

Heldenfels has role in stadium

Firm gets contract to help build facility for Dallas Cowboys

By Fanny S. Chirinos Caller-Times
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Fred Heldenfels IV always has been a Dallas Cowboys fan. One could say it's in his blood.

His grandfather was a fan, as was his father. It was only natural that Heldenfels, now president of Heldenfels Enterprises, a pre-cast concrete company with a plant in Corpus Christi, would cheer for the Cowboys.

He remembers as a 7-year-old dove-hunting with his grandfather at their ranch near Beeville, listening to the games on the radio while driving to and from the ranch.

"As soon as I was able to hold a small shotgun, and even before that, I remember hearing the plays by guys like Don Meredith, Bob Hayes and Leroy Jordan," he said. "I still follow the 'Boys, as I'm also an Aggies fan and some of the Aggies went on to the Cowboys."

Winning the contract to help build the Cowboys' new stadium was more than a professional achievement for Heldenfels, 47.

"It's kind of a fantasy fulfilled to play a part in these kinds of stadiums and watch them go up," he said. "I think these projects are fun and, as a fan, I think it'll help the Cowboys."

Heldenfels will provide the stadium with more than 1,800 seating risers and stairs, about 3,000 pieces of reinforced concrete from less than 20 feet long to upward of 45 feet long, he said. Pre-cast concrete is stressed concrete with an upward bow used by stretching a cable and filling the steel mold around it with



Photos by George Tuley/Caller-Times

Heldenfels employees work a casting line where pre-stressed concrete products are made. The same type of line will be used later when Heldenfels helps build the new Dallas Cowboys stadium in Arlington.



Heldenfels Enterprises, a pre-cast concrete company with a plant in Corpus Christi, has won a contract to help build the Dallas Cowboys' new stadium.



The yellow forms in this Heldenfels work site will be used in production of pre-cast concrete to go into the new Dallas Cowboys stadium. Heldenfels' local plant will be the firm's backup for the project.

By the numbers

- More than 1,000 seating risers, stairs
 - About 3,000 concrete pieces
 - Almost 900 wall panels
 - Almost 30,000 tons in total product
 - Production from January 2007 to April 2008
 - More than 11 percent, or 300, more pieces of concrete than Reliant Stadium
- Source: Heldenfels Enterprises

concrete.

The stadium in Arlington will be the largest NFL stadium, with 2.3 million square feet and a capacity of 80,000 and flexibility to accommodate 100,000 fans, according to HKS, Inc., the architecture firm that designed the structure.

The stadium will feature a retractable roof measuring 661,000 square feet, glass retractable end zone doors measuring 120 feet high by 180 feet wide, an 86-foot glass exterior wall and the world's largest center-hung video board with two panels facing the end zones and two facing the sidelines.

The stadium's two monumental arches soar 320 feet above the playing field and support the retractable roof, according to HKS, Inc.

"Our goal is to create a venue that lives up to and enhances the celebrated Dallas Cowboys brand," said Bryan Trubey, principal designer, in a written statement. "The new stadium palette of forms and materials create a modern and progressive architectural expression."

Heldenfels said his company will do most of the work in its San Marcos office, but will rely on its Corpus Christi location as a backup to meet deadline. Established originally in 1917 as Heldenfels Brothers, the company has undergone many internal changes.

The company first opened its plant in Corpus Christi in 1936 under the Heldenfels Brothers name. In 1995, Fred Heldenfels IV formed Heldenfels Enterprises, Inc. with his father F.W. Heldenfels III and bought the Corpus Christi prestressed plant from the Heldenfels Brothers entity.

The company has since worked on Whataburger Field and the American Bank Center, plus Minute Maid Park and Reliant Stadium, both in Houston; SBC Center in San Antonio, ; and the Toyota Center in Houston..

Heldenfels said his company's perseverance has mirrored that of the Cowboys and that's part of the reason he's remained a fan.

"I think what's remarkable about them is their consistency in winning, their discipline, perseverance and innovation," he said. "They were the most innovative team of their day. Everything from offensive and defensive plays, such as the shotgun formation, to being the first team to use computer analysis in recruiting. They were winners in spite of it all and maybe even because of it. I think that's how I would describe Heldenfels Enterprises."

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