

## Design-build team of Certified General Contractors, CEG, and DNA delivers new 15,000-square-foot Palm Bay Fire Station ahead of schedule; 'timeless design'

By Ken Datzman

PALM BAY — The veteran design-build team that recently completed the new Palm Bay Fire Station, a roughly 15,000-square-foot building on Port Malabar Boulevard, thinks they have a showcase facility within that industry and hope to gain this city some recognition for the project.

The team for the new Fire Station 1 included Certified General Contractors, the Construction Engineering Group, and Dave Nagrodsky Architects.

"I believe that Dave's design of the front façade of the fire station is going to be timeless," said businessman Jim Stivers, president and founder of Certified General Contractors, a firm that caters to the commercial-building market.

"People will drive by this fire station 20 years from now and will have no idea the year it was built. What's nice about a design like this is its look is not dated."

"We wanted to make it an icon for the City of Palm Bay. Hopefully, they will reproduce it on a smaller scale around the town for some of their other stations," added Nagrodsky, whose signature designs in the region include the new Melbourne City Hall.

The station is one of five serving the more than 100,000 residents of Palm Bay, the largest city in Brevard County.

The interior finishes were designed to sustain the "wear and tear of the firemen living there."

Ryan Runte, vice president and senior project manager for Certified General Contractors, said the design-build team plans to submit the project to "Fire Chief" magazine's annual "Station Style Design Awards" competition.

"We think it's very worthy of consideration," said Runte, who headed up the Fire Station 1 project team for Certified General Contractors. The prestigious competition recognizes architects and fire departments for their achievements in fire-station design and construction.

The project winners are highlighted in the November issue of the magazine which is seen by more than 47,000 fire chiefs, officers, and manufacturers in the service market.

Civil engineer Jake Wise, a Construc-

tion Engineering Group partner, said the design-build team worked closely with Palm Bay city staff on the project.

"We worked hand-in-hand with the city. We had to do some rezoning and also relocated a water-main storm drainpipe. It was all part of the project. We worked through the city staff and city council to get the work completed in a timely manner."

"We worked closely with Palm Bay assistant fire chief Art Renfro, who was very involved in the project," said Runte. "He assisted us in every way during the construction and design of the station."

The building, which took about six to seven months to complete, was delivered to the City of Palm Bay ahead of schedule.

"The city was expecting to be in the building in October," said Runte, "and they were able to move in the first week of August. We fast-tracked the construction."

The \$2 million station on Port Malabar Boulevard replaces the old Station 1 on Palm Bay Road, which was constructed decades ago. The new facility will help the city improve its efficiency and better serve its citizens.

In 2011, Fire Station 1, on Palm Bay Road, responded to more than 4,000 calls for service in the community. That number made up roughly 35 percent of the total calls for fire-rescue service throughout the City of Palm Bay.

The new station, in a residential area, is situated on five acres. Wise said two acres were preserved. "From a site perspective, we were able to save most of the trees and the vegetation. So it was an environmentally friendly project."

He added, "We did some right-of-way improvements and median improvements to give the fire trucks the full access they need."

The three area businesses — Certified General Contractors, the Construction Engineering Group, and Dave Nagrodsky Architects — were awarded the Fire Station 1 project through a request-for-proposal, or a competitive-bid process, that resulted in about 15 companies submitting their qualifications.

"We made the short list of five companies and went on to win the contract," said Runte.

"We came in under the city's budget



BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

This design-build team did two construction projects for the City of Palm Bay over the last two years, including the new 15,000-square-foot Fire Station 1 on Port Malabar Boulevard. From left: Jake Wise, partner, Construction Engineering Group; Ryan Runte, vice president and senior project manager, Certified General Contractors; Jim Stivers, president and CEO, Certified General Contractors; and Dave Nagrodsky, principal, DNA.

for the project. It was another example of a great public-private partnership, just like the Palm Bay City Hall Annex project the same team did last year."

The design-build team constructed the new Palm Bay City Hall Annex, a 27,000-square-foot building on Malabar Road.

"I think the success of the Palm Bay City Hall Annex, having worked with the city staff closely on that project, played a big part in our team winning the fire-station contract," said Wise.

"This design-build team has worked together on projects for the past 10 years," said Stivers. "There is a lot of cohesiveness. We're thankful to the city of Palm Bay for these opportunities. The team has enjoyed providing services to them and to

the citizens of Palm Bay."

The \$5 million three-story Palm Bay City Annex houses a host of departments that cater to residents, including water and sewer billing. The facility was built with federal stimulus funds and a loan.

The Palm Bay City Hall Annex was designed as a LEED building. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. These types of buildings typically lower operating costs, conserve water and energy, and reduce harmful greenhouse emissions.

Palm Bay Mayor John Mazziotti, in a recent "BBN" article on the facility, said the annex is a long-term investment for the city. "We're actually saving money versus renting. We have ownership of the building."