

Project manager shares challenges, what's ahead for Osceola's \$70M smart sensor hub

Sep 14, 2016, 6:20pm EDT
Matthew Richardson, Reporter
Orlando Business Journal

As he walks through what is now a large empty building made up of thick, explosion-proof concrete walls, Eamonn Hassett uses one word to describe a massive Osceola County project: Courage.

"It's very courageous of Osceola County to invest in a project of this size," said the senior project manager of Orlando-based construction consulting firm ZHA Inc.



Eamonn Hassett, senior project manager with ZHA Inc.

Hassett, who has been in the construction industry for more than 30 years, said the \$70 million Florida Advanced Manufacturing Research Center will be one of the most unique facilities the Sunshine State has ever seen.

More than 70 workers were at the construction site on Sept. 9, when the last support beam was installed atop the 54-foot-tall structure. The 109,000-square-foot facility is 60 percent finished.

The building, which broke ground last year, created dozens of temporary construction jobs.

And once completed in March, it will generate nearly 20,000 permanent high-tech jobs within 10 years tied to studying and manufacturing tiny microchips — a fast-growing market with an expected \$154 billion global impact by 2020.

Here, Hassett talks more about the project, challenges and what's next:

What makes this project unique? I've worked on many different clean rooms, and I can say this one will be the most unique because of its flexibility. The building users — International Consortium for Advanced Manufacturing Research and the University of Central Florida — requested flexibility because they don't know which tools will be used to conduct the research. There could be around 400 different kinds of tools that may require the use of water,

electricity or gas. The clean room we're building will be equipped to use all of those different elements.

What's been the biggest challenge so far? To maintain flexibility of the clean rooms. The construction process has been open ended to stay in communication with the building users. That way, we will know exactly what they need and how to incorporate all the different uses in a single clean room.

What's next in the building process? The next step is focusing on installing electricity and plumbing.

Why is the project a big deal for Osceola County? This is going to bring leading-edge technology to the county and to the state. This is on the forefront of what Austin, Texas, is doing with semiconductors. Right now, we're sitting on a 200-plus-acre property, and it's all going to be dedicated to technology. That's a brave move and a big investment.

The big number

250 gallons: Amount of purified water used per minute for the Florida Advanced Manufacturing Research Center