

# C O L U M N S

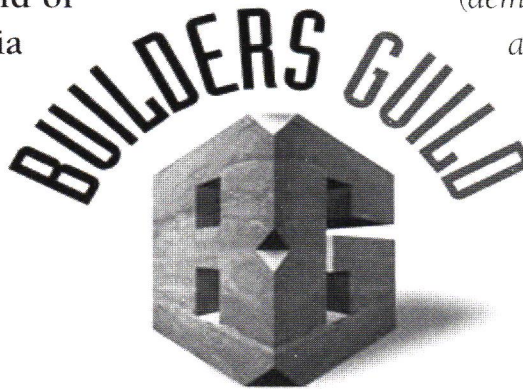


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# FAQ's

By Tracy Certo



*COLUMNS has the potential to make money for AIA Pittsburgh, and at times it has. That said, COLUMNS needs advertisers. If you're in the position to advertise, or know someone who is, contact us!*

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**On the cover:** The Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan

### Maybe this should be titled

Infrequently Asked Questions or We Know it's On Your Mind. Most of you, unfailingly polite, never bring these things up but some of you, whose bluntness can be quite helpful, have questions we assume others are also thinking. So here we go, our attempt to answer. Please if you have more questions, just ask.

### How do I get a story idea into COLUMNS?

Suggest one. In our monthly meeting we discuss story ideas and we welcome your ideas. We try to be careful to choose timely topics that serve a broad audience or a subject with a fresh angle. But hey, it never hurts to ask. Many a suggestion has turned into a full feature article.

### Why can't I get more than a few lines in breaking ground?

Since Maya Haptas has taken over Breaking Ground, my disgruntled call rate has dropped precipitously for which I'm grateful. She now handles them and most of you are pleased with the coverage you get. Others are not. What can I say. Breaking Ground is meant for news briefs, just the facts, without embellishments.

We're very space-dependent, meaning when we're inundated with news releases you get just the basic facts. Obviously we devote more space to AIA member architects. Sometimes the background information is intriguing so we'll include the fact that someone graduated from a university in South America, for instance. We love to feature new names and faces so don't hesitate to send info.

### What is the deadline for submission?

For Breaking Ground items, five or six weeks prior to publication. So an item appearing this month, October, would have been submitted by the third week of August. Assigned articles are given deadlines.

### How do you decide what to write about in your columns?

Good question. Sometimes there's a story behind the story and that's my first preference. When that's not the case, I look for another interesting or timely topic. In this column I almost wrote about my friend's knockout beach house in Cabo, Mexico. One of the most beautiful houses I've ever

seen, it was designed by an architect who died during the construction phase. It's a touching story about an architect who was pretty special and the house now bears a plaque on the front wall with a dedication to the architect. Thought you'd like that. Maybe another time.

### When are you going to change your photo?

It's on my list. I'd prefer a change of format where my photo isn't even necessary. Which leads to...

### Didn't you once write about a new design for COLUMNS?

Yes, and we haven't given up yet. We're all for it, it's just a matter of time and money and priorities.

### Does COLUMNS make money?

It certainly has the potential and at times it does. Prior to 9/11 we maxed out on ad pages which was a bit of a thrill. But we don't have an ad rep for *Columns* and the AIA staff is busy with a lot of other things so with advertising its catch as catch can, usually by phone at the end of the month. That said, *Columns* needs support from ads. If you're in the position to advertise or know someone who is, we would greatly appreciate your help.

### How are things at COLUMNS? (the most frequently asked question)

You might be surprised to know that *Columns* has been referenced in presentations, reports and other publications as far off as New Zealand. The article Health by Design was picked up by AIA National and it has been circulating freely on the Web ever since. And soon, I am happy to report, *Columns* will be on the AIA Pittsburgh web site.

### What would you like for COLUMNS? (the question I would most like to have asked)

A professional proofreader. A new design. An ad rep. And as always, your suggestions and contributions. I could ask for many things but I couldn't ask for a better reading audience and I take the chance here to thank you.

Contact me at: [tcerto@adelphia.net](mailto:tcerto@adelphia.net)

AIA Pittsburgh serves 12 Western Pennsylvania counties as the local component of the American Institute of Architects and AIA Pennsylvania. The objective of AIA Pittsburgh is to improve, for society, the quality of the built environment by further raising the standards of architectural education, training and practice; fostering design excellence; and promoting the value of architectural services to the public. AIA membership is open to all registered architects, architectural interns, and a limited number of professionals in supporting fields.

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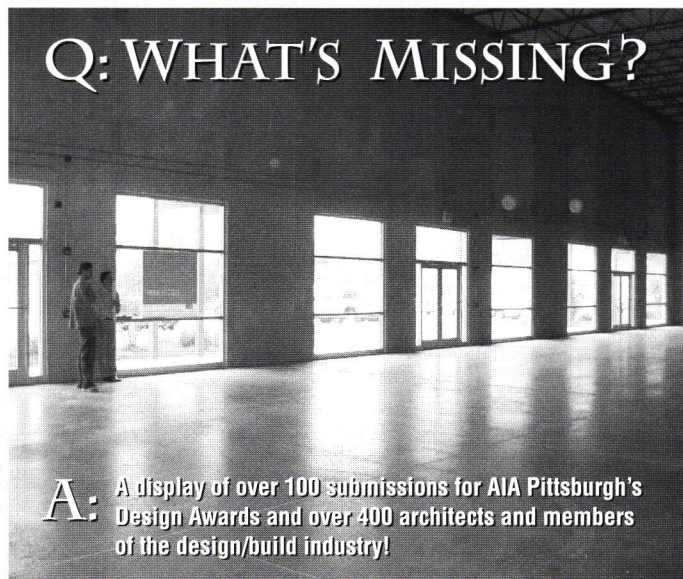
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Opinions expressed by editors and contributors are not necessarily those of AIA Pittsburgh. The Chapter has made every reasonable effort to provide accurate and authoritative information, but assumes no liability for the contents.

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Online: [www.aiapgh.org](http://www.aiapgh.org)  
email: [info@aiapgh.org](mailto:info@aiapgh.org)



## Q: WHAT'S MISSING?

A: A display of over 100 submissions for AIA Pittsburgh's Design Awards and over 400 architects and members of the design/build industry!

**Come to the Design  
Pittsburgh Gala on  
Thursday, October 6th  
to see how a group of  
architects transform  
this unfinished space  
into a modern  
exhibition site.**

**Join us at the 51st  
Street Business Center,  
in the 16:62 Design  
Zone.**

## The Chance To Mix and Motor

The Master Builders' Association - Young Constructors invited the AIA Pittsburgh Young Architects Forum and the Young Real Estate Professionals to join them for a joint networking social on July 28<sup>th</sup> at the Claddagh Irish Pub in the Southside Works. It was not all fun and games although there was plenty of that, but also the chance to try out some serious construction equipment (pictured below). One Call Rentals provided the thrills as attendees operated Caterpillar equipment while participating in games and competition. All that and the chance to meet peers in architecture, construction and real estate.



### McGraw-Hill Construction Reports

McGraw-Hill Construction reported on June contracts for future construction in the metropolitan statistical area of Pittsburgh, consisting of Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Washington, and Westmoreland counties in Pennsylvania. The latest month's construction activity followed this pattern:

	2005	2004	% Change
Nonresidential	\$87,290,000	\$104,405,000	-16
Residential	\$119,734,000	\$96,776,000	24
TOTAL BUILDING	\$207,024,000	\$201,181,000	3

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

	2005	2004	% Change
Nonresidential	\$492,094,000	\$923,173,000	-47
Residential	\$616,046,000	\$703,526,000	-12
TOTAL BUILDING	\$1,108,140,000	\$1,626,699,000	-32

— Nonresidential buildings include commercial, manufacturing, educational, religious, administrative, recreational, hotel, dormitory and other buildings.

— Residential buildings include one and two family houses and apartments.

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Columns is printed on recycled paper.

