



Photo courtesy of Hamilton Stern Construction LLC

Co-owners Justin Hamilton, left, and Christopher Stern have moved their firm into its new headquarters on Monroe Avenue in Pittsford.

# Construction firm settles into new Pittsford home

## Hamilton Stern's owners have grown firm to 12 staffers since launch

By TROY L. SMITH

Justin Hamilton and Christopher Stern, co-owners of Hamilton Stern Construction LLC, finally can put their feet up and relax.

After completing renovations on their headquarters in Pittsford, the duo have settled into the new home of their full-service construction management company.

In just more than two years, Hamilton Stern Construction has completed or begun work on a variety of commercial, health care, industrial and residential projects, ranging in cost from \$25,000 to \$5 million.

Those projects include building renovations to the Niagara Falls Air Force Base, the build-out of Savers thrift store in Henrietta and the corporate offices of Chain-treuil Jensen and Stark Architects LLP.

Hamilton and Stern's dream of owning a business together began in 1998, when they met as teammates on the basketball team at Rochester Institute of Technology. They clicked instantly.

"We kind of knew right then and there that one day we would be working together," Stern said.

Both Stern and Hamilton were civil engineering majors. After graduating in 2003, they worked as project engineers at MLB Construction Services LLC in Ballston Spa, Saratoga County, before pursuing separate ventures.

Stern went to work as a project manager for LeCesse Construction Services LLC, a commercial construction management company with offices in Henrietta. Hamilton became a project manager for Mazzarella & Cannan LLC, a real estate development and property management company in Rochester.

Both Hamilton and Stern said the contacts they made working for those two companies served as the building blocks for their construction firm. The duo formed the company in early 2010, with two other employees.

Hamilton Stern Construction took shape in a temporary office on Humboldt Street in Rochester. The company's first major project came in May 2011, a 7,000-square-foot addition and renovation of Tire World

Auto Service Center in Penfield. The renovations, completed in October, included a new showroom and an expansion from five to nine service bays.

As the project wrapped up, Hamilton Stern Construction was moved into its 5,000-square-foot office and warehouse space on Monroe Avenue in Pittsford. Stern and Hamilton spent the first few months working together in a small office in the building while their construction team completed renovations.

The space, which previously housed the Three Crowns gift shop, now features their offices, a spiral staircase, conference area and kitchen. Hamilton said the next step is hiring a receptionist as business picks up.

"We're growing to the point where we need help," Hamilton said. "That's a good thing."

The firm has 12 employees, but each client still gets the services of either Hamilton or Stern.

"We're very hands-on. Either Justin or I will see each project from start to finish," Stern said.

Hamilton said the company owes its early success to word-of-mouth marketing, several repeat customers and the chemistry between its 32-year-old co-founders.

"I tell people Chris is like my brother from another mother," Hamilton said. "We're able to bounce ideas off each other. He knows what I'm thinking before I say it. That's the beauty of having a partner."

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## CORRECTIONS AND AMPLIFICATIONS

In the Homebuilders list published April 27, the stated number of units built by Conifer-LeChase Construction in 2011 was companywide. The firm built 347 units in Monroe, Genesee, Livingston, Ontario, Orleans and Wayne counties.

In the Q4 feature published May 4, William Verhelle's title was misidentified. Verhelle is CEO of First American Equipment Finance. Alan Sikora is the firm's president.

The Private-Sector Employers list in the May 4 issue contained an error due to incorrect information provided. Unity Health System has 5,472 employees, of which 3,829 are full-time and 1,643 are part-time.

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