

Final Steel Rafter Installed On World Trade Center Transportation Hub



Workers at the World Trade Center site topped off its transportation hub on Tuesday, putting into place the final steel rafter. It's another big step forward in the rebuilding of the WTC site. NY1 transit reporter Jose Martinez got an exclusive look as the latest piece fell into place on a project that's going to open years later than expected.

By Jose Martinez

It's been a year of milestones at the World Trade Center site.

"We've completed the museum, May of this year. Tower Four, we opened up, Tower One, we opened up," said WTC Director of Construction Steven Plate.

And on Tuesday came another one as workers topped off the World Trade Center Transportation Hub by putting into place the 114th and final steel rafter.

Port Authority officials say the towering centerpiece of the nearly \$4 billion project, designed by architect Santiago Calatrava to look like a bird in flight, is an ironworker's dream.

It's made up of 618 pieces of steel that weigh more than 12,000 tons.

"It's probably one of the most challenging, difficult jobs we've ever done," said Robert Koch, executive vice president of Skanska. "You've got to be very precise with the engineering to keep the stresses under control where you locate the structure."

But the flashy project that will open years later than expected and at twice the original pricetag, even though PATH train service returned to the site more than two years after the September 11th attacks.

"We've never turned off the system. We've always worked around those people coming in and 100,000 people come in and out each day via PATH to get to and from New Jersey and we've been able to build around them," said Plate.

Once the hub opens, it will connect commuters to the MTA's new Fulton Center and 11 subway lines.

And it might make riders marvel a bit at their surroundings.

"They're gonna say, 'Wow, this is great,' and I've been on a number of projects that take some time, but when they see when it comes together, they just get amazed," said Plate.

What milestones should New Yorkers expect next down here? In the spring of 2015, another platform is set to open inside the station, followed by the opening of portions of the public space, all leading to the late 2015 grand opening.