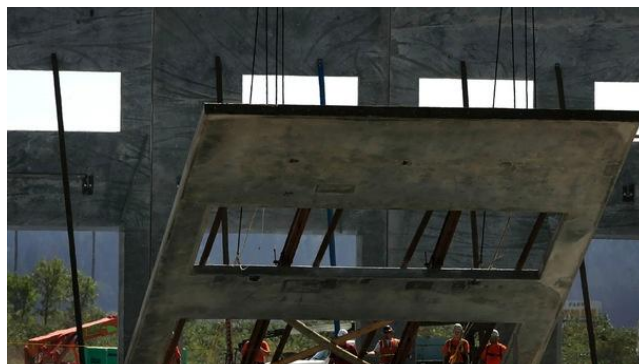

EWEB's halfway home - Construction of the utility's new operations center is on schedule

By Greg Bolt, The Register-Guard, Aug 22, 2009

Piece by piece, the new operations center for the Eugene Water & Electric Board is getting boxed in.

Workers are almost finished raising the first set of concrete panels that will form the walls of the three-building complex at Belt Line Road and Roosevelt Boulevard in west Eugene. The work should be done by Monday, allowing workers to begin pouring the remaining walls.



Brian Davies/The Register-Guard Pre-cast walls are raised

Friday at the new EWEB operations center.

EWEB is building the \$83.5 million complex to house its operations, warehouse and fleet services divisions. That will leave only administrative workers at its headquarters building next to the Ferry Street Bridge in downtown Eugene after the new buildings are done in November 2010.

Project manager Ken Beeson said putting up the walls marks the halfway point in the project.

"It's going real well," he said. "We're basically on the same schedule we set a couple of years ago when we got approval for this."

The buildings are going up using what's called concrete tilt-wall construction. With floor slabs already in place, horizontal forms for the wall panels are built on top of the slabs, concrete is poured and allowed to cure and then the forms are removed and the wall panels are tilted up into place.

Beeson said it will take about 120 separate panels to form all the walls for the three buildings. About half that many were part of the first batch of panels; workers will start work on the second batch as soon as the first ones are in place.

Those should be poured and cured by about the middle of September, and once the walls are raised into place, workers will start on the interior partitions and roofs, Beeson said.

The largest building is the two-story operations building, which will house the water and electrical shops, engineering, purchasing and related divisions. That building is about 108,000 square feet.

Also being built are a single-story warehouse and fleet repair buildings, each about 20,000 square feet.

Beeson said that all of the major bid packages came in lower than estimates, allowing the project to remain on budget as well as on time.

He said a little over half of all the 40 subcontracts have gone to Lane County companies.

But an even larger share of the workers on the project are local, Beeson said. That's because many of the contractors based in other parts of the state hire local workers.

He said that the project will have a peak work force of about 260 workers and estimated that 220 to 230 of those will be from Lane County. That's about 85 percent of the work force.

EWEB is aiming for the LEED gold certification, so it's including features such as solar panels, on-site wastewater treatment, a bioswale for storm water runoff and wetlands preservation.