# HOT TICKET

*Frank Lloyd Wright: Renewing the Legacy* brings together two iconic buildings by Frank Lloyd Wright with new, associated projects by Toshiko Mori and Zaha Hadid, two women recognized as visionaries of contemporary architecture. The exhibition in Carnegie Museum of Art's Heinz Architectural Center runs from October 1 to January 15, 2006.

The Frank Lloyd Wright buildings are the Darwin D. Martin house (1903-1905) in Buffalo, New York, and the H.C. Price Company Office Tower and Apartments (1952-1956) in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. One of the best examples of his Prairie House period, the Martin House is an early and major domestic design which includes gardens and satellite buildings. The Price Tower, one of Wright's last realized works, is a rare example of an organic high-rise.

Both buildings are about to gain new and highly ambitious neighbors. As the result of an invited competition between five contemporary practices, the Japanese-born, New York-based architect Toshiko Mori is to construct a glass-walled Visitors' Pavilion to one side of the Martin House garden. At the same time, the Iraqi-born, London-based Zaha Hadid

will design an Arts Center situated like an inhabited earthwork with a glazed roof beside the Price Tower.

*Renewing the Legacy* presents and evokes both Wright projects with original drawings, furniture, film, photographs, and in the case of the Martin House, original art glass including the famed Tree of Life window. Several detailed models of Mori's winning design are shown alongside competing proposals by Brian Healy Architects, Architecture Research Office, Schwartz/Silver Architects, and Office dA. Hadid's presentation includes computer drawings with a characteristic sense of dynamic ground surface and an animated fly-through of the interior.

"Both architects have created buildings that are tailored to their site, that are inspired by the original Wright structure," says Carnegie Museum of Art Curator of Architecture Raymond Ryan, who is organizing the exhibition. "Toshiko Mori is making a new building, a rectilinear box based on the dimensions of the Martin House. She is manipulating geometry, as is Zaha Hadid, who has created a horizontal building in contrast to the verticality of Wright's Price Tower."

Mori's Visitors' Center inverts Wright's original design by turning its pitched roof upside down to act as a funnel for daylight. As opposed to the opaque brick of the Martin House, the glass walls of Mori's design allow for a sweeping view of the complex and grounds. The Center will provide historical information about the site, an underground gallery, and such amenities as a café, bookstore, and restrooms.

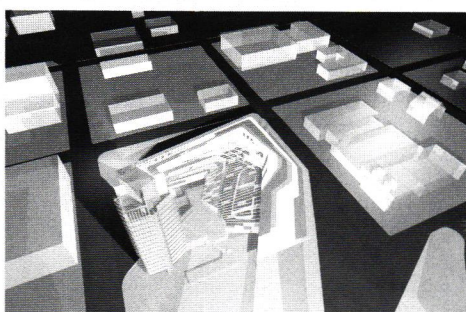
Hadid's aspiration is that her Arts Center will "flirt" with Wright's Tower. Converse to the Tower's verticality, her design takes the form of a long, horizontal promenade beneath a low roof of transparent, translucent, and colored panels through which visitors can view the tower above them.

After decades of only sporadic maintenance, the Martin House is currently subject to a meticulous restoration. In Bartlesville, much of the tower has recently been adapted to a boutique hotel by New York architect Wendy Evans Joseph, with furniture and fabrics inspired by natural materials and organic imagery.

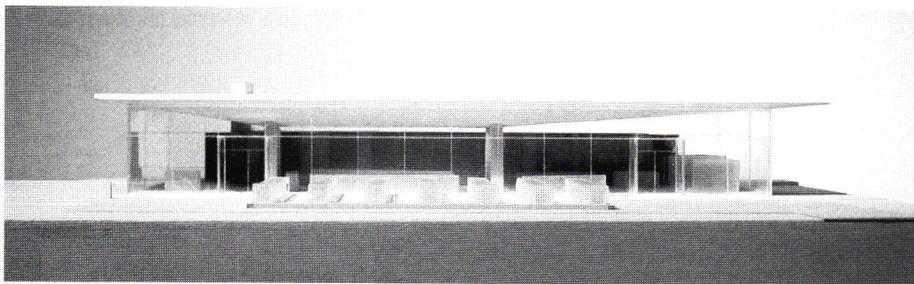
For more information, log onto <http://cma.org>.



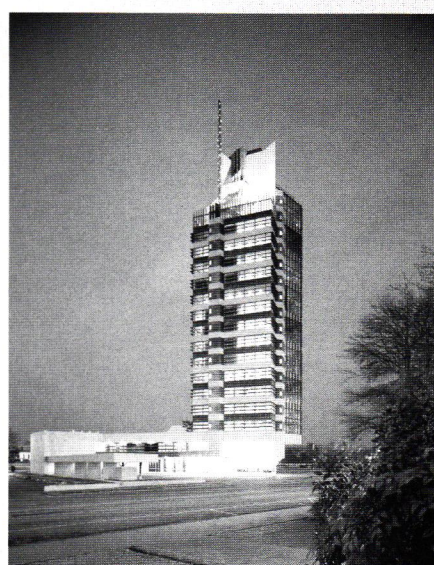
**The Darwin D. Martin House, Buffalo, NY**



**Zaha Hadid's Arts Center for the Price Tower**



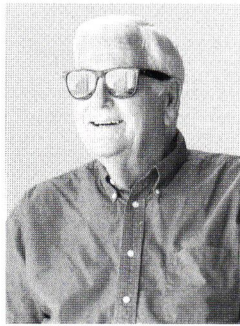
**Toshiko Mori's glass-walled Visitors' Pavillion at the Martin House**



**H.C. Price Company and Office Tower and Apartments, Bartlesville, OK**

# WHY DO I PAINT?

By David Lewis, FAIA. Carnegie Mellon University



Why do I paint?

Why do I breathe? Do you think about breathing when you breathe?

Faced with a white sheet of paper, or a white canvas, I am paralyzed. Until I blemish it. Any kind of blemish. I cut it, or mark it. Only then can a dialogue begin.

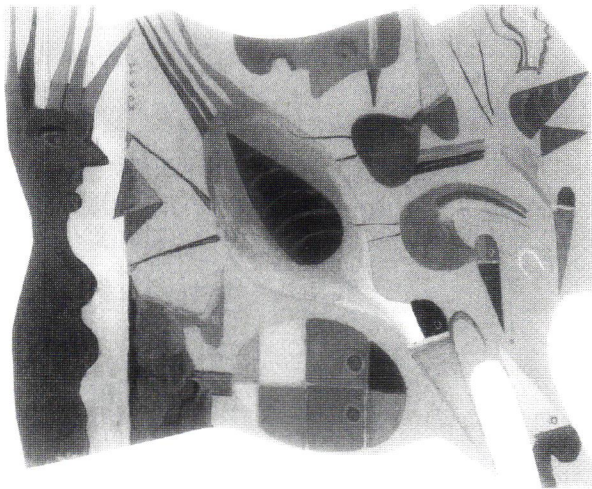
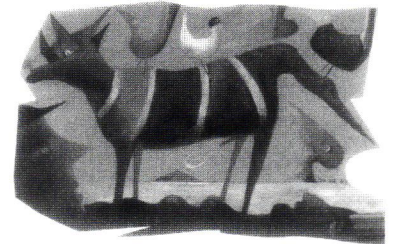
Painting is a dialogue. It is a quest for the precision of language.

So is architecture and urban design.

As architects we draw buildings that don't exist. But there's no such thing as a building nowhere, a building without a context.

In urban design, the very first thing is context.

Urban designers, like doctors, aren't called in unless the context has problems. Contexts are always alive and ongoing: from past into future. Can the wheel be seized and the neighborhood steered towards new futures that are already implicit in its context?



The same thing with a painting. You can't begin without that first mark, that blemish.

Urban designers become components of the context the moment the dialogue begins. The same thing with a painting. Our work embodies us.

