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In some ways, the world seemed to turn more slowly at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. There were significant shutdowns, education became virtual, people needed to distance themselves socially, and companies sent employees home to work. At the same time, Hogan & Associates Construction and MHTN Architects pressed forward on Utah State University’s Moab Academic building as construction was categorized by the Utah state government as an essential industry because of the considerable public money involved.

The spread of COVID-19 reduced the labor force and created supply chain shortages. These elements necessitated an increased pace for selecting and ordering construction materials. Before COVID-19, design and construction teams had ample time to confirm an item or material selection. But during the pandemic, selection times were sometimes reduced to 24 hours. Alternatively, material arrival times were extended weeks or months, thus impacting construction schedules.

Design and pre-construction began on Utah State University Moab’s Academic building at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pre-construction successfully progressed despite COVID-related challenges, including material procurement and lead times. In November 2020, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Utah State University Moab’s Academic building broke ground. Hallmarks of constructing the academic building during COVID included resiliency, collaboration, flexibility, and agility.

Hogan & Associates Construction and MHTN Architects constantly collaborated to keep design and material selection moving forward. Before Hogan mobilized on-site, the team ordered and stored materials to ensure they’d be there when needed. From computer chip shortages delaying the main electrical gear’s arrival to the calling card for the fire panel nearly delaying the USU Moab Academic building’s opening, Hogan, MHTN, and numerous subcontractors quickly responded to meet changing circumstances.
Hogan and MHTN hope the USU Moab Academic Building will positively impact Moab by being an epicenter for training and gathering, a community resource, and a catalyst of economic growth and strength. From the project’s on-set, the community was the focus. Hogan, MHTN, and Utah State University Moab designed and constructed a facility to support the community without overutilizing fossil fuels. Instead, the building has a ground-source heating and cooling system and a solar array to create a Net Zero energy learning environment that generates as much power as it uses. From health professions and building construction spaces to the community-focused extension demonstration kitchen, Hogan and MHTN hope this facility will open avenues to residents as it brings increased higher education opportunities.

Further, Hogan and MHTN’s goal was to bolster the local economy by offering students the option to stay in Moab and be trained as skilled employees. As the economy strengthens, our team envisions USU Moab’s Academic building having a multi-generational impact, allowing individuals to better themselves, their families, and the community. Hogan and MHTN hope this first installment on USU Moab’s campus will be an example of what’s possible when it comes to sustainability, especially in a rural, desert area. As we look to the future of how USU Moab’s 40-acre campus could grow, we’re eager to see how this higher education institution will benefit Utah’s southeastern region.

Drone images of various phases of construction are shared on the following pages.