

Business

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Architects shaping look of county

Newton firm surpasses 35 years in business

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NEWTON — You don't have to look very far to find a building designed by the the Houghton Quarty Warr architectural firm. A stone's throw away in any direction and you're bound to hit something this team of architects has designed in Sussex County and the surrounding area. The firm recently celebrated 35 years in

business. It has played an integral part in designing or redesigning some of the most familiar buildings in the county, such as the Cochran Plaza in Newton and Pope John Regional High School. Hqw also designed buildings at Blair Academy in Blairstown, Warren County.

"Sussex County has been our home, we live here and our work is here," said Frank Warr, a founding partner.

Warr, along with partners William Houghton and N. Stewart Quarty, attended Syracuse University together and started the architectural firm after graduation in 1971. Today the firm employs 10 architects.

Some of the biggest changes Warr has seen since the firm opened have to do with technology. Architecture has gone from T-squares and pencils to computer design, the Internet and ftp sites that now allow clients and architects, along with construction, electrical and other consultants to remain in close contact throughout the design and completion of a project, Warr said.

"In the past we had to draw the plans, get them copied and mail them. When Federal Express came around, that was new technology," he said.

As much as modern technology plays a role in present-day architecture, it is important to remember the past. "Civilization is really measured by its architecture; it is a timeline, really," Warr said.

"It is cutting edge but at the same time reflective of the past," said Sergio Chavarria, a partner in the firm.

Chavarria said he enjoys architecture and working with clients to create new ideas. "Our job is to take the ideas from clients we come upon and put those ideas into a structure. The client is the catalyst for what we do," he said.

Warr echoed that thought and described the firm's projects as "children," where "conception" begins with the design. The firm is there every step of the way, through the infancy of schemat-



Sergio J. Chavarria, Frank Warr and Steve Skorski discuss new plans in their office, where they are surrounded by posters and blueprints of a few of the projects they have done in Sussex County.



Frank Warr, one of the founding partners of Hqw Architects, LLC, discusses plans with project architect Glenn Gorlich.

ics, design and development as their guidance continues through childhood, which includes construction and documentation, and more construction until there is a complete three-dimensional space that is finished and occupied by the owner.

However, once the project is complete, Warr said with a laugh, "it's unusual because you're there, as close as a man can get to giving birth, and then you can't get in (to the building) without a badge. It truly is like saying goodbye to one of your children."

But like any proud parent, it gives him a great sense of pride when the finished project is a blend of form and function that makes the firm and client happy.

Developing a good relationship and making sure clients are satisfied with the end result is an inte-

gral part of the business, Warr said.

"It is important to create a relationship with clients where they receive accurate honest information that is current. It is important to form a relationship of mutual respect or it just won't work," Warr said.

Warr and his colleagues said they research their clients to assess their needs before a project begins because "the clients have to get a return on their investment. That's one of the important things about our job, is to make sure that happens," he said.

Even with all the research, sometimes it isn't clear what a client has in mind.

"Saint Clare's Hospital is a good example of a client who wasn't really sure what they wanted



Cochran Plaza, located at 1 Spring St. in Newton, was designed by Hqw Architects, LLC and completed in 1990.

the end result to be. It had to be somewhere that made patients feel comfortable during a stressful time, but also be state of the art," said project architect Steve Skorski.

In the end, the architects and the client conceived and executed a design that solved both issues.

Sometimes the challenge isn't the concept, but rather the execution of the design. There are times when it has to be "business as usual" while the building or renovation project is in progress.

A perfect example, Warr said, was during an addition to The New Jersey Herald building. It was important that the presses kept running while the construction was being completed, he said.

A separate foundation had to be poured for the presses to minimize vibrations in the rest of the

building while the renovations were taking place.

Warr and his associates take pride in the work they do and said it is difficult to pinpoint one particular project as their "favorite." "With every project, we try to do our best," Warr said.

Warr said the majority of the firm's employees live in Sussex County, and many of them attended local high schools and then came back to work here.

"I love Newton," Skorski said. The firm offers internships to local high school and college students, with the hopes that they too will come back to work here.

Warr hopes his business continues to see the future of architecture and buildings in Sussex County "growing vertically," and believes buildings in the county will expand upward because of space restrictions.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Exhibitors sought for Warren Business Expo

WASHINGTON — For a business or a restaurant/caterer that is looking to garner valuable exposure, the Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce has an opportunity that has become a yearly tradition — the fifth annual Flavor of Warren Business Expo. The concept combines a business expo with a restaurant tasting event. Businesses and Warren County restaurants are invited to participate in this event as exhibitors and the general public is invited to attend.

