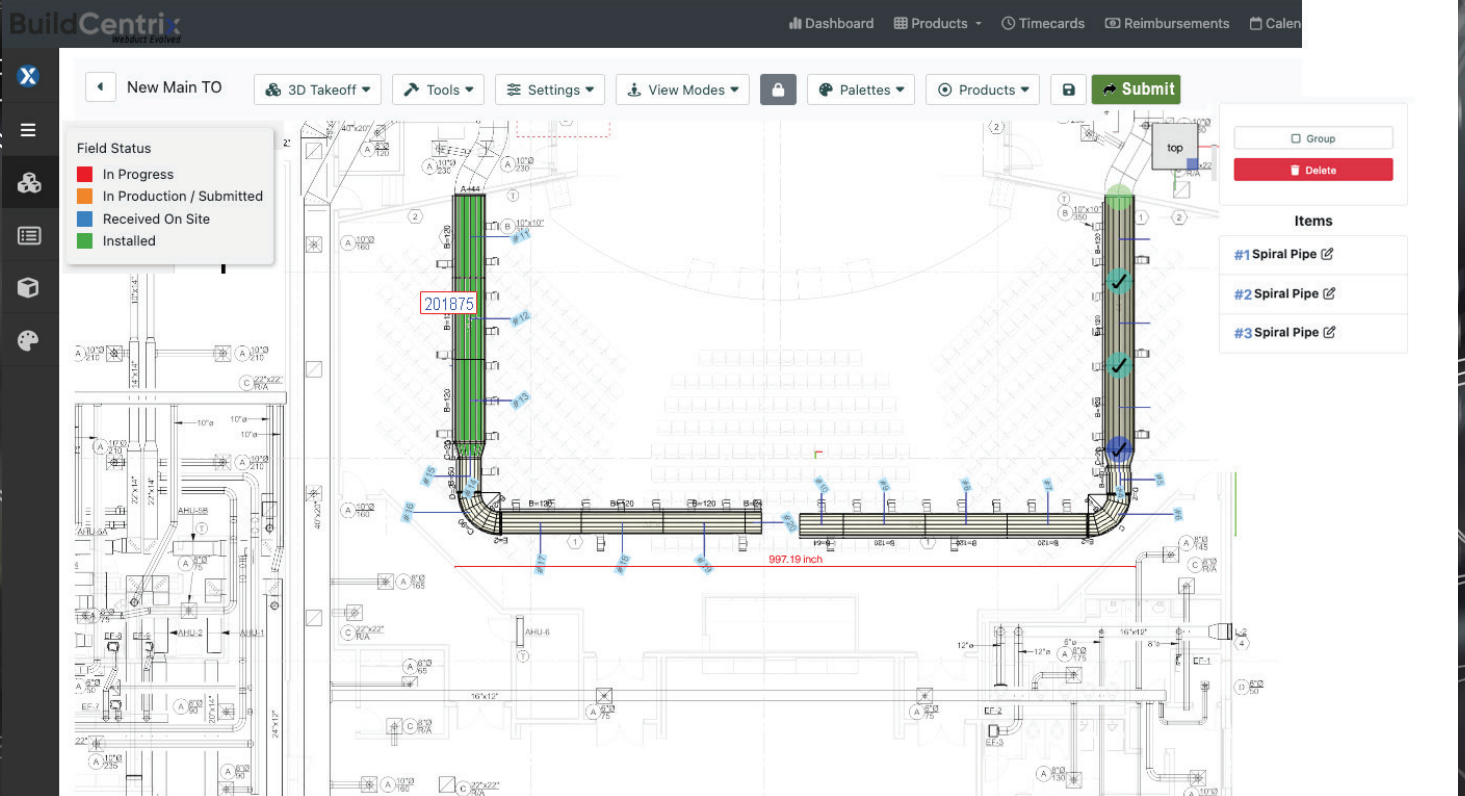


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CONSTRUCTION IN THE CLOUD



Workflow Changes for Blueprint Projects

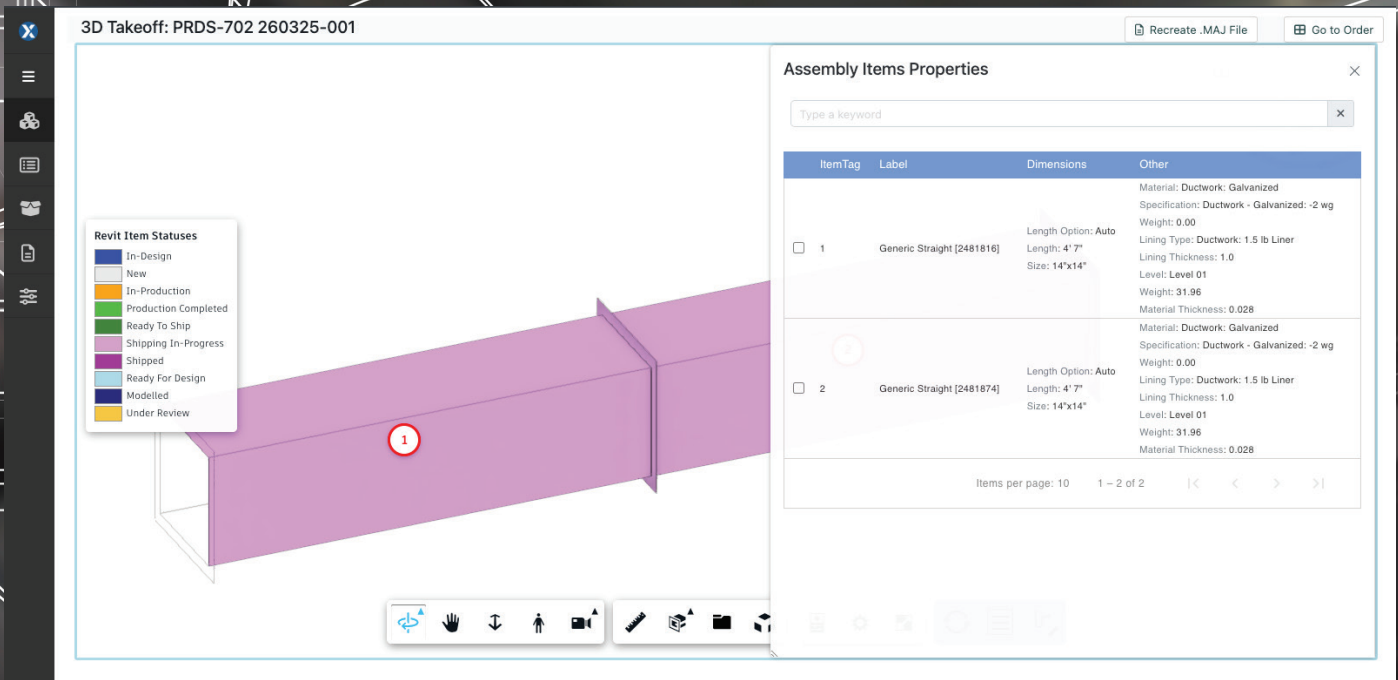
Also inside:

NEW FEATURES FOR MODEL SPOOLING

2026 SMACNA FAB FORUM



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Workflow Changes for Blueprint Projects

When BuildCentrix first developed 3D takeoffs, the project was mostly centered on providing clients with an easy way to increase the amount of prefab in their shops. Snapping together fab-ready duct and pipe assemblies in 3D meant faster fabrication time and lower install time on the jobsite.

The workflow very much followed a shopping cart or what we call a “freestyle” where the 3D assembly is created and submitted immediately for fabrication. While this has proven very successful, it wasn’t long before the next big ask from clients: “Can we upload a blueprint so we can do the takeoff right on it?”

In our experience, approximately 50% of MEP construction is considered “small project work,” which, in essence, means “non-Revit” projects. These small projects are driven almost exclusively by blueprints (PDFs, nowadays) and clients wanted an easy way to go from takeoff to fabrication with no software.

To accomplish this, the BCX engineers built on the success of the freestyle 3D takeoff already in use and created a “Blueprint Mode”. In this mode users can easily upload a PDF or image, set the scale, and then create a work order by snapping together duct and pipe fittings right on top of the blueprint. In Blueprint

