

SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

M/E Engineering structures air, water and electric

Firm works closely with architects

Alan Morrell

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When it comes to construction projects, architects get the kudos for the aesthetics, but firms like M/E Engineering handle the crucial work involved to make a building function smoothly.

M/E, as the initials imply, provides mechanical and electrical engineering services. Those services include the programming and design for things like heating and air conditioning systems and air filtration and making sure the electrical system is properly balanced.

“We work with architects to design buildings,” said M/E President Ronald Mead. “The architect does how the building looks (and) M/E would do all the systems inside the building.”

Mead is one of the founders of the firm, which is headquartered on North Chestnut Street in Rochester. M/E’s projects include the new performing arts center at Nazareth College, the Monroe Community College move into the Kodak Office building, the del Lago Casino and much more.

M/E also has been involved with the transition of the iconic downtown Sibley’s building into housing and the construction of a gaming studio at Rochester Institute of Technology. An upcoming job will be the expansion of The Strong museum. In the industrial sector, M/E has done work for companies like DuPont (on Lexington Avenue) and Optimax Systems in Ontario, Wayne County.

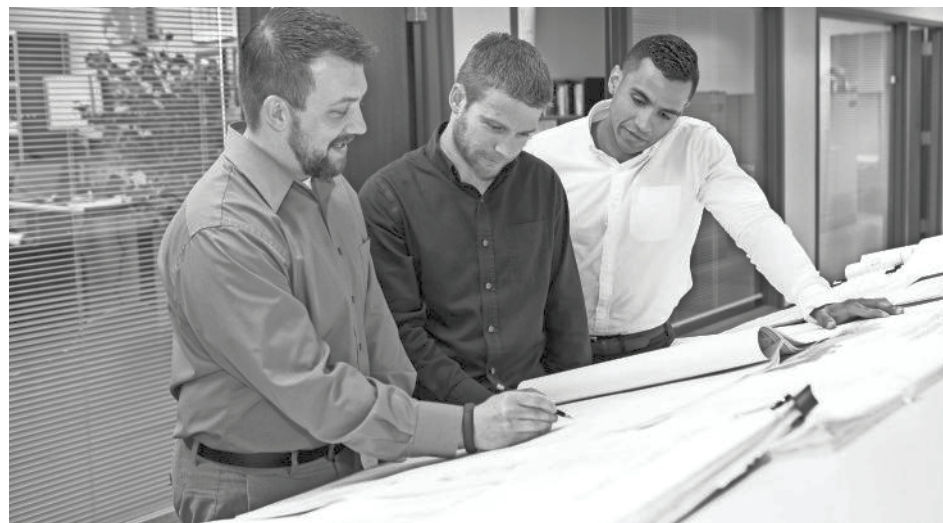
Some of the work — like that for a “clean room” for the University of Rochester laser lab — can get quite complicated.

Mead recalled the startup days of M/E Engineering. He and the other founders — Al Casey, Bill Liberto and Joe Straub — worked for a local engineering firm when they decided to give it a go on their own.

“We were aggressive. We were hungry,” Mead said. “We chased down every



An M/E Engineering group photo at the Rochester office located at 150 North Chestnut St. PROVIDED BY M/E ENGINEERING



Nathan Auble, left, Chad Cummins and Louis Amezcquita look over plans at M/E Engineering. PROVIDED BY M/E ENGINEERING

job we could chase down. We put a lot of effort into it.”

The effort paid off pretty quickly. Within six months, the small firm had grown to more than 20 employees, and within a year to more than 30. The firm has since expanded throughout upstate New York.

M/E opened a Buffalo-area office in

1996 and three years later bought out a Buffalo firm, doubling the overall size of M/E. An Albany office opened in 2003, followed by a Syracuse branch the next year. Casey and Straub have since retired, and Liberto runs the Buffalo office. Ron Mead and John Dredger, who head up the Rochester office, talked about “special computer modeling” that M/E

M/E Engineering

Founded: 1991.

Location: 150 N. Chestnut St., Rochester (offices also in Buffalo, Syracuse and Schenectady)

Executives: Ronald Mead, president; John Dredger, vice president, Rochester office; W. Bruce Knapp, Brian Danker and James P. Chatelle, principals.

Employees: 187 overall; 89 in Rochester.

Website: www.meengineering.com.



M/E Engineering and RIT officials meet over a project at RIT’s James E. Gleason building in 2009. Clockwise from left are Matt Shannon (M/E), Catherine Ahern (RIT), Ronald Mead (M/E), Tom Hyzen (RIT), Brian Danker (M/E) and Doug Rose (M/E). The photo was taken for a Rochester Top 100 story. DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE FILE PHOTO 2009

uses to give clients a virtual walk-through of their structures. The modeling demonstrates, for example, how wind direction and temperatures can affect exhaust and help determine the best ways to contain contaminants. “It’s a tool that we use to make our designs work,” Mead said. “MEP — mechanical, electrical and plumbing — is our core.”

That’s been the case since the beginning for M/E Engineering. It’s the nuts-and-bolts stuff that makes a building function smoothly.

Alan Morrell is a Rochester-based freelance writer.