

The Lehigh Way

Volume 1 | Issue 1

A publication from Lehigh Construction Group, Inc.

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Frank Lloyd Wright's Rowing Boathouse

The century-old design is finally built



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Lehigh renovated a historic church in Buffalo, New York, for conversion to commercial use by artist Ani DiFranco's Righteous Babe Records.

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Welcome to The Lehigh Way

I AM HAPPY TO INTRODUCE YOU TO THE PREMIERE ISSUE OF OUR MAGAZINE. I believe this is the first construction publication of its kind in the local marketplace, and I hope you will enjoy learning more about our company and various industry issues.

Lehigh Construction Group, Inc., has always been about relationships — and, as we begin our 25th year, I would like to thank all of our clients, subcontractors, vendors, associates, and, most importantly, our employees, who have made this a special company.

Why did we name this publication *The Lehigh Way*? I'm not sure who coined the phrase, but we have been referring to "The Lehigh Way" of doing business for years. These three words evoke the values our company's relationships are built on:

- Treating our clients, partners, and co-workers fairly and honestly
- Being proud of our accomplishments
- Committing to safety
- Finding ways to do things that seem impossible
- Expecting everyone to make responsible decisions that are in the best interest of our clients
- Above all, honoring our commitments

We welcome your comments on *The Lehigh Way* and hope to be of service to you in 2008 and beyond.



David E. Knauss
President



David E. Knauss
President



A publication from



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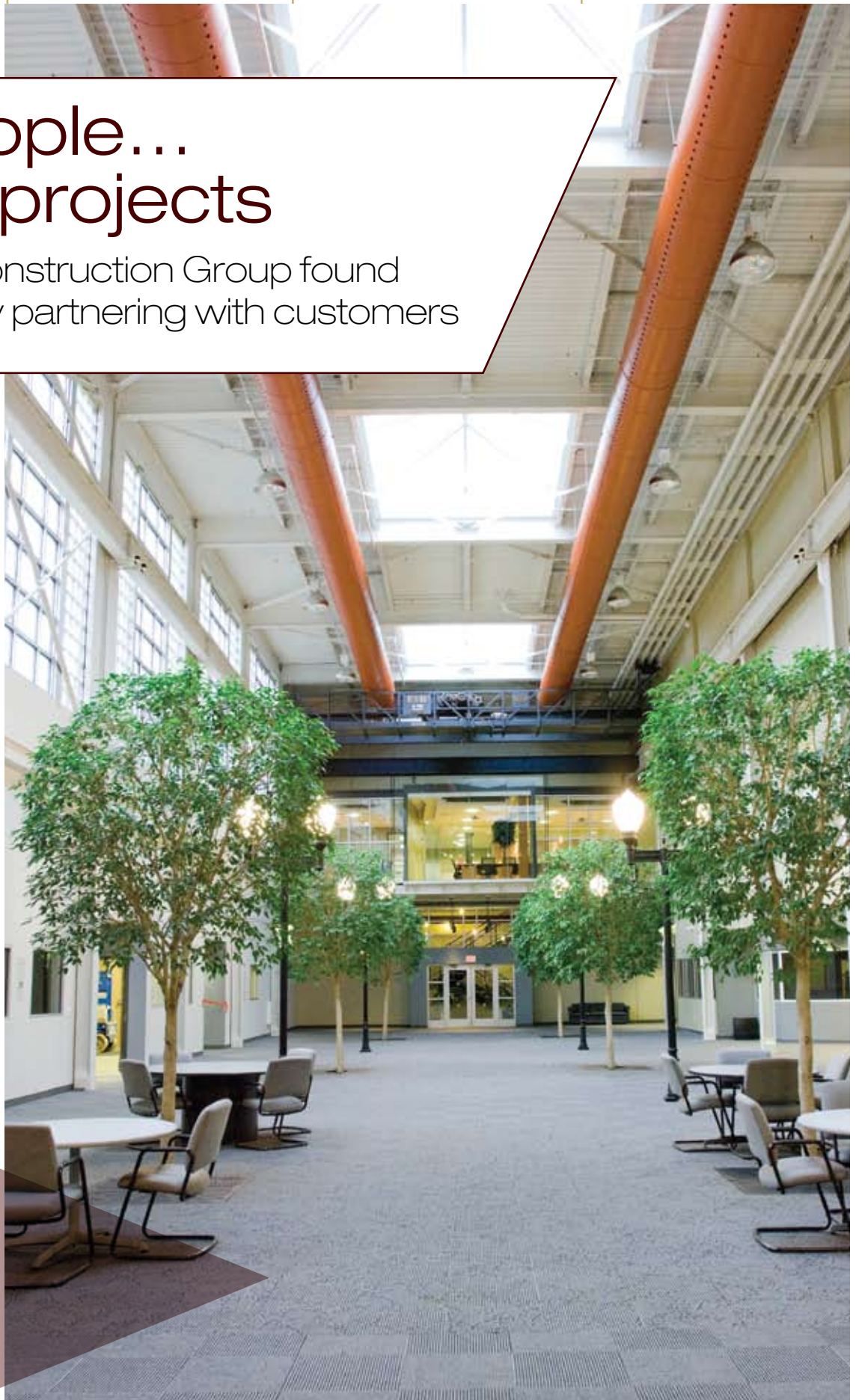
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People... not projects

Lehigh Construction Group found success by partnering with customers



Lehigh has partnered with Praxair — a manufacturer of industrial, process, and specialty gasses — on a continual basis since 1990. Pictured here is an 8,500-square-foot Ceko metal building that Lehigh completed for the company.

Photo by Studio Z Photography, www.studiozphoto.com, © 2008.

FROM THE DAY DAVID KNAUSS AND HIS BUSINESS PARTNER, TOM GLOMB, launched the company 25 years ago, Lehigh Construction Group, Inc., headquartered in Western New York, has focused as much on constructing relationships as buildings. That sensitivity to relationship-building wasn't so prevalent back in the 1980s when Knauss and Glomb launched their business. Low bids and a rigid interpretation of "service," often characterized by constant spats over change orders, were typical for the industry in those days. But Lehigh wanted to be different. "We were relationship-based before it was cool," Knauss said.

