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Cover photo: Center for the Creative Arts at Cuyahoga Community College – Metro Campus, by Scott Pease

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## FEATURES



Photo by David Wilding

- 10 New Construction Starts in December Climb 5%, 2009 Total Drops 26%**
- 14 Outside In**  
*Wyse Advertising makes itself at home within dynamic new workspace at 668 Euclid*
- 23 Designed to Perform**  
*Tri-C launches master plan with new home for creative arts programs, Rock Hall archives*
- 43 New Destination**  
*Cleveland Airport Marriott flies high following renovation*
- 49 Building Connections**  
*Time Warner Cable consolidates Northeast Ohio call centers at NEO Park*
- 55 Surveying the Landscape: A look at projects, places & familiar faces in Northeast Ohio's growing industry**  
*56 Gaining Ground: Annual reviews provide opportunity to update grounds maintenance plans*  
*59 Sensible Mulching Keeps Grounds (and Budget) Healthy*  
*60 Vantage Point: Musings on 'Working Smarter'*  
*62 Project Profile: Vizmeg Landscape tackles big challenges at South Franklin Circle*  
*65 Bringing Buildings to Life: Look at green plants as friends with benefits*

## DEPARTMENTS

- 8 PROPERTIES PEOPLE**
- 13 BOMA BUSINESS**
- 30 FINANCIAL STRATEGIES**
- 34 BILLBOARD**
- 38 LEGAL PERSPECTIVES**
- 40 CABOR CORNER**
- 66 CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS REPORT**

## Inside and Out



KEN KRYCH

**D**uring these cold winter months, we tend to spend a lot of time indoors. So it's fitting that our feature stories this month largely deal with interior spaces, including a pair of renovated offices, a revamped hotel and a brand new facility on Cuyahoga Community College's Metro campus. But with spring just around the corner, we do have our eyes on the outside as well with our annual Landscaping Special Section.

Our thanks go out to the many top local experts who submitted articles on a variety of landscaping-related topics. Mark Scheer and Joe Schill, of Schill Landscaping, detail the importance of reviewing your grounds management plan each year. Shawn Fitzgerald, of The Davey Tree Expert Company, provides tips for effective, cost-efficient mulch use. Ohio Landscape Association President Jim McCaskey provides a personal account of how his company McCaskey

Landscape and Design decided to give the concept of "working smarter" a try recently and saw benefits. James Arch, at Vizmeg Landscape, profiles his company's work at South Franklin Circle. Finally, Nancy Silverman, at Plantscaping and Blooms, details the benefits of using live greenery in interior environments.

Our cover story focuses on Tri-C's new Center for Creative Arts. It's quite a unique building in that it is literally split down the middle between the past

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and the future. On one side it will house the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum's a library and archives. Cross the lobby and you enter the future with state-of-the art classrooms, recording studios, practice rooms and more for Tri-C's Division of Creative Arts. One wonders if any among its students' works will find their way into the archives. It could all begin and end there in this new building at Tri-C's main campus.

Customers of Time Warner will be well taken care of with the consolidation of several offices into a new call center in Neo Park in Garfield Heights. This is an open, colorful renovation of existing space that employs hundreds of workers.

On the west side we check into the Cleveland Airport Marriott and its latest and greatest renovation, including all meeting rooms as well as individual suites.

If you can imagine it, you can build it.... That sums up the very delightful and creative new headquarters for Wyse Advertising at 668 Euclid. It is unlike anything I have seen in the region and reflects the philosophy and core values of the firm in a three dimensional form. It is a perfect fit and a beautiful additional new piece in the reconstruction of Euclid Avenue's area buildings.

*A lot more coming up*

Next month is our focus on design/build with our "Masters of Design/Build" section profiling the best in the business. And there is quite a spread of newly completed projects such as the Gilmore Academy Gymnasium/Natatorium addition, Holy Family Church addition and renovation, Hiram College's new dining facility, Bartels & Busack's Pet Hospital and more.

As always we welcome input on features on projects, people and potential profiles we can share in *Properties*. Feel free to call us anytime at 216-251-0035.

Here's hoping for an early spring!



Kenneth C. Krych  
Owner/Publisher

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# PROPERTIES PEOPLE

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## HBA Awards & Installation Banquet

Recently the Home Builders Association (HBA) held its 66th annual awards banquet at the Cleveland Ritz-Carlton Hotel to honor excellence within its membership and install new incoming officers. Cocktails were followed by dinner, an awards ceremony, installation of new officers and a night of dancing. The executive committee for 2010 includes President David Payne, Vice President Chris Tsonton, Treasurer Enzo Perfetto and Secretary George Davis. **P**

- 1 **Ed Belair** (Graves Lumber) and **Harry Mireau** (Babin Building Center)
- 2 **Kim Lisboa** and **Linette Arsianian** (Cleveland Granite & Marble Company)
- 3 2010 President **David Payne** and his wife **Sarah**
- 4 2010 Executive Board: Secretary **George Davis** (ProBuilt Homes), Treasurer **Enzo Perfetto** (Enzoco), Vice President **Chris Tsonton** (Pepperwood Homes) and President **David Payne** (Payne and Payne Builders)
- 5 1995 President **Mike Payne** and 2010 President **David Payne** (Payne & Payne Builders)
- 6 **Jeff Budzowski** (HBA) and **Bill Sanderson** (Forest City Land Group)
- 7 **Greg** and **Chris Romes**, **Al Scott**, **Rick** and **Lynelle Puzziello**, **Holly Finkler** and **Gregg Finkler**
- 8 2009 OHBA President **Greg Romes**, OHBA Secretary and Treasurer **Bill Martin** and **Al Scott**



Emcee **Rich Smothers**, **Susan Edison** (daughter of inductee Linda Kacher), Hall of Fame inductee **Mary Felton** and **Becky McAuley** (daughter of inductee Linda Kacher)

## NCBIA Installation & Hall of Fame Banquet

About 150 attendees were on hand as the North Coast Building Industry Association (NCBIA) celebrated its 65th Anniversary at its Installation and Hall of Fame Banquet recently at Sawmill Creek in Huron. Presenting the toast was Dan Strauss who served as president for both NCBIA and the Ohio Home Builders Association. **P**



## ABC Craft Championships

- 1 **Seth Hager** (RLC Construction)
- 2 **Brian Miller** (Preferred LLC), **Matthew Moore** (Northern Lights Electric, Inc.) and ABC-Northern Ohio Chapter President & CEO **Ryan Martin**
- 3 Spectators watch the competitors in action at the Northern Ohio Associated Builders and Contractors' Craft Championships

Five local construction craftsmen beat out stiff competition to claim regional awards in the Northern Ohio Associated Builders and Contractors' (ABC) Craft Championships, which was held recently in Broadview Heights. Each of the five winners will go on to compete in their respective trades this February at the 2010 National Craft Championships in San Diego, California. Judges in the competitions ranked participants in every aspect of construction performance from layout to quality of workmanship. Viewed by more than 200 spectators, the contests were also timed, receiving four hours in which to complete the projects. Weighted most heavily in the overall score, however, was general safety. **P**



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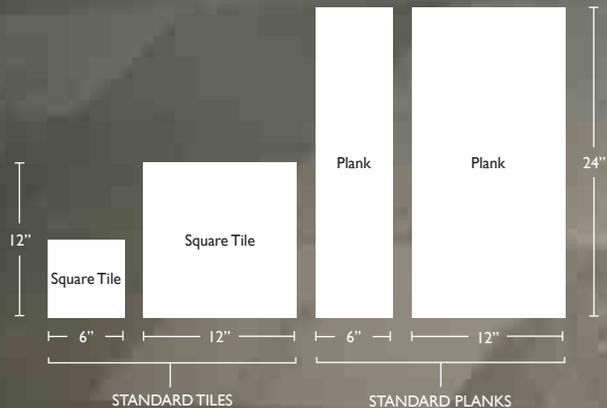
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## New Construction Starts in December Climb 5%, 2009 Total Drops 26%

New construction starts in December improved 5% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$425.8 billion, according to McGraw-Hill Construction, a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies. While nonresidential building and housing were essentially steady with the prior month, the nonbuilding construction sector (public works and electric utilities) strengthened in December, providing the lift to total construction. For the full year 2009, total construction starts plunged 26% to \$411.6 billion, marking the third straight year of diminished contracting after declines of 7% in 2007 and 13% in 2008.

The December statistics produced a reading of 90 for the Dodge Index (2000=100), up from November's 86. The Dodge Index for all of 2009 was 87, so December's pace of construction starts came in slightly above the full year average.

"The construction industry went through a particularly tough year in 2009, as the 26% annual decline for construction starts was the steepest in at least the past 40 years," says Robert A. Murray, vice president of economic affairs for McGraw-Hill Construction. "At the same time, the bottom for construction starts was reached in February, to be followed by an up-and-down pattern during 2009 which suggests that the transition has been

made from steady decline to at least low-level stability. Single-family housing, while still remaining at a very low volume, began to show some improvement as 2009 progressed.

"Funding from the federal stimulus bill helped to produce gains for highways and bridges, as well as a pickup for a few project types such as courthouses. However, commercial building and multifamily housing registered particularly severe declines in 2009, and even the previously resilient institutional building sector lost momentum. Going into 2010, more improvement is expected for housing and public works, but commercial and institutional building will continue to be adversely affected by weak employment, tight bank lending

and the eroding fiscal health of states and localities."

### Nonresidential building

Nonresidential building in December was reported at \$145.2 billion (annual rate), unchanged from the previous month, which reflected a mixed performance across the various structure types. On the commercial side, gains were registered by stores and warehouses, up 52% and 15% respectively, compared to very weak activity in November. This was countered by a 32% slide for hotels as well as a 15% drop for offices, which retreated even with groundbreaking for a \$91 million office building in Washington DC. The manufacturing plant category in December jumped 143% from a depressed November. On the institutional side, healthcare facilities in December advanced 8%, lifted by groundbreaking for a \$140 million hospital in New Mexico and a \$135 million medical center in Beavercreek, Ohio, a suburb of Dayton.

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Amusement-related projects climbed 56% in December with groundbreaking for a \$107 million casino in Pennsylvania and a \$95 million indoor arena in Indiana. Reduced activity in December was reported for educational buildings, down 3%; transportation terminals, down 14%; and public buildings, down 60% from an elevated November.

For 2009 as a whole, nonresidential building dropped 33% to \$162.4 billion. The commercial sector plunged 47%, much steeper than the 16% drop that took place in 2008. The retail categories were hard-hit in 2009, with stores and shopping centers falling 42% while warehouse construction plummeted 62%.

An even larger decline was reported for hotels, down 66%, which included a sharply reduced amount of hotel/casino projects. The office building category in 2009 dropped 37%, less severe than the other commercial categories yet still a substantial downturn. The office decline in 2009 was cushioned to some extent by the start of several large government-related projects, such as the \$922 million U.S. Army headquarters complex in Alexandria, Virginia and the \$747 million renovation of the United Nations Secretariat Building in New York, New York, as well as groundbreaking for several large data centers. The manufacturing plant category in 2009 fell 66%, reflecting in part a decrease in the amount of large oil refinery expansions compared to 2008.

The institutional side of nonresidential building fell 17% in 2009, following a 10% gain in 2008. The most noteworthy decline was healthcare facilities, which retreated 36% compared to the record high in dollar terms achieved in 2008, as hospital chains in 2009 deferred expansion plans amidst tighter credit conditions and the uncertainty arising from the debate over healthcare reform. The educational building category in 2009 dropped 19%, with reduced activity for public school construction as well as colleges and universities. Declines were also reported for churches, down 11%; and amusement-related projects, down 17%. On the plus side, the public buildings category grew 10% in 2009, lifted by a large increase for courthouse projects, which in numerous cases were able to reach groundbreaking as a result

## December Construction Contracts for Cleveland Area

McGraw-Hill Construction recently reported on December contracts for future construction in the metropolitan statistical area of Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, consisting of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina counties. An authority on the construction market, the firm produces Dodge Reports and Sweets Catalog Files. According to the Dodge Analytics unit of McGraw-Hill Construction, the latest month's construction activity followed this pattern:

	2009	2008	Percent Change
<b>Nonresidential</b>	\$83,013,000	\$49,362,000	+68
<b>Residential</b>	\$23,772,000	\$37,433,000	-36
<b>Total Building</b>	\$106,785,000	\$86,795,000	+23

For the year-to-date on a cumulative basis, the totals are:

	2009	2008	Percent Change
<b>Nonresidential</b>	\$870,465,000	\$1,444,526,000	-40
<b>Residential</b>	\$413,643,000	\$660,038,000	-37
<b>Total Building</b>	\$1,284,108,000	\$2,104,564,000	-39

- Nonresidential buildings include commercial, manufacturing, educational, religious, administrative, recreational, hotel, dormitory and other buildings.
- Residential buildings include one- and two-family houses and apartments.

Source: McGraw-Hill Construction

of funding provided by the federal stimulus bill. Transportation terminal work in 2009 also advanced, rising 37%, with the boost coming from several large airport terminal projects in California and Nevada.

### Residential building

Residential building in December edged up 1% to \$131.3 billion (annual rate), with slight improvement for both single-family housing (up 2%) and multifamily housing (up 1%). The gain for single-family housing is the continuation of the gradual upward trend that's been present since April. The December pace for single-family housing was still 8% below the monthly average for 2008, and a full 64% below the monthly average in the peak year of 2005. For multifamily housing, the December pace was 54% below the monthly average in

2008 and a full 74% below the monthly average in the peak year of 2006.

The December multifamily total featured smaller-scale projects compared to a few years ago, including the December groundbreaking for a \$45 million apartment building in Yonkers, New York, a \$37 million mixed-use building in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and a \$35 million expansion to a managed care facility in Hamden, Connecticut.

The 2009 amount for residential building was \$111.4 billion, down 31% from 2008. Single-family housing fell 23% in dollar terms, less severe than the 39% drop reported in 2008. The regional pattern for single family housing showed the largest 2009 decline in the South Atlantic, down 30%; followed by the West, down 25%; the Northeast, down 24%; the Midwest, down 21%; and the South Central, down 16%.

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Multifamily housing in 2009 fell 56% in dollar terms, more pronounced than the 36% drop reported in 2008. The top five markets for multifamily housing in 2009 all showed sharp reductions compared to the prior year – New York, New York, down 59%; Chicago, Illinois, down

36%; Washington, D.C., down 68%; Dallas-Ft. Worth, Texas, down 56%; and Seattle, Washington, down 54%.

