

Solano Community College Beats Back the Elements With Long-Lasting Exterior Paint

By Mike Couchie

Tall or oddly shaped buildings can be very costly to paint, especially when it comes to labor. And when buildings are exposed to intense UV rays and moisture, they may need to be repainted often to maintain their color and condition.

Faced with the prospect of having to repaint a relatively new, but severely faded, building three times over a 15-year period, facility management at Solano Community College in Fairfield, Calif., decided to try a different approach. The team took advantage of a 15-year paint-and-labor warranty on NeverFade paint from APV Engineered Coatings, saving more than \$48,000.

Solano Community College's Vallejo Center building was completed in 2007. It is located on the San Pablo Bay northeast of San Francisco, an area known for ocean-driven fog, wind and moisture coupled with sunny, hot and windy afternoons. The weather conditions caused the building's exterior — originally painted with a premium latex paint — to fade from a bright and vibrant blue to a tired, battleship grey in just five years. Even a light touch of the walls left a chalky residue on the hands.

"The building's curb appeal was lackluster, to put it mildly, and we started to get complaints from students, community members and our board of trustees," said James Buchanan, director of facilities for Solano Community College.

Tough Exterior Coating

Buchanan and other college leaders didn't relish the thought — or the expense — of having to repaint the building every five years, and sought a paint product that could stand up to the elements over a longer period of time. They ultimately decided to explore NeverFade, which contains Kynar Aquatec resin, a tough, engineering thermoplastic that maintains high stability when exposed to harsh thermal, chemical and ultraviolet environments. The water-based, low-VOC paint also resists fading, dirt, staining, algae, mold, fungal growth, chemical pollutants and corrosion.

"Reducing VOCs is important for the safety and comfort of our students and staff," Buchanan



APV Engineered Coatings exactly matched the vibrant and eye-catching "Solano Safety Blue" that Solano Community College is known for.

said. "We want to be as environmentally responsible as we can in every aspect of our operations."

Long-Lasting, Custom-Matched Color

APV custom-blends each batch of NeverFade and primer, if requested, to match the customer's specified color. In this case, APV exactly matched the vibrant and eye-catching "Solano Safety Blue" that the college is known for.

Erin Brown, director of marketing and business development for APV Engineered Coatings, said that the company's warranty is unique because it doesn't just cover the cost of the product, but labor as well. "It states that if the paint fades more than a delta E of 5 in 15 years, we will repaint the entire facility free of charge to the property owner and the painting contractor," she added.

For Solano Community College's Vallejo Center, those costs were estimated to be \$16,000-\$18,000 per paint job — a significant expense if the building needed to be repainted every five years.

"Fifteen years is quite a long time for paint to sustain its color in the type of high UV exposed environment we have," Buchanan said. "That longevity saves us a tremendous amount in terms of maintenance costs and labor. And that

doesn't even take into account the 'soft costs' associated with the building's appearance."

Easy to Apply

The building's new paint job was recently completed by Tiber Painting LLC of San Jose, Calif. The firm's owner Ivans Belovencevs, explained that repainting the building first required his team to power wash its surface to remove the chalky residue left behind by the previous paint. The company then applied three coats to the building.

According to Buchanan, feedback on the project has already been positive.

"We want to make our campus attractive to students and the community so it's a good learning environment and a place people want to be," Buchanan said, noting that the college is also interested in using NeverFade for upcoming exterior maintenance jobs. "Everyone is impressed with the striking color."

Michael Couchie, head of sales, has served 26 years at APV Engineered Coatings, focusing the vast portion of his career on new product development and sales for emerging markets.

