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TODD STRAND

## Cover

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Tideman Architects  
Photographer: Joel Butkowski



DON F. WONG



ANN FISHER



JERRY SWANSON

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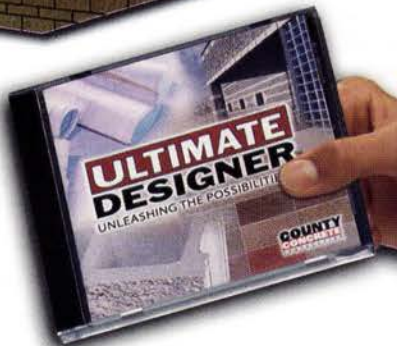
*Architecture Minnesota* is published bimonthly by AIA Minnesota. The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Board of Directors or the editorial staff of *Architecture Minnesota*. Editorial offices: International Market Square, 275 Market Street, Suite 54, Minneapolis, MN 55405. (612) 338-6763. FAX: (612) 338-7981. E-mail: lefevre@aia-mn.org. Web address: www.aia-mn.org. Note to subscribers: When changing address, please send address label from recent issue and your new address. Allow six weeks for change of address. Subscription rate: \$18 for one year, \$3.50 for single issue. Postmaster: Send address change to *Architecture Minnesota* at above address. Periodical postage paid at Minneapolis and additional mailing offices. Advertising and Circulation: *Architecture Minnesota*, above address and phone. Printing: St. Croix Press. Color separations: Spectrum, Inc. Copyright 2001 by *Architecture Minnesota* (ISSN 0149-9106.)

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## Bringing It Home

**L**ivable communities and the architect's role in creating them was the theme of this year's AIA National Convention, with a focus on such related subjects as environment, place and sustainable design. During the convention, everyone from AIA officials to firm practitioners, mayors to planners, star architects to New Urbanists had their say, adding layers of complexity and insight to the notion of "livable community," one of the design world's hottest topics.

AIA president John D. Anderson, FAIA, emphasized that in communities "quality of life, not size, determines greatness" and that architecture is "a profession uniquely gifted to bring people together." Anderson also stressed that "concern for the environment is not only right, it's smart. What is architecture if it's not about the environment [and] communicating a sense of place?"

Sensitivity to environment and place easily overlap, yet have such different meanings depending on context or speaker. Focusing on environmentalists who, he claims, are undermining New Urbanist principles with their attempts to "ruralize" the urban core, Andres Duany, FAIA, insisted on generating urban areas "that are so attractive people won't want to leave them" so open areas can be left to nature. The more moderate Peter Calthorpe, AIA, added that "the integration of humans and habitat is very complex."

Integrating stakeholder buy-in on sustainable-design projects is also complex and necessary. During a discussion on fostering a multidisciplinary approach to architecture's green future—the panel included an owner, architect, engineer and energy specialist—the comment that "our thin fragile atmosphere is all that separates us from the other, dead planets" drove home the need for a radical transformation in the resource-depleting way we build. Yet, "without art," as one panelist reminded the audience, "the whole idea of sustainability fails." Similarly, without connection to place, architecture fails.

In his presentation, Berlin-based architect Daniel Libeskind enthused about a current "Renaissance of architecture," in which "people are discovering there is more to architecture than an

image or manipulating technology." During lunch, he also asserted that demolition of the Guthrie Theater for a Herzog & de Meuron-designed expansion of the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis is unconscionable. A museum addition, he explained, must not only be iconic, but preserve and augment a community's sense of cultural and architectural history, while responding to the existing context and materials.

As you'll read in this issue of *Architecture Minnesota*, similar concerns inspired a master plan for the College of St. Benedict, by Grooters Leapoldt Tideman Architects, St. Cloud, as the plan reflects such Benedictine traditions as nurturing a sense of place and fostering community. Other spirited interpretations of community, place, environment and sustainability are evident in this issue, with its focus on the work of outstate firms.

In designing a new headquarters for Ducks Unlimited, Foss Associates, Moorhead, produced a green building sensitive to its site, functional for employees and welcoming to volunteers. Paulsen Architects, Mankato, designed a headquarters for Midwest Wireless that has boosted employee recruitment and retention, company visibility and the bar for design in southern Minnesota, while functioning as a community gathering place and Mankato landmark.

One of the challenges of 21st-century architecture, Libeskind asserted, is determining how globalization relates to *genius loci*, or spirit of a place. Explorations of livability, community, sustainability, environment and place, as this year's national convention and this issue of *Architecture Minnesota* make clear, are starting posts with relevance and vanishing points far into the future.



DON F. WONG

*Camille LeFevre*

Camille LeFevre  
lefevre@aia-mn.org





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## Calendar

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The exhibition of textiles and clothing, which salutes Marimekko's 50th anniversary, is part of an interdisciplinary program at the University of Minnesota titled "Inspiration and Resource: The Forests of Finland and Minnesota."

### SUPERFLAT

JULY 15–OCTOBER 14

WALKER ART CENTER

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(612) 375-7622

Organized by Tokyo-based artist Takashi Murakami, the exhibition investigates a tendency toward two-dimensionality in Japanese visual art, animation, graphic design and fashion.

### ON THE JOB: DESIGN AND

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THROUGH AUGUST 19

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### ARCHITECTURE AND WATER

THROUGH SEPTEMBER

VAN ALLEN INSTITUTE

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(212) 924-7000

Steven Holl, AIA, and Michael van Valkenburgh are featured in this exhibition, which focuses on five international building projects that integrate architecture, landscape and infrastructure to engage waterfront sites.

### 2001: BUILDING FOR SPACE TRAVEL

THROUGH OCTOBER

ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

(312) 443-3600

The exhibition explores evolution and visions of architecture for space travel, and includes work by architects, civil engineers, and industrial and graphic designers.

## Ed Kodet, FAIA, Elected to National AIA Board

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN DECADES, an AIA Minnesota member was elected to the AIA National Board Executive Committee during the AIA National Convention in Denver in May. Ed Kodet, FAIA, founder and principal, Kodet Architectural Group, Ltd., Minneapolis, will become a vice president for the National AIA Board in 2002. A former president of AIA Minnesota and its Minneapolis Chapter, Kodet has also served with AIA National as director of the North Central States Region, as a regent with the American Architectural Foundation, as chair of the Gold Medal and Firm Award Advisory Jury, and as regional director of the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture.



As an AIA vice president, Kodet says, he will address the membership's most important professional issues. "Others feel they have an innate foundation to assert that they can provide more and better services than the architect," he explains. "I feel architects can and should lead the construction industry. AIA can foster programs that empower architects to be at the core of that leadership."

Kodet also predicts a more proactive and powerful AIA will emerge with a renewed focus on the "three E's": on economics, by becoming more responsive to members regarding financial management; on education, by promoting life-long-learning activities through better relationships with the academic community and professional-education providers; and on engagement, as civic engagement and ongoing relationships with clients, elected officials and the media are integral to the success of the architectural profession.

### INSIDER LINGO *By Gina Greene*

## Scope Creep

Think of a nice little plant like creeping Charlie that appears on your lawn, then starts sprawling over everything in your yard. Similarly, left unchecked, "scope creep"—like creeping Charlie—is about running amok, as the term refers to a project that acquires features above and beyond the original specifications.

Here's how it works. A project begins with client and architect agreeing on the aspects (the scope) of a project. They sign a contract specifying that scope. During the project, the client asks for an aspect

or service outside of the agreed-upon scope. As more of these tasks creep into the project, the architect winds up with scope creep. Project managers are then forced to incorporate additional aspects into a project without going over budget and over deadline.

To avoid scope creep, architects and clients must control project scope as tightly as possible. It might help if they listened to the music of Scope Creep, an alternative rock and soul band from Charleston, South Carolina, especially their song titled "Cruise Control."





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## Newsmakers By Bette Hammel

The spirit of Edwin Lundie, which pervades the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum's shingled Snyder Building in Chanhassen, is echoed in a conceptual design for an additional visitor's center. According to **Scott Berry, AIA**, design director, Ellerbe Becket, Minneapolis, the design continues the Snyder Building's humane scale and use of natural materials. The two structures will be linked via covered walkway.

The new facility is part of the arboretum's vision for expanded education and research programs, improved physical facilities, increased family learning experiences and more gardens. An updated master plan by Ellerbe Becket is guiding a capital campaign to bring the dream alive. One of the campaign's most hoped-for features is a glass conservatory designed by Ralph Rapson, FAIA, which resembles giant ice cubes massed in two pyramid forms.

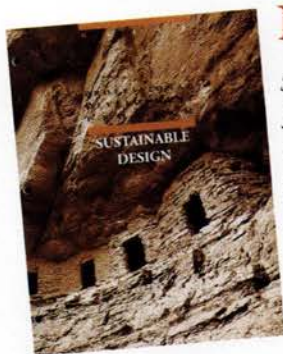
**Julie Rokke, AIA**, principal, YHR Partners Ltd., Moorhead, recently completed a project for Fergus Falls: the Bigwood Events Center. Rokke's design features a curving-glass curtain wall intersected by two brick box structures that serve as small conference rooms. To warm up the two-story glass-atrium interior, the architect used outdoor wood decking on the ceiling. The building's exterior features a covered patio. Following many lively community meetings, the Fergus Falls conference center, with an interior large enough to hold a boat show, was funded through a combination of state, city and private monies.

During the five years **James Dayton, AIA**, worked for Frank Gehry, he learned to think of buildings as sculpture. Now, in his first public commission since establishing his own firm in 1996, James Dayton Design Ltd., Minneapolis, Dayton has brought that philosophy to fruition in his design for a new Minnetonka Center for the Arts, a visual-arts school.

The U-shaped design features a series of "boxes" for different art disciplines, each of which faces an outdoor courtyard. Dominating this courtyard will be a 28-foot-high, concrete "art wall" for art displays. A two-story glass lobby includes space for a café, a lecture room and a gallery. Dayton says his design decisions represent the interdisciplinary nature of fine art and architecture. The new center, to be constructed on the existing building's Orono site, will be completed June 2002 and the old center will be demolished.

Landscape architect for the project is Thomas Oslund, ASLA, who has designed a sculpture and events courtyard, wildflower garden and outdoor space for the center's annual children's summer art camp. Oslund, who served on the Guthrie Theater's architect-selection committee, is also looking forward to helping French architect, Jean Nouvel, with site planning and landscape architecture for the Guthrie's new riverfront site.

The Minneapolis riverfront continues to attract new development. **MacPhail Center for the Arts**, which sold its 1922 LaSalle Avenue building to the University of St. Thomas last fall, is proposing a four-story, 30,000-square-foot facility in the block next to the Milwaukee Depot train sheds. The block is bounded by Fifth Street, Portland Avenue, Washington Avenue and Second Street. MacPhail awarded Nagle Hartray Danker McKay Kagan, Chicago, the commission. Also planned for that block are a five-story office building for developer CSM and mixed-use housing designed by Elness Swenson Graham Architects, Inc., Minneapolis.



## New Releases

*Sustainable Design*, by Jonee Kulman, AIA, environmental advisor, Cuningham Group, Minneapolis, and Joel Schurke, principal, Factor 10 LLC, Minneapolis, is the newest title in the Professional Development Program's monograph series published by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB). The monograph is divided into three sections: "Benefits of Sustainable Design," "Elements of Sustainable Design" and "Implementing Sustainable Design." The "Elements" section is especially timely as it provides an overview of five sustainable-design elements and relates them to such projects as the Phillips Eco-Enterprise Center in Minneapolis (see *Architecture Minnesota*, January-February 2000) and the Interdistrict Downtown School in Minneapolis (see *Architecture Minnesota*, September-October 1999).

Throughout the monograph, the authors focus on a theory called "the Seven R's"—respect, receive, reuse, recycle, restore, remember—which encourages the design professional to consider a project from its inception to its reuse. To order call (202) 783-6500 or visit [www.ncarb.org/publications](http://www.ncarb.org/publications).



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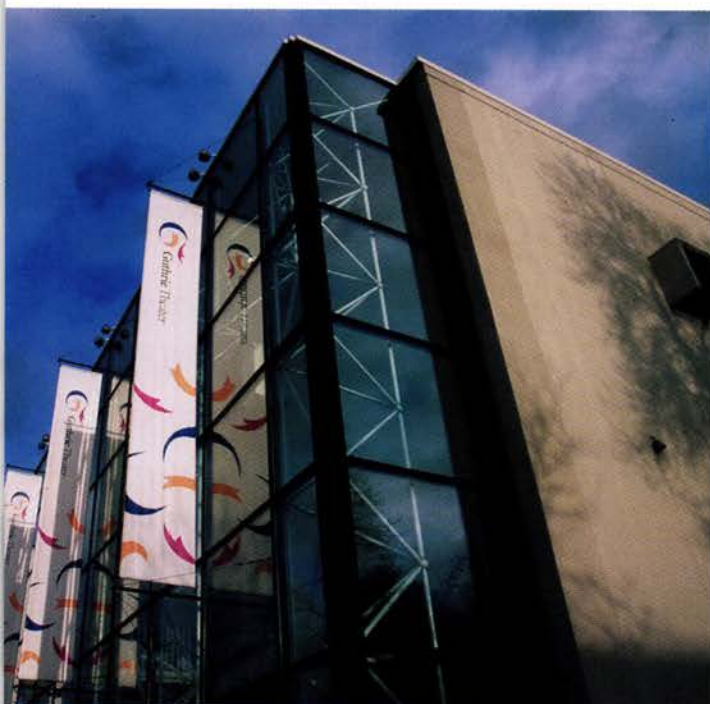


## Endangered Places

**THE PRESERVATION ALLIANCE OF MINNESOTA** recently announced the state's 10 most endangered historic places for 2001 (see below). The Alliance also announced the new Preservation Resource Depot program, which joins together architects, engineers, historians, lawyers and others to assess options for saving endangered properties. For more information call (612) 338-6763.

*Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis*  
*Historic downtown district, Pipestone*  
*Series of stone-arch bridges, Winona*  
*Fergus Falls Regional Treatment Center, Fergus Falls*  
*Adams and McKinley elementary-school buildings, Fergus Falls*

*Duluth Armory, Duluth*  
*1899 hospital, Starbuck*  
*Lookout Park wayside, Eden Prairie*  
*Selke Field, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud*  
*Twelve houses on Summit Avenue, St. Paul*



*Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis.*



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*Lookout Park wayside, Eden Prairie.*



*Series of stone-arch bridges, Winona.*



*Twelve houses on Summit Avenue, St. Paul.*



*Historic downtown district, Pipestone.*



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# Stuntz Bay Boathouses

Lake Vermilion, Minnesota

BY ROBERT ROSCOE

In the mid-1960s, the United States Steel Corporation, a major iron-mining company on northern Minnesota's Iron Range, built a string of boathouses along the shore of Stuntz Bay. The bay lies at the east end of Lake Vermilion, which is located half a mile from the company's deep shaft mine at Soudan. Lake Vermilion's name is derived from "Onamunií," the Ojibway word for the lake, which translates as the sky's red and gold reflection on the water's surface at sunset.

U. S. Steel leased the boathouses—simple corrugated-steel-clad structures—to its employees as a reward for years of hard work in the local mines. For employees unable to afford a lake cabin, these boathouses provided easy access to Lake Vermilion's extensive waterways, numerous islands and irregular shoreline.

Flotation tanks built into each boathouse's understructure buoy it in the water; one end of the boathouse is affixed to shore, while large hinged doors on the other end allow boats in and out. Today most of the boathouses continue to be used by the families of the original miner-lessees. They value their handed-down leases as an inheritance, as well as an opportunity to continue a tradition of family boating.

Some years ago, U. S. Steel terminated iron-ore mining operations at the Soudan Underground Mine and the company donated approximately 1,200 acres to the State of Minnesota, including the shoreline of Stuntz Bay where the boathouses are located. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) currently manages the area, known as Soudan Underground State Park.

The land is listed on the National Register of Historic Places because of the mine and the area's contribution to the development of iron-ore mining in this region of Minnesota. The boathouses, however, were not included in the historical designation because they were not associated with mining activity.

Meanwhile, the structures are in various states of care and disrepair. Many boathouses are well-maintained, many are in an average condition, and several are extremely dilapidated and in danger of collapse, with potential damage to adjacent structures. Some of the most dilapidated boathouses have been razed in the last few years. The DNR has targeted a few others for removal.

Why are these boathouses important? David Salmela, AIA, Salmela Architect, Duluth, is a native of northeastern Minnesota and well-known for his sensitive interpretation of Scandina-



*The Stuntz Bay boathouses were built as recreational rewards to U. S. Steel's mine workers, and subsequently initiated and fostered a family recreation tradition.*

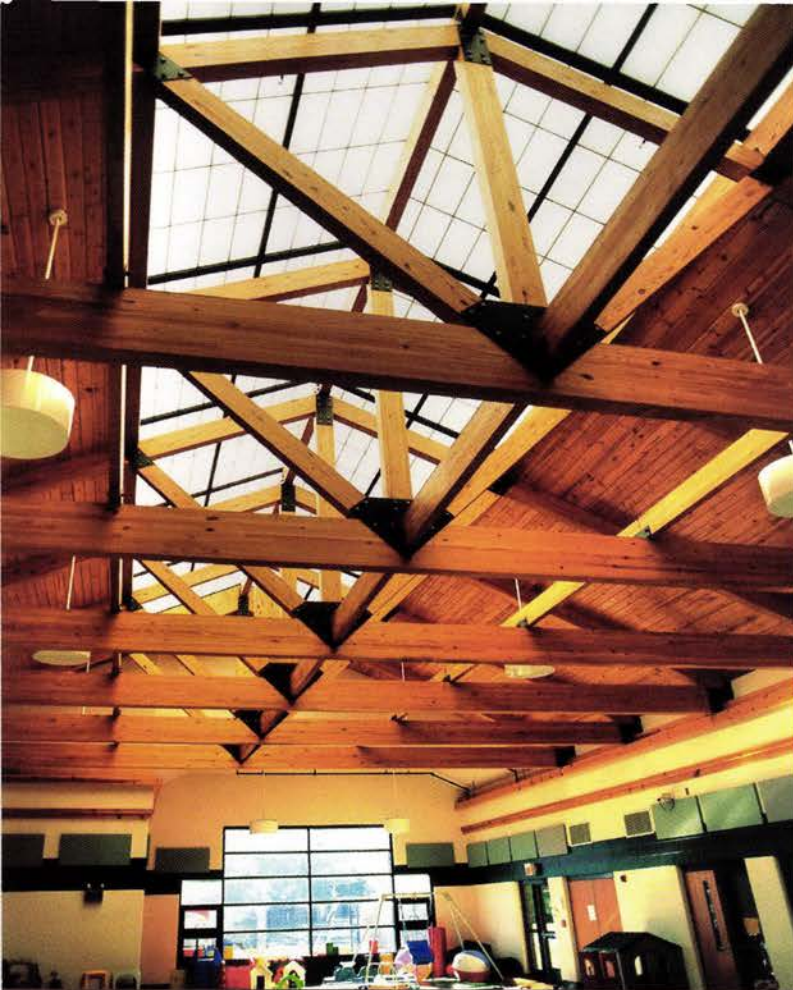
vian-vernacular architectural forms. Salmela says he finds a kinship with the boathouses as representations of "a pure archetype—the repetition of simple gabled-roof forms in a closely knit linear alignment serving elementary functional needs while achieving beauty."

Scandinavian coastal villages, Salmela continues, display series upon series of roof gables that form a straightforward geometry. The Lake Vermilion boathouses possess this characteristic as they hover at the water's edge against a backdrop of balsam, aspen and birch trees. In addition, these structures have remained true to their utilitarian origins: their strict footprints have not been extended with ancillary sheds of added-on, vinyl-canopied boatlifts, and their walls and roofs are still unadorned, metallic-gray corrugated metal.

There is hope these boathouses can survive a while longer. The DNR is considering a management plan that would continue the lease legacy for a specified period of time, and mandate consistent boathouse maintenance and repair by each lessee. In the past, the vague wording of the informal lease agreements resulted in inconsistent maintenance and lack of incentive for repair. A report to the State of Minnesota's Senate and House Environment and Natural Resource Policy Finance Committee,

*Continued on page 44*





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# Jeff Kagermeier, AIA

Politics and architecture, says Mankato's mayor,  
are complementary in efforts to  
reach regional cooperation and consensus

BY HEATHER BEAL

Nearly a year and a half after being elected mayor of Mankato, Minnesota, Jeff Kagermeier, AIA, has made the chimerical role of "archipolitician" seem like a natural career path for design professionals. In addition to being the city's mayor, chief environmental officer and chair of the Economic Development Authority, Kagermeier is a member of the League of Minnesota Cities, and serves on the executive committees of the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities and Region Nine Development Commission. He is also an adjunct professor at Minnesota State University Mankato, a practicing architect and co-owner of KSA Architects, Inc.

Based on these credentials, it's hard to believe that in 1985 Kagermeier's major goal was, as he claims, "to achieve escape velocity." He was married on a Saturday and moved from Mankato to Boston, Massachusetts, with his new wife the next day. In Boston, Kagermeier worked for such major firms as Arrowstreet Architects and Sasaki Associates. It was the opportunity to work with his father and "serve the community that gave me so many opportunities," he says, that drew him back to Mankato in 1992.

After receiving an AIA Minnesota 2000 Young Architects Award, Kagermeier was selected for the 2001 National AIA Young Architects Award. He is the fourth recipient of the Minnesota award to also receive the national award. *Architecture Minnesota* spoke with Kagermeier about the challenges and rewards of blending politics with the profession of architecture.

## What unique skills can architects contribute to the political arena?

Three skills, in particular, are common to both architecture and politics. The first is assimilation. Architects can absorb a great deal of information and make sense out of it. The second is synthesis. We can relate pieces of information to each other and then use them to develop an action plan. Our minds are geared toward finding solutions. Finally, there's facilitation. Architects are used to building consensus. We lead and facilitate group discussions as a regular part of the design process.

These skills complement the abilities of others involved in the political process. For example, I've found that most planners have backgrounds in finance, so they tend to focus on how many tax dollars will be generated by specific districts. As an architect and a contextualist, I'm interested in how buildings can bind a community together. Architects can balance the perspectives of planners by addressing how to weave buildings into neighborhoods and neighborhoods into districts to create an interesting urban fabric.

## How do you balance your public, professional and personal roles?

I prioritize. I'm a husband and parent first; an architect, second; a teacher, third; and a facilitator of the public interest, next. I don't have any political aspirations. The Republicans and Democrats both asked me to run for mayor, but I ran as an independent candidate. Being



"Architects can balance the perspectives of planners by addressing how to weave buildings into neighborhoods and neighborhoods into districts."

*Continued on page 50*



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# General Practitioners

Specialization, strategic partnerships and geographic diversity  
are the hallmarks of today's outstate firms

BY J. TROUT LOWEN

In the past, like a small town's doctor or general store, architectural firms located in Minnesota's outstate cities were often viewed as one-stop shops. These general practices took on any project that came their way, and may have designed everything from the town hall, to the Episcopal church, to the county jail. Times have changed.

The regional medical center has replaced the town doctor. The jail, in many counties, has morphed into a high-tech correctional facility. The practice of architecture in greater Minnesota is changing, too. While generalist firms still operate throughout the state, many greater-Minnesota firms are redefining what it means to be a generalist. Some firms are specializing in order to foster growth and meet client needs, while others are partnering with specialized firms to expand their reach.

Richard Engan, AIA, Engan Associates, P.A., Willmar, estimates that 70 percent of his firm's work is now health-care related; most health-care institutions have new projects every year or so, he says, which means they're often repeat clients. At Yaggy Colby Associates, Rochester, the split between specialized and generalist work is 50-50, says Christopher Colby, AIA, principal. The bulk of the firm's work (which also has offices in Delafield, Wisconsin, and Mason City, Iowa) is in municipal and transportation engineering, with only about 20 percent of the practice devoted to architecture.

Even within the architecture division, Yaggy Colby focuses on such public institutions as fire stations, city halls and highway rest-area facilities, and on such commercial work as shopping centers and banks. "There was a time when we took whatever walked through the door," Colby says. "Part of the luxury of growing over time is defining what we do well."

Still, Colby adds, greater-Minnesota firms need to remain open to a diversity of work to stay profitable and keep the practice stable. That stability is particularly important when it

comes to staffing. Recruiting and retaining employees is one of the biggest challenges outstate firms face. Firms often feel responsible for keeping employees on, even during slow times, because layoffs can mean uprooting families.

North Dakota State University in Fargo provides a steady supply of graduates to YHR Partners, Ltd., Moorhead, says Royce Yeater, AIA, principal. Many graduates, however, want to leave after completing their internships in search of opportunities in larger metropolitan areas. Since YHR opened a Minneapolis office three years ago to serve its institutional clients in the Twin Cities, YHR's Moorhead employees who want to move can stay with the firm if they wish.

To compensate for chronic staffing shortages at his firm, says Ron Halgeron, AIA, principal, Group II Architects PA, Marshall, the office sometimes partners with a Twin Cities firm. A general-

practice firm, Group II's work ranges from elevator installation to the design of correctional facilities. Group II is currently collaborating with Kimme & Associates of Champaign, Illinois, which specializes in correctional detention facilities, to design a jail expansion for Lyon County. Similarly, teaming with Partners & Sirny, Minneapolis, helped John Korngelbel, AIA, principal, Korngelbel Associates, Hutchinson, land his first contract with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU): a \$5 million addition to Ridgewater College.

Collaboration can be a double-edged sword. Architects located outside the state of Minnesota often need an outstate firm as the local partner on a large project. That arrangement can reinforce the idea that outstate firms are not sophisticated enough to handle the project themselves. In addition, many outstate architects say they struggle with an urban bias that views the Twin Cities, as well as the East and West Coasts, as

Generalist architectural  
practices still operate  
throughout the state, but  
many greater-Minnesota  
firms are redefining  
what it means to be  
a generalist.