### Nonbuilding construction

Nonbuilding construction in December climbed 15% to \$149.3 bil-

lion (annual rate). For the full year 2009, nonbuilding construction dropped 9% to \$137.8 billion, due mostly to a 41% slide for electric utility construction from the record high achieved in 2008. The 2009 volume for electric utilities was still strong by recent standards, coming in as the third highest annual amount over the past ten years. The public works sector in 2009 settled back a slight 1% as the result of a varied pattern by project type. Highway construction (the largest public works category) grew 5%, and bridge construction climbed 10%. Both project types were the beneficiaries of funding provided by the federal stimulus act, and Murray notes that “both would have registered declines in 2009 without the stimulus funding.”

The 26% decline for total construction at the national level in 2009 was reflected by similar weakness at the five-region level. The steepest reductions were shown by the South Atlantic and the West, each down 27%; followed by the Midwest, down 26%; the South Central, down 25%; and the Northeast, down 24%. **P**

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# Outside In

## Wyse Advertising makes itself at home within dynamic new workspace at 668 Euclid

By Diane DiPiero | Photos by David Wilding

The phrase “think outside the box” is often used to describe the innovative ideas provided by creative agencies. In the case of Wyse Advertising, thinking outside the box has taken on a whole new meaning. The company’s new offices at 668 Euclid Avenue are fresh, innovative and inspiring – just the type of facility you’d expect from a business that revolves around building brands and leaving lasting impressions.

Previously located on the top floor of the Landmark Office Tower in Downtown Cleveland for 12 years, Wyse Advertising has a 58-year history of devising memorable print, radio, television and electronic marketing campaigns for the likes of Sherwin Williams, Dirt Devil, Moen, GE Lighting, Marathon Oil Company and Meineke Car Care Centers. Wyse’s creative thinking has gained the agency a national presence.

Yet, the folks at Wyse couldn’t help thinking that their talented team could be even *more* creative, especially if given the appropriate surroundings.

“In our old building, the company was split on three floors,” says Mike Marino,

president and CEO of Wyse. “People tended to email each other rather than approach each other. In the creative business, lots of ideas happen when people talk face-to-face.

“We wanted our new space to be attractive but also to be a machine for creative ideas,” he adds.

With this goal in mind, Wyse set out to find new office space, seeking guidance from tenant rep Allegro Realty Advisors. “The mission was two-fold: find the right space with a ‘wow’ factor and make sure it had the right economic factors,” explains George Hutchinson, president and CEO of Allegro. Together with Allegro manager Kelly Moody, owner’s

rep Jim Lawler of Lawler Construction, and architect Tim Mulle of Mulle & Associates, Hutchinson worked with Wyse to find the ideal space.

There were multiple “wow” factors at 668 Euclid, which is being developed as a mixed-use building by K&D Group. The first-floor, Euclid Avenue frontage was a definite draw, as was being part of the rejuvenation of the Euclid Corridor. 668 Euclid includes 250 luxury apartments and will soon house a fitness center, a French-American bistro and a bar with golf simulators and a pro shop. The overall project encompasses an eight-story building that was originally home to the William Taylor Son

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**CLEAR IMPACT** The lobby has a spa-like ambiance with cedar paneling and drenched in natural light from large windows and skylights.

& Company department store, a 73-foot atrium and a four-story annex, along with the former Dollar Bank building, which K&D demolished to prepare for a pedestrian park.

Mulle helped Wyse assess the space to see if it would meet the firm's requirements. Focus group meetings with Wyse employees highlighted issues within the existing offices and what would be needed in a new space. At the same time, Allegro determined the ultimate lease cost and made sure all of the financial factors were in place. The entire site selection process took about nine months.

Once Wyse settled on the 668 Building, the creative process began.

Not comfortable with your typical office-and-cubicle setup, Wyse wanted its new digs to be highly functional and very different from what they had before. "There's a whole new generation entering the workforce," Marino says. "How they behave in the workplace is very different. We want people to be happy working here."

Wyse Executive Vice President and CFO Margaret Weitzel points to a need for various levels of communication within the organization. "We have people assigned to multiple accounts and working on multiple projects at once. They need to have access to one another," she says.

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**HOUSING EMPLOYEES** “Cottages” replace traditional office spaces and evoke individuality with varying rooflines and color schemes. Adding to the residential feel is a “front porch” at one end of the facility that boasts outdoor-style furniture beneath a wooden trellis.

“Over the course of 12 years, the dynamics of business have changed,” adds Mulle, who worked with Wyse on their previous location. Wyse was about to change the dynamics of *where* it conducted business as well.

The lobby area of the new Wyse offices has a spa-like ambiance. Bathed in cedar paneling and drenched in natu-

ral light streaming from large windows and skylights, it is the kind of lobby where you don’t mind hanging out for several minutes.

But there’s even more intrigue within the office spaces, where Mulle designed

a series of cottages to house Wyse’s 85 employees. These “homes away from home,” if you will, feature corrugated metal roofs and siding; varying rooflines and color schemes give each “cottage” a unique personality.

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**CREATING COMFORT** The overall design is intended to offer employees a sense of privacy as well as promote interaction with clients and other team members. “We didn’t want to be in a cube farm,” says Wyse President/CEO Mike Marino.

“We used small-town planning for the village concept,” Mulle says. “There are freestanding structures within a larger space.”

Overall, the feeling is open and comfortable. “We didn’t want to be in a cube farm,” Marino says. “We wanted to offer both conviviality and privacy. There’s lots of glass – we’re not hiding. And there’s room to foster communication.”

Throughout the space, informal meeting areas interrupt rows of work cottages. These spots, which feature comfortable seating and pleasant lighting, encourage intimate meetings and brainstorming sessions. Mezzanine areas serve as “studies” for Wyse team members. An open-plan

cafeteria acts as a central pass-through for employees.

Surprise design elements wait around every corner. A “front porch” at one end of the facility boasts outdoor-style furniture beneath a wood trellis, creating a casual and impromptu meeting or relaxation location. Curvaceous outdoor lamps decorate an office corridor. Sensors allow them to turn off when enough natural light is pouring in from the atrium above.

As with any project, especially a historic renovation, challenges arose. Cleveland Construction’s Elliot Christiansen, who served as construction manager for the Wyse project, says

that these challenges were handled swiftly, without adding to the client’s budget. “There was an elevator shaft and a stairwell in the center of the space where the restrooms are now,” he says as an example. “We had to take those out and redo some steel work.”

Cleveland Construction also had to work around plumbing in the ceilings, which is used for the apartments above. The mezzanine levels had to be positioned so as not to interfere with the plumbing.

Throughout the planning and construction, keeping within budget remained a constant goal. “We spent one and a half months value-engineering

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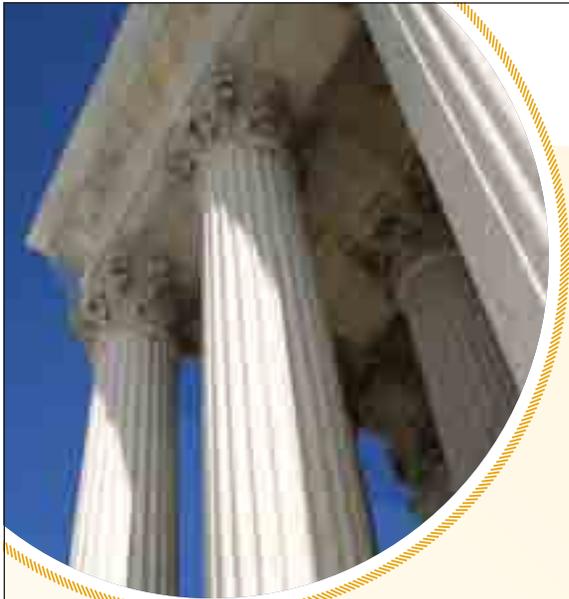
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**FRAMING FEATURES** The design scheme is intended to be colorful and dynamic with retro desks, antique furniture and framed vintage advertisements, blended with exposed wood ceilings and ductwork, and warm, muted color tones.

materials and design,” Christiansen says. “We had to find ways to accommodate their needs and not go over their budget.

For example, wood doors were initially proposed for private offices, but sliding glass doors saved Wyse about \$150,000, according to Christiansen. (Cleveland Construction is actively involved in the overall renovation of 668 Euclid, with David Sawicki serving as construction manager of the ongoing project.)

Weitzel was heavily involved in creating a design scheme that was colorful and dynamic. Many pieces of furniture and accessories from Wyse’s previous space were reused here. “We wanted a place that showed creativity with rather frugal resources,” she says. Retro chairs and antique desks add to the ambiance. The strongest design statement, however, comes from the framed posters of old advertisements. These represent a genre of advertising from the late 1880s through the 1920s.

Several of the posters are highlighted on a long corridor leading from the lobby to the presentation room. Mulle set wall panels at angles so that each poster could be seen as one walks down the corridor. “The colors get warmer as you go down the hall,” he points out.

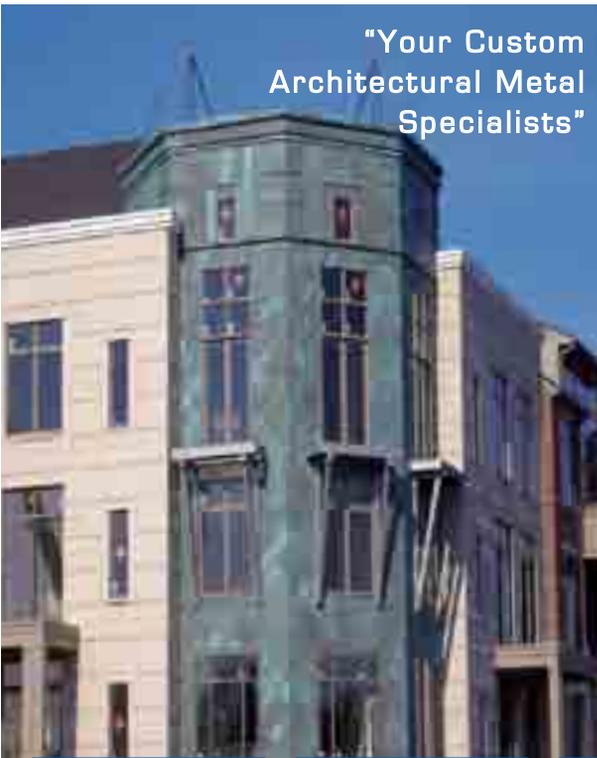
Sarah Pakan of Mulle & Associates served as interior designer, coordinating colors and finishes and working with Mulle on the overall concept, planning and design.

The architect added to the charm of the facility with elements that were strong on impact but not damaging to the budget, including exposed wood ceilings, exposed ductwork and skylights. Weitzel credits the professionals who worked on these types of details for imbuing the space with warmth and texture. “We really had craftsmen here,” she says.

All parties involved in the formation of the new Wyse offices employed skill and creativity to get the job done, on time and on budget. “It’s not an elaborate space,” Marino concludes. “It’s a creative space.” And it suits a company that understands what it means to think outside the box. **P**



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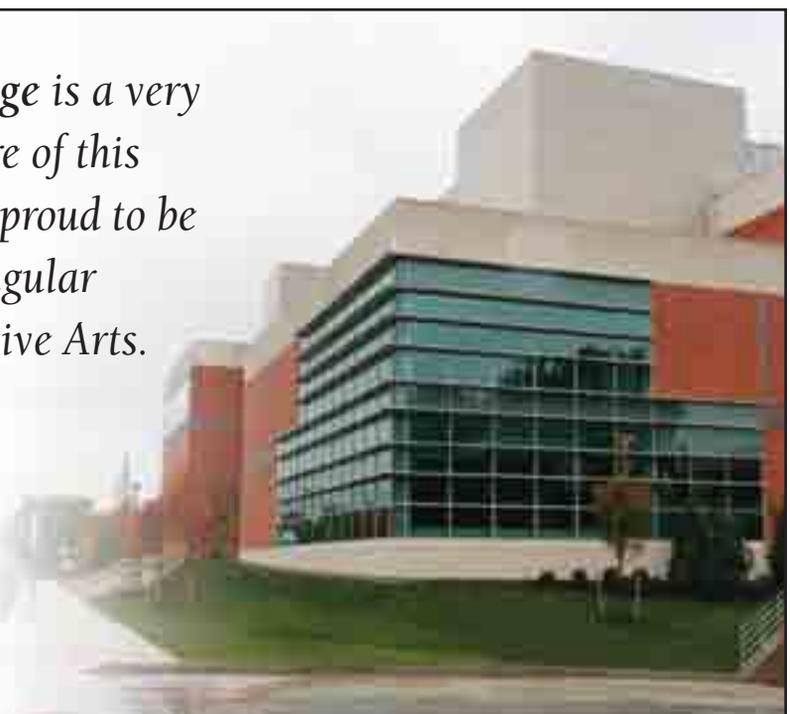
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# Designed to Perform

## Tri-C launches master plan with new home for creative arts programs, Rock Hall archives

By Mark Watt | Photos by Ken Krych

**T**wo tenants with two vastly different programming needs. That meant two sets of challenges for the design and construction team at Cuyahoga Community College's new Center for the Creative Arts. The \$30 million structure, situated along Woodland Avenue at Tri-C's Cleveland Metro Campus, houses studios and classrooms for the college's music, recording arts technology, media arts, animation, theater and dance programs. Separately, it will also serve as home for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum's Library and Archives, a repository of written and audio-visual materials related to the history of rock and roll.

Designed by Robert P. Madison International with construction management services provided by Donley's, the building opened its doors for Tri-C's fall semester in 2009. The college's newly designated Division of Creative Arts has utilized the facility since then, while the Rock Hall's Library and Archives is scheduled to open this fall.

From the outside, the four-story, 75,000-square-foot structure blends in with the architecture of surrounding buildings on Tri-C's campus with its brick precast and glass façade. The relative simplicity of its exterior is deceiving however, which becomes apparent with a look inside.

Essentially the building is divided into two separate masses within one structure. The Division of Creative Arts occupies 50,000 square feet of educa-

tional space built to accommodate strict lighting and acoustical needs for professional-level audio and video recording, while the Rock Hall's 22,500-square-foot facility is designed to protect valuable archival materials with stringent humidity, temperature and light control requirements. The disparate needs of each space made for an intricate design and construction process.

