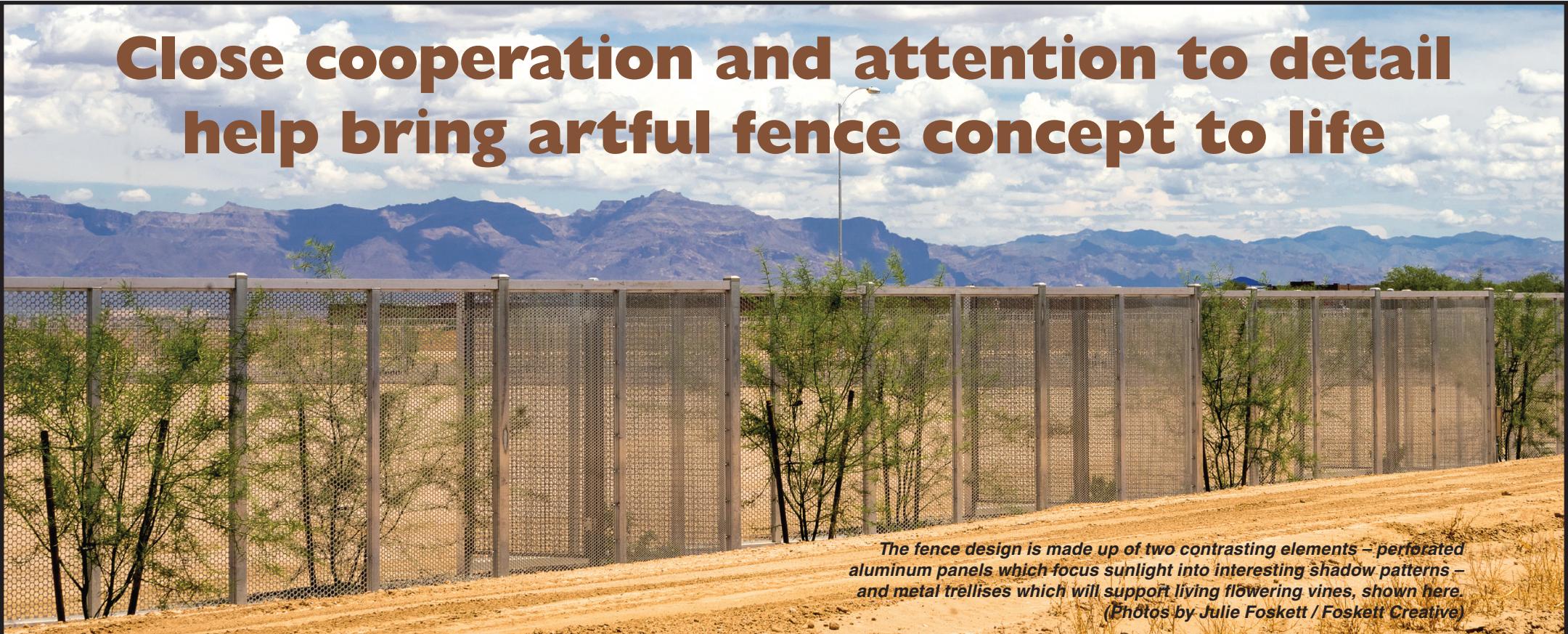


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Close cooperation and attention to detail help bring artful fence concept to life



The fence design is made up of two contrasting elements – perforated aluminum panels which focus sunlight into interesting shadow patterns – and metal trellises which will support living flowering vines, shown here. (Photos by Julie Foskett / Foskett Creative)

American Fence Co. of Phoenix, Ariz. recently completed a major enclosure at a sustainable energy research facility in the state. The project was not your average fence job, and to successfully bring it to completion to the satisfaction of the owners took close cooperation among all parties involved, particularly the architect, the contractor and the manufacturer of the fence, Ultra Aluminum Mfg., Inc. of Howell, Mich.

For security reasons, the project owner did not want its name mentioned, nor the specific location. The primary purpose of the structure was to provide separation of the property from an adjoining public right-of-way via a combination of 1,500 linear feet of 8 ft. high 9 ga. chain link and decorative screen wall.

