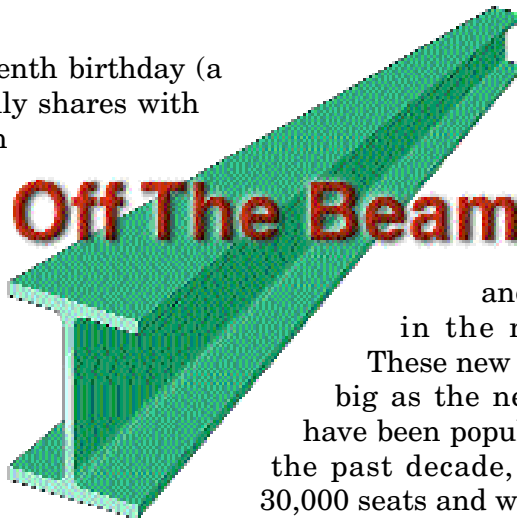


For my niece Rachel's sixteenth birthday (a birthday that she coincidentally shares with me), I took her to dinner in Chinatown and then out to Soldier Field to see a Chicago Fire soccer game. I had never been to a professional soccer game before and was impressed with both the excitement of the game and the enthusiasm of the large audience (for the first half of each team's seasons, the Fire outdrew the Chicago White Sox on a per home game basis!). If you've only ever experienced soccer on television or on a Saturday afternoon watching your son or daughter, pop for the tickets to a professional game—just be ready to be hooked (fortunately, season tickets are affordable and available).

At lunch the following week with Peter Wilt, general manager of the Fire and my former roommate, we talked about the growing popularity of Major League Soccer and he gave me a scoop to pass on: Expect big construction activity in new stadiums for soccer teams. Most of the owners of MLS teams have big bucks and are willing to privately finance stadiums—with public support for land acquisi-



tion and infrastructure development.

One stadium has already been built in Ohio and it would not be surprising to see another eight to 10 underway in the next two to three years. These new soccer stadiums won't be as big as the new baseball stadiums that have been populating the landscape during the past decade, but they will have about 30,000 seats and will feature skyboxes and the other amenities increasingly necessary in sport venues.

Granted, 10 new stadiums in three years isn't going to provide work for a lot of companies, so I have another tip: Distribution centers. The growth of e-commerce (the sale of goods over the internet) is creating a burgeoning demand for distribution centers. Some in the industry are predicting that more than 1.2 billion square feet of new space will be needed by 2006.

While not as glamorous as a new stadium, distribution and warehouse space will pay a lot more bills.

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