



Gilbane Building Company relied on DBO2 SafetyNet to achieve exceptional jobsite visibility and communication at its Heritage Village project in Freehold, NJ.

## AT-A-GLANCE

Project: Heritage Village at Elton Corner  
Location: Freehold, NJ

## DETAILS:

- Construction started in late April 2005 and was completed on August 15, 2006.
- Two 3-story senior housing buildings with 75 residential apartment condominium units for a total of 150 apartment units
- One 1-story community building with a community room, a fitness room, a wellness/healthcare room and kitchen
- Installation of 125 parking spaces, site improvements and highway easements

## CHALLENGES:

- Busy highway location
- 100 subcontractors working 10-hour days and weekends to meet an aggressive schedule for completion
- English was a second language for the majority of the tradesmen, who also lacked prior experience with a structured safety program

## RESULTS:

- > 20,000 observations on 117 inspections
- Identification and correction of 726 unsafe acts and conditions
- Zero recordables
- Zero lost time injuries
- 450 safe days worked
- 124,296 total work hours

## AWARDS:

- Recipient of the Paul J. Choquette Jr. Safety Excellence Award in 2006
- Recipient of the ISHN Safety that Soars Award (Honorable Mention) in 2007

## Transforming a challenging jobsite into a safe haven

Imagine a jobsite adjacent to a busy highway, where 100 subcontractors are working 10-hour days and weekends to meet an aggressive schedule for completion. Now imagine that these tradesmen are communicating in Spanish, Portuguese, Polish and Russian and that this jobsite represents their first experience with a structured safety program.

All of these challenges were present at a Gilbane project site called Heritage Village at Elton Corner, which broke ground in April 2005. Despite these potential obstacles, the project team successfully implemented and enforced project safety plan requirements from day one. With 124,296 safe work hours completed, the five Gilbane employees and 100 contractors on site achieved zero recordables and zero lost time incidents.

From day one, jobsite visibility and safety awareness were top priorities. The team relied on DBO2 SafetyNet to accomplish these goals. SafetyNet simplifies the collection, analysis and distribution of jobsite hazards. Using Pocket PCs, the team conducted over 117 inspections on site. Over 20,000 observations were made, resulting in the identification and correction of 726 unsafe acts and conditions. In the process, safety awareness at the site was elevated.

Says Superintendent Pat Catalano: "SafetyNet played a critical role for me because I was able to pick out the safety violations in the field. Since all the checklists are in the handheld, it makes me aware of other things I wasn't looking at. I could scroll through the list and be reminded of something I might not have thought about. It's a good tool for newcomers and superintendents. They can take this and go down the list, which helps them get more familiar with safety."

SafetyNet enabled the consistent and regular communication of site safety information. Reports were used in weekly meetings to identify unsafe trends by hazard or contractor, thereby increasing accountability for safety and driving the elimination of unsafe acts and conditions before they became accidents.

“The reporting is excellent,” says Catalano, of the Safety Summary and Contractor Analysis reports that he uses. “I download it to my Treo and it generates the report right there, without the need to synchronize my device. The reports break everything down so you can see your areas of weakness. I love it!”

The typical subcontractors on this project were small residential construction companies – many without adequate safety programs – so a significant danger was posed by inadequately trained workers or misunderstood work instruction. Because a majority of the tradesmen spoke English as a second language, consistent communication was even more critical.

“It was a non-union job,” explains Catalano. “A lot of our workers were local guys in pickup trucks who had very little safety awareness. In the end, we really taught them safety.”

Catalano used the SafetyNet reports he generated to evaluate, motivate and coach his subcontractors. The reports functioned as a barometer for safety performance, helping to pinpoint subcontractors that had been performing well and those who needed additional coaching. During meetings, his secretary verbally translated the SafetyNet information into Spanish for the crew. The team also conducted safety training in multiple languages and placed safety signs throughout the site in several different languages including Spanish, Portuguese, Polish and Russian. Tradesmen observed working safely were given public recognition and rewards, and safe work hour milestones were celebrated, with lunch served to the craft by the Gilbane project team.

In the end, Gilbane was able to transform a challenging jobsite into a zero incident site by using progressive safety tools, coaching contractor foremen, and fostering a positive total safety culture. Faced with a demanding schedule and multilingual work crews, Heritage Village beat the odds to become a safety success, with 124,296 hours worked over 450 days without a recordable injury. The project was recognized internally with the Paul J. Choquette Jr. Safety Excellence Award in 2006, the most significant award for Gilbane Building Company. Project team members were also awarded the Gilbane Stop Work and Safety Champion Awards for their safety leadership and initiatives. Recently, the project garnered an honorable mention in conjunction with the 2007 ISHN Safety that Soars Award.