According to the project narrative, the goal for the screen wall design “is to provide an aesthetically-pleasing, secure perimeter element that recognizes the significant investment in technology that [the project owner] has pioneered. It also ties seamlessly

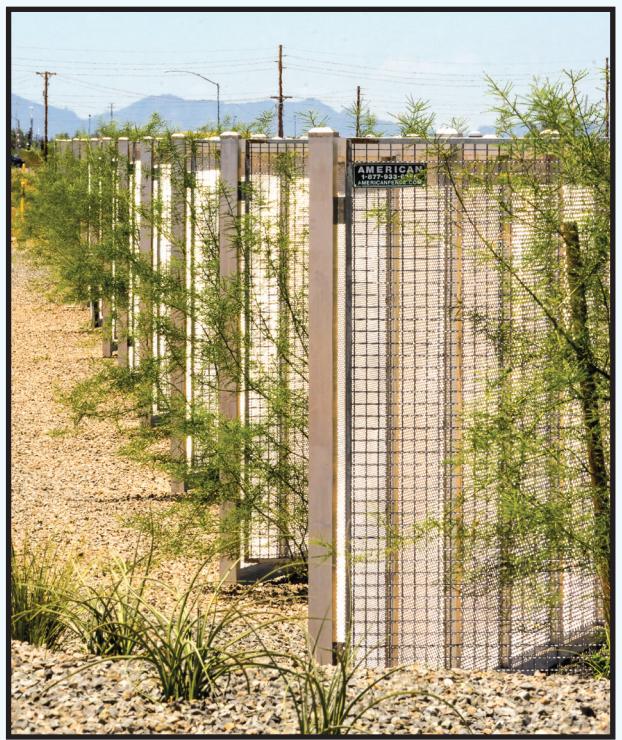
into the fencing along the balance of the perimeter, allows drainage to occur, and provides the public with limited views into the site.”

The design concept was to utilize the iconic “grid” form that is symbolic of solar technology, and also featured on the [project owner’s] headquarters building, to allude to the important and interesting research being conducted inside the facility.

“By using interpretive materials in forms that communicate natural solar processes, the screen wall can tell a story about harnessing the power of the sun,” the narrative stated. “The design will be made up of two contrasting elements – perforated aluminum panels which focus sunlight into interesting shadow patterns – and metal trellises which will support living flowering vines. Together, the materials metaphorically demonstrate the conversion of raw energy from the sun into other useful forms.

“The two elements are laid out in alternating directions, forming a repeating ‘Z’

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General Jackson Downtown Nashville (Photo courtesy Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp.)

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shape which calls to mind illustrative diagrams that explain the complex chemical transformations behind this process. The 'zipper' shape allows the entire landscape setback to be used for the screen wall, so that the overall impact of the wall feels three dimensional and purposeful. Trees

will be planted on both sides of the wall in order to create a secondary rhythm that reiterates the dynamic screen wall shapes."

According to Bill Wallis of American Fence Co., the client wanted a silver finish fence that would blend with the desert environment and be in keeping with the character of a high tech facility. Darrin Jones of Ultra Aluminum suggested that the most natural and economical way to achieve this would be to utilize a "raw" prod-

uct, not powder coated. After extensive discussions with the owner and the landscape architect, LVA Urban Design Studio, LLC, agreement was reached to utilize the raw finish product. In addition, to further the natural look, vegetation would be planted within the Z-shaped fence line.

According to Ben Jodoin, VP Sales & Marketing with Ultra Aluminum Mfg., Inc., the firm provided 1,400 lineal feet of "traditional" 8' tall Industrial grade (1" picket) ornamental



Showed above is a 30 ft. wide double drive gate which matches the 8 ft. tall Industrial grade ornamental picket fencing used on the job, a portion of which is shown below. In the background of both photos is a portion of the solar panel array which is the main function of the facility.



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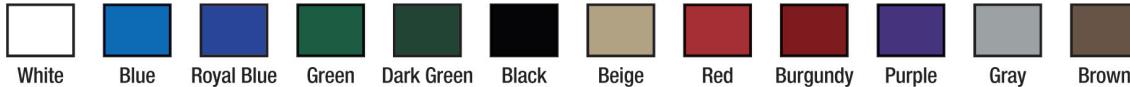
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tal fence with a matching 30' double gate and man gate.

