

Firm sees upswing in construction

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In its 93 years of business, Hanover, NH-based Trumbull-Nelson Construction Company has gone through a lot of economic cycles, no two of which have been alike.

This spring, there is evidence the demand for its services is on the rise, as the combination of low interest rates and reduced prices for construction materials helps to drive interest in residential and commercial projects.

"The level of interest in work, especially for residential renovations and commercial fit-ups, increased significantly over the winter," said Steve Usle, director of sales and marketing for Trumbull-Nelson.

"By February, we were already working on a wide variety of bid and construction management proposals, some of which involved ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) funds," Usle said. "We anticipate a very busy building period in the months ahead."

Through the years, Trumbull-Nelson (T-N) has built a variety of projects including residential, commercial and institutional. While the techniques, equipment, materials and scope of specialties offered have changed at T-N through the decades, management has remained dedicated to remaining among the top builders in the Upper Valley.

The quality and scope of its work continues to earn recognition. A few years ago, Business NH magazine rated Trumbull-Nelson as the fourth-fastest-growing business in the state in its profile of New Hampshire's top 100 private companies.

This spring, residents will be moving into The Woodlands, a 66-unit retirement community on the campus of Alice Peck Day Hospital in Lebanon, NH that T-N has been working on since breaking ground 18 months ago. T-N serves as project manager, and UK Architects of Norwich, VT created the design for the four-story apartment building, which features underground parking. More than half of the apartments were already reserved by early this year. The aging-in-place community complements Harvest Hill, which is also located on the Alice Peck Day property.

T-N has established a reputation in the region for doing work for area schools. It is construction manager for building renovations to the historic Slocumb Hall at Proctor Academy; that work is set to begin in mid-April. Slocumb Hall is home to the school's fine arts program and is a popular gathering spot for students in the center of campus.

Originally a livery stable before being converted to the school gymnasium, Slocumb Hall will gain a 1,600-square-foot addition to be followed by a 4,500-square-foot addition to the existing timber-frame structure.

Banwell Architects drew the plan to provide additional classroom space and improve the existing building's exterior envelope, lighting systems and heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems, according to Todd Thompson, project manager for T-N.

"We have constructed a series of recent projects for Proctor Academy and place the highest value on our ongoing relationship," Thompson said. "We collaborate well with Proctor's administration, staff and trustees and work hard to extract as much value as possible from each project budget dollar."

Another significant school project has been well underway at the Thetford Academy, a high school serving about 400 students in the Thetford, VT area. Thompson, who also serves as manager of this project, said work for the addition and renovation to the Daniel Science

Building was completed by the first of the year.

That work includes a 2,500-square-foot addition and renovation of approximately 9,000 square feet of space; occupancy is anticipated in early April. Work on the Anderson Gymnasium, including about 14,000 square feet of renovation and an addition of about 20,000 square-feet, is slated for completion in August.

The overall expansion and upgrade plan, which includes improved thermal insulation at the school, has been in the works for many months, said Thompson; Banwell Architects drew the plans. Subcontractors include Northwoods Excavating, Cole Electric and North Chapman Builders, all of Thetford; Dayco Roofing of Sharon; and Thomas Mechanical and Sheetmetal Specialists of South Burlington.

"We appreciate the high standards and focus on value that the academy's building committee and Banwell Architects have established for this project," said Thompson. "We are happy to be working with a high-quality group of local and regional subcontractors and applaud the skills and dedication they bring to the project."

Another large school project that included renovations and additions was recently wrapped up at Grantham Village School. The addition of 15,000 square feet of space and renovation of 27,000 square feet of existing floor area took over 12 months to complete at a price tag of about \$6.1 million.

The work included creation of a new larger cafeteria, six new classrooms, an all-new electrical system and a new displacement ventilation system. "The school now has a 150-kilowatt generator, security system and door access control, as well as a new library area, landscaping and new decorative entrances," said Tony Instasi, project manager for T-N.

This May, T-N will start work at Seminary Hill School; the work should be finished in August, according to Instasi. The \$333,000 project is being done for the city of Lebanon, and consists of a 400-square-foot elevator addition. Banwell Architects designed the project.

T-N will handle a different type of project in early April for the town of Colebrook, NH: a building with a 432-square-foot footprint that will house a water treatment system. Two large new water pumps and ductile iron water mains will carry the water through the station in this \$645,000 project, slated for completion in late July.

For the last half-century, T-N has made construction of upscale private homes a specialty in addition to building area automobile dealerships, banks and churches and Upper Valley landmarks including the Powerhouse Arcade in West Lebanon and the Woodstock Inn.

Usle said evidence is mounting that the next few years will be a good period for the region's construction industry: "Overall, our business is clearly picking up again," he said.