I grew up in South Africa. The Cape of Good Hope, at the continent's most southern tip, is a mountain and a spit of land surrounded on three sides by the sea. Animals, birds, fishes, snakes, insects, lizards were my friends. So were the trees, the winds, the stars.

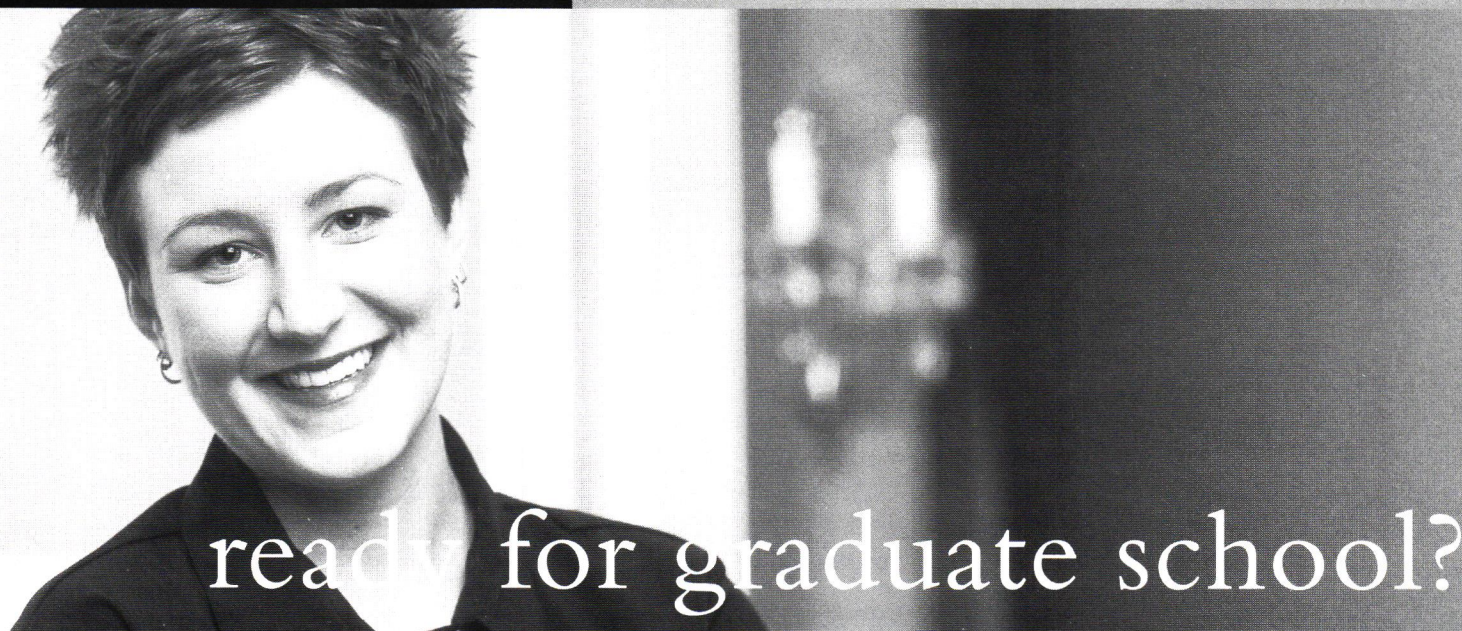
The Bushmen, like the ancient painters of Lascaux, used the rock-faces of cave walls to express their oneness with a world of animals, reptiles, water, the hunt and the dance.

At night my grandmother would retell the African folk tales of her childhood and before I went to sleep I could hear on the evening breeze the call of the faithful to prayer from a distant muezzin.

Like the artists of Africa I use materials at hand. A piece of brown supermarket bag, and simple colors. An odd shape. A blob in an odd shape. A bird, or a cow emerges. What is it? An enigma. Let the dialogue begin.

Is it so different from urban design?

David Lewis



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# In Memoriam:

## *Ralph Burt, AIA August 27, 2005*

When Ralph Burt, AIA, was in the Air Force flying B24 bombers over Austria and Germany, his future business partner, Alva Hill, AIA a fighter pilot based in England, was flying the escort missions that accompanied the bombers. Although they had seen each other at Williams Air Base in Arizona at one point, they never met until their first night class as architecture students on the GI bill at Carnegie Institute of Technology. Hill recalls saying to him that evening, "Where have I seen you before?" That was the start of their remarkable friendship, which included a partnership in an architecture firm and continued for the next 58 years. Mr. Burt died August 27th at the age of 82 after suffering a stroke ten months earlier.

As freshmen, Burt and Hill were taught by Kindred McCleary, a muralist who "marked our lives dramatically in approach to design," said Hill who noted that McCleary died days after the school year ended. After graduating in 1952, the two men joined Howard and Murphy, an architectural firm in Butler that soon became Howard, Burt and Hill and then eventually Burt, Hill Associates. "We started out with four in Butler and then grew to 400 people all over the place," chuckled Hill. As his partner, Hill was short to Burt's tall and frequently referred to himself as Burt's wingman.

In the beginning the two architects did a lot of school designs, including the Ellis School, although Ralph "was the promoter, the marketing type who designed buildings but was more interested in building the firm," said Hill. Under Burt, the firm expanded to Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. as well as offices in Cleveland and Boston. In addition, 70 employees are in the Dubai office working on major projects including five hotels, 5,000 housing units, three hospitals and a 21 car dealership auto mall.

In his long and remarkable career, Ralph worked on many projects including local ones such as Chatham Center, the Liberty Center, and the Union Trust Building restoration. As a designer, "Ralph was a very visionary person, and very creative in the way he looked at things," says partner John Kosar, AIA of Burt, Hill. He cited Burt's outstanding

marketing know-how as well as his people skills. "He was just a wonderful partner, the best there is," said Kosar. "He was also a great mentor to me and the other partners."

As a leader, Burt was enthusiastic, exuberant, highly compassionate and loved by all, said Hill who said they never had a cross word between them. "He was responsible for a lot of innovative things the firm did, including marketing," said his partner. As an example, Burt decided from the start that they should take a trip to another city every year to see what other notable architects were doing. Their first trip was to Columbus, Indiana, famous for its many foundation-funded architectural designs. Over the years they visited numerous cities including Chicago, Cleveland, Boston and Toronto.

Burt was known for his great ideas and for his "endearing idiosyncrasies" as well, said his partner with a laugh as he recalled Burt's "name association problem." If he saw you coming down the hall and said, "Hi there, young fella or young lady," you knew he couldn't recall your name, Hill

said. Once in a meeting he referred to a client as Dumont when his name was Dunlap and Hill jotted a quick note to correct him. "It's Dunlap, Ralph, not Dumont!"

While Burt was the "outgoing, eager beaver" Hill was more reserved. "We were great friends," said Hill. "He was the most unforgettable person I ever met and it was my privilege to have him in my life."

Mr. Burt is survived by his wife Jean Rice, who was his high school girlfriend at Washington High School in Washington, PA, his daughter Suzanne Sardi of North Oaks, MN and the late Ralph H. Burt III and Sandra Burt Carrera; he was grandfather of Chad, Andra, Ralph Hill, IV, Mary Bridget and Alexandra and brother of Elinor Kowell and the late Harold Burt and Florence Kimberland.

The family suggests donations, if desired, to the American Stroke Association, P.O. Box 8835, Camp Hill, PA 17001 or the charity of your choice.





# Design Pittsburgh

IN THE DESIGN ZONE ▶▶▶▶

- ▶ AIA Pittsburgh invites you to see all of the submissions in our **Design Awards Exhibit**.
- ▶ This year **Design Pittsburgh** will take place in Lawrenceville's 16:62 Design Zone, Pittsburgh's arts and design district.
- ▶ Vote on your favorite entry in the Columbia Gas People's Choice Award!
- ▶ Vote on your favorite local nomination for the 16:62 Design Zone Neighborhood Knockout Award!