"It's a very unique building, especially when you consider the complexity of it," says Robert Madison, principal of Robert P. Madison International (RPMI). The RPMI design team included Project Manager Jim Lim, Project Architect Chester Henderson and Project Designer Vjekoslav Zlataric. "Considering the programming requirements, a tight budget and the college's needs, which evolved throughout the course of the

project, this is easily the most complex building I've designed."

### Setting the stage

The project began in the late 1990s when leadership at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum began looking for an offsite storage space for its growing collection of archival material. According to Madison, there was no existing space within the Rock Hall itself and an addition was considered too cost-prohibitive, so the museum began looking for a site at surrounding college campuses. It was a solution that would highlight the educational mission of the museum and benefit from government funding as well.

Madison, who was associate architect on the iconic Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum with lead architect

Photo by Dan Mimich



**RECORD COLLECTION** The new facility will house the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum's Library and Archives, beginning in late 2010. The archives will include a range of materials, such as handwritten lyrics and personal correspondence from rock 'n' roll greats; complete collections of vital rock publications like *Rolling Stone* and *Creem Magazine*; and unreleased audio and video recordings.

leoh Ming Pei, worked on a variety of schemes for the museum and his proposal for a structure at Tri-C was selected.

Working with leadership at Tri-C, including Dr. Brian Bethune, dean of what is now the Department of Creative Arts, the design team began working through plans for the college's portion of the building. That process was fluid and involved constant adjustments as Tri-C's visions for the space evolved.

"We wanted to be sure that we would be prepared not just for the present, but for the future as well," Bethune says. "Our goal here was to create a space that would break down the barriers between disciplines, to get recording arts students working with multimedia production students, or dance students with journalism students. We took previously separate programs that were located

throughout campus and brought them together under one roof."

That creates invaluable synergies for Tri-C now, but presented challenges during the design process as the school's plans for the new department developed. To meet the specialized needs of the various disciplines, a number of consultants were brought aboard, from acousticians to computer and audio/visual infrastructure design specialists.

Construction began in September 2007, notes Dan Gess, project manager with Donley's. "We procured the project through five separate bid package releases, starting with fast-tracking the site utilities and concrete, then bringing in structural, masonry and stairs and then ultimately the balance of general trades along with mechanical and electrical contractors," Gess says.

"Then finally, with the help of the IT and AV consultants, we fully integrated the building with thousands of miles of conduit and wiring to interconnect the audio/visual systems throughout the building." A final fifth package, a late change to the project, involved the installation of a 25-foot by 25-foot LED video message display on the south side of the building, facing nearby I-77.

"Because we were doing it in that phased approach, there were complexities," Gess says. "It was a collaborative, time-conscious effort on the part of everyone involved."

### In the spotlight

Visitors to the Center for Creative Arts can approach the building through its eastern entrance along Woodland Avenue or a western entrance from

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**SOUND DESIGN** Acoustic isolation and attenuation were crucial to the design and construction of recording studios in the new Tri-C facility. Hinged acoustic panels along the walls feature hard surfaces on one side and soft surfaces on the other. These can be opened or shut to “tune” the room by diffusing or deflecting sound waves.

within Tri-C’s pedestrian-focused campus. Both entrances open to a two-story atrium that is designed to pop with stained, self-leveling Ardex concrete flooring, colorful graphics and contemporary furniture, selected by Vocon, Inc., who served as interior design consultant. The atrium, which includes a ticket counter for special events, creates a clear division between the building’s two users.

To the east is the Rock Hall’s Library and Archives, which is designed to accommodate scholars, educators, students, media and the general public with resources for the research of rock and roll’s history. A public library is situated on the first floor. When completed, it

will incorporate racks of books, magazines and periodicals with a meeting room and designated reading areas.

Floors two and three will house administrative offices, as well as the Rock Hall’s extensive archives, including publications, photographs, song manuscripts, recording contracts, flyers, posters, concert programs and books, as well as thousands of unreleased sound and video recordings. To protect those materials, wall construction details and mechanical systems are built around maintaining specific humidity requirements. The Rock Hall plans to eventually add in-house labs for the digital preservation and conversation of the materials.

“The rock hall expects people from all over the country to come do research here,” Madison says. “It’s a research facility for the world.”

A penthouse serves as the fourth floor, with air handlers, heating boilers, a chiller and domestic boiler serving the needs of both the Rock Hall Library and Archives and Tri-C’s portion of the building.

Within the Division of Creative Arts’ portion of the building, first floor spaces include a Wi-Fi café, meeting spaces, administrative offices and a state-of-the-art, 3,000-square-foot black box studio for recording and/or transmitting video performances. Miles of electrical and audio/visual wiring snake through conduit that wraps around the room and ceiling, as well as an adjacent control room. Cinder blocks used for the black box studio’s walls are packed with specialized acoustic insulation.

On the second floor are classrooms for video, animation and multimedia editing, as well as video editing suites.

The third floor is dedicated to recording arts technology with labs, classrooms and a pair of high-end recording studios – the Large Ensemble Room and Small Ensemble Room – each with adjoining sound isolation booths and control rooms. A/V inputs and outputs are situ-



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**MUSIC BOX** A black box studio on the first floor provides versatile space for audio/video recording and broadcasting, as well as live performances if desired.

ated within wall panels and connect to wiring routed throughout the building. The complex system, designed with assistance from Westlake Reed Leskosky who acted as IT and A/V infrastructure consultant, makes it possible for students to pull in a live feed from virtually any room in the facility, such as the black box studio where the long-running Crooked River Groove cable TV music show is taped. Eventually, the Center for Creative Arts will take advantage of fiber connections to Tri-C's Eastern and Western campus locations around

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**SWEET SOUNDS** Studio A is a multi-room recording complex featuring a top-of-the-line, \$200,000 audio mixing console from England. An adjacent, tiered classroom overlooks the control room for training purposes.

tems are two and three wall studs thick with between eight and 12 layers of dry-wall. Suspended ceilings and floating floors isolate and disconnect rooms from the building, and all penetrations are caulked. Fabric soffits conceal electrical and mechanical systems, as well as sound baffles – pieces of drywall every 12 inches – that deaden sound.

the city, allowing live broadcast feeds from the college's various performance spaces, for instance during the college's renowned, annual Tri-C JazzFest.

On the building's lower level are a dance studio and theater studio, with neoprene-padded sprung hardwood floors to create a soft surface for dancers. Locker/shower rooms are situated nearby. Deeper within the building's lower level is the "heart and soul" of the Recording Arts Technology Studio, according to Gess. Designed by Walters-Storyk Design Group, Studio A is a state-of-the-art multi-room recording complex featuring a \$200,000, 48-channel Solid State Logic Duality mixing console from England. A tiered

classroom overlooks the control room, which includes its own classroom seating as well.

As control over acoustics is essential for audio recording, this and the other two studios are designed with specialized features. Walls are set at varying angles to deflect sound. Along some of those walls, operable acoustic panels feature a hard surface on one side and a soft surface on the other; these hinged panels can be opened or shut to "tune" a room, according to Gess. Heavy, sound isolation doors seal shut when closed.

While those features are visible, much of the acoustic control comes from specialized building materials within walls, floors and ceilings, Gess notes. Wall sys-

Todd Lowe, P.E., chief mechanical engineer on the project with Point One Design, Ltd., says recording studio sound requirements require skilled HVAC installation.

"Obviously, the duct system connects all the interior spaces and it can be challenging to prevent sound from moving from one room to another," Lowe says. "We worked with the acoustician and architect to prevent that from happening by installing dense acoustic lagging and specialized insulation."

Also on the lower level is an entryway from an underground parking garage. Featuring a mural designed by Cleveland artist Hector Vega, this serves as a primary access point for most students and

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### Green light

Doug Myers, project manager with Tri-C's Capital and Construction department, notes that the new Center for Creative Arts marks the first building in the college's master plan to update its Metro campus. Along with the functional needs of campus buildings, the college is hoping to establish a more inviting presence in the community.

The college is also pursuing LEED certification for the Center for Creative Arts, Myers says, which would make it the first LEED-certified structure on campus. The Rock Hall is separately pursuing Silver LEED status for its portion of the building. Particular green features include a highly reflective white roof, low-flow plumbing fixtures, motion-detection lighting and FSC certified wood.

Doty & Miller Architects are overseeing both submissions, while Donley's played a key role during the construc-



**LOCAL COLOR** An entrance from the underground parking garage features a mural designed by Cleveland artist Hector Vega.

tion process. In addition to tracking and processing LEED-required documents, Donley's also monitored other critical LEED requirements in the field. "Over 93% of construction waste was diverted from landfills," notes Gess, and particular attention was paid to site conditions to prevent soil erosion and contamination of nearby sewer systems." Additionally, all ductwork arriving on site was protected both during storage and after installation to ensure air quality standards for the future occupants.

### Big finish

Complex as it is, Madison says, the building has come together successfully.

"I'm happy but most importantly, our clients are happy," he says. "[Rock Hall President/CEO] Terry Stewart says he thinks it's magnificent. Tri-C's faculty are enjoying their new space and the students are as well."

That's the most important point, according to Myers.

"At Tri-C, our client is the student," he says. "I really don't think any of us will know how truly successful this project is until once the community and students ramp up and use this building the way it was designed to be used. I see this building as a tool and it will take a while for people to realize what it provides.

"That said, I'm very happy. In managing the project with the college, I was very impressed by the professionalism and the commitment of the entire team." **P**



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ALEC J. PACELLA

## Information Superhighway

One of the first pieces of advice given to me as a young lad in the brokerage business was offered by an old-timer. He said that a broker only has two things – time and information – and that to be successful in the business, you needed to figure out how to maximize both while not being consumed by either.

As I look back over the last 20 years, I am amazed at how the delivery of information has changed. In the early 1990s, mail was slowly yielding to fax machines and the majority of information came from conversations and reading printed material, such as newspapers and industry periodicals. Contrast that with today. Mail, fax machines, newspapers and periodicals are all still around but their collective prominence is diminished. And providing timely and current information is critical now more than ever.

So what is a person to do?

One word: technology.

This month, I'm going to let you in on a few of my little technology secrets, discussing the places that I go to get current information (and often even having it delivered to me). In future

columns, I plan to cover some other technology topics such as building an effective website and real estate's role in social networking. But this month, it's all about information.

There are two different categories of information that I am typically interested in. The first is property-specific information, such as new properties for sale, new spaces offered for lease and sale comparables.

Below are some of the sites that I frequent to find this information:

### LoopNet

[www.loopnet.com](http://www.loopnet.com)

Formed in 1995, this site was one of the first to jump on the information superhighway and is arguably the most successful. It's free (well, sort of, more on that in a minute), easy to use



Paul Stark and Brian Stark

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and contains commercial properties of all sizes and types available both for lease and for sale nationwide. You have to sign up but once you do, you will be able to run custom searches on specific criteria as well as have LoopNet send notifications via email when new properties are entered that fit your criteria. Now about that “free” part – you can view some properties for free but to have full access to the entire database, you need to be a paying member.

### Co-Star

[www.co-star.com](http://www.co-star.com)

This company dates back to the late 1980s and is similar to LoopNet in that it offers information on properties available for lease and for sale nationwide. However, it also aggregates the information and produces analysis on metro markets, offers current real-estate related news and contains sale and lease comparables. Similar to LoopNet, you can get some information for free but to get full access, you have to be a paying member. Co-Star will also push new information to its paid subscribers, based on user-defined criteria.

### Real Capital Analytics

[www.rcanalytics.com](http://www.rcanalytics.com)

Founded 10 years ago by my good friend Bob White, RCA has become the go-to source for the investment community. It contains a variety of information, including sales comparables, market analysis and special topical reports. However, a paid subscription is a must, as the amount of free information is very limited.

### Various brokerage company websites

Almost all commercial brokerage companies maintain their own web site. Typical content includes current listings and background on the brokerage company and its salespeople. Several have additional information, such as reports, market statistics and useful links to other sites in the local real estate community. And while most sites do not have the capability of setting up an email push based on user-defined criteria, a quick email or call to the brokerage company, letting them know you would be interested in receiving new listing information, will typically yield good results.

### Ohio Auditor's Directory

[www.caoo.org/directory](http://www.caoo.org/directory)

All of Ohio's 88 county auditors maintain web sites, with many offering property search functionality via the web. This can be a great tool when tracking down sale comparables. And best of all, it's free.

The other type of information that is always of interest to me is news, market information and statistics. Some of my favorites here include:

### Globestreet

[www.globestreet.com](http://www.globestreet.com)

This site is a clearinghouse of information and contains all types of daily real estate news, as well as regular columns on various topics. It is national in scope but the news can easily be filtered and daily email notifications are a snap to set up.

### Ohio Labor Market Information

[www.lmi.state.oh.us/laus/current.htm](http://www.lmi.state.oh.us/laus/current.htm)

This section of the Ohio.gov site provides data on employment and

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labor information for the state, including current unemployment rate and employment by economic sector. The information is available on a variety of levels, including by county and by MSA.

### Ohio County Profiles

<http://www.odod.state.oh.us/research/files/s0.htm>

This section of the Ohio.gov site provides information and statistics for Ohio's 88 counties, all wrapped up in a slick five-page report. The information includes population trends, primary employers, demographic profiles and new construction information.

### Heartland Real Estate Business

[www.heartlandrebusiness.com](http://www.heartlandrebusiness.com)

### Midwest Real Estate News

[www.mwrealestatenews.com](http://www.mwrealestatenews.com)

### National Real Estate Investor

[www.nreionline.com](http://www.nreionline.com)

All of these are monthly print publications that have corresponding web sites with digital content. Features include searchable archives of past issues, the

## Daus, You Know?

**OFFICE BLUES** December saw two suburban office buildings sell for eyebrow-raising numbers. Rockwood Center, on Rockside Road, sold for \$40 psf while Point 6 in Westlake sold for \$21 psf. —AP

ability to have digital issues sent via email and periodic email notifications of breaking news.

### Crains Cleveland Business

[www.crainscleveland.com](http://www.crainscleveland.com)

### Cleveland.com

[www.cleveland.com](http://www.cleveland.com)

The digital counterpart to regular printed issues, these sites provide access to local and regional news of all types.

