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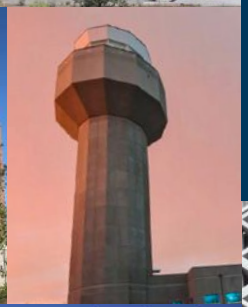
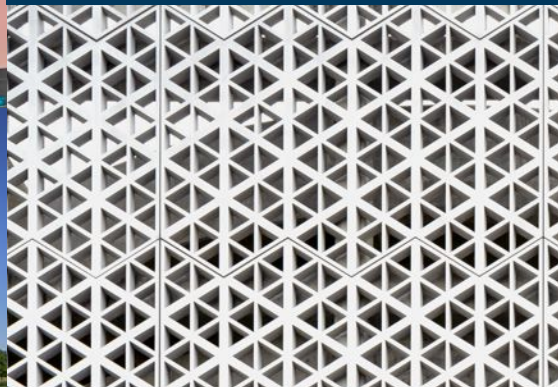
DESIGNING WITH PRECAST CONCRETE

DIGITAL EDITION

SPRING 2025

2025 PCI DESIGN AWARDS





Office Building

EDUCATIONAL MEDIA FOUNDATION HEADQUARTERS

FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE

PROJECT TEAM

Owner: Educational Media Foundation, Franklin, Tenn.

PCI-Certified Precast Concrete Producer:
GATE Precast, Ashland City, Tenn.

Precast Concrete Specialty Engineer:
GATE Precast, Brentwood, Tenn.

Architect: HASTINGS Architecture, Nashville, Tenn.

Engineer of Record: EMC Structural Engineers, Nashville, Tenn.

General Contractor: Brasfield & Gorrie, Nashville, Tenn.

PCI-Certified Erector: Precision Stone Setting Company, Hiram, Ga.

Project Size: 169,000 ft^2

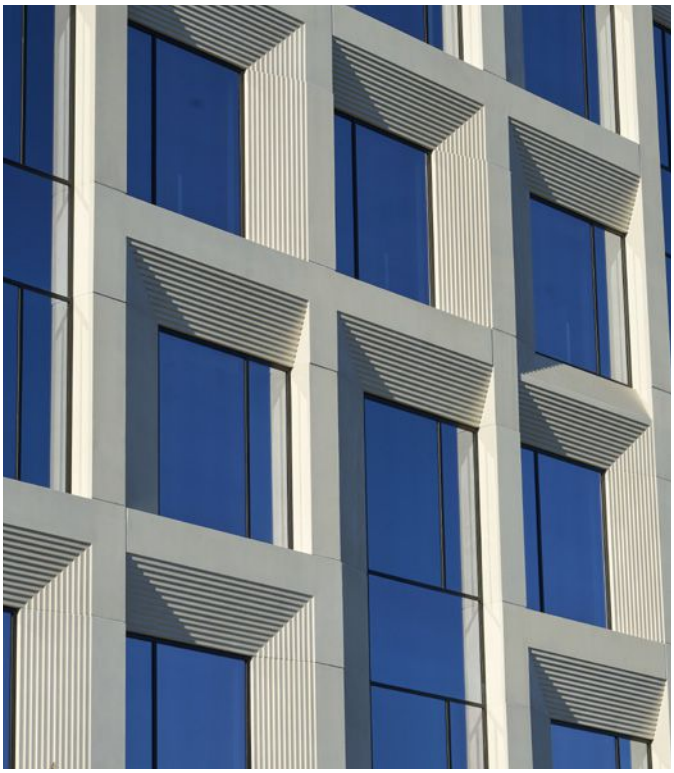
When relocating its corporate headquarters from Rocklin, Calif., to Franklin, Tenn., faith-based nonprofit Educational Media Foundation (EMF) sought to consolidate separate locations into one centralized campus. The company, which was founded in 1982, owns and operates two of the largest Christian music radio networks in the United States, K-LOVE and Air1. EMF also has a global reach via their streaming audio platforms and other endeavors, including podcasts, concerts, events, and more. To meet the wide-ranging functional needs of the company's employees and teams, officials at EMF partnered with HASTINGS Architecture and GATE Precast on the construction of a five-story, 169,000 ft^2 corporate headquarters featuring precast concrete components.