## **Design Pittsburgh Design Awards Exhibit**

***Free and open to the public!***

**Special exhibit hours:** open all day during the Lawrenceville House Tour, 12:00 - 5:00 p.m.

**Normal exhibit hours:** Saturdays in October from 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. or by appointment

**Location:** 51st Street Business Center, 125 51st Street (pictured left)

## **And join us to hear the announcement of the winners!**

### **AIA Pittsburgh Design Awards Ceremony**

Tuesday, October 25, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

51st Street Business Center

125 51st Street

Admission: \$15 per person

For more information on Design Pittsburgh or to register for an event call

412-471-9548 or visit:

[www.aiapgh.org/design\\_pgh\\_events.html](http://www.aiapgh.org/design_pgh_events.html)



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**“We want to  
RAISE THE LEVEL  
of how people think  
about PLANNING  
and projects.”**

**— Lynn Heckman**



**It's the first ever comprehensive plan for Allegheny County, a business plan for the future and a necessity for future state funding. So what is it? And how will it affect architects and urban planners?**

**By Tracy Certo**



## ALLEGHENY PLACES

THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



THE PLAN PLAN NEWS PLANNING 101 COUNTY LINKS FAVORITE PLACES PUBLIC INPUT CONTACT FUTURE FACES

### Welcome

#### Chief Executive Dan Onorato Welcomes You!

Welcome to Allegheny Places, the official website for the Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan. The Plan will establish an overall vision for our future and a roadmap for reaching it. It will set policies, guidelines, and standards for land development, conservation, and economic initiatives. We hope that you will find this website informative and fun, and will take the opportunity to [share with us your thoughts about](#)



### Welcome!

Allegheny Places is the name of the County's comprehensive plan. Allegheny County has many wonderful qualities that we have come to appreciate, which will be reinforced by the Plan. It will help us maintain and enhance our sense of place and provide for the creation of more special places. It will establish a framework of lasting value for communities and allow us to integrate new development into established communities while maintaining their character.

### What's Happening

The public kick-off of Allegheny Places, the Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan, was announced by Dan Onorato at a morning event on March 30, 2005 at the Regional Enterprise



What is your  
favorite  
place?

The Favorite  
Place of the  
week is...

[find out!](#)

Take the  
Public Input  
Survey!

## Planning the Plan

How do you plan a comprehensive county plan?

The short answer is, very thoroughly. Since the Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan includes virtually every component of future physical development, from inventories of current land use to economic projections in the future, suffice it to say planning for it is quite comprehensive. There's historical data, for example, such as tracking population growth and decline in different areas of the county. Without knowing where we've been, goes the logic, we can't know where we have arrived or ever have a clear idea where we are headed. But the planning goes beyond the volumes of data that must be meticulously gathered: the research and background studies, the e-Library archive on the Web and the Geographic Information Systems. At this early stage of the planning, what is more vital to the entire process than anything is public input. Without it, there is no plan. And a plan as ambitious as this one, which will take up to 18 months to flesh out, means much is at stake. Dan Onorato, Allegheny County Chief Executive put it this way, "We need business, we need community organizations, residents—everybody has to be involved."

"If we get this done right," says the county's Assistant Director of Planning Lynn Heckman, whose intention is to do just that, "it will help to do everything right." And everyone in the county will benefit, from Joe Resident to the numerous municipalities.

Preparation for the county's comprehensive plan, which has been dubbed the friendlier title of Allegheny Places,

has been underway the past year through the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development, headed by Dennis Davin. This past March, County Executive Dan Onorato officially launched Allegheny Places at a public reception, urging all Allegheny County residents to

log onto the new Web site at [www.alleghenyplaces.com](http://www.alleghenyplaces.com)

To lure visitors to the site, residents are being asked to vote online for their favorite place in Allegheny County. The results so far? PNC Park is number one followed by South Park and North Park.

What is your  
favorite  
place?

### What is your favorite place?

Tell us your favorite place and join our mailing list!

Favorite Place in Allegheny County

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Email

Have you taken the

survey yet? Go to

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

and take the survey and

make your voice heard.

Once residents get online, they are encouraged to participate in the public input survey which measures everything from satisfaction with the air and water quality and tax rates to commute time and priorities on where to live. Thus far 7,000 mostly upscale residents have chimed in. The goal is to reach out to a "total and diverse" 700,000.

While the Web site is one convenient way to solicit input, another is extensive outreach. In 2005, Heckman and Marilyn Gelzhiser, manager of planning for the Department of Economic Development, will make approximately 100 presentations targeted to various groups in the county as part of their extensive activities. At Build Pittsburgh this past March, the team presented the early makings of the Plan to a filled room of architects, urban planners and others. In an innovative twist, they conducted a Samoan Circle, a leaderless meeting to stimulate active participation.

Although everyone is encouraged to participate in the planning, it seems architects are being courted heavily. AIA Pittsburgh Chapter President Steve Quick, AIA who is already involved, urges his cohorts to jump in at this early planning level when the most influence can be formed. What to do? Serve on a committee to start. (To read how a Blair County architect got involved in his county plan, see page 18.)

Once the Plan is up and running, it will be a boon to architects, promises Heckman who cites the wealth of data



# ALLEGHENYPLACES

THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



THE PLAN
PLAN NEWS
PLANNING 101
COUNTY LINKS
FAVORITE PLACES
PUBLIC INPUT
CONTACT
FUTURE FACES

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- [The Planning Team](#)
- [Steering Committee](#)
- [Resource Panels](#)
- [Additional Info](#)
- [Municipal Parks Survey](#)

### Plan Goals and Objectives

There are a number of goals and objectives to be accomplished through the planning process for the Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan, including:

- Setting the vision and direction for the coming decades
- Celebrating and promoting assets
- Fostering orderly and fiscally responsible development
- Maximizing economic opportunity
- Respecting the environment
- Conserving and managing natural, cultural, and recreational resources
- Facilitating government cooperation and coordination

### Featured Favorite Place



**PNC Park**

The new home of the Pittsburgh Pirates, PNC Park is a magnificent classic-style ballpark that salutes the spirit of early ballpark originals such as Forbes Field, Wrigley Field and Fenway Park.

### We Need Your Input

**Public views, attitudes, and opinions are essential to the planning process**

We are currently in the data gathering phase of the Plan and we invite you to [take the public input survey](#) to provide us

### Around the County



## Comprehensive Plan Fast Facts:

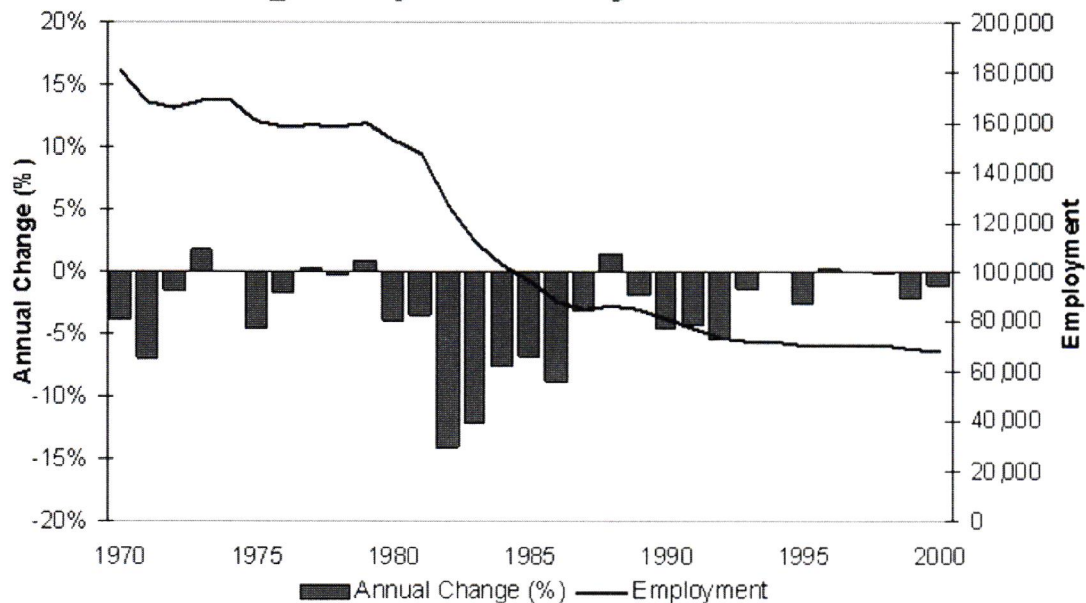
**Budget:**  
\$3 million  
(\$2.7 million committed)

