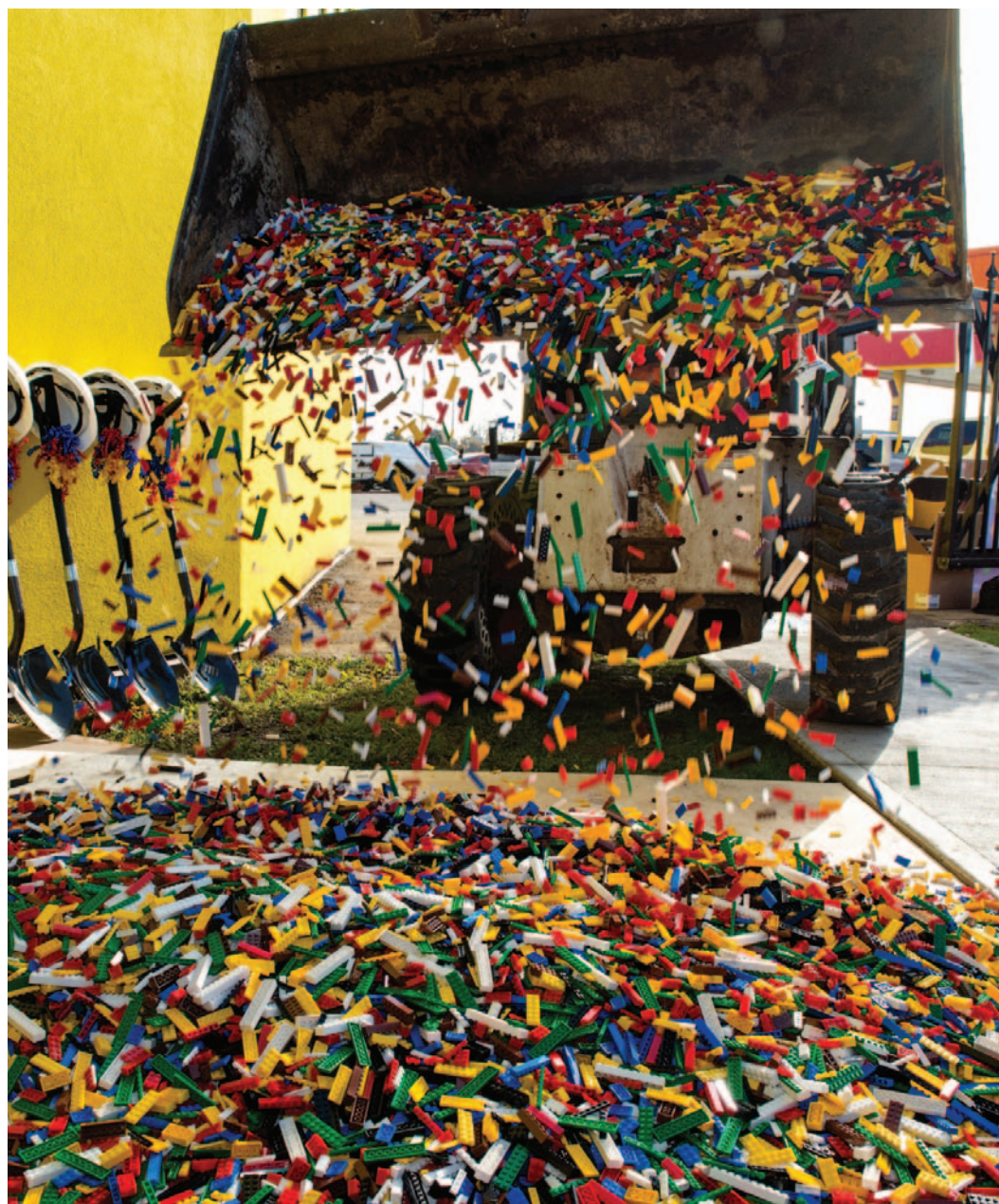


Legoland Discovery Centre, Vaughan Mills, Toronto

Ledcor co-ordinates construction of internationally-designed attraction with special scheduling and co-ordination challenges



STAFF WRITER – The GTA Construction Report Special Feature

Toronto's Legoland Discovery Centre, which opened on March 1, is a 34,000 sq. ft. lego box filled with rides and is an attraction that's unlike any other ever built in the city. It also features a GTA 'Miniland' created entirely out of Lego, a 4D cinema, interactive games, modelling, a café, and retail space.

