

# World Trade's rebuild bigger than the bids

N.J. contractors expect site work to boost reputations

BY MARTIN C. DAKS

THE \$11 BILLION-PLUS landmark World Trade Center rebuilding project in lower Manhattan is driving work to more than 20 New Jersey construction and engineering firms. And while executives at those companies said they're grateful for the revenues they're getting from the assignments — especially in a tepid economy — more impor-

> See **WORLD** on page 7

tant could be the boost in reputation they're getting from the work, which they hope will yield valuable long-term benefits.

"We've done some architectural work before," said **Joe Moretti**, 42, co-owner of **Service Metal Fabricating**, in Rockaway. "But it was a small part of what we did until this World Trade Center memorial job."

His family-owned business is working on the bronze memorial plaques that will surround a pair of reflecting pools at the National September 11 Memorial and Museum. One component of the \$9.5 million design and build project has the firm cutting the names of that day's nearly 3,000 victims, as well as those killed in the 1993 bombing of the North Tower.

The company has about 20 people out of the firm's 95-person work force assigned to the project, which is scheduled to be completed by Sept. 10.

"We didn't reduce prices, although we were very competitive" to win the contract, Moretti said, adding that Service Metal's ability to meet a tight deadline also played a big part in securing the bid. The company had to hire some people with unique expertise to stay on schedule to meet the deadline, he said.

And while the work will account for

nearly 20 percent of the firm's revenues this year, Moretti also said it's giving his company a lot of visibility. "The reflecting pools are the centerpiece of the memorial," he said. "People will connect with them, so this job is hugely important."

"We're hoping more architectural-related work could come down the road later on," he added. "Doing this will give us a huge leg up on competitors. We know the (business) landscape and the players, and everyone in our industry world now knows what we're doing."

Because there are "dozens and dozens of contractors and subcontractors" working on a variety of complex projects, it's not feasible to tally the total funds flowing to New Jersey companies, according to a spokesman for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which owns the 16-acre site. The agency identified about 22 New Jersey companies that have a slice of the work, but the spokesman said the number probably is a fraction of all the Garden State firms connected to the World Trade Center activity.

Large companies "usually get most of the work," when it comes to jobs like the World Trade Center, said **Frank G. De Luca**, a partner at the Edison-based consulting firm **Cambridge Financial Services**. "But they often hire subcontractors who are specialists that can handle niche parts of it. Getting a piece of a high-profile job like the WTC can enhance the reputation of the smaller company, because it means the firm went through a lot of scrutiny and passed muster."

Even for a \$16.9 billion global project development and construction firm like **Skanska**, getting a slice of World Trade "is a big deal," said spokeswoman **Beth Miller**.

In late March, Skanska's Carteret-based **Skanska Koch** division announced it won a multiyear, \$204 million contract to build "Oculus," a wing-shaped structure that will serve as the main access point to the PATH commuter train at the site.

Other companies, like Red Bank's **R. Baker & Son** got some World Trade work through subcontracting. Baker, for instance, got such an assignment through **Tishman/Turner**, a joint venture between **Tishman Construction Corp.** and **Turner Construction Co.**, according to **Damon Kozul**, mar-



keting manager at the 100-person company.

Kozul said one assignment involves the transportation hub at the site. The other calls for the firm to remove partially incinerated fire trucks and other items associated with the World Trade Center's destruction and subsequent rescue attempts from a hangar at John F. Kennedy International Airport.

The World Trade work will involve about 20 percent of the firm's employees, including onsite and support personnel, Kozul said.

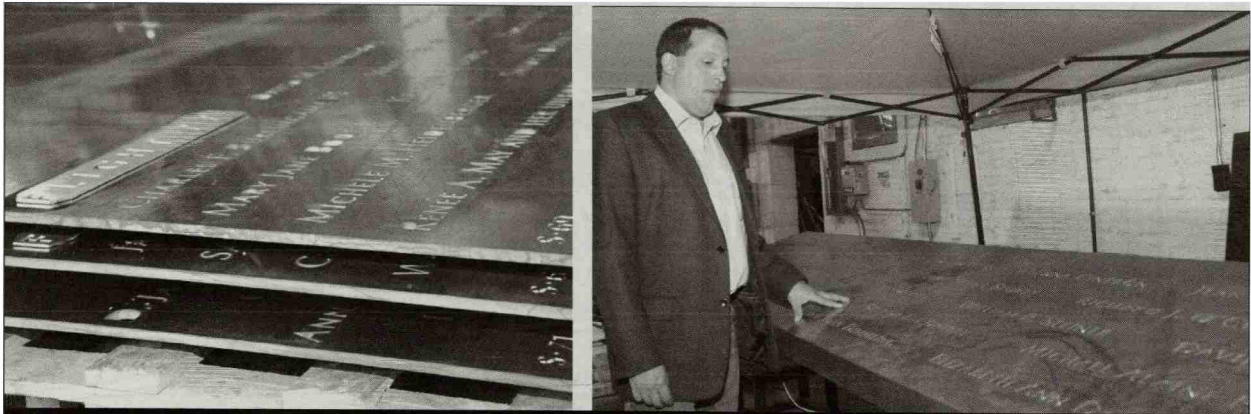
The fee of about \$400,000 that **Matrix New World Engineering Inc.** got for doing

asbestos monitoring and other geotechnical work at the World Trade Center site may not have represented a huge chunk of the East Hanover-based company's total revenue of about \$15 million a year, said senior vice president **Dennis Petrocelli**. But the firm was still happy about getting the assignment.

"Working on the World Trade Center was interesting and unique," he said. "I think it helped our company's reputation."

E-mail to: [mdaks@njbiz.com](mailto:mdaks@njbiz.com)

*Photos by Christina Mazza*



**Joe Moretti, above, co-owner of Service Metal Fabricating, in Rockaway, says the company did some hiring to meet the deadline for its part of the project: bronze memorial plaques featuring the names of Americans killed in terrorist attacks.**



