



Motivated by Christ's love
We bring hope to life
Especially for those most in need

Motivados por el amor de Cristo
Llevamos esperanza a la vida
Especialmente a los más necesitados

December 16, 2016

Big Sky Insulations
PO Box 838
Belgrade, MT 59714

Dear Big Sky:

It all started with a phone call. Our development consultant called to ask what was going on with our new migrant housing units in Mabton, WA. The utility bills were less than half what the permanent housing units were consuming. The primary difference: the permanent housing was built using standard stick frame construction, and the migrant housing was built with structural insulated panels (SIPs).

The Mabton project had been completed in March of 2003. I got the phone call in August of 2003, barely a month after I joined Catholic Charities Housing Services (CCHS) as Development Manager. CCHS builds affordable housing, primarily for farmworkers, in the seven central counties of Washington.

I traveled to Big Sky Insulations' Belgrade R-Control facility in late September/early October that year to learn more about SIPs and see the production process. I stayed at a Microtel in Bozeman, the back of which was adjacent to a major train yard. I heard train whistles faintly, but my room was very quiet.

The next morning as I left my room there was a lot of noise in the hallway that was coming from under the motel room hallway unit doors. I re-entered my room to find absolute silence. I was astounded at the sound deadening of the SIPs. The front of the Microtel was adjacent to I-90. The motel had a policy of a free night's stay if exterior noise made it difficult to sleep. An active train yard on one side, an interstate highway on the other, and no claims of a free night's stay due to excessive noise.

The manager told me that the owner had built an identical Microtel in Missoula, except it was stick-built. The SIPs motel's utility bills were half that of the other motel. So I was favorably impressed before even seeing Big Sky's operation.



5301 Tieton Drive, Suite G Yakima, WA 98908-3479 • P: 509.853.2800 F: 509.853.2805 • www.cchsyakima.org



I had traveled to Belgrade with my general contractor, Mark Lundgren of MC Lundgren Construction. We met Jerry Callisto, Big Sky's sales representative, and went on a plant tour. The operation was smooth and efficient. I was particularly impressed with the quality control employed throughout the production process. But what really closed the deal for me was the independent lab testing R-Control had done to prove the performance of their product. And their construction manual was comprehensive, with lab testing or stamped engineering as indicated.

I had a six-hour trip back to Washington with my general contractor. We unpacked the trip, the product, the Big Sky personnel, etc. We decided that we would build our next project with SIPs. Big Sky requested permission to work directly with our architect, because the Mabton project had used SIPs with a predetermined design and did not use SIPs efficiently.

Working directly with the architect, Big Sky was able to teach the nuances of using SIPs and how to maximize performance and minimize costs. That desire to provide best performance AND best value to the customer demonstrated the professional competence that is Big Sky Insulations.

CCHS is certainly not perfect and neither is Big Sky. They made a mistake cutting one panel on a project. We had the corrected panel on the job site the next day (450 miles from Belgrade)! On another project, we were having a minor condensation issue on some roof panels. Together with our general contractor and Big Sky's technical staff, we devised a fix that has since become a standard detail for certain applications.

If there are issues, they are addressed upfront and resolved. Big Sky has practiced absolute integrity in its dealing with CCHS. They are, without question, the finest supplier we work with.



John Probst
Development Manager
Catholic Charities Housing Services
Diocese of Yakima