

THE REAL DEAL

NEW YORK CITY REAL ESTATE NEWS

1450 Brickell plans to ward off storms with curtain wall

June 03, 2009 02:04PM
By Jennifer LeClaire

As hurricane season approaches, companies doing business in Downtown Miami easily recall Wilma's glass-shattering wrath. The 2005 storm blew out tens of thousands of windows and interrupted businesses in the Central Business District for months, causing \$29 billion worth of damage.

The developers of 1450 Brickell, the 586,000-square-foot tower slated for delivery in January 2010, want to prevent a repeat scenario with a glass curtain wall system fashioned entirely out of large missile-impact resistant glass that withstood wind loads of up to 327 mph during lab testing (see below for a video of impact testing at 1450 Brickell). Designers said 1450 Brickell is the only office building on the market to meet this standard for wind resistance. It's a big bet.

"After enduring one of the most rigorous sets of glass testing ever conducted in the United States, we can say with confidence that 1450 Brickell's curtain wall system will set a new standard for building strength," said Jeff Lee, project executive for Miami-based Coastal Construction Company, the construction management firm building 1450 Brickell.

In setting this new standard, the office tower is offering tenants a peace of mind that cannot be found elsewhere in Miami — or the United States, said Alan Ojeda, CEO of Rilea Group, the Miami-based developer for 1450 Brickell.

"Construction quality has been a chief priority of ours since we began planning 1450 Brickell, so we're proud that our tower's glass façade will be the strongest in our market," Ojeda said. 1450 Brickell is also the first and only office tower in Miami to earn LEED Gold pre-certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

A curtain wall system rarely tops the list of selling points when leasing office space. But it's a competitive differentiator for 1450 Brickell in a market with a glut of inventory coming on line in 2010.

"Existing buildings in the market would have to take out their entire frame and change the whole curtain wall system to compete with 1450 Brickell," said Danet Linares, executive vice president at Miami-based Blanca Commercial Real Estate. She said Rilea has invested in business continuity with the curtain wall system.

Although there are no government incentives for building a wind curtain with such high standards, 1450 Brickell will see a return on its investment in the form of lower insurance costs — and so will its tenants. With the Obama Administration opposing the expansion of the federal flood insurance program to include coverage for wind damage, that becomes even more important.

"When a developer exceeds the current building codes, insurance companies value that attribute because it lowers their exposure to loss," said Gayle Bainbridge, a partner at Global Risk, an insurance solutions firm in Miami. "At 1450 Brickell, insurance will be far more available to tenants than it would be otherwise and at lower rates. Any business that lived through Wilma will appreciate 1450 Brickell."

Tags: [1450 brickell](#), [alan ojeda](#), [blanca commercial real estate](#), [coastal construction company](#), [danet linares](#), [jeff lee](#), [rilea group](#)

RELATED POSTS

[Brickell construction continues](#)

[TRD video: First look at 1450 Brickell](#)

[Met 2 tower still seeks tenants](#)

[Developer not worried about Miami office market](#)