RIDING THE CONCRETE ROLLERCOASTER
Profiling Madison Concrete Construction
By Kimberly Kayler

James Dolente Sr., the company visionary who continues to guide the Madison team today, built Madison Concrete Construction from a strong foundation of concrete construction knowledge and a desire for excellence. With great admiration for his grandfather and father, James and his brother established the company in the fall of 1969 with a vision to bring their passion for concrete construction to the region. Today, the next generation of the Dolente family is actively involved in the leadership of the company.

Rollercoaster “In today’s market, every firm in the design and construction industry has had to face tremendous challenges,” said Jim Dolente, Sr., Chairman of the Board. “Unfortunately, for our team, the challenging economy resulted in a bit of a rollercoaster. However, no matter how challenging, we were adamant about not wavering our commitment to safety, quality and innovation.”

And so, in spite of the challenge economy, Madison’s commitment to growth has helped make them one of the most successful pure commercial concrete contractors around. Through careful planning and a lot of perseverance, the company has been able to ensure ultimate flexibility in staffing projects and meeting the needs of multiple clients at the same time. For example, Madison responded to the changing economy by conducting a survey of clients to ensure the company understood the challenges its clients were facing in their projects. “We recognized that the marketplace wasn’t just challenging for us, but also for the general contractors and owners we serve,” said Jim Dolente, Jr., President. “As such, we wanted to make sure that, as we adapted our approach to these changing times that we truly understood the needs of our clients.”

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One of the lessons learned was that Madison’s clients were also being asked to take on more responsibility and liability. Owners continue to ask for more guarantees than ever before in terms of financial backing, safety and on-time performance. Such stringent requests resulted in increased requests for financial statements, Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) logs and other forms of validation of a firm’s sta-
“While price is again a driving force today, we do not necessarily view price and cost as the same,” said Dolente, Jr. “Cost is a combination of price and schedule and safety and quality. If we save a few dollars on the actual material or installation price, but the vendor or subcontractor impacts our ability to perform the work, there is actually a cost overrun rather than a savings. This is why we work closely with our key allies and have relationships that have lasted as long as Madison has been in business in some instances. Too often, price is viewed as the only factor. In reality, low price sometimes is an equivalent to higher cost.”

**Ambulatory Care Center** Madison’s business approach has earned the company an impressive list of projects in the Greater Philadelphia area. From the Revel Casino Tower, to Harrah’s Bay Tower, the Barnes Foundation, The Federal Detention Center, The National Constitution Center, Lincoln Financial Field, PPL Park, Wells Fargo Center and Princeton University Chemistry Building, the Madison team continues to build the region around them.

Case in point is the new Ambulatory Care Center (ACC) at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. Madison Concrete began work on the project, which involves construction of a new nine-story outpatient ambulatory facility and a

**Continued Investment** According to Dolente, Jr., Madison’s employees try very hard every day to adhere strictly to their mission statement: “To consistently provide superior quality concrete construction, in a safe environment, with a reputation for honesty, integrity and responsiveness to our clients, vendors, and our employees.” To this end, though many firms cut training and research efforts during the last few years, such innovation is central to Madison’s business approach. Throughout the firm’s growth process, they have invested in extensive improvement efforts, utilizing the latest technology and developing innovative techniques for field implementation. The investment extends to the office in terms of technology to streamline payroll and timekeeping, project management software and items such as surveying and finishing equipment.

And this approach to business also extends to strategic alliances with several key suppliers and subcontractors.
2116 Chestnut Street Redvelopment is also the theme for the new John Buck Company structure at 2116 Chestnut Street. The new mixed-use building will feature ground floor retail on Chestnut St., new space for the Hillman Medical Center, and a 34-story tower of 309 residential rentals. Completion is expected second quarter of next year.

One of the main objectives for this project is to open the building for rental far enough in advance of the start of the 2013 school year to maximize the opportunity for university students, one of its core target tenant markets, as the property is situated closely to several local facilities of higher learning. Due to developers’ overall belief that there is a demand for rental units in the City, The John Buck Company believes the key is being one of the first to market. Madison is answering the call by achieving a three-day “cycle” on the typical floors, from level six (6) through 34.

Family Court Madison is also involved in the largest construction project in Philadelphia since the expansion of the Pennsylvania Convention Center and the renovation of the former 30th Street Post Office for the IRS. The new $160 million Family Court facility, located at 15th and Arch Streets, will allow all juvenile delinquency cases and family court cases in the First Judicial District (FJD), Philadelphia’s court system, to be held at a single location. The 14-story, 510,000 square foot building also will have three underground levels for parking. The project is scheduled to be complete by spring 2014.

With several high-profile projects in the works, Madison Concrete is poised to continue growing. “My father instilled in me and other managers at Madison the importance of our mission statement,” Dolente, Jr. said. “Our success depends on working hard and surrounding ourselves with talented people like our dedicated field staff. They take pride in representing Madison in the field and completing work the ‘Madison way,’ which circles back to our mission statement and the importance of quality, safety, honesty, integrity and responsiveness.”

The Ambulatory Care Center (ACC) at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia involves the construction of a nine-story facility and a five-level underground parking garage.

The Granary Many of Madison’s projects also help build or redevelop communities, such as The Granary. Located in the Logan Square neighborhood of Center City, The Granary is surrounded by world-class museums and located a stone’s throw from The Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The Granary is also within easy walking distance to Center City’s major office buildings, restaurants and entertainment destinations. Comprised of 227 luxury apartments and more than 20,000 square feet of prime retail space and underground parking, the three-year, $66.2 million project is expected to be completed by late 2013. Madison is proud to have helped convert the design of the structure from a structural steel wall bearing hybrid system to a cast-in-place concrete structure utilizing the filigree wide slab method of concrete construction.

five-level underground parking garage, in April. The 750,000 square foot parking structure will feature post-tensioned and conventional cast-in-place concrete construction, with 400,000 square feet of steel deck slabs. Madison previously worked on the neighboring South Campus facility for Children’s Hospital (Colkett Building). This new project will also extend the hospital’s central utility plant.

A unique feature of the parking structure is the design of cast-in-place braced frames in the portion of the structure below the structural steel ACC tower. The decision to utilize this type of concrete element was borne from the owner’s desire to maintain open sightlines throughout the structure, creating a safe and secure environment for the facility’s visitors. These concrete diagonal braces support the steel braces directly above throughout the steel structure. Without the owner’s specific requirements for openness, more traditional concrete shear walls would most likely have been designed.

While this type of design is not new to concrete construction, this is one of the first, if not the first, structure in the Philadelphia region to use this method. The brace frames included extremely congested areas of reinforcing steel, complex connections to adjacent columns and beams and 8000 and 9000 psi concrete. Due to the amount of reinforcing steel, Madison is placing Self Consolating Concrete (SCC) in order to minimize voids in the frames.