

Building Scene

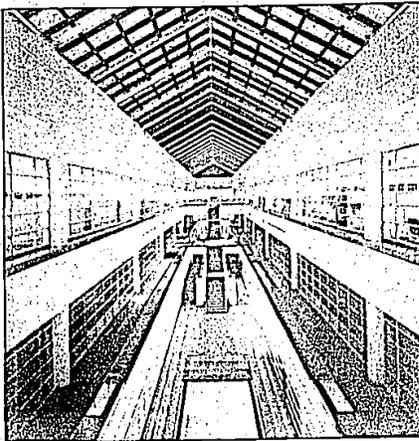
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Marilyn Filchett editor/591-2300

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Thursday, April 23, 1992 O&E



ESD applauds construction, design winners

By Doug Funke
staff writer

Skylights and open spaces.

Those were key elements in many of the seven projects selected as construction and design award winners in an annual competition sponsored by the Engineering Society of Detroit.

Six of the winners have a connection with the Observer & Eccentric coverage area either through the architect, contractor or where the project was built.

"The reason this (contest) is unique is it's the only one in the area that honors everyone — architects, contractors and engineers in the

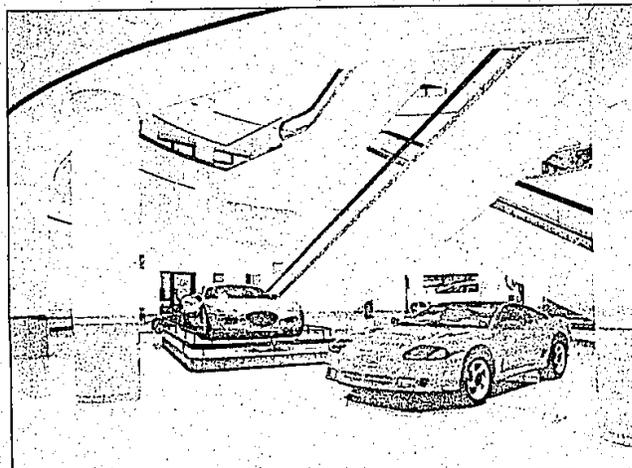
same competition," said Phil Komar, spokesman for ESD.

The winners:

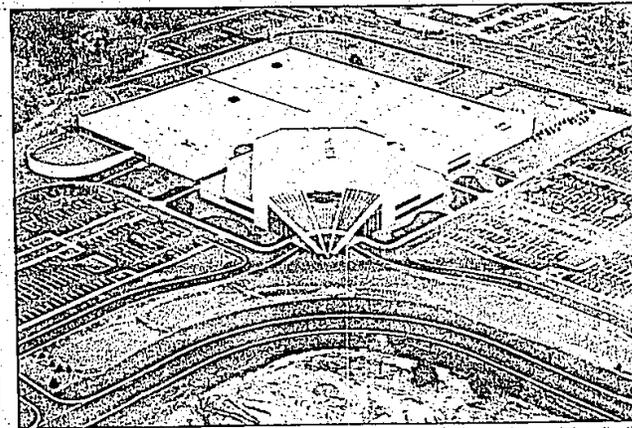
- Chrysler Technology Center, Auburn Hills, designed by Harley Ellington Pierce Yee Associates of Southfield.
- Apartments of Stroh River Place, Detroit, designed by Redstone Architects of Southfield.
- Gershenson Radiation Oncology Center, Detroit, built by Barton Malow of Southfield.
- Nissan Research and Development Facility, Farmington Hills.
- Solid waste industrial landfill, Allen Park, designed by NTH Consultants of Farmington Hills.
- Livingston County Road Commission Central Maintenance Facility,



Please turn to Page 2



Skylit concourses and glass-walled offices mark the Chrysler Technology Center, Auburn Hills, designed by Harley Ellington Pierce Yee Associates of Southfield.



The Nissan Research and Design Facility in Farmington Hills consists of a three-story administration section and a prototype/testing segment connected by an atrium.

Firms adopt mentoring roles

By R.J. King
special writer

One way a small minority-owned firm can land a new account or large contract is to strike a partnership with a client or competitor who wouldn't normally provide an outsider with access to internal reports, valued contacts and marketing strategies.

It's commonly referred to as mentoring, and New Detroit began just such a partnership plan last year by pairing minority-owned firms with long-established players in such industries as accounting, construction and services as a way to increase sales and solidify markets.

"Mentoring is really a means of insuring the competition, whether minority owned or not, can compete successfully and fairly. It makes for a healthier industry," said Tom Landry, president of the A.J. Etkin Construction Co. in Farmington Hills.

"It also gives us an opportunity to learn something from a smaller firm. They might do something different on the accounting end that could save us time or money. I think both parties benefit, and there's always joint ventures that might open up."

ANDREW McLEMORE, president of A-MAC Sales & Builders Co., a general contractor in Detroit that was matched with Etkin in January, said his firm has already benefited from several meetings with its larger competitor.

"Our goal going into the partnership was to develop more private sector business, but these things take time," said McLemore.

"But we have been introduced to their management and administrative network. That should help in the future. They also gave us several of their forms for contracts and purchase orders. That's an advantage to us because now I don't have to hire an attorney to do that work."

Both companies said they hoped to strike a construction contract in the near future, but given the depressed state of the commercial real estate market, a joint venture is a few months off.

The goal of New Detroit's mentoring program is to increase business opportunities and help minority-owned firms expand their marketing reach. Instead of building or servicing immediately neighborhoods, New Detroit wants minority firms to tackle entire markets.

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— Ron Hall

"It's a win-win situation for both parties involved. If only that barriers get knocked down and relationships open up," said Ron Hall, director of the mentoring program as well as the minority economic development division of New Detroit, which works to encourage urban and suburban relationships.

"We would like to see the partnerships last between three and five years, or however long the parties wish to continue. We hope greater profits and job growth will result, and we will be monitoring the relationships to track what benefits transpire."

GLENN WASH, president of Glenn E. Wash & Associates, Inc., a general contractor in Detroit, said his firm has had one meeting with its mentor, the Walbridge Aldinger Co., a large construction concern formerly located in Livonia before moving to Detroit two years ago, since the pair were matched in January.

"Not too much has happened yet, but we're looking strongly at the possibility of striking a joint venture with Walbridge," said Wash. We also feel we can learn a great deal about their operations which will help in expanding our own marketing reach.

John Hakola Jr., president of Walbridge, said the company entered the program with the hope of providing smaller firms with advice on management and business skills as opposed to becoming a marketing arm for future projects.

"Large corporations have a lot to offer smaller firms such as how we set up accounts, buying insurance and setting up new business proposals," he said. "We don't want to award a contract and go away. We want to teach firms about our business and listen to what they have to say. We both learn in that kind of environment."

IN OTHER mentoring partnerships recently announced, Bartech Personnel Services, a supplier of contract engineers, technicians and clerical personnel in Detroit, was matched with the Chrysler Corp. in Highland Park. Fuller & Co., a management consulting firm in Detroit, was paired with Coopers & Lybrand, one of the Big Six accounting firms with offices in Detroit's Renaissance Center.

"Bartech wants to be acknowledged first as a quality supplier than one that happens to be minority owned," said Jon Barfield, president of Bartech. "I believe the mentorship program will enable us to overcome some barriers traditionally faced by minority-owned firms and develop to the point where we will be able to compete effectively with the industry leaders."

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MEADOWBROOK	\$187,900