But what does relationship-based mean? It means earning the larger projects by gaining the customer's trust during the smaller jobs and never shunning the opportunity to provide even the most mundane services. "We try to provide as broad a range of services for clients as we can," Knauss said of Lehigh, which undertakes anything from \$100 repair jobs to \$15-million building contracts. "No job is too large or too small."

Growing with customers

Knauss cut his teeth in the business by working for his father's construction company as a teenager during school breaks and summer vacations. That was where he learned the value of simply doing what the customer wants. In 1984, two years after graduating from Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and doing a stint at Burns and Roe, an engineering, procurement, and construction company based in New Jersey, Knauss partnered with Glomb to start their own construction firm. Glomb, at the time, was one of the youngest supervisors to ever hold that position at Knauss' father's company.

One of Knauss' first cold calls was to McGard, Inc., a local manufacturer of wheel locks and other automotive security products. His approach was simple. Knauss told the potential client that Lehigh would do any construction work — caulk windows, patch walls — Lehigh would take care of anything. Once Knauss got the point across that Lehigh wasn't looking for a slam-dunk opportunity, but was in it for the entire game, the owner of McGard asked if Lehigh was interested in constructing an 80,000-square-foot extension to a plant. Not a bad up-sell.

Lehigh's relationship with McGard has continued during the years, building upon that first big job as well as other projects, both large and small. More recently, McGard called on Lehigh to build a 185,000-square-foot plant and two subsequent additions.

But not all of the company's relationships have ramped up so quickly. Take the example of printing company Graphic Controls, LLC. Lehigh worked with Graphic Controls for many years on dozens of smaller projects, but in 2000 Graphic Controls sought out Lehigh to build a larger, 225,000-square-foot headquarters — the largest manufacturing building constructed in downtown Buffalo in the past 75 years. When those loyal clients go in search of new markets, Lehigh goes with them, taking customer service on the road to execute a customer's building projects in 18 states so far.

"Our clients don't sign up for a multi-million dollar job right away," Knauss said, "but they might call us to fix a leaky roof. We service them and work with them closely for a while, and when they have a big project, they trust Lehigh to do it."

People first, customers always

New construction, pre-engineered buildings, renovations, additions — these aspects of Lehigh's business are handled by the company's general contracting division. The "smaller" work is done by Lehigh's PRO division, which

"We were relationship-based before it was cool."

— DAVID KNAUSS, PRESIDENT OF LEHIGH CONSTRUCTION GROUP



provides construction maintenance and building repair services, completing more than 1,200 small repairs a year (see the article about the PRO division on page 20). Lehigh has worked in several niche sectors, including financial institutions, health care facilities, churches, and schools. Two of Lehigh's highest profile jobs were historical restoration projects: the Frank Lloyd Wright Rowing Boat-house on the Black Rock Channel in Buffalo (see our article about the Boathouse on page 10), and the Roycroft Inn, granted National Historic Landmark Status in 1986, ►

David Knauss, President of Lehigh Construction Group, Inc., started the company with Tom Glomb 25 years ago.



in East Aurora, New York, — the birthplace of America's arts-and-crafts movement.

What anchors Lehigh, however, is neither its organization nor the types of projects it has done, but its people. Lehigh's employees are what embody the core values of excellence, safety, and customer satisfaction that grant Lehigh the 24/7 flexibility to get the job done whenever and wherever necessary. "We've worked hard from the very start to earn an excellent reputation for quality of service and ethical business practices," Knauss said. "It's something that can't be written into a business plan or controlled by a business policy. It comes down to every individual employee doing the best job they can to deliver high-quality services to every customer every day. It's what we call The Lehigh Way."

Looking around the industry, however, one might think The Lehigh Way has become an industry standard. In some ways, it has. Construction companies have jumped onto the customer-oriented, value-added bandwagon for years now, raising quality throughout the industry. But as competitors plow the paths of their own "way," they might find Lehigh has been there already. "Lehigh Construction Group has focused on customers' needs since the beginning," Knauss said. "It is ingrained in our culture."

But that doesn't mean that Lehigh rests on its laurels. According to Knauss, Lehigh "looks toward the future by maintaining open lines of communication with our customers, our employees,

In 2006, Lehigh and The Asbury Church were honored by the General Building Contractors with the 2006 Build New York Award for Renovation Project.

and the industry as a whole to determine the most recent issues facing our customers and ways to develop new and unique programs to address them.”

The right size for serving customers

The concepts of growth and restraint might appear mutually exclusive. A company that holds customer service as a core value might have to take a hard look at trying to make the two work. Lehigh learned this lesson eight years ago, when the company expanded its workforce to simultaneously meet an explosion in demand in order to self-perform

the work instead of outsourcing it. “We still believe this is the best way to provide high-quality service and maintain customer relations,” Knauss said. “However, that fast growth curve caused Lehigh to hire individuals too quickly, making it impossible to control the company culture and ensure that every individual shared the company’s belief in The Lehigh Way.”

“It comes down to every individual employee doing the best job they can to deliver high-quality services to every customer every day. It’s what we call The Lehigh Way.”

— DAVID KNAUSS, PRESIDENT OF LEHIGH CONSTRUCTION GROUP

Lehigh had to reassert the principles that had led to its success over the years. So the owners made the difficult decision to downsize the work force at the cost of turning away business that it worked so hard to gain. Lehigh now maintains a healthy balance of direct employees (each of whom understands the company culture and embraces The Lehigh Way) with supplemental support from subcontractors who are held to the same ethical, moral, and customer-oriented standards as Lehigh’s employees. “Lehigh’s core values of working hard, doing the right thing, and sending everyone home safely every day have become the vehicle for its continued growth,” Knauss said.

Lehigh now manages its growth rate by selecting its customers carefully and delivering high-quality projects on time and within budget (something that Lehigh has become well-known for in the industry). “In an industry where add-ons and extras are almost expected, Lehigh maintains its philosophy of full disclosure and informing the client about all costs up front ... even at the risk of losing the job, which has occurred on many occasions,” Knauss said.