**Lead Consultant:**  
**McCormick Taylor**

**Team:**  
**Michael Baker, Jr.—GIS**  
**Olszak Management Consulting (WBE)—**  
**Public Participation**  
**URS Corporation—Transportation**  
(and others)

**Timetable:**  
**Preliminary Draft Plan—Jan. - July 2006**  
**Final Draft Plan—August 2006**  
**Final Plan—February 2007**

## Manufacturing Employment Change Allegheny County 1970-2000



Stabilization by mid 1990's. Continuing but slow decline.

that will be onsite, including the GIS. "It will be a good tool for everybody," she says. With the ability to quickly retrieve valuable information, architects can save time and money better spent on design pursuits. To those skeptics who suspect the Plan might be yet another time-sucking bureaucratic hoop, she assures that the Plan will not only be educational but also cooperative and completely non-threatening.

The down side? None that she can see. It's all good.

As it stands now, no one has the framework to even look at a plan, says Gelzhiser. There is no good base of information. Formulating Allegheny Places will change that, transforming the region from its current reactive mode to a more proactive role. Once all the information and material is gathered—admittedly no small feat—the initial Plan will be drafted, approved by the County Council and Onorato and refined as a final but continuously refined Plan.

What then? Essentially, Allegheny Places will provide a necessary vision and direction for the future. And it will include implementation strategies for a proactive approach to such things as conservation, land development and

economic initiatives. And yes, a sustainable agenda is part of the Plan. In fact, points out Heckman, Allegheny County's plan will be the first in the state to have an equity and diversity component.

Aside from the fact that a comprehensive plan is now mandated by law as a requisite to state funding, the Plan will act as a guiding force but not law. So if a developer's plan is to encroach the trail system now in place, he or she will be told that the trails need to be protected, an idea that, ideally, will be reinforced by the public input into the Plan.

For governing forces such as municipalities, benefits include being able to see what other municipalities are doing. And officials, along with everyone else, will be able to track information unavailable to them right now—such as the amount of activity and maintenance on any given road in the county, including crash data.

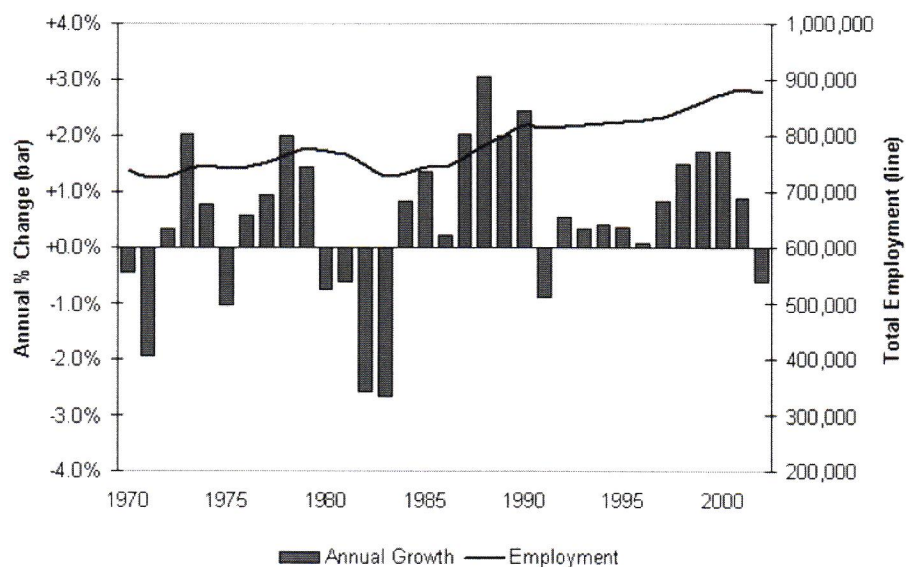
What happens to those development projects currently underway? Citing the projects at Pittsburgh International Airport as an example, Onorato emphasized that Allegheny Places would complement them.

In this initial planning phase, many questions are being posed. A good part of the Plan is educating the public about it and making the information easily available, says Gelzhiser. As the team works to identify new economic, residential and cultural opportunities, they will be forming partnerships with residents, communities and businesses which should prove beneficial to all involved. The Plan will not be forced on local officials, Onorato said emphatically at the March reception. "If you see something you don't like speak up and tell us," he told the crowd.

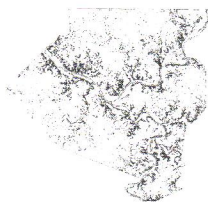
Cooperation and participation is part of the theme sounded by all involved. If, as Heckman suggests, they get this done right, then everyone wins. It will be, as County Council, an active partner in the planning process predicts, an excellent tool for decision-making. To make it work, this stage underway now is critical. "Everybody has to be involved," says Davin.

The planning team is confident the effort will be worth it, resulting in a strategic use of public resources that ultimately optimizes the quality of life and serves as a tool to more effectively market Allegheny County. Sounds like a plan.

## Allegheny County Employment Levels



Employment level and labor force higher than during steel era.



### Planning Partners (and funders)

Allegheny County

Allegheny County Industrial Development Authority

Southwestern PA Commission

US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

Federal Highway Administration

PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development

PA Dept. Of Environmental Protection

PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources

PA Dept. of Transportation

## What the Plan Includes

**When completed the Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan will include—well, just about everything including an incomparable source of information that will be continuously updated. Take a look:**

- Demographics and Economic Trends and Projections
  - Water Supply
  - Economic Development
- Inventories of Existing Land Use and Physical Conditions
- Future Land Use Plan
- Goals, Policies and Strategies
- Analysis and Plan for the following individual elements:
  - Land Use
  - Housing
  - Transportation
  - Community Facilities
  - Community Utilities
  - Natural Resources
  - Historic / Cultural Resources
  - Mineral Resources
  - Agricultural Land
- Implementation Plan
- Maximizing economic opportunity
- Respecting the environment
- Conserving and managing natural, cultural, and recreational resources
- Facilitating government cooperation and coordination

## Q & A with Lynn Heckman and Marilyn Gelzhiser

### ***Is the plan going to influence communities?***

The Plan will set forth a vision for the entire County and its communities. As we prepare the Plan, local communities will play a part in the process and will have the opportunity to participate in determining the vision for the county as an extension of the vision of their own local community. As the Plan is implemented, communities will be able to improve their local quality of life.

Although municipalities will not adopt Allegheny Places, having a County Comprehensive Plan can facilitate obtaining federal, state, and county grants and permits for municipalities. In addition, Allegheny Places will provide models and tools, advance Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and existing data, and assist with planning activities such as the preparation of consistency reviews.