### Google Alerts

[www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)

This is a free service offered through Google. You simply enter in a word or series of words and any time the Google's search engine finds a new Internet entry that matches, it will send an email with a hyperlink to the

entry. For instance, one of my Google alerts has the words "Formula 1 FIA" (yes, I'm a closet fanatic). Any time Google picks up a new entry with these three words on the Internet, I am sent an email with a hyperlink to whatever the search engine picked up. You can choose how often the alerts are sent (daily, weekly) as well as what type of Internet content to search (i.e., articles, blogs, videos, web pages, etc).

In the past, the person who had the information had the advantage. But with the startling increase in both volume and flow, information has become almost commonplace.

As a result, the advantage is quickly shifting from those who have the information to those that know how to use it. So hop on, it's going to be a fast ride. **P**

---

*Alec Pacella, CCIM, senior vice president at NAI Daus, can be reached by phone at 216.831.3310, ext. 125 or by email at [apacella@naidaus.com](mailto:apacella@naidaus.com).*

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## Terry Hanson Earns Fellowship Designation

Terry Hanson, president and CEO of Zumpano + Hanson, recently became a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), the nation's leading professional society for healthcare leaders.

The American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) is an international professional society of more than 30,000 health care executives who lead our nations' hospitals, health care systems and other health related organizations. ACHE is known for its prestigious credentialing and educational programs, including its annual Congress on Healthcare Leadership, which draws more than 4,500 participants each year.

Fellowship status in ACHE represents achievement of the highest standard of professional development. In fact, only 8,500 healthcare executives nationwide hold this distinction. To obtain Fellow status, candidates must fulfill multiple requirements, including passing a comprehensive examination, meeting academic and experiential criteria, earning continuing education credits and demonstrating professional/community involvement. Fellows are also committed to ongoing professional development and undergo re-certification every three years.



Terry Hanson

Dimensions Inc., has earned the coveted designation of Marble Institute of America (MIA) Accredited Natural Stone Fabricator. Accredited Natural Stone Fabricators represent the best companies that work on residential projects such as kitchens and bathrooms.

Currently, only 25 Natural Stone Fabricators in the country have achieved accreditation, with Rocksolid Stone Works being the first in Ohio. Rocksolid Stone Works designs, custom fabricates, and installs stone applications for residential and commercial clients.

## Wells Wins BOMA Award at Key Tower

Wells REIT II, a real estate investment trust specializing in Class-A office properties, has won its latest "Office Building of the Year" award, for the iconic Key Tower in Cleveland. The award is presented by the Greater Cleveland chapter of the Building Owners and Managers Association.

The 57-story, 1.3-million-square-foot office tower was designed by Cesar Pelli and is home to Key Bank.

Key Tower, which will now compete for regional BOMA honors, was named tops in the one-million-plus-square-feet category. It was built in 1991 by the Richard E. Jacobs Group; at the time, the tower was the tallest building between New York and Chicago. Wells

REIT II acquired its ownership position in Key Center, including the tower and an adjacent hotel, in 2005.

Wells REIT II owns 85 office and industrial buildings in 23 states; Washington, D.C.; and Moscow, Russia.

## Rocksolid Stone Works Receives MIA Accreditation

Rocksolid Stone Works, a division of Wood

## Spectrum Design Services Senior Designer Receives NCIDQ Certification

Interior design firm Spectrum Design Services recently announced that Valene Loar-Tabone, LEED-AP has received interior design certification by the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) and has been promoted to Senior Designer. Loar-



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Tabone is currently working on the interior design of the Radisson Hotel Cleveland – Gateway. Most recently, she completed a multi-million dollar interior renovation of the Cleveland Airport Marriott (see full story, page 43).

### Ohio Land Title Association Announces President-Elect

Michael J. Sikora III was recently elected President-Elect of the Ohio Land Title Association. Sikora founded and operates Sikora Law LLC, which represents real estate companies in disputes throughout the State of Ohio. Ohio Land Title Association is an association that promotes product



Michael J. Sikora III

quality and integrity in real estate transactions, while advocating for and promoting interests of its members.

### Crew Cleveland Member Nominated to Nat'l Board

CREW Cleveland member Amy Whitacre, sales execu-

tive with First American Title Company, has been appointed to the CREW Network national board as Chairperson for the Corporations and Family Trusts Committee, a sub-committee of CREW Foundation Donor Development. Her most recent position within CREW Network was as a member of the Nominating Committee for the 2011 national board. In CREW Cleveland, Whitacre has been a member for seven years and was the 2008 Chapter President.

CREW Cleveland is an association for women in the commercial real estate industry and is dedicated to furthering the success of its members by provid-

ing opportunities that foster productive and supportive relationships and enhance personal and professional growth.

CREW Cleveland is comprised of over 140 members from all disciplines of commercial real estate.

### NAIOP Announces Board of Officers for 2010

NAIOP Northern Ohio Chapter recently elected its officers for 2010. The board includes President David Sobochan (Cohen & Company); President Elect Dave Robar (Vocon); Treasurer Traci Mockbee-Hunt (CAM, Inc.); and Immediate Past President Matt Ambrose (PICIS). **P**

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## Real Property Complaint Filing Deadline Approaching

In 2008 and 2009, declining real property values were a common part of the headlines, both nationally and in Northeast Ohio. Although property values appear to be stabilizing, now may be the time to consider challenging your tax values because property tax bills are always one year behind. The tax bill you receive this year will reflect the value of your property on January 1, 2009 which is the tax lien date.

Real property is taxed at 35% of its true value, which is referred to as the assessed value for property. The county auditor is charged with adjusting the assessed value of each parcel within a county every three years. There are two different evaluations that occur: "Reappraisal Year" and "Update Year." The Reappraisal Year occurs every six years, and during the Reappraisal Year each parcel is viewed and evaluated based on market conditions. The Update Year occurs three years after the Reappraisal Year, and involves re-valuing property without physical inspection. This is often done using computer-assisted modeling of value changes by neighborhood and type of property within the county. The value of property is based on its condi-

tion on January 1st of each year. While 2008 was a Reappraisal Year in Summit County, 2009 will be an Update Year in Cuyahoga, Portage and Lorain Counties, and this year, 2010, is the Update Year for Medina County.

The county auditor's valuation of property may be challenged. Pursuant to Section 2, Article XII of the Ohio Constitution, real property is to be taxed "according to value." Ohio Revised Code Section 5713.03 also requires that each separate tract of property be valued according to its "true value." Section 5713.03 states, in relevant part, that "[t]he county auditor, from the best sources of information available, shall determine, as nearly as practicable, the true value of each separate tract, lot, or parcel of real

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property and of buildings, structures, and improvements located thereon.”

True value is equivalent to fair market value, which the Ohio Supreme Court in *State ex rel. Park Investment Co.* (1964), 175 Ohio St. 410, has defined as follows:

The best method of determining value, when such information is available, is an actual sale of such property between one who is willing to sell but not compelled to do so and one who is willing to buy but not compelled to do so. *In Re Estate of Sears* (1961), 172 Ohio St. 443, paragraph 2 of syllabus. This, without question, will usually determine the monetary value of the property. However, such information is not usually available, and thus an appraisal becomes necessary. It is in this appraisal that the various methods of evaluation, such as income yield or reproduction cost, come into action. Yet, no matter what method of evaluation is used, the ultimate result of such an appraisal must be to determine the amount which such property should bring if sold on the open market.

In other words, when property is recently the subject of an arm's length transaction between a willing seller and willing buyer, the sale price of the property will constitute the value for taxation purposes. The determination of how “recent” a real property transaction has to be is determined on a case-by-case basis. Generally one year or less is a good rule of thumb, but the purchase price of property in a transaction occurring later may still be relevant. It is important to note that only the value of real property, not the value of personal property, is considered when determining real property value.

When real property was not subject to a recent sale or such sale was not conducted at arm's length, then an appraisal or other evidence may be necessary to challenge the county's real property value applied to the subject property, especially when the market has drastically declined, as in today's current economy. Generally, when a recent arm's length sale is not available, there are three other property valuation approaches used in determining true value:

- (1) Cost Approach to Value – determines value by estimating the costs to reproduce the improvements to the property based on current prices of labor and materials;
- (2) Market Approach to Value – the value of the property is determined by analyzing recent sales of similar properties; and
- (3) Income Approach to Value – the value of the property is based on the net cash flow that can be produced by the property, capitalized at the rate of return that would be required based on the risk associated with holding the property.

Given the drastic decline in the real estate market and corresponding real property values, it may be beneficial to review your own industrial, commercial,

***If you disagree with the assessed value of your real property, you may file a complaint with your local county board of revision. A complaint must be filed with the board of revision by March 31, 2010.***

retail, business, and/or residential real property tax liabilities to see if they have also declined. If you disagree with the assessed value of your real property, you may file a complaint with your local county board of revision. A complaint must be filed with the board of revision by March 31, 2010. The complaint form is straightforward, and the county provides a form with instructions. A counter-complaint may be filed, and many times is filed, by the Board of Education where the property is located. This counter-complaint must be filed within 30 days after the Board

of Education receives notice of the filing of a complaint. If a tax assessment complaint is filed and unsuccessful, the property owner has the right to file an appeal to either the Court of Common Pleas or the Ohio Board of Tax Appeals.

In considering if you will challenge the valuation of your or your company's real property, you must keep in mind that March 31 will be an absolute deadline to file a complaint and failure to file by this date will result in a loss of your rights to challenge the valuation. The standard complaint form is referred to as Form DTE 1, Complaint Against the Valuation of Real Property. Although the instructions accompanying the complaint indicate that certain non-attorneys may prepare the complaint and file it on behalf of a company, it is important to note that the Ohio Supreme Court has questioned the constitutionality of that provision, and has determined that in many circumstances having a non-attorney prepare the complaint may constitute the unauthorized practice of law, especially if the matter involves legal issues and would involve the questioning of witnesses, such as appraisers. See, e.g., *Dayton Supply & Tool Company, Inc. v. Montgomery County Board of Revision* (2006), 111 Ohio St.3d 926, 927. Consequently, it is advisable to consult an attorney when filing a complaint. **P**

*The material appearing in this article is meant to provide general information only and not as a substitute for legal advice. Readers should seek the advice of their attorney or contact John at [jslagter@bdblaw.com](mailto:jslagter@bdblaw.com). This article may not be reprinted without the express permission of Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs, LLP © 2010.*



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GEORGE J. POFOK

## Checking in on Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credits

In the Job Stimulus Plan, \$120 million was set aside for the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credits. Tax credits from this program have been used locally to restore properties along the Euclid Avenue Corridor in downtown Cleveland, including landmarks such as Terminal Tower, Higbee Building, Hanna Theatre and Cleveland Trust Building.

To date, three rounds of applications have been completed, awarding \$95.7 million in tax credits across the state. The Application Submission Window for Round 4 is open and is in process now until March 31, 2010, with \$24.2 million in funding available for fiscal year 2011 for new applicants.

Like the Rounds 1 through 3, Round 4 is a three-tier process. Key dates to remember are as follows:

- Application Submission Window: January 4 – March 31, 2010
- Application Review Period: April 1 – May 31, 2010
- Approved Applicants Announced by: June 30, 2010

According to the Ohio Department of Development, the Ohio Preservation Tax Credit program gives tax credit for the rehabilitation costs to owners of historically significant buildings. The program was ratified on December 13, 2006 by the General Assembly (Sub.

H.B. 149) and amended on June 12, 2008 by House Bill 554, the Ohio Bipartisan Stimulus Plan. The Ohio Department of Development, through its Urban Development Division, is responsible for administering the program with the Ohio Department of Taxation and the Ohio Historical Society.

The tax credit subsidizes 25% of qualified rehabilitation expenses for historic rehabilitation projects. Qualified rehabilitation expenses embody hard construction costs for structural improvements or interior enhancements such as HVAC, plumbing or electrical work, and these efforts must be in keeping with the U.S. Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties. A property can only receive a designation as an historic building when it is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places; located in a registered historic district and certified by Ohio's Preservation Officer as being of historic significance to the district;

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or listed as a historic landmark by a certified local government.

The Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit program has considerable economic impact on the State of Ohio. Approved applications are anticipated at an average leveraged investment ratio of 5.44. With \$5.44 of private funding and federal tax credits invested for every dollar of state tax credit invested, there will be significant additional tax revenues produced in the years ahead.

Plus, historic preservation tax credit sites are oftentimes catalysts for neighborhood or community enhancements, taking that investment from a single site much further. This catalytic redevelopment effort is expected to far exceed the state's initial investment of tax credits.

The legislation remains unchanged in its eligibility requirements for Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit qualification:

- 1) non-governmental ownership,
- 2) the building must be a designated historical site,

3) a recommendation from the Ohio Historic Preservation Office that the rehabilitation work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and

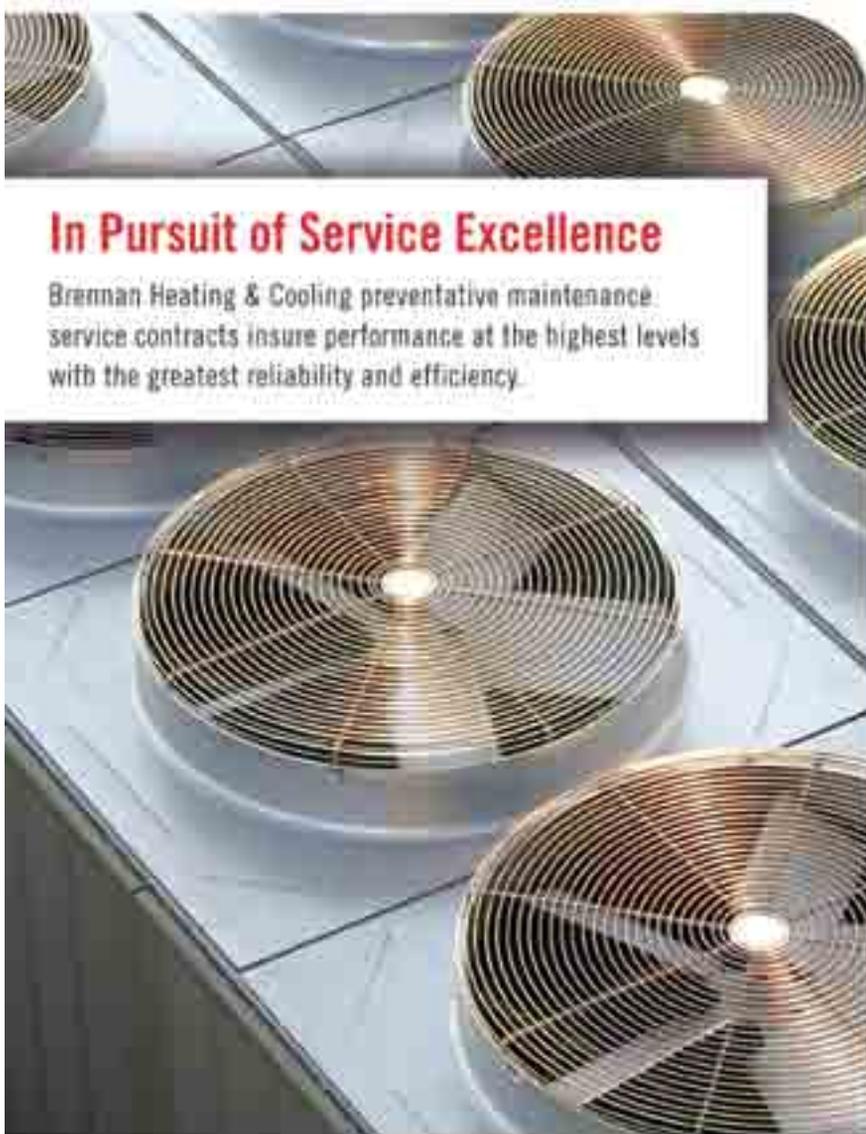
4) the tax credits must be a major factor in the financing for the rehabilitation.