The company is focused on growing 10 to 20 percent each year during the next five years, with the possibility of expanding into other regions outside its primary market of Western New York. “With a controlled growth approach, the sky’s the limit to our capabilities,” Knauss said, “and with a willingness to try new things to improve the company, we will continue to be successful into the foreseeable future.”

Lehigh Land and Building: New business, same focus on quality

A few years ago when David Knauss, President of Lehigh Construction Group, Inc., went on vacation to Seabrook and Kiawah Islands, just off the

coast of Charleston, South Carolina, he noticed all the new, large, luxury residences being built as second homes and vacation residences for people who lived in Atlanta, the Northeast states, and other far-flung locales. Rather than focus on his golf swing, Knauss couldn’t help noticing that at least some of what was being built reflected a quality of work below Lehigh’s standards.

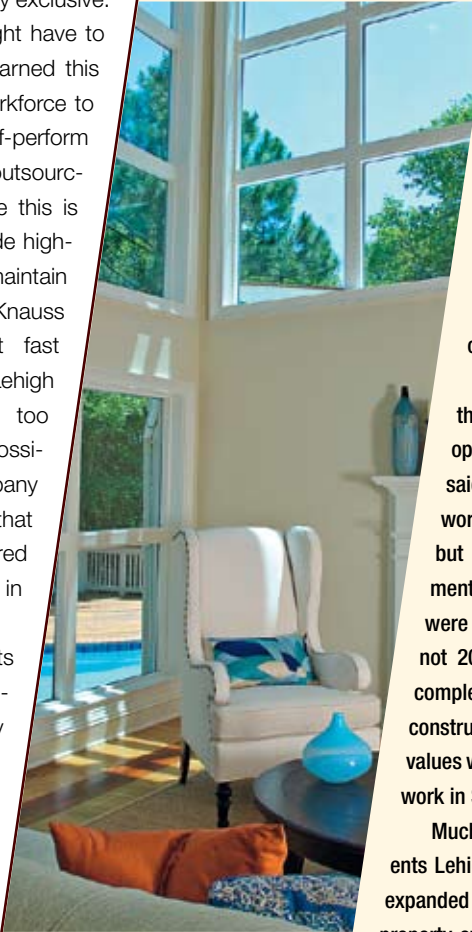
“The more we went on vacation there, the more I saw the business opportunity that existed,” Knauss said. Lehigh had not done much work in the residential home sector, but Knauss recognized the fundamentals were the same. “These were 5,000-square-foot homes, not 200,000-square-foot industrial complexes — but we believed the construction experience and core values we embodied could certainly work in South Carolina,” he said.

Much like the corporate clients Lehigh had worked with as it expanded into new regions, these property owners — most of whom lived far from these vacation sites

— needed a contractor with a proven track record of delivering high-quality projects on schedule and within budget. So Knauss opened Lehigh’s South Carolina division, which has since been spun off into a separate company, Lehigh Land and Building, LLC.

The company constructs custom-built, single-family, single-lot homes from 4,000 to 7,000 square feet on Kiawah and Seabrook islands. Unlike most builders in the marketplace, Lehigh employs its own crew of high-quality finish carpenters that work for Lehigh full-time. The company prides itself on delivering these homes with the same schedule, budget, and quality standards that have characterized its relationship with larger corporate clients. So far, Lehigh has built 10 such luxurious homes and renovated 12 others.

“It was a challenge to take everything we’ve learned from 20 years in the business and start something new,” Knauss said. “Starting from scratch, being an entrepreneur again, that was very exciting.”



Photos provided by Kiawah Island Real Estate.