*Continued on page 44*



# THE BEST BUILDINGS ON EARTH ARE STILL BUILT BY HAND



More than a million bricks laid in a series of unique patterns, textures and colors make the Veterans Administration Health Care Facility in Detroit, Michigan, a striking example of masonry design by architects Smith, Hinchman & Grylls Associates. But masonry was chosen for more than its beauty and flexibility of design. Buildings built of masonry by skilled union craftworkers will outperform, outshine and outlast any others. Add to that the speed and efficiency of union masonry contractors, and you have a prescription for health care facilities that satisfies any schedule and budget. We're The International Masonry Institute, and we'd like to help you design and construct the best buildings on earth. Visit us on the World Wide Web at [www.imiweb.org](http://www.imiweb.org), or call us toll free at 1-800-IMI-0988 for design, technical and construction consultation.



*The International Masonry Institute*



The International Masonry Institute — a labor/management partnership of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers and the contractors who employ its members.

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# Plansong

BY BILL BEYER, FAIA

I enjoy music of all kinds, from country-western to Gregorian chant. In the interest of self-improvement in this area, I once purchased a book entitled *Blues Harmonica for the Musically Hopeless*, but found I could not create the allegedly simple tunes from the even simpler musical notation. The authors could not have known the extent of hopelessness they were dealing with, so I could not hold them responsible. I still enjoy music, but will never be able to effectively make it.

Many people read musical scores; others read computer code. Treble clefs, musical notes, and 0's and 1's are no more than abstract patterns on paper to me. I read building plans. Good plans may even sing, as a good plan tells me almost everything I need to know about a building. Order, hierarchy, and public and private space are all revealed.

Structural logic or ambition, roof lines, the daily movement of people and spatial interplay can be assessed. A plan drawing records the ways in which a building meets and interacts with its site and surrounds, what kind of a neighbor it is, how it engages the land. Spatial organization jumps off the page; relationships of small and large spaces tell how the place intends to serve its purposes.

Plans provide that omniscient, bird's-eye view of the world that seduces us into believing we control things. They show the designer's skill in manipulating geometries that accept and adapt to the larger world. That the word "plans" long ago became shorthand for the entire set of documents necessary for building reflects the special power of these drawings.

When architects used to hand-draw plans with pencil and ink on vellum, the ghostly palimpsests of layout lines communicated to an observer the process of making the plan, as well as the process of thinking it. Such information is missing from today's computer-drawn plans. Some architectural educators disdain the two-dimensionality of floor plans, preferring perspective or other drawings that better display the volumetric and spatial character of a place, but a good plan can speak volumes.

When I was 10 years old, I was captivated by the Wisconsin-native-son hype around Frank Lloyd Wright's new Guggenheim Museum in New York City. On Sunday mornings, I would get up early and retrieve the *Milwaukee Journal*, quickly turning to its "House of the Week" to study the plans and imagine the spaces. I learned the conventions for delineating materials, doors, windows and other essential elements. I saw the cleverness needed to nest utilitarian spaces among grand ones. I conducted my own unauthorized tours of neighborhood houses under construction, trying to imagine their plans from partial stud-wall layouts.

My dad brought me a discarded t-square and other tools from his office, and I began to draw my own plans. Later, when Wright's plans were more widely published, I saw how truly powerful a plan drawing could be. Picasso once said that, "To draw, you must close your eyes and sing." For me, drawing plans feels more like singing and dancing about architecture.

"Writing about music is like dancing about architecture."

— Frank Zappa





DEAN NAGEL

## Campus Community

A master plan designed and implemented for the College of St. Benedict fosters community, hospitality and a sense of place *By Camille LeFevre*



Project team (from left to right): David Leapaldt, AIA, Steven Paasch, AIA, John Frischmann, AIA.

In 1986, when Colman O'Connell, OSB, was appointed president of the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota, she had a mission: to develop a long-range master plan that would assess the renovation potential of existing buildings, identify locations for new buildings and create a more cohesive, welcoming campus. She also wanted these changes to reflect the school's Benedictine traditions.

"Over time, we built the college, improved the faculty, increased the number of students and strengthened the curriculum, but we still didn't have a campus," explains O'Connell, who retired as college president in 1996. "The master plan was to provide a campus for a college that had all of the necessary components, but not the facilities."



In 1987, O'Connell charged Grooters Leapaldt Tideman Architects, St. Cloud, with designing and implementing the project for St. Benedict's 146-acre campus. "Sister Colman asked us to put together a master plan so the physical campus would reflect the quality of the institution and the Rule of St. Benedict the sisters live by," concurs David Leapaldt, AIA, principal.



The Benedictine traditions include nurturing a sense of place, fostering community, preserving resources, and blending with the existing built and natural environments. "The thrust of our master plan, renovations and new buildings was to make the campus beautiful, but not extravagant," O'Connell says. "Also, hospitality should be a mark of every Benedictine college, so all the buildings should be welcoming, not austere or unfriendly."

Taking these concerns to heart, GLTA set to work in 1987. The resulting master plan for the 2,000-student women's college identified the locations of possible new facilities; proposed renovations, remodels and additions to many existing buildings; described a landscape and site-amenities plan that reorganized vehicular and pedestrian circulation; created new entrances to the campus; and established design standards for buildings and landscaping.

Early manifestations of the master plan included the restoration of St. Teresa Hall, also known as Main Building. Built in 1914, this former residence hall and library was converted to faculty and administrative offices and conference spaces (see *Architecture Minnesota*, September/October 1991). In 1989, the project won an award from the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota. Adjacent to St. Teresa, GLTA designed a new campus entrance flanked by granite pillars. In 1989, a new 158-bed student residence, Margretta Hall, was completed.

O'Connell, however, felt Margretta fell short in one respect. "Everything on campus should assist in the building of community," she explains, "so we wanted the residence halls to include places where students can assemble, where they're encouraged by the architecture to know, love and support each other. After Margretta was finished, we discovered it didn't have enough lounges scattered about to facilitate this."

GLTA's design of Lottie and Frank J. Ardolf, Jr. Hall, completed in 1994, addresses that concern. The three-story building, which houses 246 women, eschews traditional residence-hall design characterized by double-loaded corridors and laundry relegated to a dark, uninviting basement.



DEAN NAGLE

Instead, using a keyhole concept, GLTA located skylights over an open, two-story rotunda. Radiating from this central area are wings with double and single rooms gathered around lounges and study areas. The laundry area, with lounge, is located in a sunlit, first-floor room. A third new residence, the 145-bed Brian Hall, completed in 2000, follows this prototype.

Mary Commons, completed in 2000, was also renovated to encourage community. A multiuse building connecting three freshman residence halls, Mary Commons is a gathering space that includes a bookstore, student-development offices, an information station, a two-level lounge and student mailboxes. The mailboxes, in fact, are located along a first-floor corridor or "street" intended to encourage mingling among students. "Our design on this campus is about offering opportunities for community and interaction," Leapoldt says.

*GLTA's master plan included design of the new Hahn building, which connects two existing athletic facilities on the campus's south side (opposite top); redefining campus entrances (opposite below); and the design of two new residences, Margretta Hall and Lottie and Frank J. Ardolf, Jr. Hall (top and above).*







Similarly, Ardolf Science Center, completed with Perkins and Will, Chicago, in 1992, features a light-filled corridor leading to Clemens Library to the west and the GLTA-renovated Academic Services Building to the northeast. The new S. L. Haehn Campus Center on the south side of the campus, however, may be the college's best architectural expression of community, Leapaltd argues.

The center unites two existing athletic buildings—a gym and a pool facility—to create a hub in which varsity and intramural athletes, students and alumni interact. What generates the mingling is the variety of activities housed in the center: a multi-purpose Alumnae Hall, a dining facility, a nightclub and a new field house. Gallery-like corridors connect Haehn with the athletic buildings.

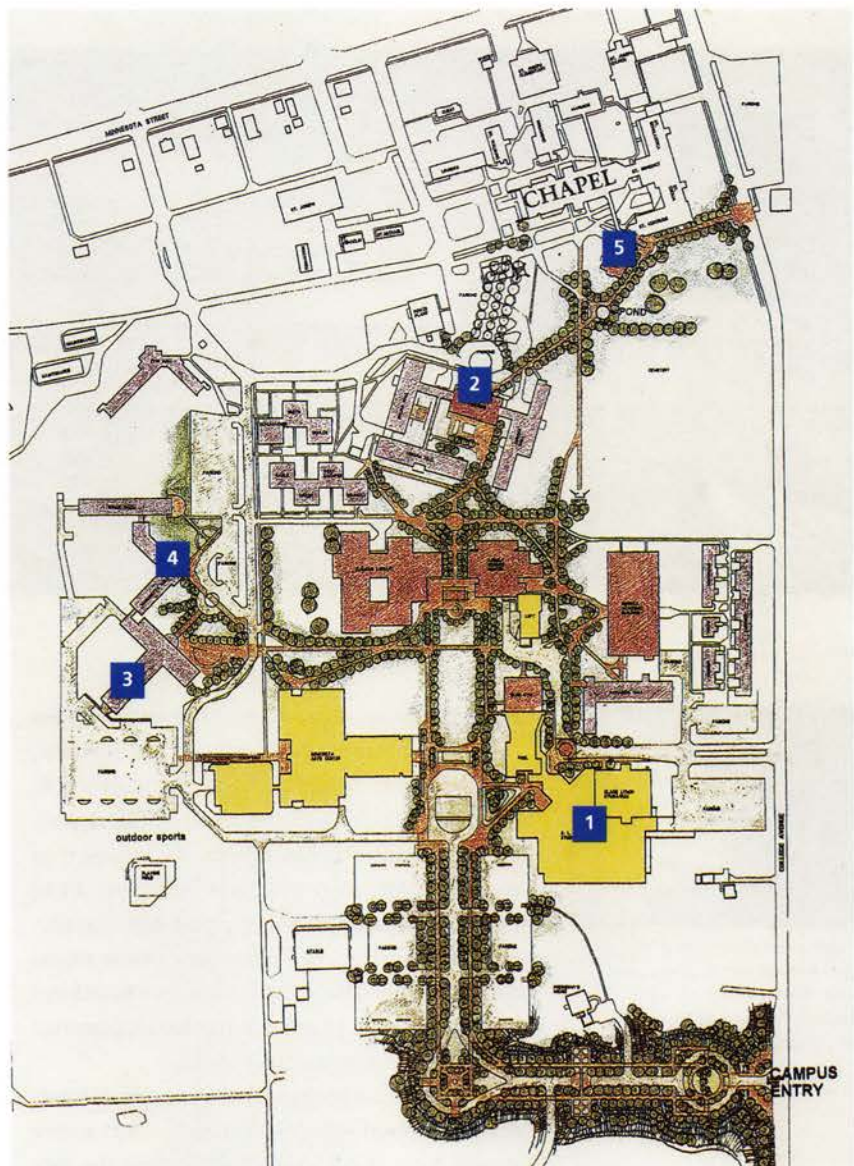
At night, Haehn's domed roof is lit to create a beacon that corresponds with the illuminated chapel dome on the campus's north side. In designing the master plan, Leapaltd explains, "we made sure all the new buildings, all the sightlines, focus back at the chapel dome."

Throughout renovation and construction, GLTA used brick, granite and white trim similar to that on existing buildings to ensure continuity between old and new. "All of the work they've done for us is light and airy and tasteful and simple," O'Connell says. "It's an attractive look that they've provided. They've really paid attention to our functions and needs."

For GLTA, Leapaltd says, the long-term, trusting relationship between his firm and the client made the master plan and its implementation successful. "We've ended up with an entire campus that reflects what the College of St. Benedict is," he explains. "The collaboration between us and the client, and the resulting architecture, is so molded together there's no ambiguity about why a building exists. I think that's what architecture should do; reflect the themes and goals of the owner in an intuitive way."



Light-filled corridors through Mary Commons (opposite) and Ardolf Science Center (left) encourage students to mingle.



Campus plan

1. Haehn Campus Center
2. Mary Commons
3. Ardolf Hall
4. Margretta Hall
5. St. Teresa

College of St. Benedict

St. Joseph, Minnesota

Grooters Leapaltd Tideman Architects,

St. Cloud, Minnesota

COURTESY GLTA





## Design Wise

A Mankato telecommunications firm enhances its visibility, recruits employees and marks a city entrance with its new headquarters building *By Camille LeFevre*



JERRY SWANSON



Project team (from left to right): Keith Haff, Bryan Paulsen, AIA, Meray Massad-Rhame, Greg Borchert (Michael Krager, AIA, Lyn Diefenderfer not pictured).

Ten years ago, when Midwest Wireless Communications opened for business, Dennis Miller was the company's sole employee. Today he's president of the regional telecommunications firm. By the end of the year, Midwest Wireless will post \$130 million in revenues and support 429 employees. In addition, the company's new headquarters building has become a Mankato landmark that's raised the bar for architectural design in southern Minnesota.

"We have an elegant facility that's extraordinarily functional," Miller says, "but many people have thanked me for building the first 'Minneapolis' building in the area. People are recognizing that the facility is well-designed. It's a step up and out of the boxes people are

used to seeing around here, and it's setting a new standard."