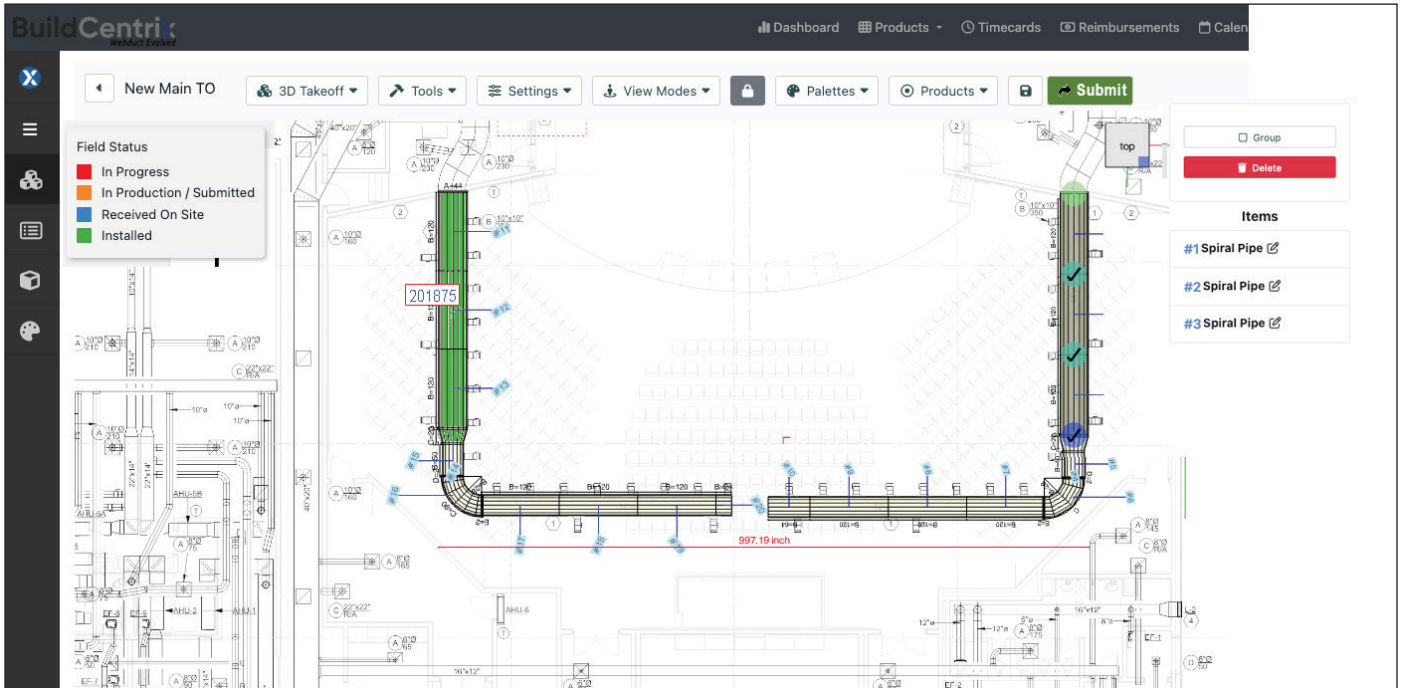
Mode we also added Status mapping so users could easily see the status of the work orders on the blueprint.

Client feedback on our initial release was good; however, over time, it turned out the workflow we followed from our successful freestyle mode (draw a run and submit it) didn’t work well for blueprint projects. What clients need for blueprint projects is the ability to take off large parts of the blueprint or the entire blueprint in one sitting. They also need the ability to go back and amend the takeoff and the ability to select duct or pipe runs that are ready to send to fabrication.

Change is Coming

BCX engineers are already underway re-engineering the existing blueprint workflow to better match how clients need this valuable tool to work. They will also be adding some new features, such as the auto-routing for pipe and duct, to make taking off blueprints even faster and easier.

Future releases will also include Blueprint sharing, which will allow more than one person to work on the project at the same time, in real time.



rest assured there will be no negative effects when this round of updates is released. We will also be sending out updates as we move forward to keep you in the loop as work progresses.

If you'd like more information on 3D Blueprint projects or any other BuildCentrix platform functionality email support@buildcentrix.com.

New Features for Model Spooling

Release 333 brings new editing functionality

UPDATE ALERT!

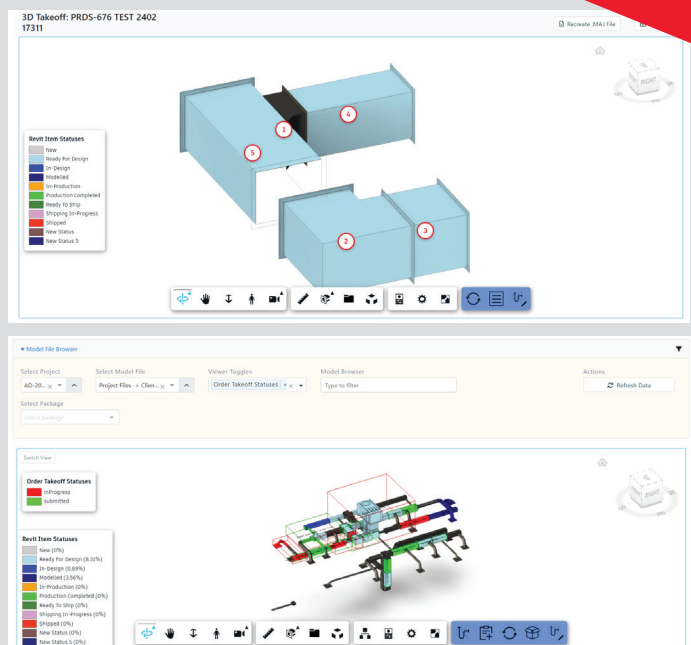
As part of Release 333, BCX engineering added some new features to the Model Spooling including:

- Edit package assemblies
- The ability to re-number items on a package
- Percent Completed by status

While Revit models contain all the required building information in the virtual world, these new features help to manage any changes on the actual jobsite.