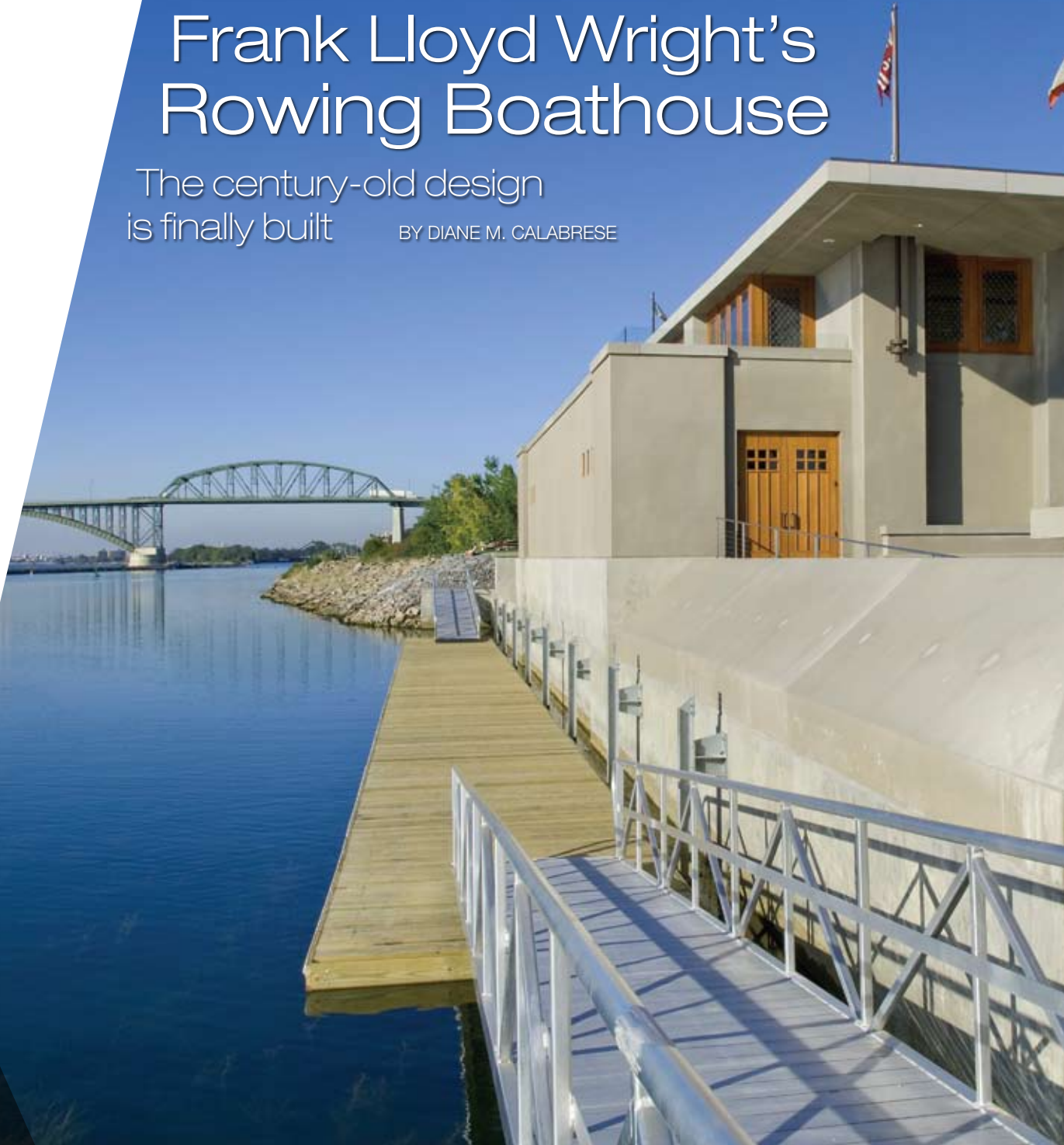


Frank Lloyd Wright's Rowing Boathouse

The century-old design is finally built

BY DIANE M. CALABRESE

Photos in this article by Studio Z Photography, www.studiophoto.com, © 2008.



Frank Lloyd Wright's Rowing Boathouse, which was designed in 1905 for the University of Wisconsin, was built in Buffalo, New York. Lehigh and the Boathouse were honored as winners of the General Building Contractors' 2008 Build New York Award for New Project.

THE SHORT STORY OF HOW FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S ROWING BOATHOUSE finally opened its doors more than 100 years after it was initially designed begins with a great plan that motivated people to take action.

More than 10 years ago, oarsmen and Wright scholars from

Buffalo were attending a conference on Wright when they stumbled across the plans for the Boathouse. The designs caught their eye, and they liked it immediately.

Designed in 1905 for the University of Wisconsin, the Boathouse, which was built in Buffalo,

New York, follows the principles of "green" building — minimizing the use of energy and maximizing the surrounding space.

Though Wright designed the Boathouse with his native Badger State (Wisconsin) in mind, the Buffalo contingent at the conference saw the Boathouse working



perfectly at the east end of Lake Erie, instead of Lake Michigan.

Therein began the attempt to bring the Boathouse to Buffalo. With the fundraising and organization efforts launched, the image of the perfectly matched Boathouse in place served as a powerful motivator.

The longer story of how the Boathouse ultimately opened its doors is one of dedication and determination.

Lehigh Construction Group, Inc., served as General Contractor for construction of the 4,800-square-foot Boathouse. Based in Orchard Park, a suburb just south of Buffalo, Lehigh understands the reality of lake-effect snow and devilish storms whipped up as northwest winds move across Lake Erie.

Working conditions of extreme climate and a watery site were taken in stride by Lehigh. The focus was on results.

“The project demonstrates Lehigh’s ability to produce work of the highest quality and detailing across all the trades,” said David Knauss, President of Lehigh.

Getting started

Fittingly enough, the Boathouse resembles a moored boat. It is sympathetic to its home along the Black Rock Channel near the Peace Bridge on the Niagara River.

The illusion stems from interplay between functional and ubiquitous materials, always a priority of Wright’s. “The building is a steel structure with architectural precast concrete and glass-fiber reinforced panels,” said Martin Knauss, Project Manager for Lehigh.

Complementing the environment often demands more from a construction team. In the instance of the Boathouse, it required building a seawall.

“The building rests on a combination of drilled caissons and a sheet pile (a cast-in-place concrete seawall) running the entire length of the site on Buffalo’s Black Rock Channel,” Martin Knauss said. The original design called for a stucco exterior, but Wright changed it to concrete in 1930.

Lehigh subcontracted with Portadam, Inc., of Williamstown, New Jersey, for construction of the cofferdam that held back the water while a permanent seawall was built. That phase of the project took about five months, from the ground breaking in September 2006 until late January 2007.

The United States Army Corps of Engineers did preconstruction survey work for the owner of the building, the Frank Lloyd Wright Rowing Boathouse Corporation, a not-for-profit organization that formed in 2000. The United States Coast Guard also provided preconstruction advice to the building owner.

Value engineering

“The project was awarded on the basis of a competitive, plans-and-specifications bid,” David Knauss said. But the process of getting the most value for every dollar spent by the owner just began there. ►

“The exciting part of the project is that Lehigh has helped create a modern masterpiece from one of the world’s most important architects. It’s a destination-worthy architectural gem that will become yet another cornerstone to Buffalo’s cultural tourism.”

— MARTIN KNAUSS,
PROJECT MANAGER FOR
LEHIGH CONSTRUCTION GROUP



The Frank Lloyd Wright Rowing Boathouse is a two-story structure, (second floor above) with the first floor designated as an open space used to house 64-foot boats.

Though there were thoughts of slightly changing the Boathouse plans, any notion of altering the design was rejected; and the design's original integrity remained in tact.



"We had an extensive period of value engineering," David Knauss said. The interval allowed Lehigh to suggest ways the owner could achieve an excellent outcome while trimming unnecessary costs.

Value engineering is important to an owner, because it gives the owner an opportunity to benefit from the experience the General Contractor has with materials and methods.

In this instance, value engineering was particularly important. When the project began, the owner was still raising the \$5.5 million required to complete the project.

At its inception, the Frank Lloyd Wright Rowing Boathouse Corporation committed to building the Boathouse, placing it in an appropriate setting, putting it in service, and making it available to architectural tourists. The West Side Rowing Club, the largest

rowing club in the nation, will use and maintain the building.

Precise coordination

There were two things that made the construction effort challenging. "First was dealing with the unpredictable weather during the initial portion of the project, which included the foundation and seawall work," Martin Knauss said.

The weather was less than placid during the installation of the cofferdam, which kept the area dry and created a safe environment for the construction team working on the seawall construction. "Several record storms hit the site in the autumn and winter of 2006 during these operations," Martin Knauss said.