A scoring methodology will determine the prospective economic impact and regional distributive balance of applicants as required by law for the program.

For more information, visit the Ohio Department of Development Web site

at [www.development.ohio.gov](http://www.development.ohio.gov) as well as the Ohio Historic Preservation Office National Register Web site at [www.ohio-history.org/resource/histpres/toolbox](http://www.ohio-history.org/resource/histpres/toolbox). **P**

*George J. Pofok, CCIM, SIOR is the 2010 Chairman of the Board for Cleveland Area Board of Realtors (CABOR). CABOR provides a variety of services to its professional members including education, insurance, affinity programs and legislative representation, as well as membership in the Ohio Association of Realtors (OAR) and the National Association of Realtors (NAR). For more information, visit [www.CABOR.com](http://www.CABOR.com).*



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# New Destination

## Cleveland Airport Marriott flies high following renovation

By Lou Kren | Photos by Victor Lee

**P**ermeating the worldwide economy, our recent protracted recession has impacted industries across the board. The lodging industry is no exception, and with light at the end of the economic tunnel, forward-thinking hoteliers are looking to recapture travelers in new ways. Thomas Point Ventures, L.P., of Bethesda, Maryland, is doing just that right here in Cleveland.

In 2007, Thomas Point purchased the Cleveland Airport Marriott, and by the summer of 2008, crews were onsite as part of a \$20 million renovation designed to completely reinvent all public spaces and meeting rooms, and all 372 guestrooms. The renovation, now complete, incorporates ideas intended to meet the needs of business travelers.

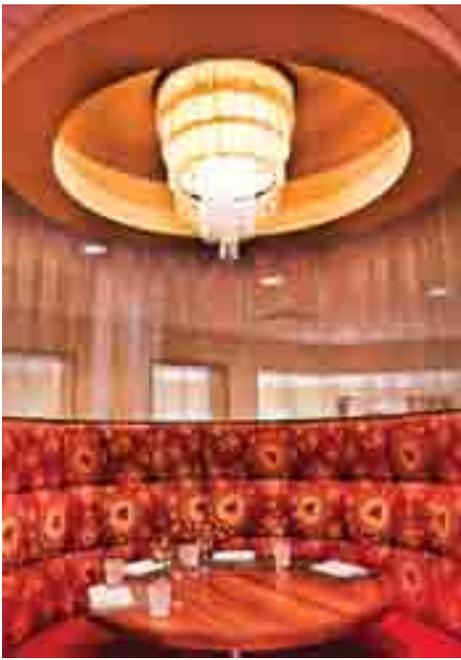
The Marriott, at the I-71 entrance at West 150th St. in close proximity to Cleveland Hopkins International Airport, opened as a low-rise hotel in 1968, the eighth Marriott built. The 10-story tower, adjacent to the low-rise and familiar to anyone driving along I-71 or flying into Hopkins, opened in 1971. With a property-improvement

plan in place upon purchase, Thomas Point went to work assembling a team to spearhead the renovation. Spectrum Design Services, the interior design division of mbi | k2m Architecture Inc., of Cleveland, was chosen as the interior design team for the project, owing to its experience with past Airport Marriott renovations, other work for Marriott and more than 30 years of experience in the hospitality design industry. Nyman Construction Co., of Cleveland, was selected as general contractor for the public spaces. Marriott's corporate office brought in Zelham, Inc., an Idaho firm, as general contractor for guestroom and guestroom-support-area construction, working off of guestroom designs

from architect Maddox NBD of Dublin, Ohio, which served as architect for the entire project.

### 'Great room' concept

Marriott's 'great room' concept forms the basis for the extensive lobby renovation. This concept recognizes Marriott research showing that nine out of 10 business travelers meet with others during their trips. Many of these meetings take place, or at least initiate, in the hotel lobby, so travelers need a place to greet colleagues, conduct business, relax and socialize. To that end, the great room concept has transformed the Airport Marriott lobby into three zones, encouraging guests to linger.



By Neil Tyson

**RICH DETAILS** New features in the restaurant and lounge include custom-designed circular booths (left) that follow the contour of existing soffits overhead, as well as a new granite-top bar with wood-vaneer counter-to-ceiling rotating shelves (right).

The Social Business Zone allows guests to engage with others for work or play. Here, seating and services have been specifically designed for guests to socialize, work, enjoy food and beverage, relax or celebrate. The Individual Zone is described by Marriott as a place where guests can work or relax on their own. The At Your Service or Delighted to Serve You Zone serves as the home base for arrivals and departures as well as concierge, business and retail services.

The new lobby concept supports the 24/7 work patterns of business travelers, who transition between work, relaxation and socializing throughout the day.

Marriott's designated zones remove traditional architectural barriers to create adaptable spaces that enable guests to more readily meet and work in small groups, take a private time-out or casually dine in more open spaces with easy access to the latest technologies.

Spectrum Design Services worked closely with Marriott to incorporate those zones into the lobby layout, backed by the construction expertise of Nyman, led by Michael Nyman with the day-to-day presence of Nyman project manager Bob Kamnikar and subcontractors.

"Marriott's 'great room' concept and its wide open layout formed the basis of the lobby renovation," says Rick Bertram,

Airport Marriott general manager, who escorted *Properties* on an extensive tour.

The lobby, restaurant and lounge reside off of the main entrance, with walls removed or scaled down between these areas to provide increased open space. The marble flooring has been refurbished with the lobby boasting a new glass-beaded chandelier. In fact, the entire renovation features new lighting fixtures throughout. Lobby columns, previously of Corinthian design, are now rectangular and clad in cherry wood to provide a contemporary appearance. Common areas feature new carpeting in custom designs developed Spectrum Design Services. Interior colors have

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been updated to reflect Marriott's red and gold color scheme, popped with eggplant, cobalt and bright green. Three large communal tables, one each in the lobby, restaurant and lounge, allow hotel guests and their colleagues to meet and interact. With the renovation, the business center, sporting a high-end granite countertop, has been opened up to the lobby for ease of guest use. The relocated reception desk, previously accessible only from back office areas, also has been opened up to the lobby to allow increased interaction between staff and guests. The reception desk features granite top and wood-veneer façade, with ADA access incorporated.

### Local artwork featured

Blown-glass sculpture embedded in the deskback was designed by Spectrum and fashioned by local artists, as was the majority of artwork in public areas and guestrooms. Marriott, Spectrum and NBD worked with the Bonfoey Gallery as well as the Red Dot Project – a local organization that helps market the work of local artists – to provide wall hangings and photography featuring scenes from the Cleveland area.

“The owners are passionate about regionalism and the notion of featuring unique Cleveland-inspired artwork,” explains Kelli Schaffran, director of design for Spectrum Design Services. “We are excited to be working with local photographers and artists to create a truly distinctive artwork package for this hotel.”

The renovation also brings a relocated self-service retail space adjacent to the reception desk, again opened up to invite access.

### New restaurant and lounge

Once separated by a half wall and glazing, the 120-seat restaurant and 45-seat lounge now provide an airy and inviting extension of the lobby. A new bar features a granite top and glass-tile front, with wood-veneer counter-to-ceiling rotating shelves revealing an extensive wine and spirit selection. This design element allows for quick and efficient opening and lockup of the bar area, according to Bertram. New flat-panel HDTVs grace lounge walls, with engineered wood providing the flooring for the restaurant and lounge. Plans called



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for retaining semi-circular soffits in the restaurant, interesting details that designers have accented.

“The existing restaurant featured curved-soffit details, so we incorporated custom-designed circular booths, partially enclosed and following the contour of the soffit,” explains Schaffran. “A shimmer screen – a metal-bead treatment – is suspended from the ceiling around the circular booths as a design feature and to provide some privacy.”

Schaffran credits Valene Loar-Tabone, Spectrum’s lead designer on the Marriott

project, for spearheading the project and serving as a liaison between Marriott and the entire project team.

A private dining room, with multimedia capability and a fireplace, has been added to the restaurant, flanked by a wine-storage wall. The wall sconces in the dining room are contained within niches, wrapped in glass-beaded wallcovering that accentuates the light. The restaurant also includes a buffet, with sliding paneled doors concealing the setup when the buffet is not in use.

### Better access to meeting rooms

The hallway from the lobby and restaurant to meeting and guest rooms also has been completely renovated.

“Prior to this renovation, meeting-room access was via a small hallway,” recalls Bertram. “We added double doors to the main hallway for better access to the rooms, and also added seating to the hallway.”

The meeting rooms and main ballroom, encompassing 15,000 square feet, all boast new lighting and sound systems as well as full computer/audio/visual capability, and take advantage of the hotel-wide Wi-Fi network. Also new: custom-designed wall coverings and carpeting. Public space on the main floor also includes a fitness center renovated two years ago and an indoor pool with new furniture.

### Guestrooms get attention

The guestroom renovation includes the Marriott-brand guestroom package with all new finishes, casegoods, seating, halogen lighting, technology package and regional artwork. The rooms incorporate Marriott’s plush



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**MEETING NEEDS** The redesign focused in part on creating adaptable spaces (left) that allow guests to meet and work in small, casual groups. The hallway from the lobby and restaurant to meeting and guest rooms has been completely renovated as well and includes comfortable, informal seating (right).

signature bedding, with a freshly laundered, sheeted duvet for each new guest. Guestrooms also feature LCD widescreen televisions and high-speed Internet connections as well as upgraded bathrooms with granite countertops.

The new guestrooms each contain four zones: the bedroom, a work area with a pivot desk, a living area with a reclining chair, and the bathroom. Foyer-like room entrances feature extended engineered-wood flooring transitioning to new carpeting. The renovation also brings safes and new climate-control systems to each room. Motion-sensing thermostats sense guest entry and exit and adjust room temperature accordingly.

Guests in the newly renovated Airport Marriott will find a ninth-floor Concierge Lounge replacing three guestrooms and serving as a special area for Marriott Rewards members, complete with a built-in buffet. The ninth floor is also home to the renovated Presidential Suite that features dining, living and sleeping areas.

The eighth and ninth floors also feature extended guestrooms, notes Bertram, as interior space replaces non-accessible balconies that had jutted out at these levels. The second floor also is home to the Rockefeller Room, a meeting space that had once been home to the hotel's Wintergarten restaurant. Here, a wall was removed to open up space and provide improved access, and

an existing wet bar was replaced with counter space. Other smaller meeting rooms boast new furniture and décor as well as wet bars, and the Salon A meeting room has been furnished in boardroom style.

Other upgrades include a new cooling tower, exterior painting and a new sound system serving all public spaces and meeting areas.

### Teamwork key to successful project

“They key to this project was teamwork between Marriott, the design team and

the contractors,” notes Michael Nyman, whose company self-performed finish carpentry and other work in addition to its general-contracting duties. “This project was completed in several phases in order to keep the hotel in operation, so daily communication and the ability to be flexible during construction was necessary, and that is what we did.”

Bertram echoes Nyman’s comments on project teamwork, and looks forward to a fully renovated Airport Marriott Hotel poised to meet the needs of today’s travelers. **P**

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# Building Connections

## Time Warner Cable consolidates Northeast Ohio call centers at NEO Park

By John Elliott | Photos by Ken Krych

**N**ortheast Ohio's economy has gradually moved from heavy manufacturing to information and technology, oftentimes aided by a cooperative spirit among property development players. Case in point is the new Time Warner Cable call center at NEO Park in Garfield Heights, which has allowed the cable giant to consolidate separate call centers into one more modern facility for about 400 employees.

Time Warner Cable relocated approximately 250 employees from its downtown Cleveland facility and about 70 from its Cleveland Heights building near Severance shopping center just before Christmas.

The new state-of-the-art call center is at 15305 NEO Park in one of eight tenant buildings at the 33-acre industrial park just north of I-480 in Garfield Heights. NEO Park is owned by Kerry Klotzman and managed by his family's management company, Alpha Park Inc. The buildout of the call center is targeted for LEED Silver certification.

Remodeling the building from its former use as the headquarters of World Almanac into a state-of-the-art cable TV, phone and Internet call center required the cooperation of the property manager, Highland Heights-based

Alpha Park Inc., the construction manager, Cleveland-based Turner Special Projects Division, the architect, Columbus-based Ford & Associates Architects, and the project manager, C.B. Richard Ellis.

NEO Park, a spacious modern industrial park that is just minutes off of I-480, offered a convenient location for Time Warner Cable to merge its downtown and Cleveland Heights call centers. It is now one of two Northeast Ohio call centers, the other being in North Canton.

Time Warner Cable occupies 37,764 square feet of the building, leaving an additional 16,659 available for growth.

