



New Braunfels Utility chooses Lonestar Prestress Manufacturing's Easi-Set precast concrete buildings, engineered to withstand 140 mph winds, to house SCADA equipment and other vital infrastructure at local substations currently being overhauled.

Utility turns to Easi-Set buildings to protect SCADA equipment in storm

New Braunfels (Texas) Utility (NBU) has taken delivery of the first of two Easi-Set precast concrete buildings purchased from Lonestar Prestress Mfg. Inc (LPMI) located in Houston. Both buildings, which are engineered to withstand 140 mph winds, will house relay and control panels, standby batteries and SCADA (Supervisory

Control and Data Acquisition) equipment. The integrity of the Easi-Set buildings is expected to provide enhanced stability for the substation controls while giving NBU additional 138KV exits.

NBU was first introduced to Easi-Set buildings in 2003 when they were evaluating possible replacement structures for an existing metal substation building. The deteriorating structure was in need of replacement, according to Jim Williams, NBU substation supervisor. After extensive study, NBU selected a 24 by 40 by 12 Easi-Set precast concrete building for that initial project. The buildings are constructed from 6000 psi steel reinforced concrete and provide

customers with a maintenance-free, watertight enclosure. They have an expected life span of 50-plus years, can be erected in less than a week's time, and are UL level four bullet tested.

"We were attracted to the fact that the buildings are maintenance free, provide a fortified setting for our vital infrastructure and are affordable," Williams said.

NBU chose Lonestar buildings again in 2008 as part of the renovations of two separate substations. The first building, measuring 24 by 40 by 10, was delivered in March to a substation in New Braunfels. The second building, measuring 24 by 20 by 10, is scheduled for delivery this month to a location on the outskirts of town.

Both buildings will rest on precast floor slabs that are laid flat on an engineered gravel bed and post-tensioned together, thus

providing a monolithic foundation for the walls and roof panels. LPMI erected and completed the first building in about five days, which was critical to the timing of the project due to the scheduled power shutdown.

"When we go offline with a 138kv transmission line, we can't afford any delays on equipment, materials or contractors," Williams said. "We have a set construction window that has to be met which Lonestar accomplished."

LPMI (lonestarpstress.com), a privately-owned company based in Houston, manufactures prestressed concrete poles for the utility, lighting and security industries as well as Easi-Set precast concrete buildings and other assorted precast products. LPMI has one manufacturing facility in Houston that produces about 6,000 poles and 100 buildings annually. **CM**