Credit for the on-site day-to-day management goes to Rich Potter, Superintendent for Lehigh. "Outstanding site management by Lehigh's superintendent and



— east- and west-facing — afford stunning views of the Niagara River and the Peace Bridge to Canada.

“Wright Stuff” Trail

Buffalo’s “Wright Stuff” Trail, a route of Frank Lloyd Wright-designed structures that attracts professional and amateur architectural buffs, is now one stop longer. “It’s a great feeling to have contributed to the newest addition,” Martin Knauss said.

Other buildings along the Wright Stuff Trail in Buffalo include the Darwin Martin House, Graycliff, and the Blue Sky Mausoleum.

“The exciting part of the project is that Lehigh has helped create a modern masterpiece from one of the world’s most important architects,” Martin Knauss said. “It’s a destination-worthy architectural gem that will become yet another cornerstone to Buffalo’s cultural tourism.”

Indeed, the effort that brought the Boathouse from paper to reality pulled in the entire community. Television producer and writer and Buffalo native, Tom Fontana, gave the fundraising a boost with a gift of \$500,000 and served as Honorary National Chair of the fundraising campaign.

Fontana had a special place in his heart for the Boathouse effort; his father was a rowing coach to the young people of Western New York for many years.

A \$1 million grant from New York State was also part of the support for the project. The grant acknowledged the Boathouse will serve many members of the Empire State community.

First Niagara Foundation of First Niagara Bank also donated to the project, and the bank cited the contribution the Boathouse will make to the quality of life in the community.

That enhanced quality of life goes well beyond cultural tourism. For instance, the West Side Rowing Club made a commitment to reach out ►

tireless production by our foundation, sheet piling and site work crews kept the project moving ahead,” Martin Knauss said.

“The second challenge was the precise nature of the superstructure,” Martin Knauss said. “Wright’s detailing of both the interior and exterior left no room for error. Tolerances were extremely tight.” The sequencing had to be exact. “Most work had to be closely coordinated between our carpenters and several subtrades.”

The coordination was essential to realizing the interior Wright envisioned — a two-story structure. The first floor is an open space used to warehouse 64-foot boats and 12-foot by 4-inch oars.

Quarter-sawn red oak doors and diamond-paned windows give the second floor the signature look of a Wright interior. The second floor is subdivided into a club room and locker rooms. Two balconies

The Boathouse, which resembles a moored boat, is a steel structure with architectural precast concrete and glass fiber reinforced panels.



“The project demonstrates Lehigh’s ability to produce work of the highest quality and detailing across all the trades.”

— DAVID KNAUSS, PRESIDENT OF LEHIGH CONSTRUCTION GROUP

and engage public high school students from Buffalo area schools in rowing.

Forward thinking

Wright (1867-1959), one of the most renowned architects of the 20th century, sought harmony in design long before it got labeled as “green”.

Aiming to capture the dynamism of the natural world, Wright had a tendency to shun high-rise structures in favor of formats that blended with the environment. Flat-line roofs and reduced height earned Wright’s approach the label of prairie-style architecture.

Wright incorporated terraced plants, ponds, and skylights. Geometric shapes became embellishments as well as structural components. Sadly, not everything Wright designed was built.

There were thoughts of tinkering with the Boathouse plans. Wider lower-level doors would have simplified entry and exit with boats. But any notion of altering the design was rejected. Design integrity was the overriding concern. Oarsmen simply tilt their boats to get them through the door.

Organic is another moniker applied to the Wright philosophy of architecture. It indicates structures that more or less grow out of their surroundings.

Fallingwater, also known as the Edgar J. Kaufmann Sr. Residence in southwestern Pennsylvania that sits over the Bear Run waterfall, may be the best known of his works. New York’s Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum is another high-visibility offering.

As architects incorporate the beauty of green building into

their works, it’s nice to recall the forward-thinking concepts of Wright, who believed economy and uniqueness are not mutually exclusive concepts. He reckoned a home should be unique, even if it was part of mass development.

In the low-cost, high-value approach he took to home design, Wright established the value of interlocking panels of plywood, concrete slab floors, and the phenomenon of gravity heat. He was ahead of the curve on extracting maximum value in durability and energy efficiency from materials.

“With its commitment to value engineering, Lehigh Construction Group has a great affinity with Wright’s vision. As such, the Boathouse Project has a ‘special’ place in the Lehigh portfolio,” David Knauss said. 🍷

