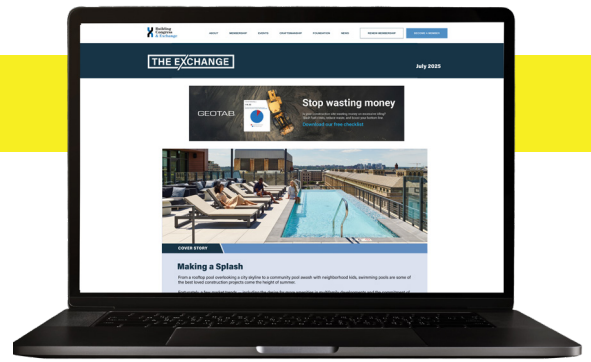


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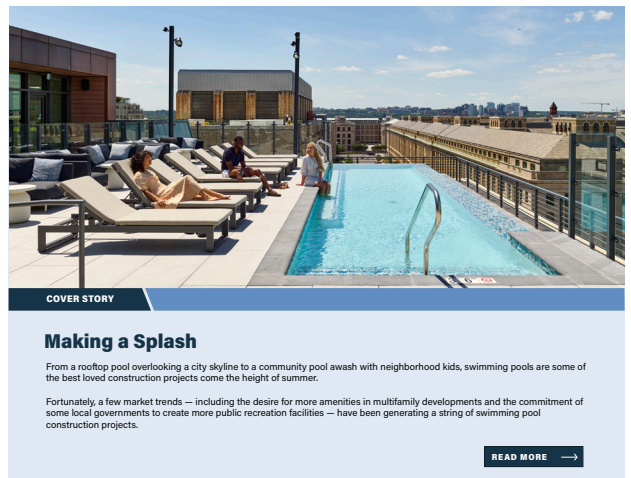
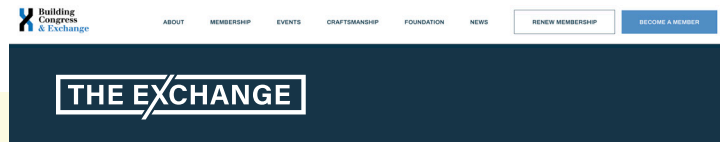
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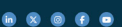


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Making a Splash

BCE&E News | June 23, 2025

From a rooftop pool overlooking a city skyline to a community pool awash with neighborhood kids, swimming pools are some of the best loved construction projects come the height of summer.

Fortunately, a few market trends — including the desire for more amenities in multifamily developments and the commitment of some local governments to create more public recreation facilities — have been generating a string of swimming pool construction projects.



At The Annex on 12th, residents can cool off in an infinity-edge rooftop pool with a spectacular view of the Washington Monument. Photo courtesy of Tom Holdsworth Photography.

While designing The Annex on 12th, a 562-unit multifamily development in Washington, D.C. Design Collective was asked to include a luxury pool on top of the 13-story building.

As with many rooftop pools, space was at a premium. In addition, designers had to overcome a list of technical challenges involved in building on the structure: drainage, height restrictions, safety requirements and MEP systems needed to operate the pool.

"It's an exercise in mind gymnastics to understand the technical constraints of the building while balancing the spatial needs of the project," said Brian Reetz, Principal with Design Collective. "Big picture decisions need to be made early in the design process about the pool and unit counts, and balancing those two... in some developments, you can't lose two apartment units beneath the pool because that won't work with the project's pro forma."

A decision to retain apartments beneath the planned pool at The Annex meant designers had to alter the elevation of the roof to accommodate the full depth of the pool and the systems that needed to run beneath it. The design also had to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Washington's tight building height restrictions.



At The Forge, designers surrounded a courtyard pool with a wealth of outdoor amenities. Photo courtesy of Red Concrete Photography.

The solution to all of those challenges was to install a modest, four-foot deep, infinity edge pool at one corner of the rooftop. Set in among chaise lounges, other seating options, the building's clubhouse, planters, a four-seasons outdoor space and a clear glass safety fence, the pool provides residents with a luxurious opportunity to take a dip, sun bathe and relax in front of a spectacular view of the Washington Monument.

The monument, Reetz said, "is a borrowed visual amenity. It's a very Japanese design theory. You design your space to borrow views and that makes your property more amazing."

Other multifamily pool projects aren't as technically challenging, but no less carefully crafted.

At The Forge apartment complex in Elbridge, Design Collective created a more spacious pool in a ground-level courtyard. The design included laminar jets along one side of the pool to create soothing white noise and a resort-style chaise lounge shelf at one end of the pool where residents could recline and drape their feet in the water.

Pools, however, are only part of the "checklist" of amenities that are needed to woo potential renters," Reetz said.

"You're selling a lifestyle so you need interior amenities that complement exterior amenities, and the quality of amenities can make a project stand out."

Consequently, The Forge's pool area was designed to be visible from inside the clubhouse, but surrounded by other attractive features — a four-season outdoor space, community grills, an outdoor TV, a variety of comfortable seating options, and even space that could be used for co-working.



"I'm always surprised at how many people rent an apartment and then work in the amenity spaces," he said.

Consequently, residents at The Forge could easily settle into a comfy chair in the courtyard or a table beneath a trellis to work on their laptops then refresh themselves midday by diving into the pool for a quick swim.

Neighborhood children were so excited to see the construction of the Walter F. Carter pool that they kept asking workers, "is it done yet?" Photo courtesy of Plano-Coudon Construction.

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