### ***Are we going to be able to work collaboratively?***

Dan Onorato, the highest elected official in the County, is spearheading this effort. In collaboration with County Council, Dan is committed to making Allegheny Places a plan that optimizes the collective good the plan can bring to the entire county. To that end, Dan regularly meets with

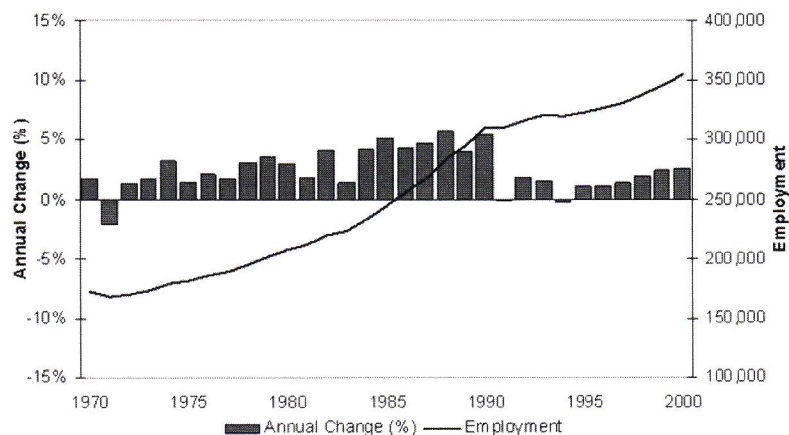
and educates the public and local municipalities about the plan and our need for a shared vision for the future of the County.

Having County residents, business owners, elected officials, non-profits, and other stakeholders participate in the development of the Plan will allow a vision to emerge that reflects the diverse views and perspectives of the cities, boroughs, and townships that make up the County. As the Plan develops, an implementation strategy will be formed to bring the Plan's vision to reality. This implementation will be based on the participation, cooperation and coordination of planning agencies such as the State, the region, the County and the many local governments. The Plan will provide a framework for the private and civic sectors so that their projects can be carried out in ways that support and advance our collective vision.

### ***How will it affect architects?***

As designers of the built environment, architects have a critical role to play in advancing the Plan's vision of the future to reality. The plans and designs of architects will translate the often broad concepts of the Plan to bricks

### Service Sector Employment Change Allegheny County 1970-2000



and mortar. Therefore, it is essential that architects understand the Plan recommendations and work to support them through project-specific decisions.

***When the rubber hits the road, will it really make a difference or is this just an exercise?***

Ultimately, Allegheny Places will serve as a tool for elected officials to guide our future growth and development so that we can better meet the needs of the citizens. We are developing the plan with input from these citizens, from planning experts, community leaders and technical experts. After it is written, Allegheny Places will be approved by the County Chief Executive and then submitted to County Council for adoption. Once adopted, Allegheny Places will establish and communicate an overall vision, set priorities and provide implementation strategies to achieve goals and objectives. The Plan will address development, conservation and economic initiatives from a County perspective. All of this will have been determined from the framework of information provided by the citizens, stakeholders and experts. We've always referred to the Plan as a "living plan" because we intend it to be continually updated and refined so that it remains a relevant tool for optimizing planning throughout the County.

***How much meaning does it have because the power of planning still resides in communities so how will you get municipal buy-in?***

The County's goal is for Allegheny Places to be generally consistent with local municipal plans, and we will work diligently to that end. Further, the Plan will provide local municipalities with information and studies that will avoid duplication, facilitate implementation and save local governments money.

In the last few years, state government has been moving toward empowering counties to be a participant in their grant and approval processes. Many state agencies require county involvement—from simple notification or support letters to full reviews of projects for consistency with the county comprehensive plan—before the agency will approve a grant or permit. The consistency review process is being formalized and standardized at the state level, and, in the future, will be a typical component in state funding or permitting processes. Allegheny County intends to also

follow this procedure in its funding and permitting processes. Consequently, there will be significant incentive for plans and project to be consistent with Allegheny Places.

***Years ago there was an overlay district on the Parkway West to guide development in that corridor with rules and regulations including how to develop big box retail and landscape and signage. Yet when DeBartolo came in to start the development of Robinson Towne Center, all folded as they granted variances and went with the developer. Now look at the mess we made. What's the strategy for dealing with something like this?***

Allegheny Places' policies will be broad and performance-based, and typically not to the level of detail as the Parkway West Overlay District. Given that, assume that maintaining the visual integrity of a particular transportation corridor becomes an adopted policy of Allegheny Places. If a proposed project along that transportation corridor requires a county, state, and in some cases federal, grant or permit, or county participation in a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) plan or Local Economic Revitalization Tax Abatement (LERTA) program, the project would be reviewed by the County for consistency with our policy. Consistent projects would be eligible for the permit or funding.

***There's a lot of current work on economic development. What parts do you see as growth areas?***

Dan Onorato has already identified the public sector's targeted economic development growth areas: the area around the Mon Valley, the Pittsburgh International Airport, and brownfields throughout the County. Within that context and private market demand, Allegheny Places will help facilitate orderly development by coordinating land for economic development with new residential and cultural opportunities and supporting public facilities and infrastructure, as well as providing a basis for the protection of sensitive natural and cultural features.

***What will the comprehensive plan have to say about regional governance?***

The planning process for Allegheny Places will include an analysis of existing and projected data and trends, consideration of alternatives for the future, identification of a preferred alternative, and provision of a detailed imple-

mentation plan to achieve the preferred alternative. It is likely that governance will be addressed in the implementation plan.

***How do you see it building Pittsburgh's broader community?***

Our planning effort is committed to understanding and responding to issues of equity and diversity so as to reach the broader community. We have established an Equity and Diversity Resource Panel to help define the issues and create appropriate policies and strategies. Resource panel members monitor committee and consultant work on specific topics such as housing, transportation, etc., to educate and advocate regarding equity and diversity issues. Further, to help assure that equal opportunity for participation is available to all individuals and communities, participation rates are being tracked. A targeted marketing and public participation plan is being developed to reach under-represented populations and municipalities.

***How will the Pittsburgh region compete with other regions?***

Potential business operators and investors look to a Comprehensive Plan for a vision and program to achieve it. Having a new Plan demonstrates the County's commitment to orderly growth, economic expansion, community revitalization, and resource conservation. The Comprehensive Plan will broadcast the message that the County has a vision, has a plan, is poised to move forward - and invites investors and partners to participate.

***What are the priorities?***

With limited resources, it is essential to have clear priorities based on a collective vision of the future. Determining that vision and the implementation priorities are what the planning process is all about. Your participation in the process is vital to help assure the priorities are in place for a bright future for Allegheny County. Our focus at this stage in the planning process is to encourage that participation, gather the information, and then develop educated priorities.

## Part of the Plan

By Patrick Baechle, AIA

*Here's how one Blair County architect is impacting his county plan — for now and in the future. (Or how an AIA meeting can change your life!)*

A few years ago, the Middle Pennsylvania Chapter invited Marty Marasco, executive director of the Altoona Blair County Development Corporation, to speak at one of AIA Chapter meetings. The subject centered on insight into the development of the new I-99 expressway corridor. Ideally, one would think the goal would be to get a handle on what kind of business opportunities might become available for architects. The whole program

turned, however, when one member asked if there were any plans for enhancements to the natural and built environment along this corridor? The lively discussion that followed generated many ideas and made a positive impact on the speaker. I'm sure he and his team walked away with a different and more accurate impression of what architects are all about and what we stand for.

Following this meeting, I met with Lee Slusser of the Be Proud Task Force. One thing led to another and

as a result, I was asked to be a participant in the development of the Blair County Comprehensive Plan.

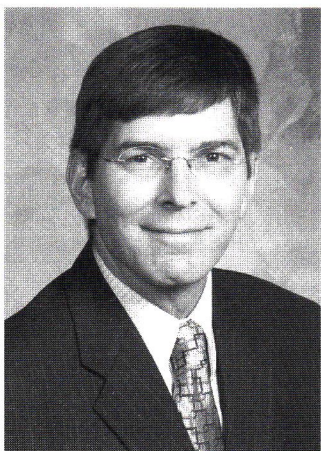
The Be Proud Task Force, sponsored by the Blair County Chamber of Commerce, The Allegheny Convention & Visitors Bureau and, wouldn't you know it, The Altoona Blair County Development Corporation, could be called a "think tank." It is a group of individuals who get together to come up with ideas to fulfill its mission statement to "unify the greater community to appreciate our areas assets, and to invest in its positive image." Since I've been involved most of the focus has been on corridor enhancement. We ask the main question, "What can be done to improve the image of our community, when entering, or passing through the area from various arteries?" Many great ideas are dis-

cussed and sometimes we spin off to other organizations to seek their input. One of the organizations we connected with was the Blair County Comprehensive Planning Committee. We presented some of our ideas in the form of a focus group and those ideas were recorded as part of the Plan by the group conducting the Plan, Pashek Associates from Pittsburgh.