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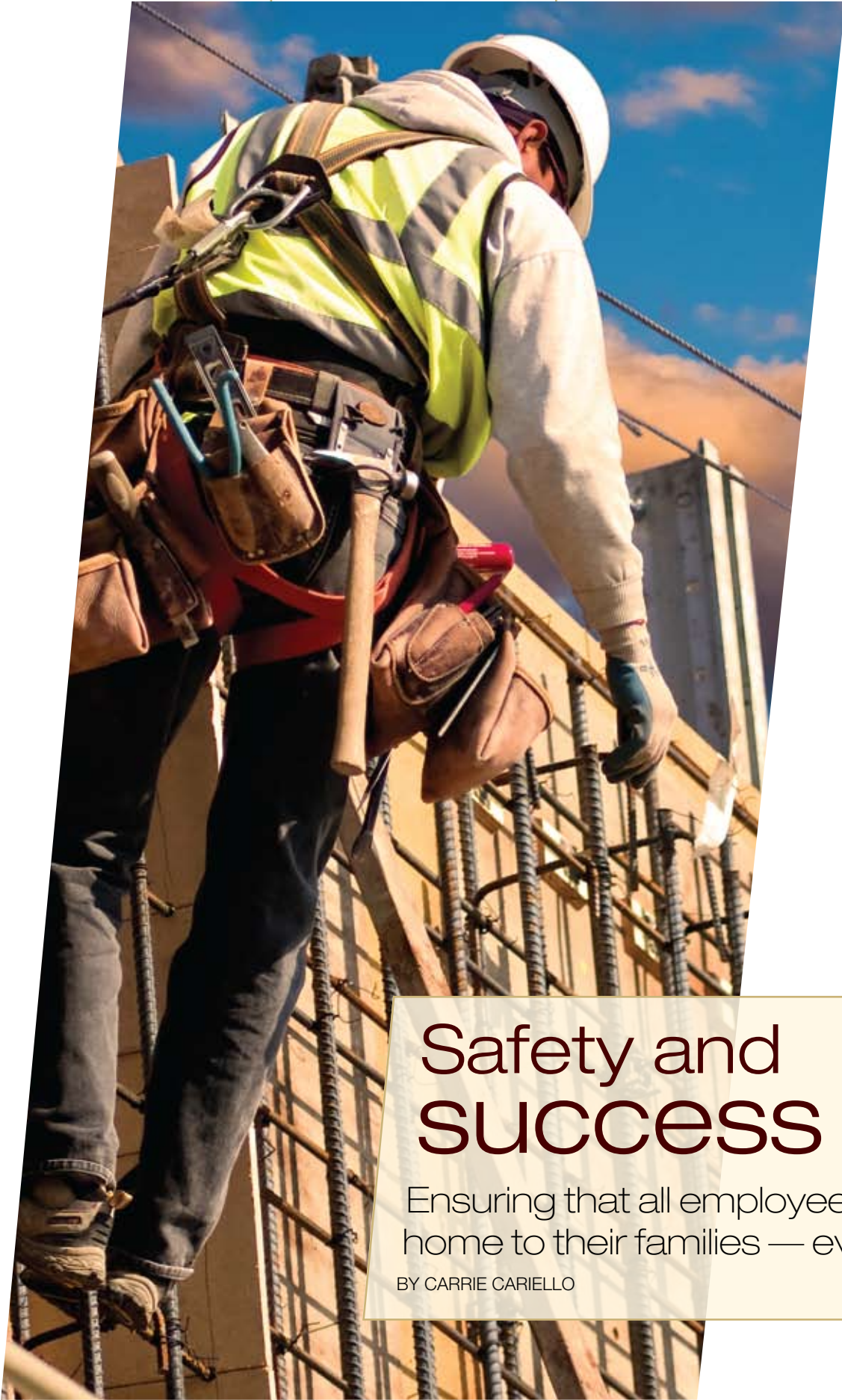
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IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THERE WAS A TIME when the construction industry thought a safe work environment meant making sure you had your hardhat on.

Lehigh Construction Group's proactive approach to a comprehensive Safety Program is as old as the company's 25 year history. Working closely with one of its largest, long-time customers, the then-named E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company, Lehigh was able to formalize its Safety Program, long before it became an industry standard. To work at the DuPont site, Lehigh's team had to be trained, tested, and outfitted with the appropriate equipment. The rules were clear — be safe or work elsewhere.

That was in the 1980s, and since then, Lehigh has raised the bar on safety, year after year. As the company's customer base expanded and the amount of heavy industrial contracting work increased, so did Lehigh's emphasis on safety. While Lehigh understands that the development of a strong safety program has become the norm, the company has always placed safety ahead of everything else.

"We do not consider safety to be just a priority at Lehigh," said Tom Glomb, Vice President of Lehigh. "It is much more than

Safety and SUCCESS

Ensuring that all employees make it home to their families — every day

BY CARRIE CARIELLO

that to us; we consider safety to be a core value. We realize that 'priorities' can change from time to time, but core values remain constant. Our dedicated focus on safety will never change."

"The Lehigh Way" means doing the job safely

Lehigh's culture of safety and its underlying objective have never wavered: send everyone home to their families — every day. This consistent philosophy has guided Lehigh for 25 years, and it has led to an amazing 1.75 million man-hours without a lost-time injury.

"I never, ever want to have to call a family at the end of a work day and break the news to them that a loved one has been injured on one of our jobsites," Lehigh President David Knauss said. "That alone motivates me to make our Safety Program the



best it can be. It's not about winning safety awards or keeping track of man-hours as much as making sure your team has the skills and equipment to keep out of harm's way."

Keeping the program current

The construction industry is constantly changing, from the

technology it utilizes to the kinds of facilities it builds. Lehigh's safety approach has to adapt to the changing environment.

Although Lehigh continues to employ the old-fashioned methods of its program — toolbox talks, regular safety trainings, prequalifying all of its subcontractors — the company is trying to widen its circle of influence. ▶

For Lehigh, safety is not just about wearing a hard hat. It is one of the company's core values. Tom Glomb, Vice President of Lehigh (left), reviews on-site safety requirements with Superintendent Chris Reichert.



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Lehigh has reached out to educational institutions to help foster an awareness of safety at the earliest stages of a worker's career.

This outreach led Lehigh to expand its Safety Program and establish an Alliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). An Alliance allows organizations to team up with OSHA in order "to leverage resources and expertise to develop compliance assistance, tools and resources, and share information with employers and employees to help prevent injuries, illnesses, and fatalities in the workplace," according to the program's website. Currently, Lehigh is one of the only privately held companies in the country to have established an OSHA Alliance.

"In collaboration with OSHA, we're working to spread the word about the importance of safety awareness in construction," Glomb said. For years, Lehigh has educated high school- and college-level construction students about industry hazards, and most recently, it initiated another component of the program that focuses on minority groups. "Bottom line is that the safety of construction workers is important to us," Glomb said. "We will always be involved with educating the construction community on safety awareness."

Now, even though no true minimum standard is required by the construction industry, it has become more common to see workers obtain their 10-hour safety card. At Lehigh, that's not enough. The company has continued its proactive approach toward safety training by expecting each worker to obtain a 30-hour card, which is more training than some Safety Directors at other companies have acquired. Lehigh is committed to making each of its crew members responsible for construction safety at its sites. ▾



OSHA Alliance Program

Safety is everyone's business, which is why Lehigh Construction Group, Inc., has joined the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Alliances Program. For national Alliances, contact OSHA's Office of Outreach Services and Alliances at (202) 693-2340.

For regional or local Alliances, contact the Regional OSHA Office in your area. Visit www.osha.gov for more information about the Alliance Program and a list of OSHA regional offices. Benefits to participating in the two-year program can include:

- Building trusting, cooperative relationships with the agency
- Networking with other groups committed to workplace safety and health
- Leveraging resources to maximize worker safety and health protection
- Gaining recognition as a proactive leader in safety and health



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No job too small

Lehigh's PRO division turns little jobs into big business

LEHIGH CONSTRUCTION GROUP, INC., HAS BUILT ITS BUSINESS by sweating the small stuff. By paying attention to its customers' smallest needs, Lehigh has been able to gain customer trust that leads to larger projects. And the smaller projects never go away. In fact, Lehigh thrives on them, and the company has established a special division that ensures that a customer's most basic needs never go unmet.