The Flavor of Warren Business Expo will be held at Abilities of Northwest Jersey Inc. on Route 31 in Washington on April 2 from 5 to 8 p.m. The event will feature booths with full pipe and drape, background music, ample parking and heavy promotion by the chamber via fliers, mailings, newspapers and radio. Pricing details are available from the Chamber office. If you want to participate as a business, but cannot attend the event in person, the Chamber also has sponsorship packages available.

The Warren County Regional Chamber of Commerce is a county wide organization serving businesses of all sizes. For more information on the chamber, visit the Web site at www.warren-countychamber.org or call (908) 835-9200.

Free seminar focuses on starting business

NEW BRUNSWICK — A free public seminar titled "Starting and Succeeding with a New Business" will be held March 13 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the New Jersey Law Center, 1 Constitution Square (off Ryders Lane), New Brunswick. The seminar is sponsored by the New Jersey State Bar Foundation, the educational and philanthropic arm of the New Jersey State Bar Association.

Barry Bendes, a partner in the New York City and Short Hills offices of Edwards, Angel, Palmer & Dodge, LLP, and Gianfranco A. Pietrafesa, a partner with the law firm of Lindabury, McCormick, Estabrook & Cooper, will discuss the nuts and bolts of starting a new business, including choosing the form of entity, planning for success; developing a concept into an effective business plan; raising capital and financing a new business; hiring and firing issues; and resources available to the startup in New Jersey. A question-and-answer period will follow the presentations.

Advance registration is required. To register or for more information on Foundation seminars, programs and publications, call 1-800-FREE-LAW. The Foundation's seminar series is made possible by funding from the IOLTA Fund of the Bar of New Jersey.

Pike County agency announces job fair

MATAMORAS, Pa. — The Pike County Workforce Development Agency announces Job Fair 2007, slated for April 2, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Best Western Inn at Hunt's Landing, Routes 6 and 209, Matamoras. Sponsors include the Pike County Chamber of Commerce, Best Western Inn at Hunt's Landing, and C.D.E. Training Inc.

"This will be our 12th annual job fair. Considering the tight job market, this event is a must for all jobseekers, both those unemployed and those looking to make a change," said Cynthia DeFebo, director of the Workforce Development Agency.

Last year, more than 500 jobseekers walked through the doors to speak with 62 vendors in attendance. The vendors were comprised of tri-state area employers seeking to recruit new employees, social service agencies, various training providers and community colleges. The main purpose of the job fair is to match jobseekers with employers, but the presence of human service agencies and educators is to inform the jobseeker of available resources and avenues for training to fulfill their goals.

Employers wanting to attend this year's job fair should contact the Pike County Workforce Development Agency, 837 Route 6, Unit 2 Shohola, PA 18458, or call (570) 296-2909.

Submissions

Submit news to the Business page by e-mail to business@njherald.com, by fax to (973) 383-8477 or by mail to The New Jersey Herald, 2 Spring St., Newton, NJ 07860

Working magic for wheelchair patients

PEAPACK — As a rehab technician at the Matheny Medical and Educational Center in Peapack, Bob Williams faces daily challenges that would seem daunting to most. In collaboration with therapists, the Lake Hopatcong resident must formulate solutions that will improve the seating systems for patients with medically complex multiple developmental disabilities.

"Each wheelchair," he explains, "is an individual, just like the person who's in it. Building that chair for an individual is a real challenge."

Before joining the rehab technology staff of Matheny in 2002, Williams had spent 30 years in the electronics industry. But he never felt the kind of satisfaction he receives from his current work. "It's very gratifying when you can see how happy the patients are with their new seating," he says. "The biggest challenge is trying to find out what you have to do to make them happier. A lot of the credit should go to the physical therapists and the occupational therapists. They communicate with us really well."

The therapists feel the same way about Williams. Last spring he won a Matheny Employee Excellence Award, and one of those who nominated him was the director of physical therapy, Cynthia LaBar. "Bob continues to

improve the seating systems of our patients," she said. "Every day, he works down in the basement putting new wheelchairs together, repairing old wheelchairs, making new and inventive contraptions and working with the therapists and staff to ensure the safety and well-being of each of our patients."

Matheny is a special hospital and special education school here for children and adults with developmental disabilities. Its seating, mobility and assistive technology clinic is a highly intensive treatment center requiring the services of at least three disciplines: occupational therapy, physical therapy and rehabilitation technology. All three disciplines are directly involved in the evaluation of individuals who need a wheelchair but who also require a system in which they can interact with their environment. The PT-OT-RT team helps individuals in choosing the assistive technology that best meets their needs and provides ease of care.

Thanks to a grant from the Merck Company Foundation, Matheny's new Workshop on Wheels will help bring its seating a mobility clinic to more locations throughout northern and central New Jersey. For more information, call (908) 234-0011, ext. 722.



Bob Williams adjusts the harness on the seating system for Matheny adult patient, George Bracken.