

## SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

# H2M celebrates 90 years of serving the needs of the community

It was 1933 when a professional engineer named Henry "Gus" Holzmacher founded a modest civil engineering and land surveying practice out of his Bethpage home. At the time, the country was in the throes of the Great Depression, and Long Island's birth as America's first suburb was still more than a dozen years away.

Over the next 90 years, the company would rise to meet the challenges and opportunities as Long Island underwent explosive growth. Today, H2M architects + engineers (H2M) is a thriving multidisciplinary firm with more than 500 employees and 11 office locations.

## Early years

Soon after hanging out his shingle, Holzmacher landed his first public works project, for the North Massapequa Fire District. In 1935, he executed his first public water supply engineering project, for the South Farmingdale Water District — which remains an H2M client today.

In 1936, Grumman Aircraft Corporation came calling. The iconic Long Island company retained Holzmacher to perform essentially all of its outline and topographic surveying work as it underwent massive expansion prior to and during World War II.

In the post-war period, the need for public water supply systems boomed, and Holzmacher fully committed his career to drinking water quality and quantity. The firm relocated from Bethpage to Hicksville in 1946 and Holzmacher was retained by the Bethpage Water District to plan and oversee a major expansion of district facilities. At the same time, he also helped to plan the South Farmingdale Water District's first major plant facilities.

His son, Robert "Bob" Holzmacher, P.E., joined the firm in 1953. Two years later, the Plainview Water District designated Bob Holzmacher as the Engineer for the District. With the water supply business growing rapidly, Bob Holzmacher's old college classmate, Norman "Norm" Murrell, P.E., came aboard in 1955, just in time to start preparing contracts for a new water distribution system for 1,000 new suburban homes. In 1956, Samuel "Sam" McLendon, P.E., joined and set up a water analysis lab in the office kitchen, establishing an



An early H2M location and the current headquarters.

environmental testing laboratory and bringing engineering and laboratory services under one roof, literally. McLendon was named a partner in 1961, which ended the company's sole proprietorship and paved the way for the firm to become known as Holzmacher, McLendon, & Murrell (the H and two M's in "H2M"). The Holzmachers, along with McLendon and Murrell, set the course for every employee as advocates for water quality and protectors of public health.

## Move to Melville

In 1960, the firm celebrated the opening of its first official office building on Route 110 in Melville, just months before Gus Holzmacher's sudden passing in 1961.

"This was the culmination of a long-time dream for my father. He and my mother were very proud that day," Bob Holzmacher would later recall. "His great satisfaction, seeing his engineering firm well-established and in a prestigious office building, was short-lived. But the firm continued to prosper through the years. I know that my father, in his wildest dreams, could not ever imagine the firm growing to its present size and importance."

As Long Island grew during the 1960s and 1970s, the company diversified its portfolio to include municipal pools, park projects, sewer districts and industrial clients. In 1970, Holzmacher, McLendon, & Murrell converted from a partner-

ship to a professional corporation and, not long after, the "H2M" acronym was officially adopted. By the end of the decade, H2M had grown to 50 employees.

In the wake of the 1972 Clean Water Act, the federal government began to disburse grants for large water quality-related infrastructure projects, including the expansion of sewer districts. Districts across Long Island turned to H2M for assistance in conducting and submitting studies demonstrating local need for the funds. H2M's work allowed several Long Island towns to receive federal and state funds, which totaled 87.5 percent of every dollar spent.

A concerning discovery in a Smithtown home in 1982 marked the beginning of Murrell's activism to ban lead and lead solder from drinking water systems. His efforts led to every Long Island town banning the use of lead solder by 1984, a statewide ban in 1985, and the passage of the LEAD-FREE legislation in the U.S. Senate, which amended the national Safe Drinking Water Act, three months later. Every fiber of H2M's mission, vision and values was built upon the ethics and moral code that Murrell lived by. This has inspired the staff to believe it is their duty to uphold the health, safety and welfare of the public above all else.

## Adding architecture

The company hired its first architect, Robert Scheiner, R.A., in 1986 in order to increase the scope of projects they could apply for. Architecture, along with the fully expanded Environmental Division, soon became an integral part of daily operations and H2M's commitment to servicing its clients. The second architect ever hired by the firm, Joseph Mottola, R.A., leveraged his own status as a volunteer firefighter to add emergency services to H2M's portfolio of work.

With the anticipated retirement of the three name partners in 1991, Harold Dombeck, P.E., took over the helm as president and CEO in 1990. Five years later, John Molloy, P.E., became H2M's president and CEO. The 1990s became the decade of environmental sensitivity and cost-effective solutions that kept up with evolving environmental regulations and growing interest in preparing for a changing climate.



Photos courtesy of H2M

## Expansion in the new millennium

The turn of the millennium kicked off an era of growth as H2M expanded to better meet the needs of all the communities it serves. By 2001, through organic hiring, the company had grown to 200 employees; 2018 saw the company hitting the 400-employee milestone; and this past summer H2M exceeded 500 engineers, architects, scientists, planners, surveyors, hydrogeologists, geologists, chemists, biologists, and technical and support specialists. The company's office footprint now extends as far north as Troy, N.Y. and as far south as Florida.

Current CEO Richard "Rich" Humann, P.E., rose to his role in 2013. Originally a college intern in 1987, Humann has witnessed H2M's evolution and growth first-hand from every rung of the ladder. He now guides the company under a philosophy of trust. Above all else, he is committed to respecting and honoring the relationships that H2M has spent 90 years building. Throughout that history, H2M has worked with 149 water and sewer district clients, some for over 80 years; hundreds of first responder facilities statewide; 36 school districts; 35 public libraries; 154 municipalities and 42 public agencies. Under Humann's leadership, H2M is dedicated to collaborating with all of its clients as trusted partners and doing what it takes to help them achieve their goals.

H2M's connection to its communities extends beyond the business world. The company and its employees generously provide financial support and hands-on volunteerism to benefit a wide range of nonprofit organizations, including Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Girls, Inc., the New York Special Olympics, Warriors for a Cause, the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, the Townwide Fund of Huntington, Habitat for Humanity, The Interfaith Nutrition Network (INN), Pink Aid and others.

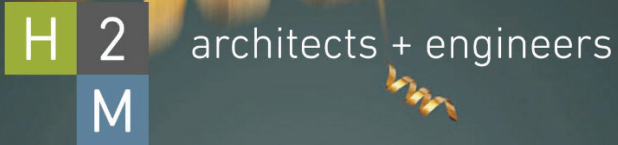
H2M's work has built the physical bones of the communities they serve, but it's the company's people who have shaped and supported those communities.



Photos courtesy of H2M

H2M's activism led to safe drinking water laws.

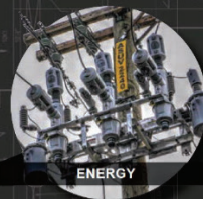
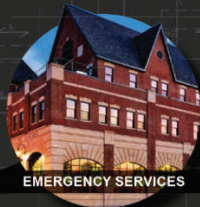




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## Building Communities Since 1933

H2M is an award-winning multi-disciplinary professional consulting firm with over 500 employees providing design services for the Education, Emergency Services, Energy, Insurance, Municipal, Public Agency, Real Estate, and Water/Wastewater Markets in the Northeast Region.



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