



STARTUP

BIG PICTURE

Tower of Tiles

DRIVERS PASSING DES MOINES ON THE INTER-state now have more to admire than the Iowa plains. The Paragon Prairie Tower rises 120 feet in a blaze of colored glass where I-35 and I-80 meet in Urbandale. Commissioned by R&R Realty Group (rrealty.com) for its new business park, the \$1 million column displays a mosaic of corn, native wildflowers, and wheat. A crew of marble artisans spent a year gluing one million one-inch tiles to the structure. "In planning more than 200 acres of commercial development, R&R could have done it in a manner that doesn't add to the quality of life. This cultural piece goes back to our Iowan roots," says Robert Layton, Urbandale's city manager. RDG Dahlquist (rdgusa.com)—a three-year-old firm that incorporates artwork into commercial buildings—designed the structure.

—MAGGIE OVERFELT

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