At first I was skeptical if anything we suggested would become part of the Plan. Since I have been participating in the Blair County Greenways Plan, which is just one small portion of the full comprehensive Plan, I have started to learn and appreciate what the Plan entails and what impact it can have on the future of this region. I realize now that this is more or less the primer, the first broad brush strokes you put on the canvas before painting a beautiful picture. I am fascinated by the vibrant colorful maps that are displayed at the meetings, which show sweeping corridors of green space designated for bicycle paths, riverways, and trails. I am intrigued by the hatches, screens and overlays which show combinations of unique fauna, wetlands and wildlife pathways all put together to form a special and important place. Most of all, I love the presentations made by the experts, who have studied our area exhaustively and describe their findings meticulously.

Being somewhat of a detail oriented person at first I would question the feasibility or practicality of the suggested components of the Plan. I would say to myself "how can they do that, there are railroad tracks there?" or, "I think that is private property. That will never fly," or "The commissioners will never pay for that." Once I started to understand the purpose of the Plan I let go of those notions. The Comprehensive Plan is about where we want to be 20 to 30 years from now. I started thinking about all of the things that have happened in the past 10 years and then I said, "Yeah! This is possible!"

*Most of all, I love the presentations made by the experts, who have studied our area exhaustively and describe their findings meticulously.*



**Patrick Baechle, AIA**

They ask us what we consider to be important and we give our input. We share ideas and help set the direction for the future. In the short time that I have been involved I have learned more about our county than I could ever imagine and I now yearn to learn more.

As an architect I believe I offer spatial insight to the Plan. When you think about the exterior environment, it can be perceived as series of rooms, large and small, wide and narrow, tall and short, all connected together by corridors, openings and portals. We can think about how we move through the natural environment the same way we move through a building environment, spatially. When we design we create variety, contrast and mystery, among other qualities, between spaces. Likewise, we do the same when considering the design of pathways through the landscape. If you know your landscape well, you know where the surprises lie, as well as the best views and the most unique

spaces. These provide some of the foundations for guiding movement through the built and natural environment.

One of my pet requests for the Comprehensive Plan is the establishment of protected green space boundaries between communities. The one I have been trying to influence is a large open green space, which is currently occupied by the Veterans home between Altoona and Hollidaysburg. I have tried to drive home the point that this broad open space is very important to be preserved for the main purpose of a visual resting place when driving from the congested box store shopping area of Altoona into the quaint and quiet town of Hollidaysburg. There are many other good reasons for protecting this space, but this one is important to me from a spatial viewpoint. Without this protection, the unrestrained development of retail shopping will swallow up the borough of Hollidaysburg and we will lose the joy of realization that we are entering a different and unique place.

I believe in the Comprehensive Plan. I believe in it because I know that times will change and in the future different people will be making decisions about what is important in our region. I have faith in the fact that long after the veteran's home moves on or the local golf course closes down, the future leaders of our community will have read the Comprehensive Plan and will recognize the importance of maintaining green space between our communities. Hopefully they will consider implementing many of the other proposed improvements to our County, which overall may make life here a little more wonderful, more than any one person could imagine on his or her own.

*Patrick Baechle is principal of Baechle & Associates Architects in Hollidaysburg. He can be reached at: archbaech@atlanticbb.net*

# Can the Translucent Tower be Green?

*(aka: How to tame the beast once you let in the light)*

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## From the Firms

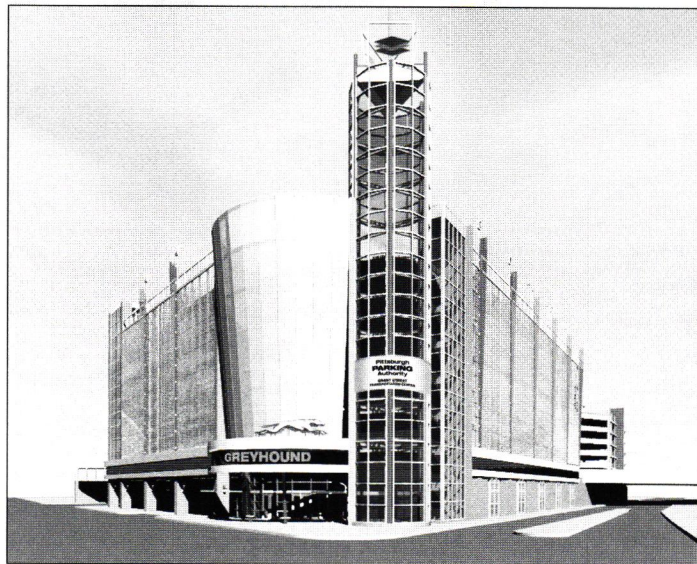
► The Elizabethtown School District has retained **McKissick Associates, PC** to conduct a feasibility study for the district's present level of school-age population density and to provide projections for future school district building needs and requirements.

**McKissick Associates** has also been selected by the Haverford School District for both design and feasibility study work, commencing with the new \$16.1 million Chestnutwold Elementary School. McKissick Associates has also undertaken the design of two smaller school renovation projects at the Chatham Park and Coopertown elementary schools in the district, and is currently working on the schematic design for a second new elementary school for the district, estimated at a cost of \$23 million.

The Pennsylvania Department of General Services recently awarded **Astorino** a \$10 million contract for the new construction of a Restricted Housing Unit and Medical Step-Down Unit for the Laurel Highlands State Correctional Institution in Somerset County, PA. Astorino has partnered with HDR Architecture, Inc. to provide physical and electronic security system design and D.W. LaSota Engineering, Inc. will provide civil engineering services on the project.

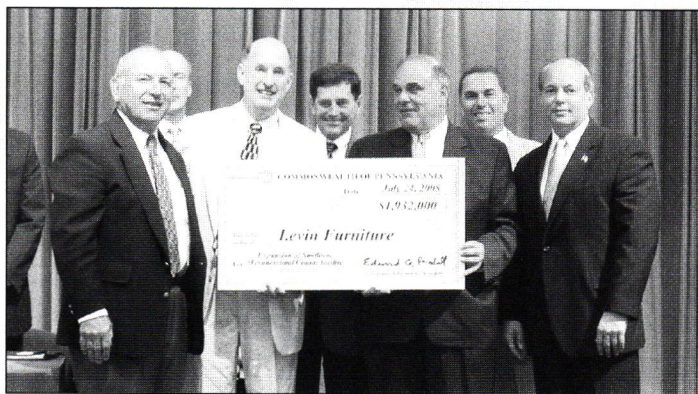
Massaro Corporation's Construction Management division was recently awarded two projects totaling \$70 million. The Grant Street Transportation Center (above right), by **IKM Incorporated**, will replace the existing Greyhound station, located in Pittsburgh's central business district. The Butler County Jail (below), by **L. Robert Kimball & Associates**, will be a multistory facility with the capacity to hold over 500 inmates.

Harchuck Construction, Inc. has been working on various local college campuses. At Duquesne University, HCI teamed up with **Alan Klauss, AIA** of **WTW Architects** to build a Starbucks Coffee Shop in the Student Union Hall. A renovation of Folgers Hall at Indiana University of PA will add additional restaurants. Architect is **Arthur Ruprecht, AIA** of **Ruprecht Schroeder Hoffman Architects**. HCI is also working with Pyramid Engineering at the University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown and with **Chambers Design Architects** at the University of Pittsburgh, Greensburg.

