

Business deal is consummated

By Diane Hofstee
staff writer

Walbridge Aldinger Co., a Livonia-based general contractor, will buy Darla & Armstrong Inc., a Southfield-based general contractor, said F. William Buton, a D&A lawyer.

The transaction plans, which got D&A stockholder approval at a special New Year's Eve meeting, display confidence in Michigan's economy and the construction business at a time when other contractors are pulling the blankets up over their eyes and ordering flowers, said William Welch, marketing director for Walbridge Aldinger.

Unemployment among Michigan building tradesmen is approximately 50 percent.

"Regardless of what anyone says, the auto industry is still in Michigan, and so is a lot of money," said Welch, who served as state economic development

director during the Milliken administration.

"We can operate just as well out of Michigan as we can out of anywhere."

"BOTH COMPANIES will be stronger in the long run than had they remained apart," said Welch, explaining the unusual backyard purchase of a competitor that he admits is better known than Walbridge Aldinger.

Both companies are roughly the same size and rank among the top 50 general contractors in the country.

D&A, an employee-owned company specializing in industrial contracts, built the often photographed EPCOT center's dome entrance in Florida as well as the American Adventure Pavilion there.

D&A, a 47-year-old firm, also built the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice in Detroit, the Prudential Town Center

and Michigan Inn in Southfield, the General Motors Tech. Center and tunnel in Warren for automotive testing and printing plants for the Detroit News, Detroit Free Press and Chicago Tribune newspapers.

In Farmington Hills, D&A built the recent addition onto Our Lady of Mercy High School.

D&A is currently building the controversial GM-Toyota plant in Fremont, Calif., Auto World in Flint, an addition to Ford Hospital in Detroit and has a dozen other hospital projects in the works, said a D&A marketing spokesman.

D&A HAS subsidiary companies in Florida and North Carolina.

Despite the transaction, "business will continue as usual" on ongoing projects, said D&A lawyer Buton.

D&A will keep its name despite ownership changes, Welch said.

The two companies overlap 25 percent in the type of contracting they do, he said.

"D&A does a lot of hospital work and we do mostly automotive-related projects," he said.

Walbridge Aldinger, a 57-year-old company, recently renovated the Pontiac auto plant to produce the new Fire cars. The company also did \$100 million worth of construction on the Detroit Edison Fermi II nuclear plant and built the Automobile Association of America building in Dearborn.

Walbridge Aldinger has subsidiaries in Mexico, Canada and South Carolina.

The joining of talents will strengthen and diversify the two companies, Welch predicted. He did not explain why Walbridge Aldinger chose to buy D&A rather than expanding on its own. It isn't wise to divulge company strategy, he said.

Dealer will sell robotics system

Roethel Engineering Corp. of Farmington Hills has been appointed as an authorized dealer of robots and machining systems from Thermwood Corp.

Thermwood Corp. is one of America's leading manufacturers of industrial robots and high-speed robotic machining systems.

Roethel Engineering Corp. will market Thermwood robots, including the Taskhandler material handling robot,

the Paintmiser spray painting robot and Thermwood's Cartesian five line of computer numerically controlled machining systems.

Both the Taskhandler and the Paintmiser are continuous path, lead-through-teach robots. The machines record motion much like a tape recorder records sound, so that programming involves simply moving the robot arm through the desired movements.

Singles group discusses changes in the law

What's new in the law will be the subject at Solo Flights Singles at Temple El at 8 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 10, 7400 Telegraph at 14 Mile Road in Birmingham.

There will be a social hour with music and refreshments after the talk. Admission is \$3. For further information, call 535-8041 before Tuesday.

Metropolitan area Jewish Singles are invited to participate in the program presented by Diane Freilich, attorney and counselor of Franklin Village.

She will discuss recent developments in family and divorce law; custody, pa-

tient rights and medical practice, drunk driving and other areas. Members of the audience will be able to participate, a question and answer period will follow Freilich's presentation.

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