



Omni Block of the Great Lakes: Building on Its Vision for Masonry

Located in Zeeland, MI, James Smits began Omni Block of the Great Lakes in 2018 with a vision to see masonry make a comeback through the implementation of a great product—Omni Block.

Omni Block is a patented insulated cementitious masonry unit (CMU) wall system that combines the benefits of indigenous aggregates, expanded polystyrene foam insulation, thermal lag (the delay, disruption, and redirection of heat flow), exposed thermal mass on the interior side which allows the absorption of heat and air tightness. This combination results in a thermally efficient wall system with a high R-value and is consistent with well-known and widely accepted thermal performance concepts. Omni Block meets the energy code using an eight-inch single-wythe wall.

Consumers Concrete manufactures Omni Block locally. All Consumers Concrete finishes and colors that apply to standard CMU, apply to Omni Block. Omni Block is manufactured in 8", 12", and 4" half high units called Omni Brick. All Consumers Concrete Bella Brik finish and color options also apply to Omni Brick. Moreover, Omni Block does not require furring, additional insulation, or sheetrock to complete the wall, even though numerous finishes (including sheetrock) may be added for aesthetic purposes.

Since 2018, dozens of Omni Block buildings have gone up across Michigan. Omni Block is considered a best management practice for projects involving restroom buildings, concession stands, school additions, pump houses and many more.

Omni Block of the Great Lakes, a member since its start in 2018, enjoys collaborating with the various architects, masons and manufacturers who make up the MIM. James Smit, president of Omni Block, offers tips for those new to the MIM or the industry. "Be willing to listen. Be willing to learn. And ask questions!"

The most enjoyable aspect of the masonry industry for James is in providing a great product that will stand the test of time. In addition, he shared that he is particularly proud of "educating the market on new and exciting innovations to masonry, and building and maintaining relationships with customers."