

Success Stories

PennTerra Engineering

www.penterra.com

Back in 1976, PennTerra's founders started an engineering firm dedicated to shaping the Pennsylvania landscape. More than 30 years later, says President John Sepp, "We're committed to providing excellent engineering services that help make Centre County what it is today."

PennTerra is a full-service engineering firm with more than 27 professionals who are committed to creating aesthetically pleasing and environmentally sound projects while protecting the interests of clients. Among PennTerra's services are site engineering, land surveying, land planning, and construction management. The firm's recent projects have included site engineering and design for the Home Depot store and neighboring Kish Bank Valley Vista Financial Center on a highly visible site at the I-99 gateway to Patton Township and State College. PennTerra also developed the master plan for the new 215-acre Benner Commerce Park, which is being constructed by the CCIDC on land formerly part of the Rockview Correctional Institution.

In addition to offices in State College and Duncansville, PennTerra recently acquired a Mechanicsburg engineering firm, allowing the Centre County-based firm to serve projects in Maryland, West Virginia, and Southcentral and Eastern Pennsylvania. "We're very excited about growing our services into that market," Sepp says.



Among the developments PennTerra has worked on are the Stonebridge neighborhood and Nittany Commons shopping center.

PennTerra (2)

Alexander Building Construction Co.

www.alexanderbuilding.com

Although Alexander Building Construction Co. began in Harrisburg, its Centre County roots go back more than 50 years. The local market was a natural geographic progression for the company, and Penn State continues to spark a need for its services. "There is a very educated public here, meaning more innovative techniques are utilized," says Chris Magent, State College manager. "We as a construction management firm are really able to relate and interface with those types of clients."

Alexander is one of Central Pennsylvania's largest construction and construction management firms, particularly in the areas of education, health care, and retail. Since 2003, the company has operated as a subsidiary of Butz Enterprises Inc., allowing it to draw on the resources of sister companies in Allentown and Philadelphia.

Among Alexander's Centre County projects are the Mount Nittany Medical Center east wing expansion, Beaver Stadium expansion, The Colonnade shopping center, and Minitab corporate headquarters. The firm's expertise in sustainable design and construction is evident in the LEED-certified Geisinger Grey's Woods ambulatory care facility.

Alexander's employees don't just help build a community; they also volunteer to serve it. Magent noted that State College employees serve on local non-profit boards and committees and volunteer their time in other ways. "We really try to make sure we give back," he says. "There's not a person in this office that doesn't give back in some way."



Alexander is construction manager for Mount Nittany Medical Center's 65,000-square-foot east wing expansion.



State College Manager
Chris Magent

Alexander Building Construction Co. (2)

West Arete Computing

www.westarete.com

When Scott Woods worked in a high-performance computer facility at Penn State, he saw that researchers often had to spend too much time managing their data, taking away from their primary focus on research. He started West Arete Computing in 2005 to help researchers at universities and companies with the computer-science part of their research. The fledgling company quickly realized that what its clients needed most was web applications for visualizing data, and that became its mission.

After two years in the CCIDC's incubator program, West Arete moved to downtown State College. Today the company has three full-time software developers and two additional employees, and outsources to independent contractors for graphic design and other services. West Arete bills itself as a "small, nimble" web development company that writes "incredibly useful, reliable software" to improve clients' businesses through everything from online shopping carts to internal order tracking systems.

"We work really hard at using the absolutely best practices," Woods says. "We have a strong emphasis on testing our applications fully so they have as few bugs as possible."

Woods says he chose to locate West Arete in Centre County partly because of its proximity to Penn State, which provides both clients and talented employees. A low cost of living kept down start-up costs, while nearby outdoor recreational opportunities create a good environment for employees. West Arete works to help preserve those opportunities by donating 1 percent of its sales to local environmental groups, such as Clearwater Conservancy, through 1% for the Planet.



West Arete employees brainstorm ideas for a client's software.

West Arete Computing

Mission Critical Partners

www.mcp911.com

As former law enforcement officers, firefighters, paramedics, and dispatchers, the executives at Mission Critical Partners know the 9-1-1 business inside and out. After each investing almost 20 years in the life safety communications industry, in 2008 they formed MCP to help clients leverage technology to improve the delivery of safety services.

Typically, 9-1-1 services are 24/7 operations, making it difficult for governmental entities to keep up with ever-changing technology. MCP manages those changes for them. "We manage our clients' risk for developing new processes and new systems and integrating them into their operations to help them protect their citizens," says Brian Bark, senior vice president.

MCP provides public safety-focused services for both governmental and corporate clients. Its employees are broadband experts, forensics investigators, design and implementation leaders, operational and systems analysts, policy developers, project managers, and next-generation technology drivers. MCP develops a master plan for each client so they can advance their ability to deliver service through thoughtful, incremental change.

Although MCP's founders lived in Pennsylvania, they had considered basing the company out of state. The availability of incubator office space in the Technology Center at Innovation Park was a deciding factor in remaining in State College, Bark says. "The access to the Ben Franklin Partnership was key for us," he says of the program that provides seed capital to new technology-focused businesses. The incubator program has also helped MCP with access to other resources, networking, and information about developing good business practices, he adds.



Construction is under way in Estill County, Kentucky, on a wireless broadband site for MCP's FEMA client that will provide communication for emergency services personnel in the protective action zone around the Blue Grass Army Depot. The project is part of the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program.

MCP