

BOTW PROFILE

Francis Joseph Straub, Jr.
Vice President and Founding
Partner
M/E Engineering, P.C.

- **Age:** 52
- **Education:** B.S. in electrical engineering from the University of Rochester
- **Residence:** Pittsford
- **Family:** Wife, Mary; children, Joseph, Andrew, and Elizabeth
- **Favorite part of the job:** Working with the staff; helping the company grow
- **Favorite film:** "Office Space"
- **Current reading material:** "The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology," by Ray Kurzweil
- **Favorite literary genre:** Non-fiction physics "Deadwood"



BOTW FACTS

M/E Engineering, P.C.
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- **Type of business:** Mechanical and electrical engineering
- **Year founded:** 1991
- **Number of employees:** 137, all full time; 17 full time in Syracuse
- **Corporate headquarters:** 150 N. Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604
- **Other locations:** 60 Lakefront Blvd., Suite 320, Buffalo, N.Y. 14202; 10 Airline Drive, Suite 201, Albany, N.Y. 12205
- **Company officers:** Allen Casey, president; Ronald Mead, vice president; Francis Joseph Straub, Jr., vice president; and William Liberto, vice president, secretary, and treasurer
- **Annual revenue:** More than \$15 million companywide; \$1.5 million in Syracuse

Specialized services sustain M/E Engineering

By Claire Duffett
Journal Staff

SYRACUSE — A variety of project types sustain M/E Engineering, P.C. during economic swings, says Francis Joseph (Joe) Straub, Jr., vice president and one of the firm's founding partners.

Because the company focuses exclusively on mechanical and electrical (M/E) engineering, it is able to provide engineering expertise on a diverse group of projects, he says.

The firm's recent projects include engineering work for kindergarten through 12th-grade and higher-education institutions, hospitals, municipalities, entertainment venues, and private companies in the pharmaceutical and manufacturing industries.

"It's truly a mixed bag," Straub says. "Our diversity is what helps us. In years where state money runs out for K through 12, we do other private-college work."

M/E Engineering works primarily as a sub-contractor for architectural firms. The company acquires about 80 percent of its contracts through bids with architectural or design/build firms, Straub explains.

One area of expertise in the mechanical/electrical-engineering realm is the firm's Computer-Aided Engineering Solutions (CAES) unit, which is part of the Syracuse office.

M/E is one of three firms in the world that offers this technology, Straub says. The others are located in Canada and England.

CAES software simulates the airflow and temperature in a building, which allows the firm to select the ideal heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system for a facility, explains Michael Frey, M/E



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Patrick E. Hayes, an employee of M/E Engineering, P.C., works on a set of documents for an upcoming project. The company focuses exclusively on mechanical and electrical engineering, and provides engineering expertise on a diverse group of projects.

senior engineer.

Straub started M/E Engineering in Rochester in 1991 with three partners — Allen Casey, Ronald Mead, and William Liberto.

The three started the company with the intention of providing specialized mechanical and engineering services rather than bundling various engineering services in one company, Straub explains.

In 1996, M/E established a small office to serve its Buffalo clients and expanded from 15 employees to a 50-person operation when it acquired the assets of Wilson, Klaes, Brucker, and Worden, P.C.

M/E Engineering opened its Albany office in 2003, overseen by Straub.

In mid-2004, M/E opened its Syracuse office when it subleased 6,500 square feet of office space from Ford Credit on the seventh floor of The Galleries tower on South Salina Street.

Straub, dividing his time with Albany, opened the office with two engineers, he says.

In the past year and a half, the

firm has expanded its Syracuse office to 17 full-time employees and more than \$1.5 million in annual revenue, Straub says.

Fifteen of the employees are either engineers or individuals with two-year technical degrees. The office also employs two administrative staffers.

The firm plans to lease an additional 2,800 square feet of adjacent space to house its growing team.

James P. Chatelle, an associate engineer, will take over the leadership of the Syracuse office for Straub when he moves to Albany to manage that office full time, he explains.

Companywide, M/E targets 8 to 10 percent annual growth — revenue- and employee-wise. In 2006, revenue will total about \$15 million.

M/E has performed engineering work on Central New York-based projects in conjunction with King & King Architects, LLP; QPK Design; HOLT Architects; and Philadelphia-based Francis Cauffman Foley Hoffman, says Straub. □

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