The company's headquarters, sited on 12 acres next to Highway 14, the "gateway" to Mankato's east side, "needed to project a positive image for the client and the city," recalls Bryan Paulsen, AIA, principal, Paulsen Architects, Mankato. To convey strength and a high-tech feel, the project team specified gray and black granite-like precast concrete and architectural metals on the structure's exterior.

They designed a 150-foot, curved-glass curtain wall to acknowledge "the idea of constant motion important to a telecommunications business," he says. The project team also invested the 78,000-square-foot building with an ingenious design. From the circular central lobby





JERRY SWANSON

or "hub" of the building, three "wing walls" radiate at 120-degree angles in imitation of the three guy wires that anchor a telecommunications tower.

Miller admits that, at first, he had trouble getting out of the box himself and embracing Paulsen's design. "I'm conservative," he explains, "so I asked Bryan to build me a box and then we'd put a little box on top for management. It would be very functional."

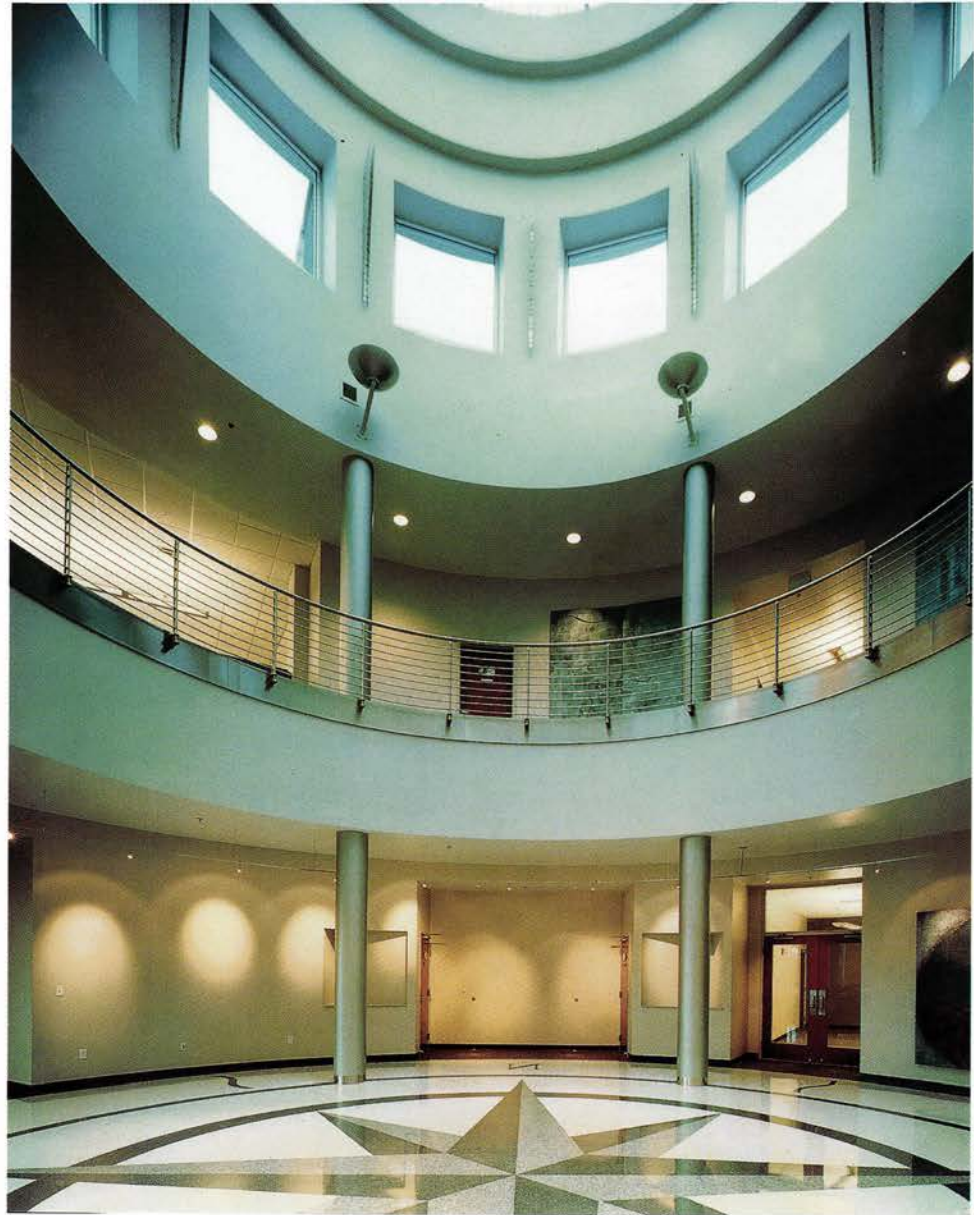
But Paulsen discovered, during his research in the programming or predesign phase of the project, that the rapidly growing company would need far more space than it anticipated in the next 15 years. In addition, Midwest Wireless needed a design that would support its interactive matrix of relationships between departments.



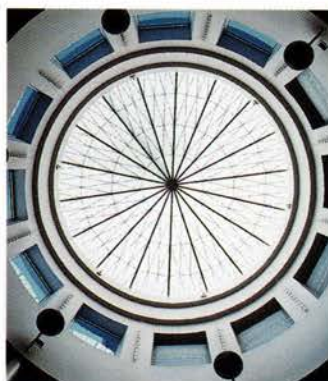
"We presented several concepts to Dennis, including the box, which he kept returning to," Paulsen says, "but we reminded him of how the employees interact and the departments function" in Midwest Wireless's highly collaborative workplace. During a typical day, personnel from

*Three wing walls radiate from the front entrance of the building (opposite top); the cubicle area and executive offices to the west (opposite middle); the curved curtain wall to the north (top and above); and a stand-alone sculptural element to the south (top and above).*





JERRY SWANSON



The entrance of the building opens into a circular lobby or hub (top), which features second-floor balconies, a domed skylight (above left) and a star-of-the-north terrazzo floor (above right).



one department consult with staff from various other departments. Sometimes they meet informally; other times in conference and training rooms. "This design promotes an easy flow of information among employees and between departments," Paulsen adds, "as the lobby/conference area provides a central location to disseminate information."

After a month, Miller says, "I finally realized how much better this concept is. We've got a building that's not only functional but cost effective, and has created for us an image that is recognized throughout the region."

Because of its three-pronged design, the building sports three different façades emanating from the main entrance. To the south side of the entrance is a stand-alone "wing wall" with



sculptural cut-outs and a decorative metal shade. The entrance itself opens into the circular lobby or hub with a star-of-the-north terrazzo floor and a domed skylight over a three-story atrium.

Extending north from the lobby is the curved-glass wing wall, which houses conference and training rooms named for historical figures: Einstein, Gutenberg, the Curies. When not in use by employees, this public area, in addition to the lobby, is available days and evenings for community gatherings.

An elevator adjacent to the lobby leads to the executive area with balconied offices, which adjoins a third form to the west that contains cubicles for customer-service, engineering and accounting departments. This rectangular box is designed for easy expansion, Paulsen explains. By removing the exterior wall, contractors can build up to 40,000 square feet of additional workspace, then enclose the addition by replacing the exterior wall.

How do employees like the design of the interior workspaces? "I can quantify it," Miller says. "This is a tight labor market. Since we moved in, in April 2000, we've had more than 1,500 unsolicited applicants. We get most of our new hires referred from existing employees, so we know we've created an environment that people want to work in."

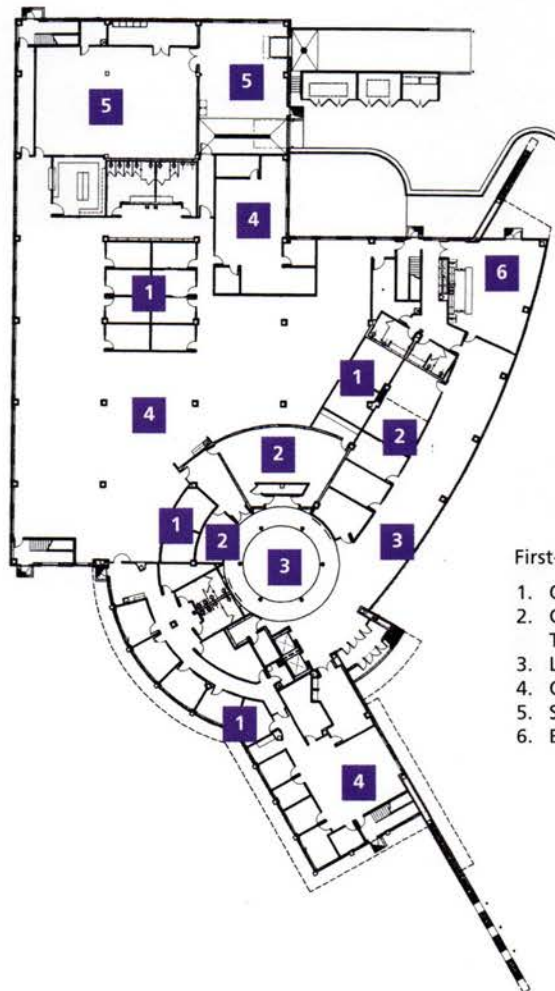
Paulsen's programming made all the difference, Miller continues. "I'm impressed with the time they took to lead us through all of our considerations. That process resulted in a building that came in under budget and on time." While Midwest Wireless will need to expand faster than expected—"We completed a transaction and grew more quickly than we thought we would," Miller says—programming helped the company plan for that eventuality.

"Because of this project," Miller adds, "I'm a real believer in design. It helps with employee recruitment and retention, and our company visibility. This building is now Mankato's number-one identifier. We're over the small-town image. Now, we're a regional hub."

**Midwest Wireless Communications**  
**Headquarters**  
**Mankato, Minnesota**  
**Paulsen Architects, Mankato, Minnesota**



*The lobby (opposite top) and the curved-glass wing wall with its conference and training rooms (above) are available for community gatherings when not in use by employees.*

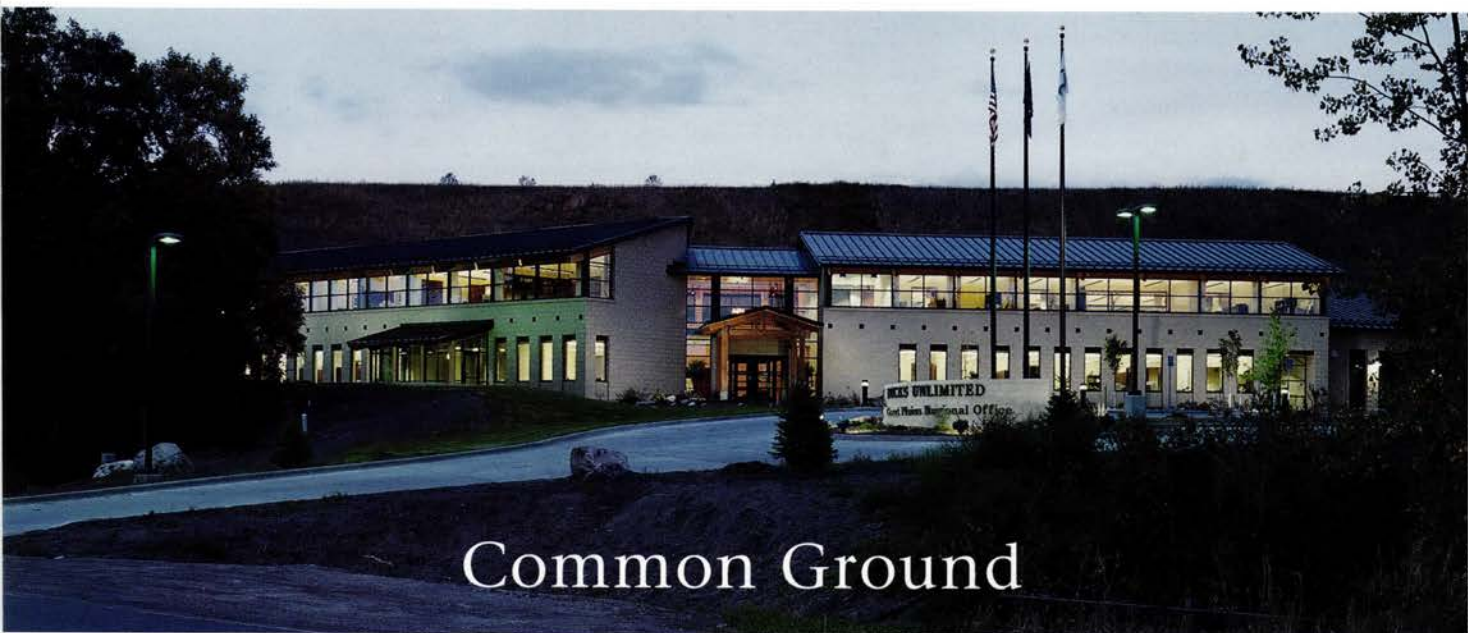


**First-floor plan**

- 1. Offices
- 2. Conference rooms  
Training rooms
- 3. Lobby
- 4. Open office
- 5. Service area
- 6. Break room



TODD STRAND



TODD STRAND

## Common Ground

A Bismarck-based conservation organization advances its mission and elevates its profile with an environmentally sensitive building *By Camille LeFevre*



Project team (from left to right): Steve Skoblik, Rochelle Conzemius, Joel Davy, AIA.