Merlin Entertainments Group, the second-largest visitor attraction company in the world, holds the exclusive licence for the Lego brand name and has used it to open eight similar attractions internationally. A 'theme park in a box', the Legoland Discovery Centre is located not on a sprawling open space affected by weather and seasons, but inside Vaughan Mills, a mall/destination featuring retail locations for brands like Calvin Klein and Hugo Boss, and attractions like Pro Hockey Life and Hollywood's Lucky Strike Lanes.

Project general contractor Ledcor Group considers the connection to Vaughan Mills to be an asset. "We had been involved at the mall on several renovations over the years," says branch manager Gord Naylor. "We were doing the internal demolition, removing the internal remnants of the space's previous use as a Nascar track and the property owner recommended us to Merlin. We submitted a proposal. They interviewed us and our proposal was accepted."

Merlin's projects director for the Americas, Mitch Bernstein, says, "The Legoland Discovery Centre is built on a model based on the Lego brand and has evolved alongside new Lego characters. The attraction includes a four-metre high play structure, a Lego replication of the city of Toronto and plenty of opportunities for kids and parents to interact with Lego. There is a retail component, a café, birthday rooms and fully accessible amenities."

Bernstein said the project presents unique construction challenges, and Merlin has provided clear direction and support. After interviewing several companies, Merlin believed Ledcor would do the best job. "We were able to provide a visual representation of what the project would be and brought them to Atlanta to tour another Discovery Centre there. We wanted to help them as much as we could to achieve success and they have."

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Legoland

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John Kyle, Ledcor's senior site superintendent, says one of the biggest challenges was the cleanup of the components of the previous space. "We had to tear out extensive structure including steel and concrete from the go-cart track that was there," he says, adding that in order to complete noisier work when the mall wasn't active, the site had both a day and a night shift.

Bernstein says the attraction, aimed at children between the ages of three and 12, is designed to help families interact with kids on their level and through things they love – Lego and technology. "Kids and parents can build models together and then test them on the earthquake table or the car ramp," he said. "They can learn model building from a master model builder in a classroom-type setting and they can explore the city of Toronto and all its attractions through a city model."

Kyle calls the Toronto city model amazing, noting that "each key attraction in the city is there, from the skyline to the CN Tower. Kids can interact with boats on the



water or play a mini hockey game at the Air Canada Centre. Because it is a dawn-to-dusk experience, the lighting changes with the time of day. The nighttime experience is stunning."

Ledcor senior project manager Simon deGroot says while local electrical, plumbing and millwork contractors were used,

and as many local materials were sourced as possible, the project had a large international component. "There were weekly conference calls with people all over the globe, and the company used WebEx share mark ups and computer drawings with specialists in England, Italy, California, Germany and the Netherlands."

Noting that many of these meetings were chaired by Merlin's onsite project

manager, Ron Rivet of True North Project Management, Kyle says it was still challenging working with such a diverse and wide-spread team. "International contractors would arrive on site and need to be oriented to our safety standards and local codes," he says. "There was trailer after trailer of product arriving from all over the world, including a play structure from England, and we had to co-ordinate their off-loading to correspond with the arrival of the contractor the product was connected to. In some cases, that meant making adjustments in the field."

Bernstein says Michael Murphy of Parkin Architects Ltd did a great job with the design and inclusion of elements to improve the energy efficiency of the space, which deGroot explains is a 'good sustainable system' including efficient water closets and rooftop exhaust boosters.

"The crew at Ledcor did a great job and we're very pleased with the effort and performance of the entire team," says Bernstein. "The Legoland Discovery Centre is like nothing you've ever experienced before and it really needs to be seen to be appreciated."

For more information, visit legolanddiscoverycentre.ca/Toronto.



Congratulations to Ledcor.
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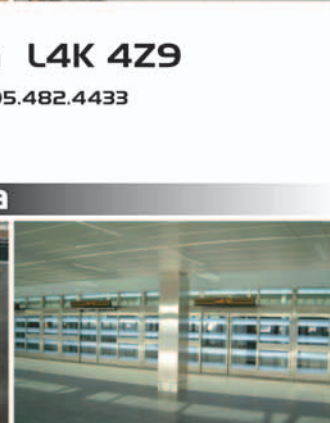
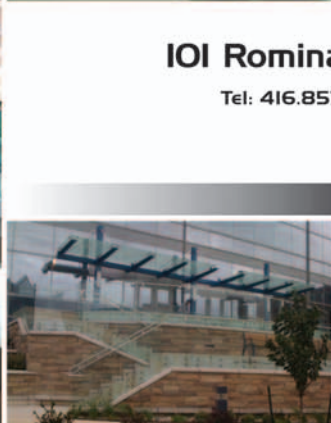
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