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New Deep Ellum tower will be built with 'smart' glass

California high-tech glass firm View lands its biggest Dallas project.



Work crews will start installing View Inc.'s smart glass next month. (Westdale)

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A new tower going up on Dallas' skyline will be using the latest in high-tech glass.

The 23-story office high-rise under construction in the Epic development on the eastern edge of downtown is planned to eventually house operations of transportation firm Uber.

The Deep Ellum tower will also be the largest building in North Texas to use View Smart Glass.

The project being built by developers Westdale and KDC will open next year.

Next month, work crews will begin installing 182,000 square feet of high-tech glass manufactured by California-based View Inc.

"We've done a few projects in Texas," said Rahul Bammi, chief business officer for View. "This is the largest building we are doing in Texas.

"It's close to a half million square feet of building size."

View is also providing glass for the remodeled terminals and new construction planned at DFW International Airport.

View Smart Windows change tints and visibility based on the time of day or programming.

“It works automatically,” Bammi said. “You can control it from your phone. The energy consumption is better for the building — we reduce that.”

The smart glass system also does away with the need for blinds inside the buildings.

“If you drive past one of our buildings, you won’t notice any blinds or shades — what we tend to call the broken tooth phenomenon,” Bammi said. “And if you look at the people in the building, they are much better off from a productivity and health perspective.

“We see lower eye strain and headaches, and people’s productivity goes up.”

Because of its smart building applications, the glass costs more initially.

“On an installed glass basis we tend to be somewhere between 30% to 50% more expensive,” Bammi said. “But we help with cost to reduce the size of the HVAC system and eliminating the blinds.

“There is annual operating savings with energy and not having to replace blinds.”

The Epic tower under construction is the fourth phase of a mixed-use development that includes a boutique hotel, an apartment high-rise and two office towers.

“We believe incorporating View into The Epic II makes our building a leader in the innovative wellness category,” Dennis Trimarchi, managing principal for Westdale, said in a statement. “This is a differentiating amenity that office tenants value, and we have the ability to upgrade the system over time to adapt to the changing wants of the health and wellness landscape.”

Founded in 2008, View manufactures all of its glass at a plant in Mississippi. The company already has its product in 23 million square feet of buildings in North America.

“We actually have four projects under construction today in Texas,” said Kyle Smith, regional vice president. “We have portion of the facade on the new 2601 Victory project with Hillwood. We are really excited to be a part of it and have a great relationship with Hillwood.”

View also did the glass for the new Independent Financial headquarters in McKinney.

The company filed for an initial public stock offering in November. Bammi said the stock offering is expected to generate \$800 million to fund the company’s growth.

“We have design commitments for another 52 million square feet,” he said. “Once we get a couple of signature installations in a city going, the market tends to pick up momentum and grows much faster.”