When the Great Plains regional office of Ducks Unlimited, Inc., decided to build a new headquarters, the nonprofit organization purchased a four-acre site overlooking the Missouri River in Bismarck, North Dakota. On the hilly property, a former cattle ranch, were several mature oak trees and a dramatic slope.

The organization wondered how it could construct a building in harmony with the landscape, since its mission includes restoring for waterfowl such threatened habitats as prairies and wetlands. "The site is certainly located in the most important landscape we work in—North Dakota and this central strip of hills, wetlands and grasslands," explains Jeffrey Nelson, director of operations.

As a conservation organization, Ducks Unlimited also wished to incorporate sus-

tainable-design technologies into its new facility. "We wanted to set a good example as an energy-efficient building," Nelson says. Because the organization is largely funded through donations, the building had a tight budget. Last, while needing an office facility to house its restorationists, biologists, agronomists, map makers and administrators, Ducks Unlimited also wanted a building that would appeal to and support the activities of its volunteers, who are outdoor enthusiasts.

To find an architectural firm that could address these criteria, Ducks Unlimited held a limited competition. Foss Associates, Moorhead, was selected for designing a structure that fulfilled the organization's program. The firm's first challenge was the site, recalls Joel Davy, AIA, principal. "The client was sensitive about overpowering nature, so we proposed





TODD STRAND

integrating the building into the site with minimal disturbance of the topography.”

Without destroying any mature trees, Foss designed a 22,300-square-foot building that follows a bend in the topography, and slopes from front to back with the back of the structure built into the hill. Window wells bring sunlight and views of a restored prairie landscape to this north side of the building.

In addition to earth sheltering a portion of the facility, Foss made sure other walls and the roof are well-insulated. The project team faced the building to the south and southwest to maximize sunlight during North Dakota’s long, cold winters. Deep roof overhangs angle to admit sunlight in winter and to shade windows in summer. A geothermal heat-pump system heats and cools the building, with the geothermal well field buried underneath the parking lot.

“To give the building a sense of dignity while conserving funds,” Davy says, the project team used such ordinary and no-maintenance materials as split-face concrete block and aluminum-frame windows—fine choices for a rural office facility. The firm was also charged, however, with designing a welcoming building that expressed a “hunting lodge or country house kind of feel,” Davy says.

Foss fulfilled that challenge by incorporating gabled roof shapes and projecting beam ends on the building’s exterior, and including ribbon windows on the second level and office-building-style punched windows on the first level. As a result, all interior workspaces have access to daylighting, often from multiple sources. “I think employee productivity has risen 10 percent because of all that light,” Nelson says.

*To avoid overpowering nature, the project team integrated the headquarters into its rolling prairie site (opposite middle and top), designing the structure to follow a bend in the topography and nestling a portion of the north side of the building into the hill (above).*









The building's interior incorporates such rustic elements as wood decking to give the headquarters a lodge-like feel attractive to its members (opposite) while providing utilitarian gathering spaces for employees (left).

Inside the building, the roof is framed with exposed glue-lam beams and wood decking, "which isn't usually found in an office building," Davy adds. The spacious lobby features a stone fireplace, and a gallery for wildlife art and the full-color, detailed wetland maps created by Ducks Unlimited staff. A 100-seat classroom/conference room provides space for staff training, public education and donor events. The classroom, lobby and adjacent lunch room can be secured from the rest of the building during evening activities.

In its new headquarters, completed last July on time and under budget, Ducks Unlimited has hosted various community organizations,

elected officials and business associations, as well as its own education programs. "The building has elevated our presence in the community and made people more aware of our mission," Nelson says.

"Visitors now leave with the knowledge that we're a mainstream professional organization and not some disorganized fringe group," he adds. "The building already has really paid tremendous dividends."

#### Great Plains Regional Office

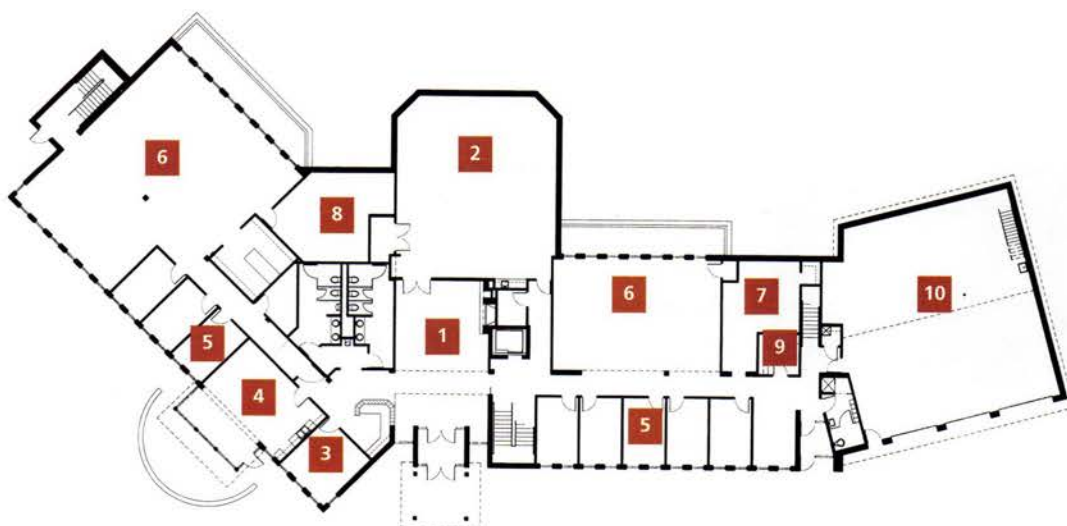
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Bismarck, North Dakota

Foss Associates, Moorhead, Minnesota

#### First-floor plan

1. Lobby
2. Conference/auditorium
3. Conference
4. Lunch room
5. Office
6. Open office
7. Work room
8. Mechanical
9. Shipping/receiving
10. Garage







## LAKE SIDE LIVING

A waterfront home near Alexandria capitalizes on a site's verticality and panoramic views *By Joel Hoekstra*



TOM TURNER

Project team (from left to right): Dan Quiggle, Reed Becker, AIA, Deb Parrott, Kent Rohr.

From the start, Dr. Robert Mohs saw hidden potential in the narrow lakeside lot. Wooded and steeply angled, the parcel had been passed over by several buyers before Mohs, a dentist, and his late wife purchased it in the mid-1990s. The property fronts scenic Lake Le Homme Dieu near Alexandria, Minnesota, but even friends remained skeptical of its value. "They'd joke

that you had to be a mountain goat with two short legs to walk on the lot," Mohs recalls.

No traditional home could have been erected on the property, but the Mohs family, long-time inhabitants of a six-bedroom Colonial in an Alexandria neighborhood, didn't want a conventional home. "Their direction to me was very simple," says Reed Becker, AIA, principal, Widseth Smith Nolt-





ing, Alexandria. "They wanted something totally different than what they were living in."

In fact, the Mohs sought out Becker for his contemporary sensibilities. The couple admired several modern civic buildings and high-end residences the architect had designed over the years. "The very first time we met with Reed, we told him we didn't want a northwoods cabin," Mohs remembers. "I don't think I've ever heard a bigger sigh of relief and thank-you from anybody."

Given almost free rein, the architect responded with a design for a house, completed in 1999, that capitalizes on the site's verticality. While the footprint is relatively modest—3,000 square feet—the house rises to three stories and is capped with a gray-metal, standing-seam roof. A red-metal garage door, decks with gray-metal railings strung with airplane cable, and large expanses of glass punctuate the house's stucco exterior. A primary aim of the design, Becker says, was to provide lakeside views from every floor and nearly every room.

The project team also made the transition between indoors and outdoors as transparent as possible by having outside walls function as a framework for the windows. In addition, instead of allowing the house to face the water head-on, they oriented the house on a slight skew from the property's north-south axis to create and widen two sightlines for panoramic viewing.

Inside the house, simplicity was the mantra. The Mohs's programmatic needs were few: a master bedroom, bedrooms for the high-school-age children, a kitchen, a mudroom, and a garage large enough to accommodate cars and a boat. The project team linked many of these spaces to keep the interiors open and contemporary. The dining and living areas are adjoined, while a 24-foot-high cathedral ceiling rises above the master bedroom located on a balcony-like third floor over the main living area.

The Mohs's choice of finishings was equally straightforward: white walls and maple trim throughout the house, cherry and maple cabinetry, granite coun-



*The waterfront home, located on Lake Le Homme Dieu, provides lakeside views from every floor (opposite), as its stucco exterior seemingly functions as a frame for the house's large expanses of glass (top and above).*





*The house's 24-foot-high ceilings and numerous windows flood the interior with light and panoramic lake views (above).*





tertops in the kitchen and the same polished granite in the three bathrooms.

In the dining room, a corrugated-metal panel decorates one wall. Square steel plates are embedded in the floor beneath the dining-room table. "We started out with copper panels on the wall, but in rural Minnesota there are a lot of grain bins and farm buildings that use galvanized metal, which fits well with the other materials in the house," Becker explains. "Plus, we didn't want anything to distract from the activity of the house or the beauty of the views."

Mohs confirms that the house enhances his awareness of the outdoors. In fact, he compares living in the house to dwelling on an ocean liner. The impression is particularly acute, he adds, in the loft bedroom on the third floor. "Here I can lie in bed and look out one window and see the waves, and I look out the other and see the stars," he says. "It's just like I'm on a cruise."

#### **Mohs Residence**

**Lake Le Homme Dieu, Minnesota**

**Widseth Smith Nolting, Alexandria, Minnesota**



*The interior's simple materials palette includes a decorative corrugated-metal panel in the dining room (top), and cherry and maple cabinetry and granite countertops in the kitchen (above).*





# Minnesota's "Seaside" Towns

While Excelsior and Grand Marais sit next to lakes, they still conjure up images and sensations associated with seaside towns *By David C. Toms*



*At the center of Excelsior is a waterfront park on The Commons (top), from which residents and visitors enjoy harbor views (above and middle). Excelsior also has a lively small-town street scene (far right).*



A visiting friend once remarked, as we strolled through Excelsior, Minnesota, that it “felt like a seaside town.” She would know. During her travels from Marblehead to Cape May, Ocean City to Provincetown, she’d spent time by the sea. But a seaside town in the Midwest? Minnesota may be leagues from an ocean, but is hardly landlocked.

This land of lakes has nurtured distinctive harbor towns, like Grand Marais and Excelsior, that conjure up the look and feel of their oceanic cousins. Just as in Key West or Bar Harbor (minus the salty smells), blue water brilliantly reflects blue sky, rows of boats are anchored offshore and rigging slaps against sailboat masts. Similarly, the architecture and layout of these towns—with their quaint streets, charming storefronts and picturesque harbors—follow design patterns usually found in towns by the water.





DON F. WONG



The seaside sensation begins on approach. In Excelsior, County Road 7 from the Twin Cities meets a curving hill on 2nd Street before merging with Lake Street. Ahead is the southeast corner of Lake Minnetonka with a bay view that may have inspired George Bertram of New York to form the "Excelsior Pioneer Association," a dues-paying organization of "superior men and women" who were granted the right to settle here.

Building began with the first log house in 1853. The town grew to include an eclectic mix of French Colonial, Queen Anne, Victorian and Colonial home styles, as well as ad-hoc mixtures of them all. As resort cabins were converted for year-round occupancy, "entire sections of houses were reused as people remodeled or added

*Dramatic views of Lake Superior are a hallmark of Grand Marais's waterfront (above, top and far left), punctuated by such small-town icons as the Beaver House's giant walleye (middle).*

*Continued on page 53*





DON F. WONG

## Welcome Aboard

For houseboat dwellers, life on a “liveaboard” can be simple or sumptuous, pleasurable or perilous *By Joel Hoekstra*



DON F. WONG

**A**t first blush, Minnesota might seem a perfect place for houseboat living, with its fabled 10,000 lakes and the Mississippi, St. Croix, Minnesota and Red rivers lapping at its landscape. But L'Etoile du Nord also suffers winters so cold they'd make Lord Shackleton shiver. Ice chokes the state's waterways for months on end. Floods follow.

Still, each year a few hardy souls overwinter on Minnesota waters. Living on

boats with steel hulls or using an underwater bubbler to lessen ice buildup, such Mark Twain types tend to cluster between Lock Nos. 1 and 2 on the Mississippi River in St. Paul, but downriver, Winona's Latch Island is home to a year-round community, too.

In summer, of course, “liveaboard communities,” as houseboat enclaves are dubbed by their residents, surface throughout the region in locales ranging





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from LaCrosse, Wisconsin, to Voyageurs National Park in northern Minnesota. What these communities have in common, residents say, is an odd mix of independence and altruism.