PRECAST CONCRETE BRINGS THE K-LOVE

EMF's new headquarters is defined by two distinct structures united by a shared entrance and lobby. Clad in precast concrete panels and glass, the buildings offer an architectural expression of the two ancient Greek interpretations of time, Chronos and Kairos. The design concept for the headquarters explores how life is defined by these two interpretations. The sequential, linear time of Chronos is conveyed via the rhythmic vertical articulation of the façade, while the moments of transformational intervention represented by Kairos are experienced via playful, irregular chamfered recesses. Accommodating these dynamic aesthetic goals while also deploying a material that could offer mass, sharp edges, and a monumental presence was a challenge, but ultimately, precast concrete emerged as the ideal solution for meeting the structural and architectural goals of the project.

"Precast concrete was the natural choice for achieving the dramatic stepped forms of the deep chamfered recesses—a signature feature of the building's façade," said Chris Melander, an associate

Photos: *Nick McGinn of McGinn Photography and GATE Precast*



at HASTINGS Architecture. "Concrete ultimately establishes a sophisticated architectural language for the project, creating striking shadow play and depth."

The use of precast concrete on the project brought many advantages to the work. GATE Precast deployed a back-forming method to reduce the weight of the precast concrete panels, which was critical for maintaining the structural integrity of the cantilevered sections of the building. Early iterations of the profiles were filled, heavy shapes. Subsequent versions included small voids to reduce mass. Back-forming converted the shapes into a shell form factor, with strategically placed ribs to accommodate connections. This technique dramatically reduced the weight of the pieces and the associated demand on the structure. Additionally, for the auditorium, load-bearing precast concrete panels were specified to support the roof's long spans and eliminate the need for columns at the perimeter. This design creates an open space that is ideal for both performances and worship.

The acoustic qualities of precast concrete also played a major role in its selection for the EMF headquarters. "Given the building's proximity to Interstate 65 and the presence of sensitive spaces such as recording studios and performance areas, this project required high-performance acoustic solutions," Melander said. "Precast concrete, with its inherent mass, was a key part of our acoustic strategy, effectively controlling low-frequency sound transmission."

Melander added that the use of precast concrete also streamlined the construction process, as the exterior of the headquarters was delivered to the site as a nearly complete system. As a result, instead of sequencing multiple trades for framing, sheathing, and insulation, the project team could focus on integrating the precast concrete panels and glazing, thereby reducing complexity on the job and shortening the project timeline. Additionally, the integration of curtainwall embeds cast into the precast concrete panels and a semi-unitized design with punched openings helped expedite the dry-in process for the building envelope. And, with just two main materials and systems—precast concrete and glass—used for the façade, the number of required trades at the jobsite was reduced, further optimizing the construction process.

"The EMF headquarters is a beacon for future development in Franklin, Tenn., setting a new standard for thoughtful, modern architecture in the area," Melander said. "More than just a workplace, the building serves as an inspiring environment that nurtures creativity and attracts talent, driving the organization's mission and the community's growth."

KEY PROJECT ATTRIBUTES

- Educational Media Foundation, a faith-based nonprofit, relocated its headquarters from Rocklin, Calif., to Franklin, Tenn., with the construction of a five-story, 169,000 ft^2 facility.
- Clad in precast concrete panels and glass, the buildings offer an architectural expression of the two ancient Greek interpretations of time, Chronos and Kairos.
- In addition to offices, meeting spaces, and on-air/podcasting studios, EMF's new headquarters also feature a state-of-the-art, 1100-seat performance venue.

PROJECT AND PRECAST CONCRETE SCOPE

- Along with glass, precast concrete served as the primary building material for the building's façade, offering the mass, sharp edges, and monumental presence the project team sought in the design.
- Precast concrete played a key role in achieving the building's acoustic goals by effectively controlling low-frequency sound transmission.
- More than 80,000 ft^2 (523 pieces) of precast concrete were installed on this project.