

## AGC and iSqFt Partner on Electronic Plan Room Technology

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By Robert L. Barker

After careful consideration, the AGC of America Executive Committee recently endorsed iSqFt, an Internet plan room developed by Construction Software Technologies Inc. The endorsement culminated an extensive process of financial and performance review of the leading Internet plan room companies. Partners in the evaluation process included Intel and Gateway.

Many AGC chapters are exploring the use of the Internet to help solve some of the inefficiencies in the construction industry. They are evaluating ways to help their members save time and money and assisting with streamlining their business processes.

iSqFt and its partner, The Internet Plan Room Inc., have joined forces in the southeast to offer their powerful suite of tools to AGC chapters. In other regions of the country, the iSqFt team is aggressively marketing AGC chapters to implement the iSqFt/Internet Plan Room. Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee and Louisiana AGC chapters have entered into agreements with iSqFt and The Internet Plan Room and are in various stages of implementation. The Master Builders of Iowa and the Carolinas AGC have recently signed letters of intent.



The iSqFt service offers access to statewide plans and specifications 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from its Internet site. Some of the features of the program include:

- Ability to view plans and specifications anywhere, any time.
- Ability to view plans on a computer without time-consuming downloading.
- Custom queries to view only the projects of interest, searching by project category, dollar range, location, public or private projects and so forth.
- Access to private projects using a unique code created by the owner or owner representative.
- Enhanced computer technology such as zooming in and positioning to view specific plan details efficiently.
- Ability to perform estimating take-off functions from a computer and transfer the information to computer estimating software, such as Timberline.
- Each general contractor is provided a private online construction office that will be password protected and accessible to invited subcontractors and suppliers. The construction office provides these firms with an exclusive communication tool that will greatly increase efficiency for all involved.

iSqFt works well for many AGC chapters that cover large geographic areas, with many members located in outlying areas. Traveling to a plan room can become a time-consuming and costly experience for these members. iSqFt will save members the time and expense of traveling to plan rooms. Operational iSqFt/Internet Plan Rooms, for example, have all of the plans currently offered in traditional paper plan rooms operated by the AGC chapter or otherwise.

AGC chapters maintain a superior working relationship with the

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architectural and engineering community, which is showing support for the program by supplying AGC with plans, specifications and addenda for projects. When AGC receives a set of plans from an owner or architect, the plans are scanned and then placed onto the system in a read-only type format that cannot be manipulated or changed in any way.

Each subscriber receives a viewer plug-in software program, along with a user ID and password to access the system. The iSqFt/Internet Plan Rooms have been up and running in select locations for more than a year, and new plans are being added to the system daily.

The AGC of Wisconsin and AGC of Greater Milwaukee are studying iSqFt very carefully.

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