When Lehigh opened its doors, the company drummed up business by telling customers it would do any construction work that needed to be done. This approach has served Lehigh well for two and a half

decades. But it wasn't until eight years ago that the company decided to market the concept by creating a separate division — Lehigh PRO (Professional Response Organization) — that does only small construction jobs, building repair and emergency work, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"In combination with a new, internal order processing system geared toward the PRO concept, the new Lehigh division was created more as a way to emphasize our capabilities in this area," said Dave Hofer, Senior Project Manager at Lehigh. "It allows customers to better understand that

we actually seek out the small work ... we continue to do whatever the customer wants."

Turning service into success

"Construction companies might view maintenance work as a loss leader," said David Knauss, President of Lehigh, "a value-added service that draws attention to the company's other (more profitable) capabilities." But those types of projects are woven into the fabric of what Lehigh is all about, and besides, Lehigh couldn't get away from it if it wanted to. It's the larger customers that still need those small jobs to be done, and they have continued to ask Lehigh to do them.

So Knauss and Tom Glomb, Lehigh's Vice President, decided to turn a "loss leader" into a profitable way to meet customer needs.

Based on a faster, work-order mentality, rather than the lengthy process required for large construction contracts, Lehigh PRO is streamlined to provide a quick response to customers' smaller construction needs. Clients call when problems arise, Lehigh's estimators enter the order into the system, and a PRO van is quickly dispatched to the site. "The process allowed Lehigh to provide quick estimates and dispatch field service individuals in a matter of hours," Hofer said, "versus the traditional, project-oriented system that sometimes takes days or even weeks to initiate the proper paperwork and scheduling."

In the early stages, PRO "service teams" were really only one person who would be assigned to a larger project, but would hop into his van and head out to the service call, returning to the original jobsite when finished. Now, Lehigh is adding roughly two new service vans to the PRO fleet every six months, and members of the PRO team are almost exclusively focused on the smaller repair jobs and maintenance work. "The great part about the PRO concept is that our clients get the same high-quality, experienced crews for fixing a door or replacing tile as they do when they contract with Lehigh to build their entire manufacturing plant or bank branch," Hofer said.

Lehigh PRO has steadily built up its clientele. Last year, the division completed more than 1,200 jobs. The pool of available clients is promising, especially after taking into account the hundreds of overall customers that Lehigh works with. "Our goal is to keep searching for the small jobs and increasing our PRO capabilities by 10 to 20 percent every year," Hofer said.

One early PRO client was Tops Markets, a chain of grocery stores dispersed throughout Western New York and Pennsylvania. Imagine the use and abuse that a highly-trafficked grocery store can undergo, and multiply that by 50 of its other store locations. There are a myriad of broken tiles, damaged handrails, malfunctioning restroom partitions, water-damaged ceiling tiles, and more. "Because Tops deals with the public, correcting these small problems quickly was critical to maintaining the cleanliness of the facilities and the smooth operation of their business," Hofer said.

Tops' maintenance crews were (and are) too busy with large projects to be available to repair the fallout from every minor mishap. Lehigh PRO was the answer to these building repairs and facility maintenance problems, and continues to provide these services to Tops.

Clients with overtaxed maintenance crews are not the only candidates for PRO treatment. Known for its quick response time, accessibility, reliability, and round-the-clock service, the PRO division has also stepped in for companies ►

What does Lehigh PRO do?

General Remodeling

- Repairs and renovations
- Improvements to lobbies, offices, restrooms, and lunchrooms
- Drywall and plaster
- Painting and wall covering
- Suspended ceilings
- Interior and exterior demolition

Excavation and Site Improvement

- Backhoe and Bobcat work
- Site grading and drainage
- Asphalt repairs
- Landscaping
- Fencing and gates

Masonry

- New brick and block
- Glass block windows and walls
- Block, brick, and stone repair
- Painting, cleaning, and sealing
- Pressure washing

Steel and Metal

- Welding and repairs
- Steel and iron handrails and guardrails
- Pipe bollards and trenches
- Metal ladders and grating

Concrete Work

- Sidewalk, stair, and curb repair
- Foundation and floor repair
- Floor and pavement drainage
- Pits and trenches
- Floor toppings, coatings, and sealers
- Concrete saw cutting
- Concrete pads for dumpsters and compactors

Carpentry

- New carpentry and repairs
- Door and window installation/repair (wood, steel, and plastic)
- Door hardware installation and repair
- Wood framing and trim
- Paneling, cabinetry, and countertops
- Shelving and railings
- Custom millwork and installation
- Exterior siding and trim repair

Thermal and Moisture Protection

- Insulation, weather-stripping, and sealing
- Roof leak investigation and repair

Hard Flooring

- Ceramic and vinyl tile installation/repair
- Grouting and sealing
- Dairy brick flooring

Specialty Items

- Toilet and bath accessories
- Wall and corner guards
- Chalk boards and tack boards
- Bulletin boards and directories
- Folding and accordion partitions
- Interior signage
- Louvers and vents
- Computer and access flooring
- Fire extinguisher installation
- Flagpole repair and installation
- Lockers and mailboxes
- Custom entrance mats
- Scale installations
- Loading dock levelers and equipment

Based on a faster, work-order mentality, rather than the lengthy process required for large construction contracts, Lehigh PRO is streamlined to provide a quick response to customers' smaller construction needs ... when problems arise, Lehigh's estimators enter the order into the system, and a PRO van is dispatched to the site.

and businesses that have eliminated their maintenance units. "They find it more economical to call on us because it helps save on the bottom line for repairs," Hofer said.

Big job? No problem

While Lehigh PRO focuses on the smaller jobs, it also plays a role in Lehigh's major construction projects. "Our PRO guys will do small demolition jobs such as renovating office space, installing equipment, or doing interior repair on new floors, walls, or ceilings," Hofer said. "They are also called upon to supplement our work crews assigned to large construction projects." Basically, the flexibility of Lehigh's construction services depends on these multifaceted individuals.

