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## STS Steel contributes skylight to SUNY Poly's ZEN project

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Haley Viccaro | February 22, 2015



Work continues on the ZEN building at SUNY Polytechnic Institute in Albany on Thursday, January 29, 2015. Pictured here is the third floor atrium, featuring STS steel support and an eco-friendly roof.

PHOTOGRAPHER PATRICK DOBSON



**1 of 10** - Work continues on the ZEN building at SUNY Polytechnic Institute in Albany on Thursday, January 29, 2015. Pictured here is the third floor atrium as seen from the sixth floor.

Construction seems to be nonstop at SUNY Polytechnic Institute in Albany, creating jobs for local businesses like STS Steel in Schenectady.

The college, formerly known as the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering, is currently constructing a \$191 million building — Zero Energy Nano — that will generate much of the energy it uses annually. STS Steel provided one of the building's most stunning features — an atrium skylight. Glenn Tabolt, co-founder and president of STS, said the project was among the most complicated the manufacturer has ever done. "We do some pretty unique stuff, and this definitely rates up there," Tabolt said. "It wasn't large, but very tricky. It's one of the more difficult things we have done."

#### Future opportunities

Tabolt said it took nearly all of his employees, about 55, to finish the skylight structure in a couple of months. It then took an additional two weeks or so to assemble it on site.

STS Steel partnered with Vector Foiltec, a construction company that uses foil to build complex skylights worldwide, to create the ZEN building's atrium skylight. Tabolt said the SUNY Poly project could lead to other work for STS with Foiltec.

"Foiltec does world-class work like this all over the world," he said. "It's a major technologically advanced company. It's great to see them come into the area. Any new customer provides us with an opportunity for future projects."

STS used curved pipes to make trusses, which together became the skylight. They were assembled in the shop in Schenectady to make sure they fit together before going out in the field, Tabolt said.

The largest truss was about 120 feet long, 9 feet deep and weighed 12 tons, which is about the weight of six automobiles. Foiltec provided "climate envelopes," an environmentally friendly substance used to create skylights, Tabolt said.

"Climate envelopes are filled with air and create an envelope so it creates a skylight," he said. "It's an interesting product. But it is a challenge for us to create a system that supports that."

Tabolt said without Gov. Andrew Cuomo's push to expand nanotechnology in New York, STS Steel would not have opportunities such as construction of the ZEN building.

#### Previous work

STS has done work for SUNY Poly in the past. When STS moved to Schenectady at the old Alco site between Erie Boulevard and the Mohawk River, the company's first project was the college's CESTM building, the University at Albany's atmospheric sciences research center.

"The college's projects really helped to employ a lot of people here," Tabolt said. "It's a great job creator for existing businesses in the area. For a few weeks, we had everyone doing something on the ZEN building."

Construction of the ZEN building is expected to be completed later this year. College spokesman Jerry Gretzinger said work is in the later stages with the shell of the building finished.

The ZEN building will house a 30,000-square-foot state data center along with 22,240 square feet of space for Tech Valley High School. The building will also have tech companies, including local software company CommerceHub.

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