"Everyone's a captain," says Peter Kramer, commodore, St. Paul Yacht Club and principal, Roark Kramer Kosowski Design, Minneapolis. "They don't take kindly to being told what to do." On the other hand, such independence is almost al-

ways trumped by a neighborliness rarely seen among landed gentry. Every river dweller has a story about some kindness paid or assistance rendered, from towing boaters who've run out of fuel to dropping off groceries on a neighbor's deck.

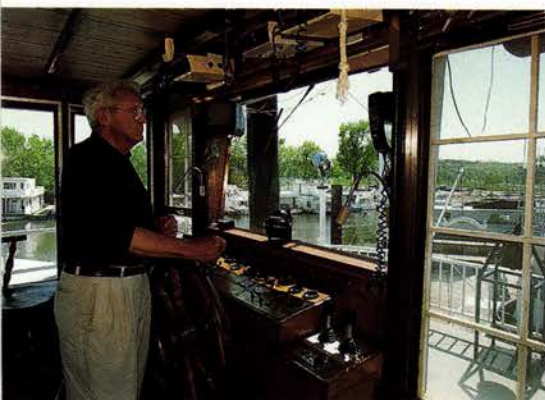
Any attempt to characterize the architecture of these communities is bound to fail, however. At best, one might say the vessels reflect the same stubborn independence and eclectic tastes of their

*Houseboat communities in the Upper Midwest are found near LaCrosse, Wisconsin (above), on the Mississippi River near Winona (top), and on the Mississippi in downtown St. Paul (opposite middle and below).*





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*Liveaboards vary in structure and amenities, from Dahlgren's luxurious, multistory houseboat (top and middle), and Moffa's tiny, one-man houseboat (above) to floating houses added onto through the years (opposite top).*



owners. The structures range from high-brow to hodgepodge, from super-size to partly submerged. Some are sleek. Others are so top-heavy they can't be moved.

"There are no building codes on the water," says Steven Buetow, AIA, SALA Architects, Inc., Minneapolis, "so everyone feels they have license to do what they want." Buetow, for example, lived for a time at Latch Island aboard an 80-foot sternwheel towboat. Some of his neighbors lived in the barest of facilities—boat houses that were little more than sheds on buoyant 55-gallon drums.

One resident built a floating dome home. Another designed his craft to be rotated according to season: in winter, the glassed-over side was turned to draw in the sun; in summer, the skipper flipped the boat north to ward off the glare.

While few conventional homes can be turned on their axis or built without regard to code, they do have distinct advantages over liveaboards, particularly in con-

struction. Plumb lines, for example, are of little use on a craft that's rocked by waves; builders must rely instead on plumb bobs. Likewise, the subtle curves and angles that are the hallmarks of boat building require that almost all additions be custom built. Factory-made cabinetry and furnishings often require tweaking to fit.

"The program is pretty much the same as a house," says Truman Howell, AIA, Truman Howell Architects & Associates, Inc., Minnetonka, who lives aboard a 65-foot, freighter-style houseboat moored at the St. Paul Yacht Club. "But you do have limitations in structure and space. While our boat is not particularly small, we do have to plan and find ingenious ways for storage."

Howell's multistory vessel, built in Escanaba, Michigan, and motored to Minneapolis via the Chicago River in 1994, has wood floors, light-filled contemporary living areas, a tiled bath with a whirlpool tub, phone service, electricity and cable-TV hookup. A natural-gas fur-





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nace provides heat inside, while a quarter-inch steel hull keeps ice from shredding the boat.

Carpenter Mark Moffa's residence is more minimalist. Purchased from a friend for \$500 six years ago, the 23-foot Holiday ranks among the smallest live-aboards on the St. Paul stretch of the Mississippi. Tied to makeshift docks near an abandoned power plant, Moffa's boat has no electricity or running water.

"Basically, it's one room with a small loft," says Moffa, a former architecture student. The challenge of designing the 85-square-foot space is not unlike the assignments his professors used to hand out: create an aesthetically pleasing 10-by-10-foot living area.

Moffa's solution employs large windows, plenty of birch and maple inside, and copper sheathing outside. Built-in shelves house books; the loft has a bunk for sleeping; a water-filled, earthenware jug on a Corian counter top suffices for a sink; and a small Finnish stove pro-

vides heat. Bathrooms? There's a port-a-potty on shore. Showers? There's the health club.

Even though Moffa has put an estimated \$10,000 and countless hours into rebuilding his boat from the hull up, "it's really not the boats I'm interested in, it's the water," he says. Wood ducks, herons, eagles, owls and foxes populate the river and its edges. Even in the heart of the city, Moffa adds, he's keenly aware of nature and its cycles, which, of course, includes floods.

When the spring floods arrive, as they did this year, river living becomes dangerous. Tight-knit river communities come together to battle wind, ice and rising water levels. Old-timers offer wisdom culled from experience; newcomers learn the dangers of getting caught in ice or drifting too far into the current. Residents share food and fuel without expecting repayment.

"Everybody helps everybody," says Howard Dahlgren, a retired planning

consultant who owns an oil-fired stern-wheeler that sleeps a dozen people. "It's like an insurance policy on the river." From offering extra fuel to picking up exhausted canoeists, Dahlgren has helped distressed sailors in almost every type of emergency.

Ultimately, however, it's the pleasures of life on the open water that make houseboat living so attractive. Cathy DeMoll, owner of a St. Paul, Internet-based curriculum company, fondly recalls her days living on a boat under Minneapolis's Washington Avenue bridge in the mid-1970s. Waves rocked her infant to sleep at night and towboat captains would stop by to drop off a can of coffee or a freshly baked pie.

"When we lived in Minneapolis, we were in the middle of the city, and yet we saw wildlife and enjoyed a close-knit community," DeMoll recalls. "It was a wonderful way of life. It was beautiful. It was peaceful."





# Dubrovnik

## Restored

*By Bette Hammel*

Ever since my school days in South St. Paul, where Yugoslavians were my friends, I had dreamed of seeing the romantic city of Dubrovnik, Croatia, described by poet Lord Byron as "the Pearl of the Adriatic." Last year, I got my chance. Friends invited me to join them on a sailing trip along the Dalmatian coast from Split to Dubrovnik.

The medieval walled city of Dubrovnik, perched on a spectacular site overlooking the Adriatic Sea, has almost recovered from the ravages of war 10 years ago. During the autumn 1991 bombardment by Serb and Montenegrin forces of the Yugoslav National Army, Dubrovnik suffered serious damage. Nine 17th-century palaces were gutted, 60 percent of the city's famed tile roofs were destroyed and 2,000 shells hit 68 percent of the Old Town's 824 buildings.

A painstaking rehabilitation process has succeeded in reviving the city's architectural reputation as a world-heritage site. During my visit, I interviewed three people who played key roles in Dubrovnik's restoration. One of them, architect Matko Vetma, president, Architectural Association of Croatia, and his firm, Gradevinar-Quelin d.d., was involved in restoration efforts. Several European countries, outraged by the attacks, offered technical support. "With them, we found the methodology of how to work," Vetma says.

Today the average tourist entering Dubrovnik for the first time barely notices where the damage occurred. Crossing the drawbridge into the Old City is like entering the pages of ancient history. Between the city's massive walls is a city built entirely of cream-colored stone with a glorious patina. This famous limestone, still quarried on the nearby islands of Korcula and Brac, also graces the White House in Washington D. C., and the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul.

Dubrovnik evolved as an aristocratic republic from the 12th to 19th centuries, during which it suffered devastating earthquakes. As a result, the city bears the marks of several architectural styles from Italian Renaissance to Gothic to Baroque;





Vetma calls it mostly medieval 13th century. The best views are from the walls surrounding the city. Here you can savor vistas of the sunlit Adriatic; admire old palaces, churches, monasteries, stone houses, church spires and domes; and study Dubrovnik's endless stretch of red-tile roofs.

Contractor Marko Kovacevic, president, GP Dubrovnik, whose firm handled the bulk of the restoration, says it's difficult to find original tiles because they were handmade. Workers crafted the tiles, called *kupa*, by kneading the clay for five days until it turned honey colored. Then they rolled the tiles on their thighs (hence the tiles' curved shape) before baking. Today, Dubrovnik's roof tiles—some handmade, some mass produced—have the brownish, burnished-red, rose and ochre colors of an old-master's painting.

Heading Dubrovnik's restoration was Vjekoslav Vierda, director, Restoration Institute. According to Vierda, Dubrovnik instituted preservation guidelines after the 1979 earthquake. These guidelines proved invaluable as the Advisory Commission developed a master plan guaranteeing that all repairs and reconstruction would be done with traditional techniques and materials wherever feasible.

The first priority was the tall stone buildings housing most of the city's residents. UNESCO also established a priority list that cited Dubrovnik's oldest harbor; the city walls; and 684 buildings including the 11th-century fort, the 1386 Franciscan monastery and the third-oldest synagogue in Europe. Vierda reports that today more than 75 percent of the restoration process has been accomplished.

Fortunately, tourists like my sailing group are drifting to Dubrovnik along with our much-needed American dollars. Our rediscovery of this splendid place includes touring the restored palaces and churches, drinking savory Croatian wines, enjoying fresh grilled fish, and shopping for handmade jewelry and bags of lavender. New and renovated hotels overlooking the sea are under construction. "Dubrovnik is alive again," Vetma says. "It's safe, no problem."



*The walled city overlooks the Adriatic Sea (opposite) and is entered through a drawbridge (far top) that leads to the wall (far below) and a city marked by ruins and renovation (top middle). An ornate entrance (above) opens into the 1386 Franciscan monastery (top right), one of the first buildings to be renovated.*



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## practice

Continued from page 17

the source of innovative design and architectural expertise.

A strong economy in the past five or six years has helped spread work around. Still, Engan says, urban bias against outstate firms becomes acute when business slows. "When the economy isn't as strong, it's always frustrating to see a project you can handle go to somebody from out of town," Engan explains.

Greater-Minnesota architects also fight the perception that they're simply local providers serving local clients. YHR, for example, limits its collaborations to strengthen its reputation as an expert in the design of community institutions—churches, health care, education, local government and some cultural facilities—and to expand its reputation. "We want to be masters of our own destiny," Yeater says. "If I'm looking to collaborate, I focus on someone with special expertise that we don't have."

Some outstate firms expand their reach by establishing offices throughout the state or the Midwest, while others market their services across several counties or states. Engan Associates markets its health-care expertise to a five-state area that includes Minnesota, the Dakotas, Wisconsin and Iowa; its second area of focus, churches, is centered in Minnesota; and the firm promotes its expertise in community projects throughout western Minnesota.

Most marketing is still done the old-fashioned way: by building personal relationships with clients and cultivating community connections. "The old business axiom '80 percent of work comes from 20 percent of your clients' is absolutely true," Halgersen says. "It's just a matter of keeping in touch with your clients and being helpful."

To stay in communication with clients, as well as project partners and staff, many outstate architects are turning to cyberspace. Websites, improved file-transfer protocols and e-mail are helping firms expand their geographic

## endangered

Continued from page 13

according to Steve Kariack, DNR realty supervisor, will give the Minnesota State Legislature an opportunity to codify past lease practices into law and allow the DNR to oversee compliance.

What about historic recognition? Mining companies have donated, or built by special tax, many high-quality school buildings and other public facilities on the Iron Range and placed them on the National Register of Historic Places. Such donations reflect a corporate contribution to the well-being and history of the region. The Stuntz Bay boathouses should be no different.

Salmela describes the construction of the boathouses as an example of "process thinking," in which a culture employs a pragmatic shape or building style that,

over time, becomes a tradition. Such forms are later recognized from a cultural viewpoint as vernacular art and form. The notched-log structures of Finnish builders in northeastern Minnesota, for instance, are an example of a vernacular architecture that's been given historic designation.

