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H2M trying to raise profile among architecture firms with new office, growth plans

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H2M architects + engineers this month moved its local office from Latham to downtown Troy to accommodate growth, raise its profile and collaborate with other design businesses.

The strategy is part of an effort by the Long Island-based firm to recruit employees and improve services for clients as it pursues more contracts in the education, municipal government, public agency and water/wastewater markets.

"One of our most recent hires was made because he wanted to walk to work," said Katrina Pacheco, assistant vice president and office director. "That was an important quality of life decision for him. We're excited to be here. There's so much more happening than in a suburb."



H2M ARCHITECTS + ENGINEERS

Katrina Pacheco, assistant vice president and office director at H2M architects + engineers in downtown Troy.

H2M moved from a 4,800-square-foot office at 3 Lear Jet Lane to a 5,800-square-foot office on the eighth floor of Hedley Park Place at 433 River St.

Other design professionals downtown include architecture+, Phinney Design Group, Mosaic Associates and Troy Architecture Program. The city is also home to the Architecture School at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

The layout of the larger office enables the firm to fit substantially more desks.

The firm has 12 local employees, plus a newly hired graduate student working part-time this semester. Another 16 or so could fit in the office, Pacheco said.

"It could be more if we built out the space a little differently," she said.

Local architecture billings last year totaled \$2.2 million.

H2M is a full-service consulting and design firm with more than 500 employees. It entered the Albany region in 2016 through its acquisition of Pacheco Ross Architects P.C., which largely served emergency services clients in the U.S. and Canada.

Pacheco and her husband, David, were principals in the firm. David serves as director of operations for H2M. They both also teach as adjunct professors at RPI.

The emergency services portfolio over the past five to 10 years included minor renovations or new buildings for fire departments in Halfmoon-Waterford, Schenectady, Clifton Park, Guilderland, Colonie and Niskayuna.

Several more are in the early design stages.

New business partnerships include designing the Bargain Grocery store that First Columbia LLC — which owns Hedley Park Place — plans to open nearby on River Street.

Other upstate cities with low-income neighborhoods that are considered a "food desert" are also being considered by the Utica-based Bargain Grocery.

"First Columbia is looking to have us on board to address those needs in other areas such as Amsterdam and maybe Hudson," Pacheco said.

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