



# Insight online

A Newsletter Of The Construction Update  
Online Plan Room Powered By iSqFt

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## Commercial Construction Forecast: Sunny and High-Tech

Just about everyone in the commercial construction industry knows the name iSqFt. Over the past decade they've quickly become the industry's leading preconstruction resource. I'll spare you the rest of the marketing spiel, but I recently had the opportunity to sit down with iSqFt's President and CEO, Dave Conway, and had a candid conversation about iSqFt, the construction industry, and changes on the horizon.

**Mona:** First, thank you for taking the time to talk with me today, Mr. Conway.

**Mr. Conway:** Could you call me Dave? You're making me feel old.

**Mona:** [Laughing] Okay, Dave it is. iSqFt has been in Iowa, and has been a partner with MBI for over a decade now. How's that going?

**Dave:** Very well. [President and CEO of MBI] Scott Norvell and I talked just last night and talked about the strategic importance of our relationship going forward. MBI has really set

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## Construction Update Plan Room Network Locations

### Master Builders of Iowa – Cedar Rapids

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E-Mail: mbiplanroom-cr@mbionline.com

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### Dubuque Builders Exchange

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### Master Builders of Iowa – Omaha Builders Exchange

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### Master Builders of Iowa – Rock Island Office

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### Master Builders of Iowa – Sioux City Office

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### Master Builders of Iowa – Waterloo Office

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### Planning News:

cuplanning@mbionline.com

### For questions regarding project

**information:** Please contact Cindy Adams at 515.288.8904 or one of the plan rooms listed above.

**For Technical Issues:** Contact iSqFt at 888.768.4569. iSqFt also provides online help and support through the **iSqFt Online Help site**. Support Hours are Monday – Friday, 7:30am – 8pm ET (6:30am – 7pm CST)

Click on the Support link in the left-hand navigation pane. See the "FAQ's" and "How To's" for guidance with the commonly requested support topics. In addition, be sure to view the Customer Training schedule of web-based seminars conducted throughout the week for the best chance to learn what our site has to offer.



## Commercial Construction Forecast *continued from page 1*

the standard for trust and reliability and they've been a critically important partner for iSqFt. I know that will still be true years from now.

**Mona:** So, speaking of the olden days, how have things changed in the construction industry since iSqFt and MBI first formed a partnership?

**Dave:** Well, when we started this, people were driving to plan rooms to find jobs, marking up paper to do takeoffs, and communicating by fax. Some people are still doing those things, but I think the days when that's a viable business model are numbered.

**Mona:** Why is that?

**Dave:** Well, working with physical documents is really inefficient, and expensive. Shipping out paper documents, marking up drawings, driving to plan rooms to get documents and stay up to date on addenda--these are all really time-consuming tasks, and with gas prices the way they are, they're also expensive.

**Mona:** How does having an online project leads service address these things?

**Dave:** Well, I'm not going to speak for other services, but iSqFt, specifically, lets project owners, architects, and general contractors send project documents electronically, with the click of a button. They update everyone attached to the project with addenda almost instantly. And an iSqFt subscription gives people daily emails about projects that fit their profile. Yes, it saves gas and time and money, but it's quickly becoming the only way to learn about enough projects to stay competitive. This is a connected world, and commercial construction is finally hopping on the bandwagon.

**Mona:** Give me some context. What does "connected" mean in the world of construction?

**Dave:** Okay, I'm going to use a word that's becoming so overused that it's in danger of losing its meaning, but I'm going to use it anyway. Ready?

**Mona:** Ready.

**Dave:** Network. Everyone talks about their "network" or joining a network or networking, but the main benefit iSqFt offers is that it plugs you into a network of architects, project owners, general contractors, subs, suppliers, manufacturers, and they can all communicate with each other through the iSqFt network. No driving, no voicemails, no faxes--well, okay, fewer faxes--and questions about projects happen in the context of the project. The iSqFt network is about having access to the very people you need to connect with at that moment.

**Mona:** You're pretty excited about this.

**Dave:** Yeah, I am. This is an exciting time, and I think there's some big stuff coming.

**Mona:** Like what? What is iSqFt working on? Where are you going next?

**Dave:** We've been really fortunate that at a time when most businesses are pulling back, we've been able to put more resources into improving our software. Have you seen iSqFt 10?

**Mona:** Yes, but I'd like to hear your thoughts on it.

**Dave:** iSqFt 10 is where we're going. I know you've seen iSqFt 10 geared toward subcontractors, and that's been a huge success. But next we're rolling it out to the GCs.

**Mona:** Why is that so significant?

**Dave:** Because GCs are what we call the "project creators"--they're the ones who put the projects in the system, invite bidders, and so on. Projects created in iSqFt 10 can only be viewed in 10, so that means--

**Mona:** That means iSqFt subcontractors will have an incentive to transition over to iSqFt 10 fulltime.

**Dave:** Exactly.

**Mona:** I've seen iSqFt 10, and it's a huge upgrade. It's easy to use, it's easy to navigate around, but what will the GC version offer?

