**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact:

Carol Warkoczewski

512-263-5521

[cwarkoczewski@yahoo.com](mailto:cwarkoczewski@yahoo.com)

**University of Texas Project Team to Present at 2012 AIA National Convention**

AUSTIN, TX – Key players from the University of Texas at Austin Belo Center for New Media construction project will present a session titled, “Owners! Start With this One Process (the OPR) to Ensure Project Predictability and Team Success,” at the 2012 American Institute of Architects (AIA) National Convention in Washington, D.C., May 17-19, 2012.

With a total project cost of $52 million, the Belo Center for New Media (Belo Center) project for the University of Texas at Austin College of Communication involves a plethora of stakeholders. Integrated with the University’s master building plan, this 120,000 square-foot place of learning is scheduled for completion in June 2012 and is targeting LEED Silver Certification.

Carol Warkoczewski, AIA, MSOLE, facilitated the OPR development and documentation process for the Belo Center, and will co-present and moderate a panel discussion at the National AIA convention on May 19. Co-presenters include Severine Halls, Senior Project Manager from the University of Texas System Office of Facilities Planning and Construction, William Throop, P.E., Director of the University of Texas at Austin Project Management and Construction Services, and Earl Swisher, AIA, Principal Architect with the Lawrence Group. John A. Martin, DBIA, Division President of Flintco, LLC, the construction management company spearheading Belo Center construction, will join the discussion from the audience side.

What if all the people who will use, maintain, and operate the completed Belo Center - the students, professors, IT system administrators, maintenance engineers, and others - could express their needs and speak face-to-face with each other at the very conception of the project? What if the University’s strategic priorities for the Belo Center could be identified while occupant and end-user requirements for the success of the project are clearly articulated and decided upon in one document that is agreed to at the highest levels?

That’s where the expanded OPR (Owner's Project Requirements) comes in. The OPR starts with a process and ends with a document. The process gathers stakeholders for collaborative project planning and definition to ensure that all parties communicate and understand the requirements for project success from the start. The results are a better-managed project cost, scope, and schedule and a finished facility that better meets the needs of those who own, use, and maintain it.

The 90-minute interactive presentation and panel discussion session, “Owners! Start With this One Process (the OPR) to Ensure Project Predictability and Team Success,” is an excellent fit for the AIA convention theme, “Design Connects.”

The power of design is about more than just a pretty building. It is about meeting the needs of the facility’s end-users and operators, which in turn meets the strategic mission – the “why” of the facility. When the facility’s purpose is clearly understood, there is a pride and purpose that becomes inherent in its design and construction. In this way, the built environment becomes linked to the success of the institution it serves and the people who use and operate the building become integrated partners with its success. Buy-in is achieved and the project team unifies and solidifies the Owner's vision and mission.

**About Carol Warkoczewski.** Warkoczewski is the Founder and Executive Director of the Institute for Leadership in Capital Projects (I-LinCP), Owner of Synergy Builders and CEO of Construction Information Solutions. She served for 20 years as an executive and project manager in the private sector and for the University of Texas and 10 years as an independent professional consultant, trainer and facilitator. Warkoczewski holds a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership and Ethics (MSOLE) from St. Edward’s University and a Bachelor of Science from the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Wisconsin.

**About Severine Halls.** Halls has been in project management for 28 years and is a Senior Project Manager at the University of Texas OFPC (Office of Facilities Planning and Construction). Her primary responsibilities are for portfolio management on Academic and Campus projects at the University of Texas at Austin with active building projects valued at over $160 million. She led the development of OPR procedures that have been implemented across the state-wide University of Texas System. Ms. Halls graduated with highest honors from the University of Tennessee with a Bachelor of Architecture.

**About Earl Swisher.** Swisher, Principal of the Lawrence Group, has been practicing architecture for 31 years serving prestigious clients such as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the New York Public Library. The Lawrence Group Architects of Austin is an emerging leader in public and institutional work. Representative clients include the City of Austin, University of Texas and Travis County. Swisher received a Bachelor of Architecture from Clemson University, studied at the Charles E. Daniel Center for Building Research and Urban Studies in Genoa, Italy, and received a Master of Architecture from Clemson University.

**About William Throop.** Throop is the Director of the Project Management and Construction Services department at the University of Texas at Austin. He is responsible for all renovation and minor construction projects on the University of Texas main campus, as well as at its satellite campuses including the Marine Sciences Institute and McDonald Observatory. His organization consists of a project management and contracting staff of 50 and a shop construction section staff of 90. He is responsible for an annual construction program that includes over 400 projects totaling over $45 million. Throop holds a Bachelor in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Clarkson University, a Masters in Civil Engineering from North Carolina State University, a Masters in Procurement and Contracting Administration from George Washington University and a Masters in National Resource Strategy from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. He is a registered Professional Engineer in the states of Texas and Virginia and is a LEED Accredited Professional with the U.S. Green Buildings Council.

**About John A. Martin.** As Flintco, LLC Division President, Martin provides oversight and leadership of the Flintco Texas Division based in Austin, Texas. He has a 26-year track-record of excellence in construction management, with a diverse career including work in commercial, industrial, retail, educational, athletics, lab, high-tech and historical renovation in both the public and private sectors. Under Martin’s leadership, the Austin Flintco office has won numerous national and regional awards for Construction Excellence, Design-Build Excellence and Excellence in Safety from the Associated Builders and Contractors, the Design-Build Institute of America and the Associated General Contractors.

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