### A more comfortable workspace

Don Jensen, vice president of customer care for Time Warner

Cable Northeast Ohio/Western Pennsylvania, says it was important for call center representatives to have a comfortable environment since they deal regularly with the public. "Providing a beautiful facility to work in is a great way to help build morale," he says. "If the employee answering the phone is happy, that attitude transfers to the customer experience."

Unlike the company's older call centers, this one has natural light throughout the building, more open space, a modern exercise room, private locker rooms, a large cafeteria and more sitting areas.

Time Warner Cable is the second-largest cable operator in the U.S., with technologically advanced, well-clustered systems located in five geographic areas — New York State, the Carolinas, Ohio, southern California and Texas.



**SHAPING SUPPORT** In the call center, cubicles are clustered in a hexagonal honeycomb shape that minimizes the noise level and provides some privacy.

for Time Warner Cable in Ohio, opted to retain some of the building's warehouse features, such as the high exposed ceiling and the concrete floor in the lunchroom. The floor was sealed to provide a finished surface.

The call center borrows some of the design characteristics from Time Warner Cable's new Midwest regional headquarters in Columbus and a recently-built 42,000-square-foot Zanesville, Ohio call center, both of which Ford & Associates Architects designed.

Ford & Associates Architects borrowed some of the design elements found in the company's marketing literature, notes Mark Ford, the firm's owner and lead architect on the project.

One example is the way the company's signature orange, red, blue, green and yellow colors are used on the walls along the eight-foot-wide corridors in the building's perimeter walls. Besides branding the company, the colors allow for wayfinding throughout the single-story building.

"We tried to brand their products so there is some continuity from one project to the next," explains Nick Magoto, vice president of design for Columbus-based Continental Office Environments, which was furniture consultant on the project. "We've

The company serves more than 14 million customers who subscribe to one or more of its video, high-speed data and voice services. It offers a suite of phone, Internet, Ethernet and cable television services to businesses of all sizes.

The 52,423-square-foot building was built during second phase of construction of the eight rectangular-shaped buildings that comprise NEO Park.

C.B. Richard Ellis facilitated Time Warner Cable's relocation to the site. The realty company happened to serve both the tenant and the property owner/manager. Both parties acknowledge that the existing relationships set the stage for a team project.

"It was a baton hand-off that worked perfectly," notes Kerry M. Klotzman, president of Alpha Park Inc.

Alpha Park Inc. prepared the shell of the building for the new tenant, including installing roof top HVAC units, replacing the overhead dock doors with eight-foot by eight-foot windows, and increasing the electrical service to the building. The landlord also paved a new asphalt parking lot with more than 200 parking spaces to handle the additional capacity.

#### Retaining warehouse features

Ford & Associates Architects, which has completed other buildings

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**ROOM TO RELAX** A main break area accommodates employees with tables and chairs for meals, refrigerators, a sink and vending machines.

taken the same finishes and used them in Cleveland.”

Continental Office Environments worked with Ford & Associates Architects on Time Warner Cable’s Columbus headquarters and Zanesville call center.

“Everybody in the space can enjoy the natural light,” Magoto says.

**Setting a theme**

One theme that can be found in all of the new Time Warner Cable buildings is the 96-inch by 120-inch branded graphic that greets visitors near the main entrance. The display is a photo montage from a company brochure and contains a four-color photo of a group of Time Warner Cable employees and the company’s mission statement: “Our Mission: Connect people and businesses with information, entertainment, and each other.

Give customers control in ways that are simple and easy.”

The company is emphasizing open work environments and natural lighting in all of its new buildings, Ford notes.

Functional support areas – training areas, conference rooms and break areas – are grouped close together to support open space in the main part of the building, but also to contain sound.

Windows were added to the exterior to allow as much daylight as possible, Ford notes. He says that all sections of the building have access to daylight.

Ford says that reworking an existing building always has its challenges. The existing masonry walls were modified to add new windows and building entrances, new underslab plumbing was added, and the site was modified to add an exterior employee patio area.

“Nearly everything that left the site was recycled,” notes Frank Morel, who

served as project manager for Turner, which removed much of the existing interior. He says it was challenging to get the renovation completed prior to Christmas.

Morel says that 95% of the material removed was recycled. Concrete taken out was used for pavement. Drywall was ground into a substance that farmers can use to neutralize acidic soil.

**Green features**

Numerous energy efficient features allow the building to qualify for LEED Silver certification.

The coal tar pitch roof has a white limestone surface that doesn’t retain heat and neutralizes acid rain. New heating and air conditioning units have been installed. The entire ceiling is insulated with metalized polypropylene batts.

All glass in the building is low emission; old windows were replaced to meet this qualification. The indoor lighting is provided by high-efficiency, T5 fluorescent lamps.

Paul McMullen, co-owner of Westerville, Ohio-based McMullen Engineering Co. Inc., project engineer, notes that dual-flush toilet technology was used to meet the LEED Silver certification. There are two buttons on the toilets for flushing, depending on the function the user needs. There are also low-flow urinals.

Recycled materials such as carpet, ceiling tiles and rubberized flooring were used. Certified wood products were used for all interior doors and cabinetry.

There are carbon dioxide sensors on the rooftop heating units to monitor indoor air quality. This feature also ensures a steady flow of fresh air. Says

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Klotzman, "With the state-of-the-art HVAC system designed by McMullen Engineering using Trane components, the comfort of the occupants is ensured while meeting or exceeding all requirements of the project."

### Focal point: the call center

The centralized open call area is bordered on the north side by offices, conference rooms and various function rooms, such as mailroom, training rooms, first aid room and server room.

There are triangle-shaped linear lights suspended from the call center ceiling; each linear triangle covers a group of cubicles, making a honeycomb pattern. There are also suspended duct pipes throughout the ceiling.

The work cubicles in the call center are separated by partial panels. The panels are arranged in a hexagonal shape, which minimize the noise level.

Magoto of Continental Office Environment notes that the cubicle walls' 120-degree corners prevent customer service reps from having their cubicle entrances in full view of each other. This



Photo by Tony Morrison

**CLEAR DIFFERENCE** Managers' offices have a combination of glass and frosted glass walls, allowing open views of the call center with a sense of privacy.

allows each cubicle a greater sense of privacy. "We found that it's been a better solution," says Magoto, who describes the floor plan as "organic design."

Organic design has evolved out of "biomimicry," which is a discipline that studies nature's best ideas and then imitates these designs and processes to solve human problems.

"The borrowed space becomes more of their space," Magoto continues. "It has a good effect on the people."

Sound speakers emit "white noise" throughout the call center. This is a random signal with a "flat" power spectral density that masks other sounds. The signal contains equal power within a fixed bandwidth at any center frequency.

The fluorescent lights do not produce glare and are clearly visible. "When occupants are able to see the source of the light, they relax," Klotzman says. "Cleverly designed light fixtures were selected to allow the Time Warner employees to see where the light is coming from while still effectively diffusing the light to reduce glare."

Nor is any glare emitted from the computer screens, thanks to the "direct indirect light" in the call center.

A series of digital video screens on the call center walls update the staff on their productivity in real time.

### Spacious support areas

A main break area with a generous view of the outside offers tables and chairs for meals, refrigerators, sink and vending machines. The break area is separated from the main training room



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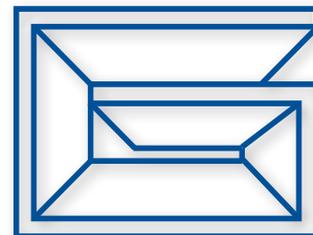
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by a garage door with transparent panels, which allows for the training area to open up into a larger room, simply by pushing the door up.

The server room was designed with input from Time Warner Cable's information technology staff. It was one of the first areas built so the call center could be ready when the employees relocated.

Managers' offices adjacent to the open call area have a combination glass and frosted glass walls, mixing an open view of the call area with a sense of privacy.

Offices adjacent to the call center have drop ceilings and sliding doors. Most of these offices have an enclosed conference room and a small waiting area with furniture.

The managers' offices utilize DIRTT (Doing It Right This Time) movable walls from Calgary, Canada-based DIRTT Environmental Solutions, a LEED feature. Movable walls and access floors allow for self-expression and individual function, providing a productive, long-term, flexible asset.

DIRTT walls are pre-engineered, pre-manufactured and horizontally support new and legacy furniture and



**UNDER ONE ROOF** The new call center at NEO Park has allowed Time Warner Cable to consolidate separate call centers into one more modern facility for about 400 employees.

storage. They minimize construction waste and any future renovation waste – there is no demolition, dumping, procuring and re-building.

"They didn't waste a square foot here," Klotzman says.

In the summer time, the employees will be able to utilize an outdoor patio adjacent to the break room.

The Garfield Heights call center presents a new era for Time Warner Cable in Northeast Ohio; employees have state of the art amenities in an energy efficient building.

"I think it came out great," notes McMullen, who has worked on several Time Warner Cable properties over the years. **P**

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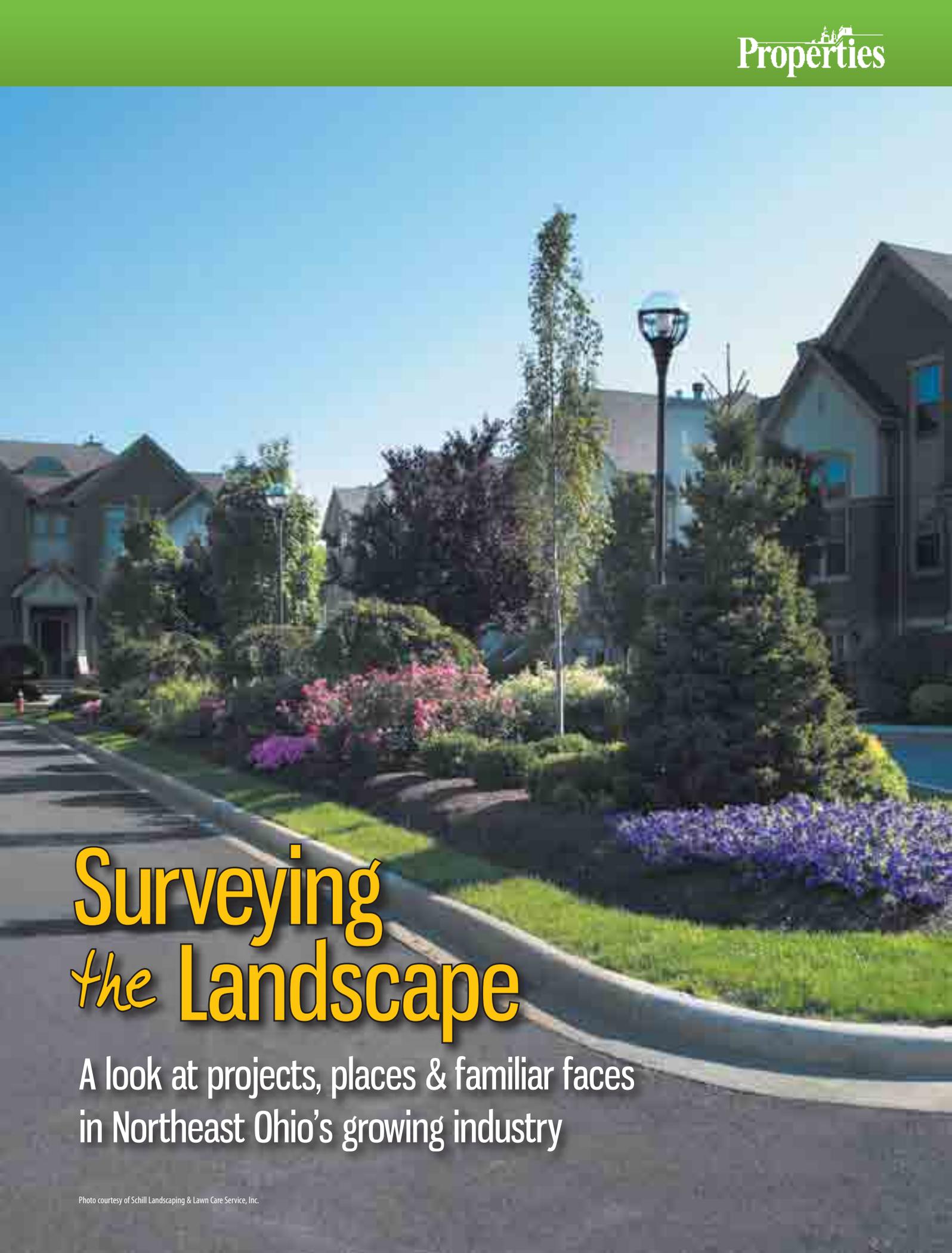
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# Surveying *the* Landscape

A look at projects, places & familiar faces  
in Northeast Ohio's growing industry

# Gaining Ground

## Annual reviews provide opportunity to update grounds maintenance plans

By Mark Scheer and Joe Schill

Schill Landscaping & Lawn Care Service, Inc.

**C**omplacency has no place in maintaining an appealing property. What worked for you three years ago may not be the best solution for you now; and without a regular review of your specifications, processes – and your grounds management partner, you won't know if you're getting the best results for your budget. It's wise to conduct an annual review of your grounds management needs.

Unbeknownst to most, the grounds management industry is a very dynamic institution and frequent changes constantly reshape the playing field – there is far more to the process than simply getting your lawn mowed each week. If you have selected a good, proactive vendor to provide these services, they should be the one to initiate this discussion with you. If not, you may want to consider a complete review and selection process to begin the spring season with a fresh perspective.

An effective management plan involves numerous variables, many of which can change from year to year. Advances in technology and equipment may upgrade the capabilities of different

providers, or a change in crew could affect performance. Your property may have undergone changes that demand a different approach to maintenance. Budget is always an overriding issue, and payment arrangements, contract extension discounts or bundling options may offer you more services for the same or perhaps even a lesser investment. Again, a good grounds management partner should approach you to discuss these items each season; otherwise, be sure you are the one to drive this process with any new partner.

If you have a good relationship with your current provider, the annual review will likely be a thorough review of your needs, discussed over a comfort-

able lunch together. Issues that you should be sure to address each year involve concerns you may have noticed with quality, stability of staff and crew, planned changes to your property and budget or billing arrangements. A great grounds management firm will always have your property's best reflection at heart, and will likely raise items with you that you may not have even considered in an effort to continue to raise the standard and quality of performance.

