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## McHugh Completes Aqua, Skyscraper of the Year

CHICAGO, May 25 /PRNewswire/ -- James McHugh Construction Co. has completed Aqua, the internationally acclaimed mixed-use tower that was named Skyscraper of the Year in a global competition, McHugh officials announced.

Begun in February 2007, the 82-story, mixed-use tower includes condominium, apartment, retail and hotel space. It was named Skyscraper of the Year by Emporis, the international building database, besting more than 300 competitors worldwide.

McHugh served as general contractor for Aqua, located at 225 N. Columbus Drive, for owner Aqua Development Group LLC, an affiliate of Magellan Development Group. The design architect is Studio/Gang/Architects, headed by Jeanne Gang, with Loewenberg Architects the architect of record.

Emporis' announcement noted Aqua as a "brilliant technical achievement for the precision of its construction" and its "application of green design innovations to an extremely large project."

Aqua's design received international attention for the undulating waves of concrete that make up the balconies. Beyond their visual impact, the "waves" diffuse Chicago's winds and provide shade from the sun, reducing energy use. The exterior even garnered an award from animal rights group PETA, as it deters migrating birds from hitting the building.

"In most structures, a single innovation would be enough to make it stand out," said Dave Alexander, McHugh vice president, "but the exterior is only one part of what makes Aqua so remarkable. We're grateful McHugh was entrusted with the responsibility to create this extraordinary building."

Mass-producing Aqua's ripples to meet a modern construction schedule required as much innovation as the design. There is no repetition whatsoever in the thousands of ripples that make up the balconies. McHugh had to invent a way to pour the concrete for the balconies, with every one unique, while meeting an aggressive schedule.

McHugh met other challenges with Aqua. Its proximity to Lake Michigan and the Chicago River meant site dewatering was a fact of life. The team also had to secure and fill 1,100 linear feet of Chicago's infamous underground freight tunnels.

Aqua is seeking LEED certification for environmental sustainability. The terrace atop the 8th floor doubles as a green roof. Green materials were used throughout the structure and its garage includes public charging stations for electric cars.

McHugh, [www.mchughconstruction.com](http://www.mchughconstruction.com), founded in 1897, is one of Chicago's oldest and largest general contracting, construction management and consulting firms.

SOURCE James McHugh Construction Co.

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