Allowing users to edit package data to accommodate real world changes and then sending the data back to the model streamlines production for all stakeholders. Extra features like re-numbering items in the package and seeing percentage complete at each stage helps to ensure smooth progress from ordering to installing and billing.

If you'd like more information on these or other BCX features, please email support@buildcentrix.com.



2026 SMACNA FAB FORUM

WRAP UP

By Tye Beazer

The 2026 SMACNA Fab Forum in Chicago brought together highly engaged fabrication leaders, operations managers, and technology partners across the country. Each focused on a common objective: improving shop efficiency, scalability, and data-driven decision making within the HVAC and sheet metal industry.

Across conversations, breakout sessions, and live demonstrations, one theme was consistent: shops are actively looking to move beyond disconnected workflows and toward more integrated, optimized operations.

Optimizing Shop Processes & Technology

A major area of discussion centred on how leading contractors are rethinking their internal processes before layering in new technology. The most forward-thinking shops are standardizing workflows across estimating, detailing, fabrication, and field installation to eliminate redundancies and reduce manual hand-offs. Technology is no longer being evaluated in isolation, but

rather on how well it connects these stages into shops, teams, current systems, and equipment.

There was also a strong emphasis on reducing “double entry” and ensuring that data captured upstream (particularly during estimating and detailing) flows seamlessly downstream into fabrication and installation.

Customization for HVAC Fabrication Shops

Another key takeaway was the importance of tailoring systems specifically to HVAC workflows. Off-the-shelf solutions often fall short unless they can adapt to the realities of duct fabrication, pressure classes, fittings, and shop-specific standards.

Many attendees shared that success comes from aligning software with how their shop already operates, rather than forcing operational changes to fit rigid systems. This includes customizing item structures, labour tracking, and job costing to reflect real production conditions on the shop floor.



Implementation: Dos and Don'ts

Implementation strategy was a heavily discussed topic, especially among shops that have recently gone through system transitions.

What's working well:

- Taking a phased approach rather than trying to overhaul everything at once
- Prioritizing high-impact areas first (e.g., time tracking, production visibility)
- Ensuring internal champions are involved early
- Budgeting for change management within the shop

Common pitfalls:

- Underestimating the importance of clean, structured data (ITMs, job codes, etc.)
- Treating implementation as a one-time event rather than an ongoing process
- Lack of proper training and patience

A consistent message was that successful implementations are not just about software; they require alignment between people, processes, and technology.

Predictive Planning & Integrations

Forward-looking shops are increasingly focused on predictive planning, using real-time data to forecast labour needs, production capacity, and potential bottlenecks before they impact schedules.

Integrations play a critical role here. Whether it's connecting estimating platforms, BIM tools, or accounting systems, the goal is to create a centralized data environment where information flows freely and supports better decision-making.

Shops that have invested in these integrations are seeing improved visibility across their operations, allowing them to be more proactive rather than reactive.

“Using BIM models to drive fabrication workflows reduces manual input, minimizes errors, and accelerates the transition from design to production.”

Feeding Fabrication Directly from BIM Models

One of the more advanced topics discussed was the direct use of BIM models to drive fabrication workflows. The idea of feeding tools and systems directly from coordinated models is gaining traction, particularly as detailing becomes more precise and standardized.

This approach reduces manual input, minimizes errors, and accelerates the transition from design to production. However, it also requires a high level of discipline in modelling standards and coordination between teams.

Final Thoughts

The 2026 SMACNA Fab Forum reinforced the notion that collectively, shops are investing in process optimization. They are leveraging integrated technologies and embracing data-driven planning to position themselves in a way to scale more efficiently and compete at a higher level.

Here at BuildCentrix, it was valuable to be part of these conversations and see firsthand how aligned the industry is around solving these challenges. The opportunity ahead lies in helping shops bridge the gap between where they are today and what fully optimized operations can look like.

If you have any questions about how to optimize your shop's data or are curious about the best practices in our industry, please contact us through our website at Buildcentrix.com.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the SMACNA Annual later this year! ■