Choosing a new grounds management partner requires proper due diligence to be sure you make a selection with lasting potential — changing partners every year will never deliver the best results for your needs. Start by qualifying their capabilities: size of crew and support staff, account management structure, equipment, technology and experience. This initial objective review will help quickly identify those firms that are even able to deliver the needs you have.

However, it's the more subjective qualities that have the biggest impact on results. Ask for and follow up on references; visit those properties and satisfy yourself that their appearance meets the standards you expect for your own grounds. Walk your property several times with any prospective partner. Ask them for their opinion and recommendations. Be sure they don't offer all praise; chances are your property isn't perfect and if they fail to give you an honest evaluation, they probably won't be willing to actively manage your needs throughout the year either.

Finally, it's your responsibility to draft a clear, concise and thorough specifica-

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tion document. Know exactly how big your property is, what services you are asking for and the frequency with which tasks will be performed. Obviously, you can create this outline by gathering input from each prospective firm, but unless you are able to precisely compare each company bidding, choosing the best partner for your budget is not possible. Deliver your specification document to each bidding firm and request that additional recommendations beyond the scope you defined be bid as separate line items.

When you do make your final decision, make sure one final time that

[When selecting a grounds management partner,] ask for and follow up on references; visit those properties and satisfy yourself that their appearance meets the standards you expect for your own grounds.

the expectations of both parties reconcile. It serves nobody well to have a relationship fall apart over poor communication. Remember, you will never find a grounds management firm that wants to lose money caring for your property; they need to make a profit too.

As with any business process and decision, being thorough and deliberate is crucial in selecting and directing a grounds management partner. If you have been clear and honest up front, and they have also been open with you in return, you will be able to build a long-term relationship with your provider. Having a partner that 1) knows your property, 2) understands your expectations and 3) constantly looks to find ways to improve your image is the ultimate goal in creating and maintaining enviable properties. **P**

*Joe Schill is president/owner of Schill Landscaping & Lawn Care Service, Inc., a full-service grounds management company based in Sheffield Village. For more information, visit [www.schilllandscaping.com](http://www.schilllandscaping.com) or call 440.949.6089.*

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**MOUNTING MISTAKES** The “volcano” of mulch around this tree (Photo 1) not only reduces oxygen supply to the roots, but also offers a haven for insects and diseases that can enter the trunk from the mulch. The two halves of the circle around the tree in Photo 2 demonstrate the difference between correctly and incorrectly applied mulch. The correct level of mulch is two to three inches deep (Photo 3), which gives a finished look, conserves moisture and suppresses weeds. Mulch piled behind the tree represents wasted dollars spent on unneeded mulch.

## Sensible Mulching Keeps Grounds (and Budget) Healthy

By Shawn Fitzgerald  
*The Davey Tree Expert Company*

In the current economy you may be finding that a tight budget is at war with good maintenance practices. It can be difficult deciding what services can be deferred or reduced. But instead of defaulting to triage mode, it may be time to take a look at some of your routine practices as a way to curtail costs without affecting quality.

A standard contract may specify that two inches of new mulch be furnished and installed every year. Ask yourself: do we really need more mulch? By making such purchases automatic, you are not only adding to your costs unnecessarily, but also could be hurting the plants! Over-mulching has become a common and expensive landscape problem.

Here’s the good news/bad news on mulch. Good news: Mulch conserves moisture, suppresses weeds, adds nutrients to soil as it decomposes, moderates soil temperature, keeps equipment at a distance from plants and adds a finished look to grounds. Bad news: You may be buying too much of it.

Mulch is at its most effective when maintained at a depth of two to three inches. Deeper mulch can stifle oxygen supply to plant roots and can form a mat that is impermeable to water.

Rather than routinely specifying additional mulch, discuss the options with your landscape care provider. One simple, inexpensive choice may be mulch cultivation to refresh your beds. Another plan of action is to selectively apply new mulch only in

**GUIDELINES  
FOR USING  
MULCH  
EFFECTIVELY**

1. Never apply more than two inches of mulch at a time. Over-mulching causes excessive moisture, which reduces oxygen and promotes fungal growth.
2. Limit mulch depth to a half-inch near trunk or stem. Mulch piled against a trunk or stem provides a haven for insects and diseases.
3. Apply the mulch around trees outward to the drip line.
4. Use mulch around trees instead of turf. Turf competes with the plant’s roots and robs vital moisture and nutrients.

areas where the previous layer has decomposed or washed away.

This is a situation in which doing less may be better than doing more.

Not only will you save money – a major concern in the current economic downturn – but you may also be doing your trees a favor.

Landscaping dollars not wasted on unnecessary mulch can be used to enhance the curb appeal of your landscape with flowers or other more durable projects.

Cultivating existing mulch and only lightly top dressing with new mulch as needed is an example of a practice that a qualified grounds service provider can help you evaluate.

A reputable and experienced landscape care company can help you sort out which practices are unnecessary, or even harmful, and which ones are essential for the long term health of your property. **P**

*Shawn Fitzgerald is technical advisor with Davey Commercial Grounds Management, a division of The Davey Tree Expert Company. The Davey Company, with U.S. and Canadian operations in 45 states and five provinces, provides a variety of tree services, grounds maintenance, and consulting services for the residential, utility, commercial, and government markets. Founded in 1880, Davey is employee owned and has more than 7,000 employees.*

# VANTAGE POINT

Experts weigh in on industry issues



JIM MCCASKEY, CLP  
OHIO LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION

## Musings on 'Working Smarter'

**A**s president of the Ohio Landscape Association, I get to see and talk to a lot of contractors and vendors. And that was especially true recently at the 67th Cleveland Home & Garden Show. Yes, it was the old show in a new place (specifically, the Euclid/Great Lakes Expo Center instead of the IX Center). And it was packed. As I talked to the other contractors, they all said, "Well, we tightened our belt and made it through. Yes, it was a tough year but at least we made it."

Mind you, this is not a scientific survey. You're right if you say, "Jim, if they didn't make it, then they wouldn't be standing there talking to you." So yes I am only talking to contractors who made it. But that's not the point. The point is that I kept hearing this term over and over: tightening our belt.

Everybody says it but what does it really mean? Does it mean beating up every contractor or vendor you deal with? Does it mean letting some people go. Or does it mean watching every penny where you used to just watch every dollar. We started counting pennies again, like our grandparents did, and let the dollars take care of themselves.

Some of us did get very competitive, which could have been a good thing. Some of us said we have to do more with less. Everybody was asked to step up to the plate and contribute a little more. We

had to squeak out 5% more, one more job per week, or one more report per day. Whatever it was, we all did it. A little more with less. Others took a "let's work smarter" attitude. I know it sounds like a cliché. But we took working smarter to heart. Work smarter. Think about it. Again, everybody says it but what does it really mean and how do you do it.

Well, we did join a company, JP Horizon to help us do it. We took the Working Smarter Training Challenge. You could do it yourself or find someone to help you, but JP Horizons was the one to help us. It's all about making sure that every motion you make is adding value to the customer. If not, do you have to do it or can you eliminate it? Drive any and all waste out of your company, no matter how small. In our case, as landscape contractors, is every moment that we are working adding

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value to our customer's yard? We also looked at every job we were doing. The first one we did look at was spring clean-ups. Sounds simple doesn't it. As we broke it down and started writing the process on how to do a clean up, everybody was doing it a little different. So if you were working on one crew today and another tomorrow, you would have to learn a different way or a different process. That's just a waste of time. We tried to copy the McDonalds process. No matter who is doing it, it always comes out the same in the quickest time possible.

What we do is, every Wednesday we get together and have a class on what can we do to work smarter. Sometimes I teach the class and sometimes the guys teach it. We try and look for any process that can drive out waste. Wasted motion equals wasted money. What's very beneficial is that it puts everybody on the spot. It allows a first year technician to question a veteran foreman on "Why do we do that?" We had a foreman always park his truck in a certain spot such that the technician had to always move it. I know this is a very small example but it does two things: one, it allows anybody to question why we do things the way we do, but more importantly it gets into your blood. Myself included.

I went to a sales call and sold a brick patio. We had the brick choices down to two out of the catalog. I said, "I'll get the two samples and drop them off." Why didn't I bring them? I knew they were going to ask my opinion. I knew which two would complement the house. I could have brought the samples and saved myself an hour of time. I tell that story because I know we all can find some waste to drive out of your day.

So I challenge you as we move forward into the New Year. Is there any waste in your company that you can drive out and work smarter? **P**

*Jim McCaskey is owner of McCaskey Landscape and Design (440-285-2600), a full-service landscape company headquartered in Chardon. He is also serving as president of the Ohio Landscape Association (OLA), a non-profit trade association for landscape contractors and their suppliers. For info on OLA, call toll free 1-800-335-6521.*

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**DIGGING IN THE DIRT** In preparation for planting at South Franklin Circle (left), the subsoil was scarified (right) and topsoil was installed.

## Project Profile:

# Vizmeg Landscape tackles big challenges at South Franklin Circle

By James Arch, ASLA

*Vizmeg Landscape, Inc.*

**U**pon being awarded the landscape and irrigation contract at South Franklin Circle, we at Vizmeg Landscape, Inc. became very excited about the challenge of installing one of the largest projects Northeast Ohio has seen in recent years. That challenge involved the planning and coordination of vendors, material, equipment and manpower to install a signature landscape for a \$177 million development in Chagrin Falls. Let me share the details with you.

South Franklin Circle (see *Properties*, November 2009 for full story; available online at [www.propertiesmag.com](http://www.propertiesmag.com)) is an 88-acre active adult community that embraces nature and healthy living. The landscape plan for the site was developed by the landscape architecture firm of Oehme van Sweden and Associates. The landscape plan portrays the signature style of this firm with large flowing drifts of perennials and four season interest. A goal of the project was sustainability. Meadows take over for manicured lawn, native plantings dominate, mature trees were protected and 28 acres are set aside in a conservation easement.

A little over a year after the project was bid the start day came and work commenced on preparing the South Franklin Circle site to plant 1,200

trees, 7,000 shrubs, 86,000 perennials and 10,000 wetland plugs. In fall of 2008, Vizmeg working for the Albert M. Higley Company began a project that would take all of 2009 and will be completed this year with the final seeding of wildflower meadows throughout the site. The whole project was basically an assembly line of activities. Vizmeg followed the building and rough excavation grading crew with soil preparation, topsoil, irrigation, planting and seeding. It was organized but not without a little stress, with the goal of completion for the grand opening in September of 2009.

A major soil preparation effort was needed prior to installing any plant material. The specifications by the landscape architect called for loosening of the subsoil to a depth of 18 inches before

adding topsoil mixed with pine fines and leaf compost. The whole idea is to provide proper drainage and relieve soil compaction caused by the construction of the buildings. The resulting soil structure is very good for growing a beautiful landscape. Vizmeg screened, mixed and placed 45,000 cubic yards of topsoil in planting beds, lawn and meadow areas on the grounds.

After soil was placed, irrigation was installed per the extensive plan. The system includes 80,000 feet of pipe, 2,400 irrigation heads and 17,500 feet of two-strand wire. A crew dedicated to this task was on-site for the better part of six months working on areas as they became available. The system is designed to establish the plantings and to be used as needed after an initial grow in period.

With soil and irrigation in place, plant material could finally start to go in the ground. All tree locations needed to be staked and approved prior to installation. In addition, the landscape architect was very involved with perennial and shrub placement. Most trees were stored in a holding nursery on-site or off-site at Vizmeg's facility in Stow. The coordination and shipment of daily perennial needs was a full time job overseen by a materials manager. The planting process was split in two: tree-planting crews followed by perennial and shrub planting crews. Having the irrigation in place made watering and maintaining the installed material easier although a full time water person was in place to manually water and fertilize as needed.

A portion of the project included work in existing wetland on site. This involved the clearing of invasive species, particularly buckthorn, cat tail and wild rose. After these were located and removed, an as-built of clearing activ-

ities was submitted to the landscape architect who fine tuned the final wetland planting plan. The areas then were replanted with 10,000 plugs of plant material specifically chosen for wetlands.

Vizmeg is also responsible for grounds maintenance including snow and ice management for South Franklin Circle. Snow removal for the 2009-2010 season involves clearing and deicing the roads, walks and driveways. Equipment utilized includes trucks, skidsteers, ATVs as well as snow blower and shovels. The site is monitored on a 24-hour basis for snow removal needs. Grounds maintenance for the 2010 season will be managed by a full time on-site crew. Minimal maintain lawn is present on the site with most areas being mowed on a monthly or quarterly basis. The native meadow areas require minimal maintenance other than the monitoring for and removal of invasive species as the natives establish and grow in. A large effort will be put forth maintaining

the extensive perennial and shrub plantings by hand pruning, deadheading and weeding. The use of chemical herbicides will be very minimal and all fertilizers used will be organic based.

We are very proud of the project and of the fact the client is very happy with the results. I think you would agree that the size and magnitude of this project would present a challenge to any landscape company. We were fortunate to have the opportunity to meet it and are looking forward to another just like it. **P**

*Vizmeg Landscape, Inc. is based in Stow, Ohio and has been providing award-winning landscape construction services for commercial projects and design/build services for residential homeowners in Northeast Ohio for 19 years. Vizmeg also offers full service grounds maintenance including snow and ice management. Vizmeg Landscape Inc. is a member of these organizations: PLANET, ONLA, OLA, IA, and ASLA. For more info, call 330-686-0901 or visit [www.vizmeg.com](http://www.vizmeg.com). Contact James Arch, ASLA for inquiries at [jarch@vizmeg.com](mailto:jarch@vizmeg.com).*

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# Bringing Buildings to Life

## Look at green plants as friends with benefits

By Nancy Silverman

*Plantscaping and Blooms*

Most of us feel a greater sense of calm and a more contented feeling of well-being and comfort in natural surroundings. But our workspaces, cubbies and daily routines are filled with hard, cold surfaces, concrete, steel and unfriendly indoor air. So why not soften those sterile environments by incorporating green plants within your interior work and living spaces?

