

Look around Sandusky, You'll see the fruits of Poulos + Associates Architects, Inc.'s labors.

By TRISH DOLLER

trishdoller@sanduskyregister.com

PERKINS TWP.



Register photo/DANIEL MILLER
Greg Schmid, at left, Bob Stadler, Mark Wagner and George Poulos sit in front of several drawings from Poulos + Associates Architects Inc.'s major projects.

Poulos has been to Erie County Human Services, Fifth Third Bank, the Sandusky Yacht Club and Firelands Regional Medical Center.

But Poulos is not a student, athlete, hospital patient or bank customer - it's an architecture firm - and its fingerprints, or blueprints, can be found all over the area.

Founded by George Poulos in 1983, Poulos and Associates Architects Inc. has completed more than \$500 million worth of projects.

Poulos, 53, who said he considers himself the firm's director, has three other professional architects on staff - Greg Schmid, Bob Stadler and Mark Wagner.

The firm at 1717 E. Perkins Ave. designs and prepares construction documents - blueprints - as well as oversees the construction process for 50-60 projects a year, Poulos said, with construction values averaging "from a quarter of a million to \$6 million a year."

He said a typical project "from the time we sign a contract with the owner until the time it's complete can run from 18 months to two years breaks down to about three to six months of design and construction documents and about a year of construction."

Poulos said the firm also offers the

Sandusky City Schools.....Poulos was there.
Sandusky YMCAPoulos was there, too.

services of a schools consultant, former Perkins schools superintendent Maxwell Shoff, who "assists schools that are in their infancy state of development and funding."

Poulos and his associates are no strangers to school design and construction.

The firm designed and oversaw construction in 1991 of the multi-purpose rooms added to many of Sandusky's elementary schools, as well as completed projects for Immaculate Conception Junior High School in Bellevue and the St. Paul's Convocation Center in Norwalk.

While the additions did not net national acclaim or professional accolades, Poulos said he is proud of the Sandusky job "because of the challenge of getting the work done in a time period that wouldn't disrupt the learning process ... on time and under budget," as well as the challenge of integrating the materials of the additions with the older buildings.

Poulos and Associates also enjoys a long list of completed local commercial design projects including Max and Erma's Restaurant, Perkins Pancake House, Vermilion's Red Clay Restaurant, Sandusky IAB and Stein Hospice Service Inc.

Another design project at Put-in-Bay's Beer Barrel Saloon at Put-in-Bay, with its record-holding "World's Longest Bar," netted a special distinction for Poulos. "I'm in the Guinness Book of World Records, if you can believe that," he said.

In addition, Poulos said the firm has done multiple design projects for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, including some buildings at Maumee Bay State Park near

Toledo, South Bass and Kelleys Island state parks and a more than \$40 million upcoming project designing the park and marina on Middle Bass Island - built on their reputation.

"We have been very fortunate ... our experience level puts us in a category to be pre-qualified by the state architect's office and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources such that we do not have to interview in order to be considered for future project by the state," he said. "We are constantly short-listed for work, which gives us an advantage when competing with larger firms."

The firm is licensed to practice architecture in six states, including Michigan, where the architects are working on projects for the Starbuck's coffeehouse chain.

Poulos attributes the firm's reputation to "our attention to detail and constantly monitoring the process from concept to completion."

And from working as a team. "The firm is set up so each architect will maintain a project management role, but we interact every day so that people who hire our firm, hire four individuals," he said.

While Poulos designs are known more for function than flash, the firm's 84-percent repeat client base means it's doing something right, Poulos said.

"When we get the testimonial letters, that's when we know we've done our job," Poulos said. "The hope is that we can come back in 30-50 years and they can still have a utilitarian, useful life."

Permission granted to publish this article.