

# The VMJR Companies Reinforcing a Niche in General Contracting

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The VMJR Companies (VMJR) provides upstate New York with high-quality commercial and municipal construction services. VMJR offers not only general construction, but construction management, design-build services, as well as program management services in the educational, healthcare, institutional, industrial and commercial marketplace through its subsidiaries. Today VMJR is the 14th largest construction company in New York's capital region, as well as one of the Top 500 Remodelers nationally, as ranked 154 by Qualified Remodelers Magazine.

When VMJR was founded in 1991, the company took hold of two well-established companies in the construction industry. Adirondack Construction, founded in 1947, performs extensive work in adaptive reuse of historical structures, commercial renovations and reconstruction projects. While Sweet Constructors – formerly known as Sweet Associates Inc. – was founded in 1951, and focuses on institutional, industrial and historical restoration projects, especially with higher education buildings and medical facilities. Sweet has been recognized for its work through numerous awards, including awards from the American Concrete Institute, Associated

General Contractors of New York and the Capital District Masonry Council.

The team at VMJR operates out of Glens Falls, N.Y., but does work extensively throughout the upstate area, including Vermont and Massachusetts. The company currently employs around 35 people, allowing VMJR to self-perform its general trades work.

Victor Macri, president, CEO and founder of VMJR, began his career in construction in 1971, and was hired shortly thereafter as an employee for Sweet. Macri says he is committed to the upstate New York region, his industry and his community. Macri shows his commitment through active participation in many construction industry organizations and civic organizations.

Macri currently serves as a national and regional member for the American Concrete Institute (ACI) and the Construction Specification Institute (CSI). Macri also served as the former president of the Glens Falls Contractors Association, past board member of Eastern Contractors Association of New York, past safety



committee chairman and board member of the AGC of New York, as well as chairman of the New York State Construction Industry Council of the NYS Business Council. Macri also served as president and chairman of the Lake George Opera Festival, as well as for the town of Queensbury planning board and as an executive committee member of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of the Capital Region. In addition, Macri is currently serving as an executive committee member, board member and properties chairman of the Twin River Council of the Boy Scouts of America, where he also recently served on the strategic planning committee. Macri is also a regional board member of Glens Fall National Bank.

### Picking Up Projects

With Macri's numerous connections, the company is already a step ahead of its competitors. However, neither the company nor Macri rests on its laurels. VMJR is constantly proposing, negotiating or bidding large-scale projects. The company continues to work on a wide range of projects, including transportation facilities, renovations and adaptive reuse projects, the construction and renovation of water treatment and wastewater treatment facilities, school building additions and renovations, healthcare facilities and much more.

Adirondack finished a \$2 million parking lot and playground expansion for the Cambridge Central School District in Cambridge, N.Y., in October 2012. The extensive project took the company only nine weeks to plan and execute, which included the entire infrastructure. "It was a quick project for us," says Macri. "It was a satisfying accomplishment."

A longer term project was completed in May 2012 for the New York Racing Association at the oldest circular race track in the country. The association needed to reconfigure storm water drainage for Saratoga Race Course, and therefore called upon Adirondack. The team started work in late fall 2011 to reclaim and improve the storm water system of basins, dams, outfalls and outlets at the racetrack.

"We did the storm water reclamation project in the winter time in order to take advantage of the frozen ground, and to basically not only facilitate the work, but also eliminate or minimize the amount of disruption to the water flow at that time," explains Macri. "The water level seemed to be lower, so you are not mucking up the water, which is a big thing to not go in and create silt and other things that create other problems."

Of course, the team made sure that the work was done in time for

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the 2012 racing season to start. “The start of the season for them is in June as horses arrive on site, and we completed the majority of work in early April and finalized the plantings in May,” reports Macri.

### Repeat Clients Enjoying the Benefits

The team’s impressive successes solidify VMJR’s reputation for reliability, and the company is proud to say it sees many return clients. Adirondack has been completing work for the past 15 years for Skidmore College. The company recently restored stone retaining walls and also renovated buildings throughout the campus.

As for Sweet, the company is in the midst of a large-scale brick façade replacement project at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Work on the seven-story project consists of the removal of over 60,000 square feet of failing brick and the replacing of it with a terracotta rain screen system. The work began in 2010, and Macri expects to be finished by 2016.

“The project is a brick replacement, where we basically strip off the brick of the façade and put on the rain-screen system that consists of a breathable liquid membrane vapor barrier, fiber insulation and aluminum framing system,” explains Macri. “The framing system supports an architectural terracotta tile. It is one of the first brick replacements of this scale in upstate New York. This type of repair of failing facades will probably be what we will be looking at for the next 20-to-30 years, because it makes the building more energy efficient and it shields it from the environment. The systems are low maintenance and basically allow for the elements to penetrate and shed the system without infiltrating the building.”

Macri explains that the terracotta has no physical connection to the tile, which is referred to as a positive pressure system. “It is an innovative system,” Macri continues. “It is a relatively new technique in the United States, though it has been done in Europe for decades.” However, Macri then notes, “as a brick replacement, it’s a rarity. We have come up with methods to make it work, and also be cost effective.”

There’s also an addition to Schenectady Library that Sweet recently

completed, which is a building the company originally constructed in 1965. “This is a project that was competitively bid by us that was on a facility that our company originally built,” explains Macri. “It was an expansion of that library in a very confined space, but architecturally it really created a new look to the entire facility. The work included architectural precast arches that we engineered and erected as part of the facility, as well as structural glass and curtain wall systems. The addition created new children library space and meeting areas.”

Sweet’s staff self-performs the majority of the company’s work and can handle all aspects of restoration, concrete, masonry and other general trade work. Additionally, Adirondack is a Ceco Building Systems Pre-Engineered Building franchisee, allowing the company to make its services more cost effective for certain clients. In this respect, the team erects these metal structures, as well as completes drywall projects. “We self-perform masonry, drywall, structural concrete ... we do it all,” says Macri. “We don’t need to subcontract out work, we know these systems and we do it all ourselves.”



VMJR uses its sister company, Thatcher-Brook Millwork and Door, for woodworking and historic restoration services. The division specializes in window and door restoration and reproduction, rounding VMJR’s capabilities.

VMJR doesn’t plan on slowing down any time soon. Macri recognizes the industry market has been fractured for many years, and he attributes the company’s success to its focus on specialized work. “We’re concentrating on niche stuff,” says Macri. “This includes historic restorations, masonry restoration and rain screen systems.” Macri also says that he keeps his eye out for proposal requests on repair or replacement of water and wastewater treatment plants. He says the recent trend is focused on improving treatment facilities throughout New York.

Whether the collaborative VMJR team is working in the institutional, industrial or commercial industry, the company’s best foot is always put forward. In Macri’s foreseeable future, the VMJR Companies will surely continue to work by the corporate philosophy focused on competence, integrity, reliability and quality. •