New studies abound that are recognizing how profoundly plants contribute to our welfare:

“Plants improve productivity.” – *Yale Professor Stephen R. Kellert in a Bank of America study to see to what degree exposure to natural elements impacts employees*

“Plants significantly lower workplace stress.” – *Dr. Virginia Lohr & Dr. Roger S. Ulrich have conducted extensive research on the psychological effects of environments*

“Plants provide a natural solution to cleaner indoor air” as they lower carbon dioxide which makes people drowsy and replace the air with oxygen. Sick Building Syndrome – due to poor indoor air quality is measurably lower when participants had plants in their offices. – *“Flowers and*



**GREEN BY NATURE** Studies have shown that plants provide a natural solution to cleaner indoor air.

*Plants Inspire our Creativity,” Texas A&M University research team*

“Plants in retail store environments enhance the shopping experience.... Interior landscapes create situations more favorable for retail activity as consumers’ perceptions of retail environments are heightened by the

presence of plants, trees and surrounding areas of stores.” – *Mattila and Wirtz (2002)*

So when considering landscaping solutions this year, keep in mind that the psychological and biological benefits offered by plants don’t need to end at your property’s front door.

Whether you use plants to enhance an office, humanize a healthcare facility or create an updated lobby design or plantscape just because you like working around living greenery, there exists a number of proven reasons why green plants are friends with benefits. **P**

*Nancy Silverman is president of Plantscaping and Blooms, a 30-year-old interior landscaping family firm in Cleveland ([www.plantscaping.com](http://www.plantscaping.com)).*

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PN-V0121039

## NEW SYNAGOGUE

**North Olmsted, OH** (Cuyahoga Co.) Stearns Road

**CONTRACTING METHOD:** To Be Determined

**STATUS:** Planning is very preliminary; owner recently purchased property and is currently fundraising.

**OWNER:** Beth-Israel The West Temple  
14308 Triskett Road  
Cleveland, OH 44111  
(216) 941-8882

**DETAILS:** SF to be determined; construction of a synagogue, a day care center, classrooms and other facilities; sitework; concrete; masonry; mechanical; electrical; plumbing; HVAC; lighting; roofing; flooring; doors & windows; wood & plastics; dry-wall; painting; bathroom accessories; signage; landscaping.

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**DETAILS:** Approx. 28,000 SF, two-story building; facility will feature historic-style building features; masonry and brick veneer; thermal and moisture control; wood frame; flat roof; mechanicals; HVAC; plumbing; electrical; painting; finishes.

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**C.M.:**

**DETAILS:** Renovations of an existing building to serve as the municipal maintenance and service facility; specific details to be announced.

PN-U1229075

## CAMPUS SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS

**Northfield, OH** (Summit Co.)

**ESTIMATED AMOUNT:** \$230,000

**CONTRACTING METHOD:** Public Bids

**UPDATE:** Architectural/Engineering Services RFQs have been received; award to be announced.

**OWNER:** Ohio Dept. of Mental Health  
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(614) 466-5060 FAX (614) 644-5621

Sharney Koch (614) 466-5060, fax (614) 644-5621, sharney.koch@mh.ohio.gov

**DETAILS:** Project No. DMH-100007  
The Northcoast Behavioral Healthcare campus at Northfield, Ohio is a

PN-U0501073

## MUNICIPAL SERVICE CENTER RENOVATIONS

**Beachwood, OH** (Cuyahoga Co.) 23550 Mercantile Road

**CONTRACTING METHOD:** Public Bids

**UPDATE:** Bidding to advance mid/late February 2010.

**OWNER:** City of Beachwood  
25325 Fairmont Boulevard  
Beachwood, OH 44122  
www.beachwoodohio.com  
(216) 464-1070 FAX (216) 595-3736

**ARCHITECT:** KA Architects, Inc.  
1468 West 9th Street  
Suite 600  
Cleveland, OH 44113

PN-U0312072

## BRITAIN PLACE OFFICE BUILDING

**Solon, OH** (Cuyahoga Co.) Bainbridge Road

**CONTRACTING METHOD:** Developer Subcontracts (By Invitation Only)

**UPDATE:** Developer still seeking financing; developer will use own group of contractors.

**DEVELOPER:** NDT Ltd.  
34208 Aurora Road  
Suite 253



## Upcoming Programs:

**The Event - BOMA Masquerade Ball**  
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restricted and secure hospital environment (Occupancy Use Group I-2) that operates on a 24/7, 365-day per year schedule. This project involves work at two separate buildings, namely McKee and Building 22. The goals of this project are to create a main access point at the McKee Building where visitors and the public will register before entry; to establish a secure patient envelope at both buildings; and to improve monitoring of blind areas on all patient units in the McKee Building. The scope of work includes the installation of CCTV, remote access controlled door hardware, and intercom upgrades at both buildings. There will also be a need to reconstruct the nurse's stations to provide more desk space for monitors, increased privacy for viewing of records and a more secure station.

PN-U0819061

**CUYAHOGA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS WIND TURBINE**

**Berea, OH** (Cuyahoga Co.) 164 Eastland Road  
**STATUS:** Proposals for turbine material supply received November 16, 2009; award to be announced shortly; bidding for construction of turbine to advance shortly.  
**OWNER:** Cuyahoga County Commissioners Office of Procurement & Diversity

112 Hamilton Avenue, Annex Bldg.  
 Cleveland, OH 44114  
 www.cuyahogacounty.us  
 (216) 443-7200 FAX (216) 443-7206  
**AGENT:** Cuyahoga County Central Services  
 1642 Lakeside Avenue  
 Cleveland, OH 44114  
 (216) 443-7650 FAX (216) 443-7663  
 Nick Willis, Project Manager (216) 443-6993, fax (216) 698-6575, nwillis@cuyahogacounty.us  
**AGENCY:** Cuyahoga County Agricultural Society  
 164 Eastland Rd.  
 Berea, OH 44017  
 (440) 243-0090  
**DETAILS:** Erection of owner supplied wind turbine; foundations.

PN-U118038

**QUAKER SQUARE INN HOTEL RENOVATION  
 Akron, OH** (Summit Co.)

**CONTRACTING METHOD:** Public Bids  
**UPDATE:** Announcing Architect.  
**OWNER:** University of Akron  
 100 Lincoln St., Room 209  
 Akron, OH 44325  
 www.uakron.edu/bids/legalnotices.htm  
 (330) 972-7340 FAX (330) 972-5564  
 David J. Pierson, Project Manager  
**ARCHITECT:** mbi/k2m Architecture, Inc.  
 3121 Bridge Avenue  
 Cleveland, OH 44113

www.mbi-k2m.com  
 (216) 357-2794 FAX (216) 357-2796  
**DETAILS:** The major focus of the work will be new finishes, furnishings and accessories in the bedrooms and sitting areas of 65 guest rooms (in 8 configurations) on the first three floors of the building. Removal and reinstallation of life safety and communication devices may be required. Guest bathroom renovations will be limited to repair of tile, grout and caulk joints. Additional guest room work will include limited replacement of light fixtures and builders hardware; removal of wet bars; and analysis/repair/replacement of HVAC units. Corridor, lobby and vending area enhancements (new ice machines); as well as pool deck structural repairs, may also be included in the project.

PN-V0119042

**NEW GYMNASIUM  
 Brady Middle School**

**Pepper Pike, OH** (Cuyahoga Co.)  
**CONTRACTING METHOD:** Public Bids  
**STATUS:** Planning is preliminary; project is in the design phase; bid schedule to be determined.  
**OWNER:** Orange Board of Education  
 32000 Chagrin Blvd.  
 Pepper Pike, OH 44124



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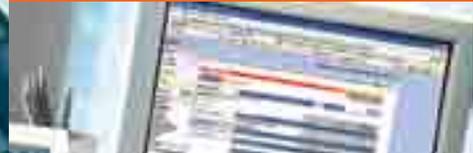
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**ARCHITECT:** Van Auken Akins Architects  
27629 Chagrin Boulevard, Suite 205  
Cleveland, OH 44122  
www.vaakins.com  
(216) 292-9944 FAX (216) 292-9943

**DETAILS:** SF to be determined; concrete; masonry; mechanical; electrical; plumbing; HVAC; lighting; roofing; flooring; doors & windows; wood & plastics; landscaping.

PN-T0128043

#### **SAFETY SERVICES BUILDING**

**Montville Township, OH** (Medina Co.) Wadsworth Road

**ESTIMATED AMOUNT:** \$3,500,000

**CONTRACTING METHOD:** Public Bids

**UPDATE:** Drawings have been completed; bidding possible shortly.

**OWNER:** Montville Township - Medina Co.  
6665 Wadsworth Road  
Medina, OH 44256  
www.montvilletwp.org  
(330) 725-8313

**ARCHITECT:** Horne & King Architects  
7219 Sawmill Road, Suite 106  
Dublin, OH 43016  
www.horneandking.com  
(614) 766-6711 FAX (614) 766-6713

**C.M.:** RFC Contracting  
13477 Prospect Rd. #105  
Strongsville, OH 44136  
(440) 572-9444 FAX (440) 572-9499

**DETAILS:** 13,000 to 14,000 SF building will be next to the township office building; police station, fire, and EMS facility; offices, conference rooms, locker rooms, public restrooms, dispatch, interview rooms, booking, holding cell, evidence room, armory, exercise rooms, break area, report writing room, radio and equipment room, record storage, sally port and vehicle evidence storage; site-work; concrete; masonry; plumbing; electrical; HVAC; finishes.

PN-U1216047

#### **THE EXCHANGE CENTER**

**Cleveland, OH** (Cuyahoga Co.) 13407 Kinsman Road

**CONTRACTING METHOD:** G.C. Bids

**UPDATE:** Construction documents are underway; bidding possible end of February 2010.

**OWNER:** EDEN Inc.  
7812 Madison Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44102  
(216) 961-9690

**ARCHITECT:** Fogle/Stenzel Architects  
2800 Euclid Avenue, Suite 600  
Cleveland, OH 44115  
fsarch1@aol.com  
(216) 861-5151 FAX (216) 861-3337

**DETAILS:** New commercial building; SF to be announced; sitework; thermal and

moisture protection; windows and doors; wood and plastics; finishes; specialties; foundation; concrete; metals; flooring; carpeting; HVAC; electrical; mechanical; plumbing; specific details to be announced.

PN-V0114062

#### **HOSPITAL WING RENOVATION**

**Cleveland, OH** (Cuyahoga Co.) 1881 Torbenson Drive

**CONTRACTING METHOD:** Public Bids

**STATUS:** Architectural Service SOQs due Friday, January 29, 2010 at 5:00 PM (To Agency)

**OWNER:** Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development  
1 Pinchot Lane  
Athens, OH 45701  
www.coadinc.org  
(740) 594-8499 FAX (740) 592-5994

**AGENCY:** Community Action Committee of Pike Co.  
941 Market Street  
Piketon, OH 45661  
www.pikecac.org/  
(740) 289-2371  
Roger Patton, (740) 289-2929 via email  
rpatton@pikecac.org

**DETAILS:** Project intent is to convert the hospital building into classrooms and offices for use as a Weatherization Training Center for Northern Ohio; in addition, the construction of a 5,000 SF adjacent pre-engineered building to house mock-up houses for training purposes is anticipated.

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## ADVERTISER INDEX

Abraxus Snow Removal.....	16	J.V. Janitorial Services, Inc.....	67
AIA.....	19	Jamieson Ricca Co.....	54
All Brite Electric.....	50	John F. Gallagher Co., The.....	12
All Sweep Inc.....	58	Kern Landscaping Inc.....	64
Alpha Drive Heating & Air Conditioning.....	50	Krill Company, Inc.....	9
Alpha Park, Inc.....	48	Kurtz Bros.....	57
American Granite & Marble.....	44	Lawler Construction.....	17
Architectural Product Sales Company.....	29	Leff Electric.....	12
Art Window Coverings, Inc.....	27	Lisco Heating & Cooling, Inc.....	32
Barber & Hoffman, Inc.....	27	McConnell Excavating, Ltd.....	35
BOMA Greater Cleveland.....	66	McGraw-Hill Construction Network.....	68
Brennan & Associates.....	41	Mid State Restoration, Inc.....	37
Brickman Group, The.....	65	Mulle & Associates, Inc.....	17
Bruder Building Materials, Inc.....	32	Mullin Brothers Construction Services.....	19
Buckeye Sweeping, Inc.....	54	Nelson Contracting Inc.....	46
Burghardt Metal Fabricating.....	26	Northern Ohio Lumber & Timber Co.....	10
Carey Roofing Corporation.....	38	Novatny Electric, Co.....	4
CB Richard Ellis, Inc.....	51	Nyman Construction.....	42
CertaPro Painters.....	35	OCP Contractors.....	15
Chagrin Valley Steel Erectors.....	40	Ohio Lock.....	9
Chas. E Phipps Company, The.....	37	Oswald Companies.....	6
Cleveland Airport Marriott Hotel.....	45	Pease Photography.....	36
Cleveland Chemical Pest Control, Inc.....	41	Pete & Pete Container Service.....	18
Cleveland Construction.....	15	Plantscaping.....	64
Cleveland Engineering Society.....	13	Point One Design Limited.....	27
CNC Construction News Corp.....	34	Precision Environmental Co.....	2
Coates, Mike Construction Co., Inc.....	72	Pring Roofing.....	11
Columbia Building Products.....	12	RB Stout Inc.....	60
Construction Employers Association.....	21	R P Madison International.....	22
County Fire Protection Inc.....	10	RAF Building Maintenance.....	69
Courtad Inc.....	21	S.A. Comunale Company.....	46
Cunningham Paving Inc.....	33	Schill Grounds Management.....	56
Davey Tree Expert Company, The.....	61	Schulz, Charles Building Company.....	39
Delta Industrial Services, Inc.....	31	Siegel, Siegel Johnson & Jennings Co., LPA.....	68
EA Group.....	25	SMPS Northeast Ohio.....	19
Educational Equipment.....	28	Sobol Sales Co.....	9
Farrow Group Restoration Services.....	70	Space Comfort Co.....	36
Frost Building Maintenance Inc.....	45	Spectrum Design Services.....	47
Giorgi Interior Systems.....	53	Stark Group, The.....	30
H & M Snow Pros & Landscaping, Inc.....	3	Suncrest Gardens.....	61
Header Construction.....	16	Suntrol Co.....	33
Health & Fitness Equipment Centers.....	52	Turner Construction.....	51
HMH Restoration Ltd.....	7	Vizmeg Landscape, Inc.....	63
Hoffman Group, The.....	57	Warren Roofing & Insulating Co.....	22
Impullitti Landscaping.....	58	Wilson Shaw Skylights.....	15
Infinity Construction.....	67	Wondergro, Inc.....	64
Infinity Studio Photography.....	35		

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