

# Busy Jersen Construction finds time to expand its Waterford

BY MICHAEL DIMASI  
THE BUSINESS REVIEW

**Jersen Construction Group** in Waterford is growing.

The firm plans to expand its offices at 6 Industry Drive by 5,000 square feet to accommodate new employees, conference rooms and an estimating department. The addition will provide the company with 20,000 square feet of shop and warehouse space.

"We've grown substantially over the last six years," said Kenneth J. Jersen, vice president. "We've gone from a company that used to average \$6 million to \$8 million a year [in revenue] to a company with revenues in excess of \$40 million."

The company has more than 100 full-time employees and is currently juggling 15 projects.

Recent projects include a \$17 million contract to pour concrete and build the superstructure for the \$142 million **Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC)** at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute campus in Troy. About 20,000 yards of concrete was poured for the facility, which is being built on a hillside overlooking the city.

"It's one of the most complex and labor-demanding projects for this area probably in the last 25 years," Jersen said.

Jersen Construction markets itself as a general contractor/construction manager that owns more than \$6 million in equipment and self-performs surveying, earth-moving, concrete, masonry, carpentry and rigging.

"They're a little bit unique in the sense that not only are they good general contractors but they're also doing major portions of other larger projects, especially in the concrete area," said Jeffrey J. Zogg, executive director of the **General Building Contractors of**



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**Family business:** (From left) Project manager David Jersen, President John Jersen and Vice President Kenneth Jersen at the site of Hampton Inn on State Street in Schenectady.

## New York State.

Jersen's father, John R. Jersen, a licensed professional engineer, founded **Jersen Industries** in 1983 after a failed buyout of Sweet Associates, where he had served as president for more than seven years. He started the new venture in the basement of his home. Later he bought land in Waterford and built a shop there.

Among the clients were **General Electric Co., BASF, Cargill** and Niagara Mohawk Power Corp. (now **National Grid**). As the business grew, the company subdivided its property and constructed buildings for other tenants. The 50-acre site eventually became known as the **Hudson Shores Industrial**

**Park**, with a total of nine buildings.

"It's been a planned growth," said Jersen, who joined the company in 1997 and, with other employees, formed Jersen Construction Group. "We've always made sure we didn't take on too much. We adequately staffed ourselves and didn't take on more than we could bite."

The growth comes as the construction industry nationally set a record for total employment for the 15th straight month, according to federal labor data cited by the **Associated General Contractors of America**.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported seasonally adjusted payroll employment in the construction industry hit 7.51

## JUGGLING ACT

Jersen currently is working on 15 projects, including:

- Construction of the \$8 million Hampton Inn in downtown Schenectady
- A \$7 million renovation for the Green Island Union Free School District
- The new \$4 million state Emergency Management Office command post in Albany
- The \$3 million renovation of Clifton Park Center

million in April, a

last year, according to Zogg said construction eastern and southern state tell him the market the central and west are having a harder

The challenge for its competitors, as the of soaring prices for

"Right now, we don't know how much Jersen said. "We try adjust bids accordingly how long we'll have

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at the Hampton Inn site

3.7 percent increase over  
to the AGC.

Construction companies in the  
ern regions of New York  
market is good, but those in  
estern portions of the state  
time.

Jensen Construction, and  
o manage costs in the face  
r fuel and materials.

"We're able to absorb it but I  
much longer that will last,"  
to price accordingly and  
ngly, but we don't know  
e that flexibility."