Likewise, the simple process thinking that went into crafting these boathouses, and the resulting significance of these structures, deserves further merit. Built to engage the state's 10,000-lake resource and commend the workers of our legendary mining industry, the boathouses subsequently initiated and fostered a family recreation tradition that has become a part of our regional heritage. **AM**

Continued on page 49



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If you need assistance in finding an architect and utilizing a fair and thorough selection process, please contact AIA Minnesota at 612/338-6763. We have brochures and suggested selection methods that can save you time and money, as well as enable you to find the right architect for your project. The May/June issue of *Architecture Minnesota* includes an annual directory of all of our AIA Minnesota firms. Call the office or check for it at the newsstand

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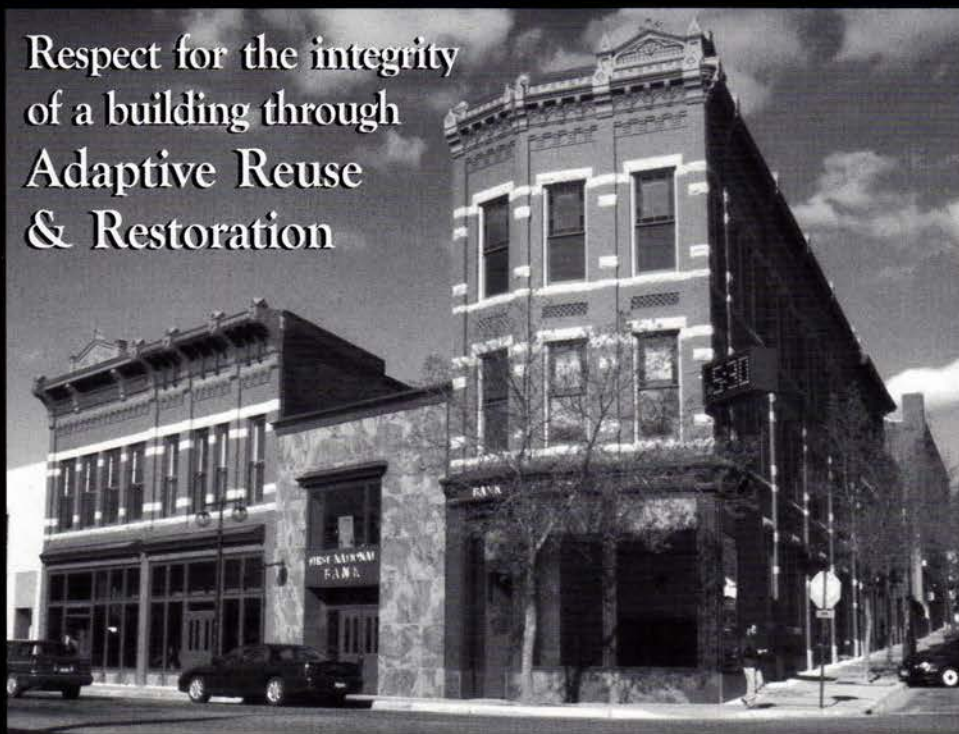
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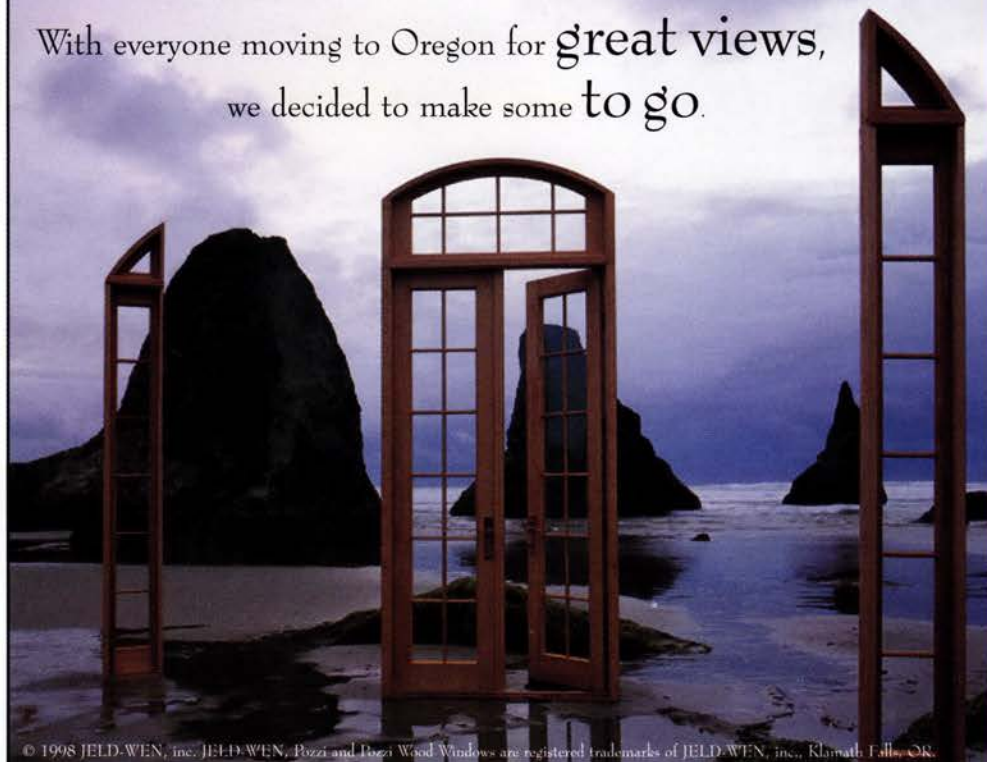
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**Prevention.**





## practice

Continued from page 44

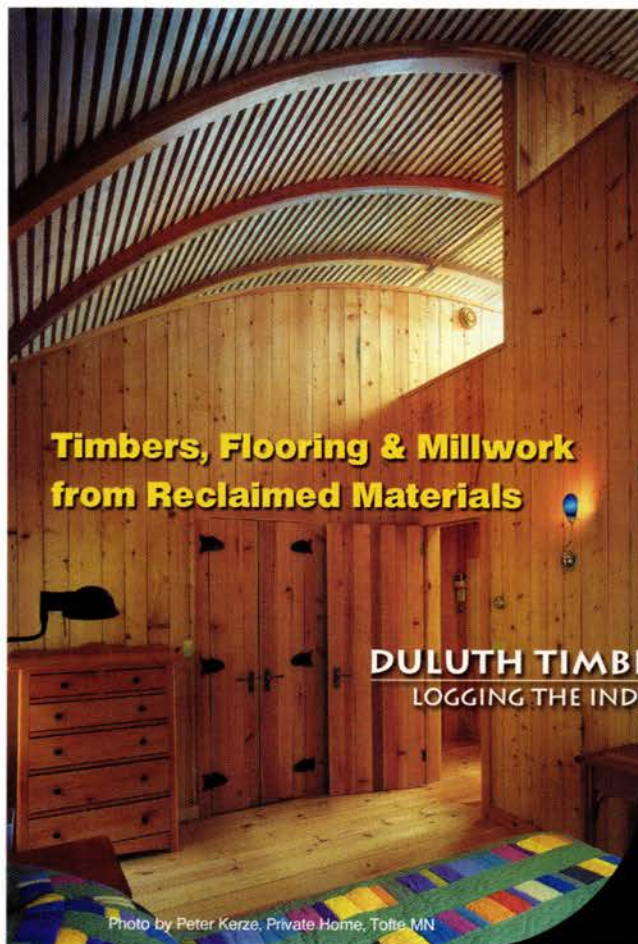
boundaries, facilitate project development and secure new clients.

Websites, Yeater explains, are both a marketing tool and a way to increase a firm's credibility. "The quality of the Website tends to be more important than the location of the firm because the Internet isn't tied to geography," he says. "Internet access makes geographically diverse practices easier to operate."

Halgerson agrees, pointing to Group II's Internet experience coordinating work on a new middle/high school in Pipestone. The project team includes a foodservice consultant, an auditorium consultant, an associate architect, and structural, electrical, mechanical and civil engineers spread over multiple locations. To improve communication among team members, the firm established a project Website to which team members submit their updated documents. "Despite our varied locations, this technology enabled us to work together and communicate throughout the project," Halgerson says.

"Technology is one of the biggest changes to the traditional business of architecture that I've seen since I've been in the profession," Colby adds. "It is possible for us to function in a location like Rochester, Delafield or Mason City, both as an organization and in the marketplace, and still hold our own against firms in the bigger metropolitan areas."

As metropolitan firms become more specialized and more interested in competing for projects outside the Twin Cities, outstate firms are redefining the role of general practice to sharpen their competitive edge. Specialization, strategic partnerships and geographic diversity are becoming hallmarks of the new outstate architectural practice. **AM**



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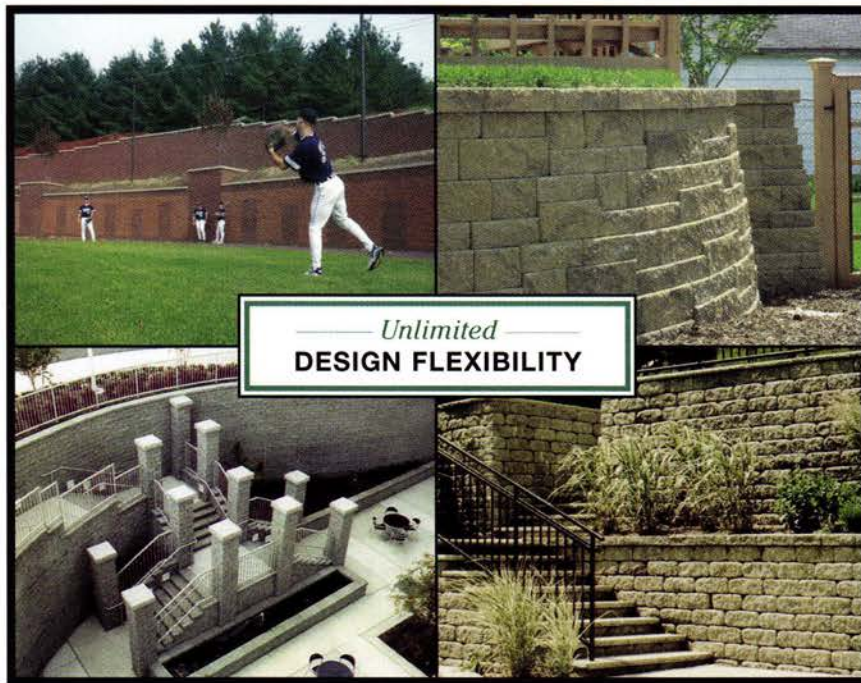
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## interview

*Continued from page 15*

busy forces me to make decisions efficiently. There's no "back burner" anymore. I've reached a point where a sort of basal instinct guides me. And I'm banking on a great nap after I die.

**What are your primary initiatives for Mankato and southern Minnesota?**

I'd like to bolster Mankato's ability to provide the best of both worlds for people. Mankato has a lot of natural beauty, so making sure that development decisions leave enough space for parks throughout the city is important to me. We are also investing in technologies that make it easy to work and live in Mankato while doing business around the world.

The city is currently reviewing three bids for placing an antenna on top of a water tower that would provide wireless access throughout our area. Minnesota State University Mankato will be one of the first campuses in the nation to feature wireless communications. Our citizens are investing privately, too. A recent survey indicated that 54 percent of our city's households are on the Internet.

Mankato is also the regional center for south-central Minnesota. We have about 42,000 residents living within the city limits. However, we serve a population of more than 300,000 people within a commuting distance of 50 miles. Our near suburbs, which are really more like small towns, are within four to six miles. Most of them range from 2,000 to 12,000 residents.

While the population of Mankato has zeroed out over the last decade, the towns around us have grown. This makes regional cooperation essential. We are trying to reach beyond the boundaries of individual cities and towns to collaborate in ways that will benefit us all.

For example, water run-off is an issue best examined from a regional standpoint. The amount of hard-surface development in one city or town has an impact on all surrounding areas. By working together, we can balance this type of development with green belts and park areas to provide

*Continued on page 53*



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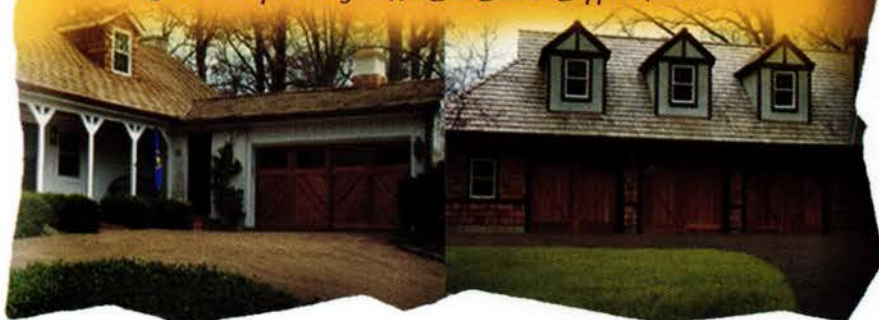


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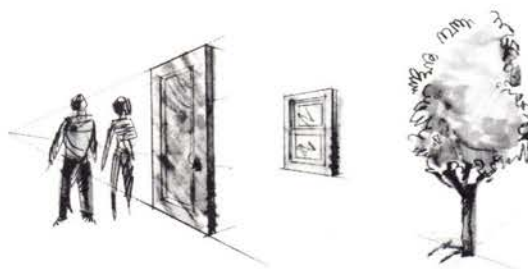


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## interview

Continued from page 50

places where water can easily flow into the water tables.

Affordable housing is another issue we're addressing regionally. Mankato is like a big sister willing to bear the costs of constructing the utilities infrastructure needed to serve new businesses. To do this, however, we need affordable housing for these businesses' future employees, our existing residents and our university students. We're exploring ways in which Mankato could provide economic aid that would enable satellite suburbs or towns to maintain their quality of life in exchange for their willingness to provide more affordable housing.

At first, this approach to growth can look like sprawl because we would be developing housing farther out and waiting for the transportation corridors to follow. Here is where regional zoning will play an important role. Cities and counties, as multi-jurisdictional governments, have to look at these issues together.

You are involved in several coalitions that focus on preserving quality of life via smart growth. How do you define smart growth? For me, smart growth is about scale and synergy. You begin with a person, then move outward to families, neighborhoods, cities and regions. If you don't inject humanity into all these facets of scale, you lose your quality of life.

You also need to decide whether you are looking at a swatch of fabric or a whole yard. Both are important. We need to be constantly vigilant to preserve the quality of life in Mankato and nearby towns. We need to consciously weave development efforts together throughout the region.

