



BANKER WIRE MESH INCORPORATED INTO CUSTOM MILLWORK AT NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL TOWER AND COMMONS

Woven material serves both a functional and thematic purpose within the exhibit space

MUKWONAGO, WI — JANUARY 24, 2018— After three years of construction, the recently completed Northwestern Mutual Tower and Commons in Milwaukee is now the second tallest building in the state of Wisconsin. Standing at 32 floors and 550 feet, this state-of-the-art tower houses 1.1 million-square-foot of office space designed to foster innovation and collaboration. The building's first floor Commons area showcases an expansive public atrium that includes a 40-foot long fireplace, tables, seating areas, a Starbucks and the "Northwestern Mutual Experience" — a museum and financial-planning information center.

The exhibit space in the Commons area was thoughtfully crafted by Downstream, a company that specializes in designing interactive ways to choreograph the user experience within branded environments. Inspired by a theme of interconnectedness, Downstream expressed their vision in the fixtures, displays and other physical attributes of the space. The three primary content zones connecting Northwestern Mutual's historic past with its future as a financial security business required division.

Downstream incorporated large panels of Banker Wire's PFZ-53 woven wire mesh as a way to create segmentation, without constructing solid walls. "We liked the idea of having a sense of transparency but also dividing the exhibit area to create partitions to support the interactive display systems," explained Tim Moraitis, a UX Strategist at Downstream.

Xibitz was tapped to fabricate all of the interactive, custom millwork, which had to accommodate heating, cooling, power and other technical needs. Banker Wire weaved the mesh panels in the specified orientation and then formed them on a press brake before presenting the material to Xibitz who devised a unique way of mounting the panels to the structure. Xibitz tack-welded a thin, magnetic material that mimics the look of stainless steel to create a frame around the large woven mesh panels. Then, for added stiffness, Xibitz added wall studs to support the weight of the massive panels. Approximately 10 magnets were placed around each frame allowing the mesh to magnetically snap into place, guided by the strategically placed magnets and studs. Brandon Dohrn from Xibitz said, "Altogether we fabricated 11 mesh walls with three panels for each side. We were able to emphasize the designer's vision for a plaid-like pattern of the mesh by doing the panels both front and back. It allows light through and creates a moiré pattern that appears to move when the viewer moves their position."

Moraitis added, "This mesh was a wonderful success as it served both a functional and thematic purpose. The material empowered us to take our story theme and make it tangible within the space, as seen in the way it helps focus people on both the digital and physical exhibit content."

In addition to the successful outcome, this project is geographically significant for Banker Wire since the Northwestern Mutual Tower stands right down the road from where Banker Wire was originally founded in 1896 as one of Milwaukee's early metal fabricators. "It's great to see how our product has stood the test of time and remained relevant after all these years as an important material for architectural and industrial applications both within Milwaukee and beyond," said Harrison Horan, Vice President at Banker Wire.

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About Banker Wire

Banker Wire is the world's leading manufacturer of woven and welded wire mesh for architectural and industrial applications. With the most modern and productive mill in the U.S., Banker Wire provides custom-weaved material for any aesthetic on any scale - from intricate design highlights to expansive building facades. Founded in 1896, Banker Wire's manufacturing expertise has been refined for more than a century, bringing unmatched customization, quality, and service to customers. State-of-the-art grid welding equipment provides a wide variety of wire alloy, spacing and diameter configurations, trimmed or untrimmed. For more information visit www.bankerwire.com.

About Architectural Woven Wire Mesh

Pre-crimped woven wire mesh is constructed of individual wires that are crimped prior to being woven together on a loom. Pre-crimping the wires provides a much higher degree of control during the weaving process. This allows for far more intricate and interesting patterns, as well as unique customization, to meet the vision of the designer. Banker Wire has refined and innovated its crimping process more than any other manufacturer, delivering more than 8,000 different spacing, diameter, and crimp combinations, plus endless customization options. As a result, Banker can make any woven wire mesh pattern imaginable - manufactured to specify for any project type.

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