A perfect example of Lehigh's PRO capabilities surfaced on a

The historic Roycroft Inn, in East Aurora, New York, has been a long-time PRO customer for Lehigh.



recent Friday afternoon. The company received a call from a customer that urgently needed to have dairy brick floors installed before it opened its doors for business the following Monday morning. "The tough part was getting all the materials on such short notice, especially the flooring that our client needed," Hofer said. "We managed to secure the materials and put together a crew that worked 10 to 12 hours on Saturday; another crew did the same on Sunday. We had the plant up and running Monday morning. Everyone stepped in — from superintendents to the individual crew members that make up the PRO team."

PRO affords Lehigh the ability to offer a solution that can be completed successfully on short notice and can involve anything from concrete work to carpentry, from excavation work to fixing a roof leak. "We're a one-stop-call capability, and our guys get the job done." 🍷



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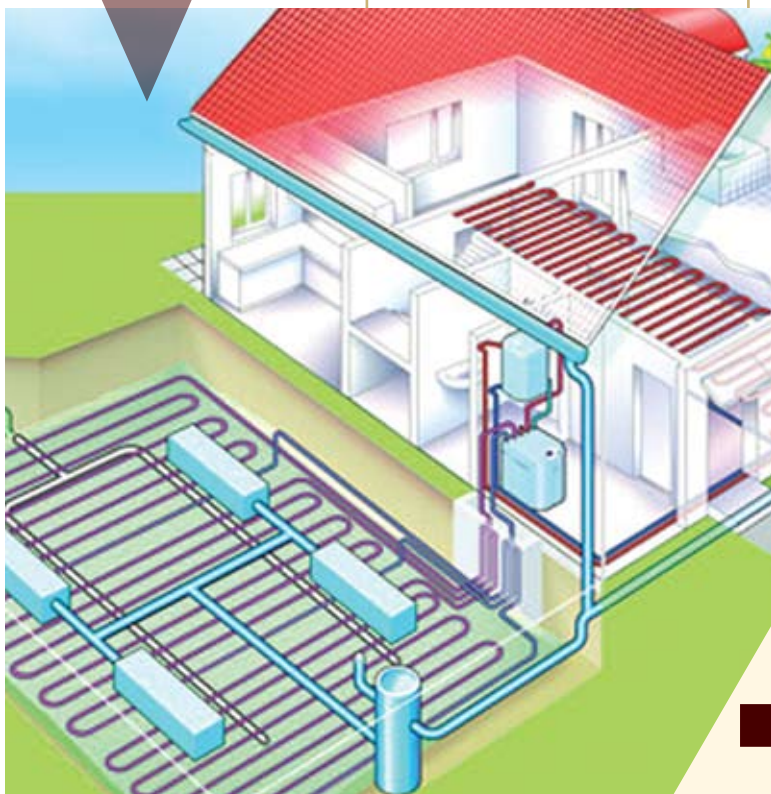
Roger Hoffman

Vice President/Owner of HVAC contractor,
Northeast Mechanical, Inc.

Q. What are some of the strongest trends you are seeing today from owners, architects, and facility managers?

A. I have seen all three of these groups migrate to “green” applications for heating and cooling. Facility managers have the responsibility to reduce energy costs to keep their operations profitable. Business owners are gathering information to improve their operating efficiency while also becoming more socially responsible in energy consumption by purchasing high-efficiency heating and cooling equipment.

Owners, architects, and facility managers are moving toward implementing “green” applications, such as geothermal heat pump systems, for heating and cooling. This is helping to reduce energy costs.



Residential architects have taken the lead in our industry for green building design, using geothermal heat pump systems for low-energy consumption.

Q. How are manufacturers responding to the new trend of “green” buildings?

A. Manufacturers in the HVAC industry have realized they are in a changing world with respect to rising energy costs, both gas and electricity. A leading manufacturer, TRANE, Inc., has created the world’s most efficient furnace, rated at 96.7 percent efficiency and includes TRANE’s CleanEffects “clean air” system.

The CleanEffects air cleaner, with its advanced technology, removes allergens and dust, and a recently completed study involving the Harvard School of Public Health shows the CleanEffects system can remove the flu virus. TRANE is at the forefront in creating clean, comfortable and energy efficient home and office environments.

Q. When it comes to environmental control, what is the most important factor to facility managers and business owners?

A. In today’s economy, productivity at the workplace continues to be a focus of every business owner. An individual’s productivity is directly related to the indoor environment; thus, the comfort of the employee is highly important. Most offices today have hot spots and cold spots, and most employees counteract this by adding fans or electrical space heaters to their work spaces. I can’t imagine the country-wide cost of running space heaters, let alone the global environmental impact. At Northeast Mechanical’s offices we utilize a zone control system. This allows for multiple thermostats for one HVAC unit that work in harmony for individual comfort. This system can be installed during construction or can be retrofitted. Other ways of increasing comfort in your office and home are the use of radiant floor heating systems. When your feet are warm, you are happy.

Manufacturers in the HVAC industry have realized they are in a changing world with respect to rising energy costs, both gas and electricity.

— ROGER HOFFMAN, VICE PRESIDENT/OWNER OF
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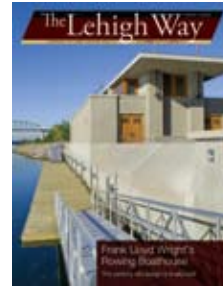
"Green" heating and cooling solutions

Q. Where do you see the trends of your industry going in the future?

A. The trend in the HVAC industry is toward geothermal systems. The ground just a few feet below the surface maintains a reasonably stable temperature. Geothermal systems extract that heat to warm buildings during colder days, and direct heat from buildings and into the ground in the hotter seasons. These systems allow flexible zone control

along with the ability to heat the exterior walls and cool the core. Geothermal systems use less energy than conventional HVAC, which makes it inherently greener. We have seen more of these systems being used by people who want to be socially responsible in the way that they use their energy. That trend is increasing and will spawn innovations that will improve our living and working environments, while maintaining eco-friendly benefits. 🍷

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