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Plots & Ploys - Sturdy DNA

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A new building currently under construction on the existing headquarters campus of the Institute for Genomic Research in Rockville, Md., is slated to be delivered on time despite Hurricane Isabel.

Most of the exterior wall on the south side of the four-story, 120,000-square-foot building, which will house laboratory and office space, contains four different colors of glass -- in shades of blue, green, red, and yellow -- designed to mimic the colors of a DNA sequence.

The wall, also known as a curtain wall, was erected in 40 sections each measuring 37 feet long and five feet wide just a few weeks before Hurricane Isabel blew through the area last month.

The wall "weathered the storm perfectly," says Jeffrey Vertucci, regional manager of the Falls Church, Va., office of DPR Construction Inc., which is constructing the building. The building remains on schedule for completion early next year, Mr. Vertucci adds.

"We were happy to see the curtain wall didn't blow away," particularly since getting the glass panels made was a challenge and cost about \$1 a square foot more than traditional materials to use, says Bruce Sanford, an architect at Leo A Daly Co. who designed the building.