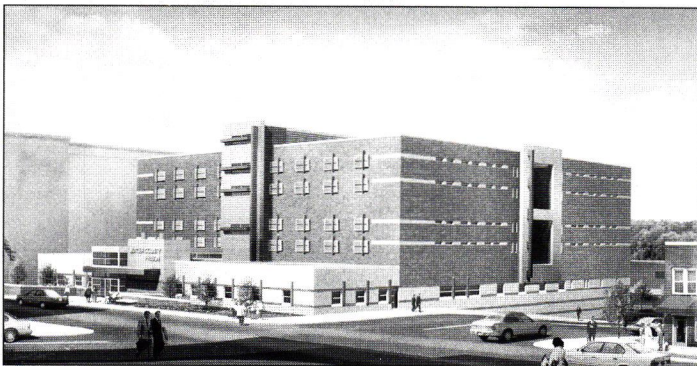


**Grant Street Transportation Center**

General Industries is constructing a new 110,630 sf distribution center addition for Levin Furniture at their headquarters in Smithton, PA. This project was recently made available when Gov. Rendell presented Levin Furniture with almost \$2 million in state funding (pictured below).



General Industries recently celebrated the opening of the building they constructed for ProLogic, Inc. at the University Technology Park near Uniontown, Fayette County, PA. U.S. Rep John Murtha (pictured next page) was the guest of honor at the new 7,000 sf high-tech facility which will provide Information Technology (IT) solutions to the Department of Defense and other government agencies.



**Butler County Jail**

## Business Briefs

→ **The Hayes Design Group - Architects** announced that Jessica Swann has joined the firm as an Associate.

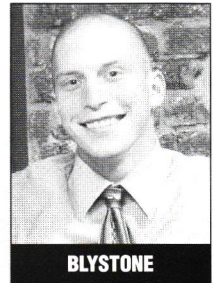
**Renaissance 3 Architects** welcomes the following additions: **William Vernon, AIA**, joins the firm as project architect, Katharine Rojik as architect intern, Keri Burd as office manager, and Lauren Muhollen as architectural intern from the University of Pittsburgh.



**Radelet McCarthy** hired **Brian R. Blystone, Assoc.**

**AIA** as a graduate architect. A recent graduate of Kent State University, he has been an intern with Radelet McCarthy for two years.

George B. Knoll joins Massaro as a lead estimator for the Construction Management Services division with more than 20 years of experience in the construction industry.



**BLYSTONE**

## Kudos

→ Congratulations to Conservation Consultants, Inc. for receiving a LEED for Existing Buildings Gold Certification for its CCI Center on Pittsburgh's South Side. This is the first LEED-EB certification in the region! Rating criteria includes building operations and system upgrades in existing structures where the majority of interior or exterior surfaces remain unchanged. CCI worked with Tai + Lee Architects, Bert Davis, and Clearview Project Services Company on the initial green renovation of the building in 1998. Subsequently, CCI and the Green Building Alliance developed green policies for future construction and implemented a green operations and maintenance plan in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Resources Council and Tudi Mechanical Systems.

## PROJECTS OF MERIT



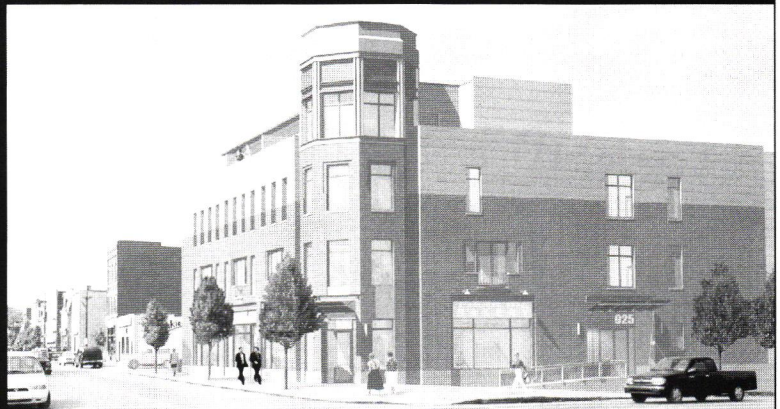
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# CALENDAR

## AIA ACTIVITIES

OCTOBER 6, THURSDAY

**Design Pittsburgh Gala** Join the celebration from 6 to 9 p.m. at the 51<sup>st</sup> Street Business Center in Lawrenceville. Cost is \$65/person. Call the Chapter office to RSVP: 412-471-9548.

OCTOBER 25, TUESDAY

**Design Awards Ceremony** 6 p.m. at the 51<sup>st</sup> Street Business Center. Cost is \$15/person. Call the Chapter office to RSVP: 412-471-9548.

OCTOBER 6 – 29

**Design Awards Exhibit** View all entries in AIA Pittsburgh's Design Awards at the 51<sup>st</sup> Street Business Center. Exhibit will be available to view beginning at the Design Pittsburgh Gala, as well as each following Saturday in October from 12 to 4 p.m. For more details please see our Design Pittsburgh ad in this issue of *Columns*.

## AROUND TOWN

OCTOBER 12, WEDNESDAY

**SDA Monthly Meeting** New MasterFormat. Robert J. Bailey, AIA, CCS, CSI, specifications writer at WTW Architects (Engineer's Club). For more information please contact Christine Stewart at 412-261-0660.

## Save these Dates

### DESIGN PITTSBURGH IN THE DESIGN ZONE

October 6

DESIGN PITTSBURGH GALA  
51<sup>st</sup> Street Business Center,  
6:00 - 9:00 p.m. \$65/person

October 6 – October 29  
EXHIBIT

Exhibit of all entries in  
AIA Pittsburgh Design Awards  
51<sup>st</sup> Street Business Center, Free

October 25

DESIGN AWARDS CEREMONY  
51<sup>st</sup> Street Business Center  
6:00 - 9:00 p.m. \$15/person

SUBMIT YOUR WORK TO COLUMNS!

## Upcoming Issues

### NOVEMBER

- Architects Building Communities
- Members report on September meeting
- Habitat: Gwen Dakis' house in Friendship

### DECEMBER

Design Awards 2005

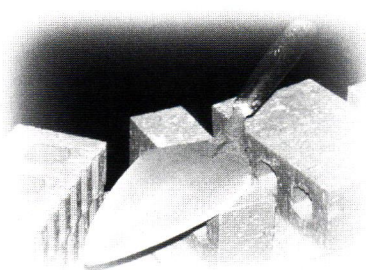
### JANUARY

AIA 150

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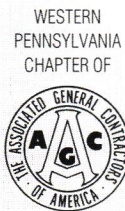
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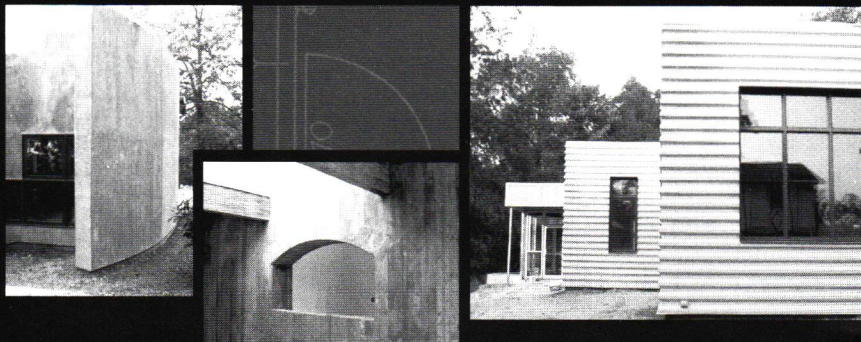
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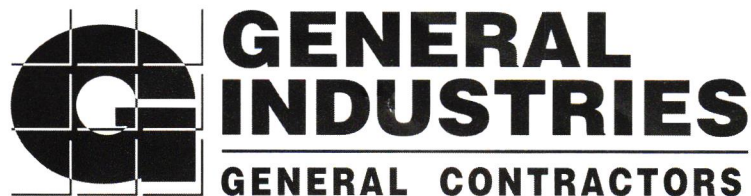


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