"The really unique part was 13 custom sections that were 36' wide x 8' tall that held eight 4 x 8 perforated aluminum panels," said Jodoin. "They had holes ranging from ½" to 2" arranged in a gradient pattern from smallest to largest. These 36' sections were installed diagonally in a 'saw-tooth' pattern and joined together with 4 x 8 trellises.

"The key was following the architect's vision as closely as possible while still providing some 'value engineering' to stay within budget and allow for easy assembly/installation."

Russ Springborn, President and owner of Ultra Aluminum added: "Some time ago, we made a commitment that Ultra was going to be the type of manufacturer that's a resource for companies that pursue unique and sometimes challenging projects. Anyone can build a 3-rail fence and we make a great one, but with the glut of imported products and a market that's increasingly becoming a "race to the bottom" to see who can produce the lowest cost fence, we wanted to take the high road. It's a decision that has served us and our customers well."

American Fence's Bill Wallis added, "I really want to stress the partnership that it took to build this fence. There were many conversations I had on the weekends with Darrin and he got many calls from the general contractor making sure that this was the right way to go. Our customer wanted a silver fence and it was Darrin who suggested to go raw."

"A close vendor partnership is still the best way to go into a project like this, and Ultra, with 3D drawings, had skin in the game and was going to

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follow through to the end," said Wallis. "With many vendors, if it's not what they stock or even out of their norm, they choose to close their ears to you, even when they have the capabilities to make a product.

"So many vendors have the same products and even the same warrant-

ties that it is hard to sell these products when they are not different or it is not easy to make changes to meet city requirements. I like to know I can pick up the phone and either talk to Darrin Jones or Steve Vetrone and tell them what I need or show them the change and it not going to be a fight. It's 'I will get back to you as soon as I can, Bill' and I know whether it's 6 a.m. or 6 p.m., I'm going to have an answer."

"Building partnerships is what it's all about and making it come out right

is the icing on the cake," added Wallis.

Backing this up is a comment Wallis received from Laura Thelen, senior landscape architect, LVA Urban Design Studio, LLC: "I saw the fence onsite yesterday for the first time. It is looking good! It's nice to see something built as expected with no surprises – which isn't always the case. Thanks for your help!"

About the contractor:

- American Fence Company was established in 1948 and has been professionally installing fence for over 67 years. The firm provides fence rental, commercial and industrial installation, and materials for the do-it-yourselfer and fencing contractors. It has locations in Arizona, New Mexico, California, Texas, Colorado, Kansas, Utah and Nevada.

Contact the company at its Phoenix headquarters at 888-691-4565 or visit www.americanfence.com.

About the fence manufacturer:

- Ultra Aluminum Mfg., Inc., headquartered in Howell, Mich., manufactures and distributes ornamental aluminum fencing, gates, and railing systems to a wide network of contractors and landscapers. Its complete line of low-maintenance aluminum fencing products brings the traditional look of wrought iron fence to residential, commercial and industrial applications. Ultra Access Controls distributes a complete line of swing and slide automatic gate openers and accessories.

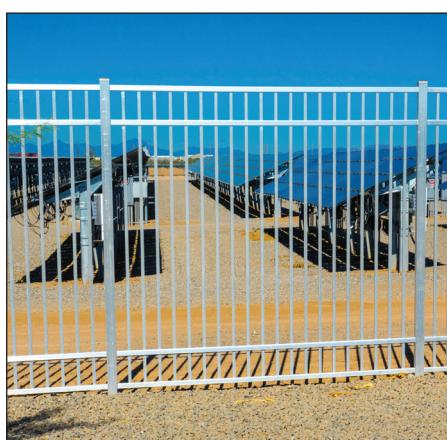
For more information, call 800-656-4420 or visit the company website at www.ultrafence.com.



Show above is a closeup of one of the 13 custom sections that were 36' wide x 8' tall that held eight 4 x 8 perforated aluminum panels. They had holes ranging from 1/4" to 2" arranged in a gradient pattern from smallest to largest. These 36' sections were installed diagonally in a 'sawtooth' pattern and joined together with 4 x 8 trellises. Below is a closeup of the transition between the perforated panel and trellis.



The photo above shows how additional foliage was planted along the fenceline to further incorporate it into the desert environment. Below is another view of the aluminum ornamental picket fence looking onto a portion of the solar array. The fencing was specified as raw/mill finish so that the desert climate would quickly weather it in unpredictable ways and add to the unique look of the project.



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