How has Mankato's built environment changed since an architect's been in charge?

We've established urban-design standards that strive to achieve a positive image for the city through improvement of the public realm and streetscape. These standards address signage, landscaping and building designs while providing flexibility for creativity. It took a while to write and refine them, but I endorse them. They are listed on the

city's Website for anyone who's interested in learning more [www.ci.mankato.mn.us].

How has being a mayor changed your architectural practice?

It's broadened my knowledge about the public factors that shape a city and it's expanded my definition of creativity. I understand more about the political process and how various groups—developers, community organizations, business owners and others—have an impact on the built environment. I also fully appreciate the creativity it takes to make such a range of stakeholders work together in the same direction.

How would you describe the legacy that you would like to create as mayor of Mankato?

The most important thing you can do is leave a place better than you found it. My goal for Mankato is to create a welcoming city that still feels like home while providing those who grow up, live and work here with the same opportunities they would have anywhere else in the world. While many students move away to other places shortly after they've graduated, we've found that they return because of the great quality of life we have here. **AM**

## seaside

Continued from page 37

to their cottages," explains Betty Peck of the Excelsior Historical Society. Sears and Roebuck mail-order homes were also built along Excelsior's residential streets. Today, modest houses coexist with expensive homes—a pattern common to waterfront villages.

Visitors and residents alike gather at The Commons, a waterfront park with beaches, art shows and festivals. Last year, a plaza redesigned by Mark Nessel, AIA, Rafferty Rafferty Tollefson Architects, Inc., St. Paul, and J. Nicolas Ruehl, AIA, TSP One, Inc., Excelsior, was completed and incorporates a ticket booth from the old Excelsior Amusement Park as a historical landmark and gathering spot.

Walkers also stroll along Excelsior's Water Street, which is lined with gift and anty-

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## seaside

*Continued from page 53*

tiques shops, art galleries and a bookstore. The sweet scents of ice cream and taffy, the convivial atmosphere, and the constant but relaxed flow of people complement the sensations that culminate in a notion of Excelsior as a seaside town.

The approach to Grand Marais is also dramatic. As Highway 61 crests a small hill, the town, lying beneath the Sawtooth Mountains and embraced by Lake Superior, comes into view. A Native American village for centuries, Grand Marais's settlement by Europeans began in the late 1800's. Grand Marais subsequently served as a trading post, a fishing village and a lumber town.

Minnesota's famous North Shore Drive cruises through town, while a spur route leads visitors to Grand Marais's harbor-front Main Street. Along the south side of the street is the pebbled lakeshore, with access to the lighthouse and Artists Point, a stone promontory in Lake Superior that's inspired artists and photographers for decades.

On the other side of Main Street is the commercial area. Along with several waterfront hotels, landmarks here include Sven and Ole's and the Beaver House Bait and Tackle Shop, which features a giant fiberglass walleye head and tail jutting from the upper story. The walleye, in fact, reflects the idiosyncratic face of seaside towns; such individualistic, playful, folksy objects become landmarks. Bill Cronberg, owner of the Beaver House, says he'd be a rich man if he "had a dime for every picture taken since his son had the idea to put that walleye up."

Like Excelsior and other seaside towns, downtown Grand Marais includes a mix of shops and restaurants. In addition, the town is a Northland center for the arts with its Grand Marais Art Colony, Grand Marais Playhouse, North House Folk School and Sivertson Gallery.

Whether found along the ocean or next to Minnesota's large lakes, seaside towns bloom on the landscape like stands of wildflowers: unexpected, colorful, elegantly simple. The sensations these places give rise to—whether wistful, nostalgic or delight-filled—cause us to suspend our everyday concerns, breathe deeply and be transported to a seemingly simpler time and place that says, "seaside town."



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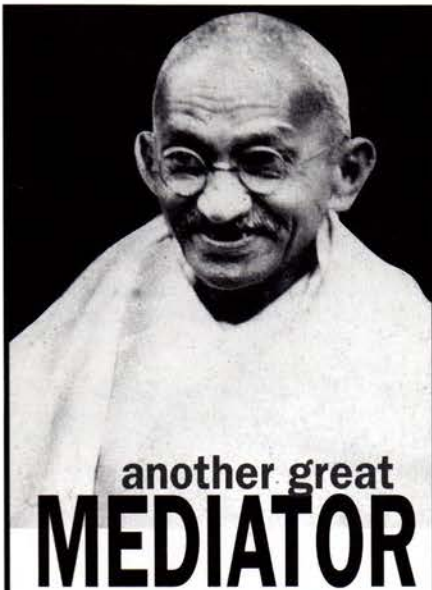
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Location: St. Joseph, MN  
Client: College of St. Benedict  
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Principal-in-charge: David Leapaldt, AIA  
Project architects: John Frischmann, AIA  
Project lead designer: Pat Waddick  
Project team: Bev Olson  
Structural-engineering team: Larson Engineering of Minnesota;  
Kesh Ramdular  
Mechanical-engineering team: Lindell Engineering  
Electrical-engineering team: Lindell Engineering  
General Contractor: W. Gohman Construction Company  
Face brick: Gran-a-Stone  
Cabinetwork: Ron's Cabinets  
Flooring systems/materials: MCI  
Window systems: Eastside Glass / St. Cloud Window  
Concrete work: W. Gohman Construction Company  
Millwork: Ron's Cabinets  
Photographer: Dean Nagel Studios

#### Mary Commons

Location: St. Joseph, MN  
Client: College of St. Benedict  
Architect: Grooters Leapaldt Tideman Architects  
Principal-in-charge: David Leapaldt, AIA  
Project architect: Steve Paasch, AIA  
Project lead designer: Pat Waddick  
Project team: Bev Olson, Lyn Johnson  
Structural-engineering team: Larson Engineering of Minnesota;  
Kesh Ramdular  
Mechanical-engineering team: LKPB  
Electrical-engineering team: LKPB  
General Contractor: Donlar Construction Company  
Face brick: Brock White  
Stone/Granite: Cold Spring Granite Company  
Cabinetwork: Ron's Cabinets  
Flooring systems/materials: MCI  
Window systems: Eastside Glass / St. Cloud Window  
Concrete work: Donlar Construction Company  
Millwork: Ron's Cabinets  
Photographer: Joel Butkowski

#### S. L. Haehn Campus Center

Location: St. Joseph, MN  
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Principal-in-charge: David Leapaldt, AIA  
Project architect: John Frischmann, AIA  
Project lead designer: Pat Waddick  
Project team: Bev Olson, Dean Wick, David Prochniak, Lyn Johnson  
Structural-engineering team: Larson Engineering of Minnesota;  
Kesh Ramdular

Mechanical-engineering team: Lindell Engineering  
Electrical-engineering team: Lindell Engineering  
General contractor: W. Gohman Construction Company  
Face brick: Corning Donahue  
Cabinetwork: Ron's Cabinets  
Flooring systems/materials: MCI  
Window systems: Harmon Glass  
Concrete work: W. Gohman Construction Company  
Millwork: Ron's Cabinets  
Photographer: Dean Nagel Studios

### Midwest Wireless Communications Headquarters

Location: Mankato, MN  
Client: Midwest Wireless L.L.C.  
Architect: Paulsen Architects  
Principal-in-charge: Bryan Paulsen, AIA  
Project architect: Michael Krager, AIA  
Project lead designers: Bryan Paulsen, AIA, Michael Krager, AIA  
Project administrator: Greg Borchert, CSI  
Project team: Bryan Paulsen, AIA, Michael Krager, AIA, Greg Borchert, CSI, Meray Massad-Rhame, Keith Haff, Lyn Diefenderfer  
Structural-engineering team: Larson Engineering  
Mechanical engineering & contractor: Schwickert's, Inc.  
Electrical design and contractor: Javen's Electric  
Civil-engineering team: Bolton & Menk, Inc.  
Lighting designer: Luma Sales  
Interior design: Paulsen Architects  
Interior designer: Meray Massad-Rhame  
General contractor: Met-Con Companies  
Site contractor: Southern Minnesota Construction  
Developer: Fisher Development  
Landscape architect: Sanders Wacker Bergly  
Architectural and structural precast concrete: Wells Concrete  
Cabinetwork: JL Rosewood Corporation  
Flooring systems/materials: terrazzo floor by Grazzini Brothers; carpet by Collins & Aikman  
Window systems: Interclad/Viracon  
Architectural metal panels: Copper Sales  
Stainless-steel railings: P & P Artec  
Concrete work: Met-Con Companies  
Millwork: Met-Con Companies  
Skylight: Kallwall by W.L. Hall  
Photographer: Jerry Swanson Photography

### Great Plains Regional Office Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Location: Bismarck, ND  
Client: Ducks Unlimited, Inc.  
Architect: Foss Associates  
Principal-in-charge: Joel Davy, AIA  
Project manager: Joel Davy, AIA  
Project lead designer: Joel Davy, AIA  
Project team: Steve Skoblik, Rochelle Konzemius, Mike Weber, Rick Hamman  
Structural-engineering team: Doug Loos, Stuctural Engineer  
Mechanical-engineering team: Prairie Engineering, Randy Axvig  
Electrical-engineering team: Prairie Engineering, Greg Dockter  
Civil-engineering team: Ulteig Engineers, Ken Nysether  
Lighting designer: Prairie Engineering  
Interior design: Foss Associates  
Landscape architect: Hanson Design Associates  
Landscape project team: Jim Hanson  
Face brick: Rock face CMU, Strata Block & Masonry  
Stone: Architectural Cast Stone, Dakota Ready Mix  
Cabinetwork: Anderson Millwork & Doors  
Flooring Systems/materials: carpet by Dimension Summit & Bigelow Iverness; ceramic tile by Technostone Pastoelli & US Ceramic; tile vinyl composition by Tile-Armstrong  
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Principal-in-charge: Reed Becker, AIA  
Project manager: Reed Becker, AIA  
Project architect: Reed Becker, AIA  
Project lead designer: Reed Becker, AIA  
Project team: Deb Parrott, Dan Quiggle  
Structural engineering: Kent Rohr  
Mechanical engineering: Jack Christofferson  
Electrical engineering: Arnie Hieserich  
Civil engineering: Tim Schoonhoven  
Lighting designer: Reed Becker, AIA  
Interior design: Reed Becker, AIA  
Contractor: Wambeke Family Builders (Bernie and Darlene Wambeke)  
Landscape project team: Reed Becker, AIA, with Bob Brickweg and Holly Wallgren from Colorful Seasons Nursery  
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Sea Wing, Lake Pepin (1888-1905)

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Although it survived the tragedy, the *Sea Wing*—a 135-foot-long sternwheel rafter that plied the waters of Lake Pepin on the Mississippi River—will always be remembered as the ship in which nearly 100 people lost their lives during a summer storm. Built in 1888 in Diamond Bluff, Wisconsin, the *Sea Wing* spent its early years hauling lumber to ports on the Minnesota and Wisconsin shores of the lake.

In July 1890, however, the ship's owner and captain, David Niles Wethern, saw a new opportunity to make money with the *Sea Wing*. He advertised that on July 13 of that year he would transform the ship into a pleasure craft, picking up passengers in Diamond Bluff, Trenton and Red Wing for a Sunday cruise down to Camp Lakeview, a pretty Minnesota National Guard facility. Wethern hired a band and sold tickets for 50 cents.

That day the *Sea Wing* boarded 11 passengers in Diamond Bluff, 22 in Trenton and 165 at Red Wing. Late in the morning the boat steamed up to the landing in Lake City, from which passengers walked two miles to Camp Lakeview. For the next seven hours they enjoyed a concert, a dress parade by the Minnesota guardsmen and ice cream.

Unknown to Wethern and his passengers, a dangerous low-pressure system covered much of the Upper Midwest. While the *Sea Wing* excursionists partied, the weather grew perilous at Lake Gervais, 70 miles north, where a tornado crushed

houses, uprooted trees and killed five people. The storm moved south, dropping hail, flattening buildings and producing gale-force winds.

When Wethern readied the *Sea Wing* to depart with its passengers from Lake City, the skies to the north appeared black and stormy. The captain apparently believed the weather not too threatening and piloted his ship onto Lake Pepin. Just after 8:00 p.m., a squall brought heavy rain and powerful winds. Many passengers sought shelter in the ship's cabins.

Suddenly a funnel cloud crossed the *Sea Wing's* path. The 109-ton steamer staggered, tilted at a 45-degree angle and capsized. Nearly everyone in the cabins drowned. Wethern, along with about 25 others, clambered on top of the overturned hull as egg-size hail began to fall. A barge attached to the ship provided refuge for additional survivors.

Dazed passengers who waded ashore near Lake City raised the alarm. Rescue boats picked up many people, living and dead, from the lake. It took four days for all of the missing passengers to be accounted for. The final death toll stood at 98.

Federal investigators faulted Wethern for taking the *Sea Wing* onto Lake Pepin under ominous skies and stripped him of his pilot's license. He returned to piloting in 1893, rebuilt the waterlogged and splintered ship and ran it for another dozen years. The *Sea Wing* ended its melancholy history in a scrap yard. **Jack El-Hai**