**Dave:** Lots. They'll have the ability to reuse previously sent invitation-to-bid forms, there's a widget that lets them assign tasks and put meetings on the calendar, and the coverage report is--and I don't use this word lightly--revolutionary. The feedback from GCs who have seen the new application has been phenomenal, really.

**Mona:** Sounds interesting. When will we get a chance to see this new application?

**Dave:** Actually, a number of GCs are already using the new application. It's because of our close working relationships with these users that we're so confident that our customers will love it.

**Mona:** But you're not going to commit to a date, huh?

**Dave:** No, but I will say that summer is my favorite season.



**Dave Conway**

# WELCOME

Acoutics By Washburn – Fairfax, IA  
 Active Thermal Concepts – Hiawatha, IA  
 Advanced Architectural – Boone, IA  
 Aidin Energy – Grand Island, NE  
 Alliance Const Group – Grimes, IA  
 American Alarms – Des Moines, IA  
 American Underground Supply – Omaha, NE  
 C&H Builders – Belvidere, IL  
 C&W Boiler – Ottumwa, IA  
 Chamness Technology – Blairsburg, IA  
 Chase Oldfield Plumbing – Muscatine, IA  
 Clear Image Glass – Fort Dodge, IA  
 Con-Struct Inc – Ames, IA  
 Decorative Concrete Surfaces – Solon, IA  
 Direct Digital Control – Omaha, NE

Drey Inc – Omaha, NE  
 Duball Electric – Cedar Rapids, IA  
 Duncan Construction – Van Meter, IA  
 Exteriors Plus – Omaha, NE  
 G & S Inc – Omaha, NE  
 Gee Grading & Excavating – Cedar Rapids, IA  
 General Asphalt – Davenport, IA  
 Gibson Drywall & Const – Blair, NE  
 Great Plains Pipe – Des Moines, IA  
 Halls Water – Lincoln, NE  
 Hawkeye Electric – Hiawatha, IA  
 Henriksen Contracting – Johnston, IA  
 Iowa City Excavating – Coralville, IA  
 Iowa Spray Foam Insulators – Carroll, IA  
 JLH Enterprises – Waukon, IA

Justrite Surfaces – Council Bluffs, IA  
 Larson Data Communications – Mitchell, SD  
 Luxa Construction – Blair, NE  
 McDermott Erosion – Richland, IA  
 Norm’s Door Service – Omaha, NE  
 Omega Test & Balance – Adel, IA  
 Seamless Exterior – Cedar Falls, IA  
 Shaw Electric – Waterloo, IA  
 Smith Brothers Const – Harpers Ferry, IA  
 Signature Masonry – Des Moines, IA  
 Suburban Landscape – N Liberty, IA  
 Thomas Drilling – Omaha, NE  
 Trenkamp Electric – Miles, IA  
 Wozniak Inc – Omaha, NE  
 Xtreme Fire Protection – Sioux Falls, SD



## Frequently Asked Questions: How Are Bidders Lists Obtained?

At Master Builders of Iowa, we know how important it is to have an accurate bidders list for each project. Therefore, there are several stages of the process to assure that we have as accurate of a bidders list as possible. First, each reporting office obtains a planholders list shortly after receiving each project by either contacting the architect, engineer, or owner. A planholders list may also be obtained from a reprographer, architectural firm, or engineering firm’s website. After the planholders list is obtained, the office reporter identifies the “general” contractors or “prime” contractors and enters these companies into the “Bidders List” tab on iSqFt for the associated project. Between the time the planholders list is entered for a project and the time the project actually bids, each reporter will revise the bidders list as new updates are found. If you are bidding as a general or prime contractor on a project and want to make sure your company is listed as a bidder, it is important to contact the distributing entity of the project. That way, your company can be sure it has taken the proper steps to be recorded as an active bidder. The day before a project bids, the reporter obtains a final bidders list from the architect, engineer, owner, or reprographer and calls each bidder to verify if they still plan on bidding the project as a “general” or “prime” contractor.

Some projects that are received in the plan rooms already have a general contractor selected. In these particular scenarios, the “Bidders List” note will provide information on which general contractor was negotiated for the project and whom you need to contact to obtain further information regarding requested sub bids.

Occasionally, the plan rooms also receive projects in which a Construction Manager is responsible. For these projects, there may be numerous bid packages that the Construction Manager is requesting bids for. Due to the complexity that each contractor may be bidding on only some of those bid packages and even different scopes within these bid packages, it is extremely difficult to list out the bidders for projects in which a Construction Manager is overseeing. Therefore, in the “Bidders List” tab, the plan room reporter inputs the following note: “Bid Package Breakdown For Bidders Is Not Available From The Construction Manager; Please Contact.....”. As a Construction Manager, if there is a project in which you wanted to submit a list stating which package each contractor expressed interest in, the plan rooms could formulate a list. The plan rooms would then do final confirmations the day prior to bidding to display as accurate of a bidders list as possible.

### Plan Room E-Mail Addresses

Des Moines: [mbiplanroom-dsm@mbionline.com](mailto:mbiplanroom-dsm@mbionline.com)  
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