

# PERRECA ELECTRIC COMPANY, INC.



## THE START OF A GREEN JOURNEY

by Gina L. Diorio

LOCATED IN NEW YORK'S HUDSON Valley, Perreca Electric Company, Inc. is one of the region's largest electrical and technological contractors for commercial clients, serving companies such as IBM, Wyeth, and Gap/Old Navy in New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey.

Although the company is approaching its 60th anniversary, March of 2008 marked the birth of Perreca's green initiative and the month the company joined the USGBC. "It was time," says executive vice president Robert Kaehler. "People want their buildings built green, and most of the projects we do are very large projects, so they're being designed

green." Reflecting on the company's progress in the last few months, Kaehler adds, "We're very new to this, but even though we're new, we've made giant strides in the last couple of months towards becoming green as a company."

Prior to going green, the company did not have an office recycling program in place, but since implementing one, its staff has found that approximately 90 percent of office waste is recyclable. Additionally, the company recently switched from utilizing standard copy paper to recycled paper. "We're doing whatever we can to prevent landfilling our waste products," Kaehler

*Above: 911 Center, Orange County, NY.*

says. "That's what's its all about: sustainable living and cutting back on landfilling."

Perreca's green transformation has stretched from the office to job sites, and Kaehler notes that in addition to encouraging carpooling on larger projects, the company has consolidated material deliveries, established delivery routes based on geography, and instituted an advance ordering system among foremen to decrease the number of trips made to sites and to conserve gasoline.

The company has also begun recycling the large amounts of cardboard that accompany electrical fixtures and products. This entails either unpacking the products in Perreca's main warehouse and placing the cardboard in the recyclables

ahead of the curve."

Looking ahead, he notes the company's goals are to become LEED-certified and to continue to develop, implement, and maintain green methods. "As a company, we've committed ourselves that we're going to do this," he says, "and so far the response from our management and employees has been very good, very open, and very receptive to the process." Indeed, two employees are already on their way to becoming LEED-certified.

"I want to be able to represent to our customers that we're doing our part to help the environment." Kaehler notes. "We're doing our part for sustainable living. If everybody just did something, it would certainly make a big difference." <sup>GBQ</sup>

PERRECA  
ELECTRIC  
COMPANY, INC.

PERRECA ELECTRIC COMPANY, INC.  
AT A GLANCE

LOCATION: Newburgh, NY

AREA OF SPECIALTY:

Commercial, industrial, and institutional electrical and technological contracting

PROJECTS PER YEAR:

At least 10–15 multimillion-dollar projects; numerous smaller projects

2007 REVENUE: \$50 million +

EMPLOYEES: 150 +

“ IF EVERYBODY JUST DID SOMETHING,  
IT WOULD CERTAINLY MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE. ”

*Robert Kaehler, Executive Vice President*

receptacle there or, for larger jobs, using separate on-site dumpsters specifically to separate recyclable products. Furthermore, the company is encouraging its manufacturers to use recycled cardboard.

Perreca is also thinking creatively of additional methods of sustainability. For example, in the early 1970s and 1980s, the reels utilized to transport electrical wire were made of wood and were always returnable and reusable. This changed in the mid-1980s, however, and the reels are now land-filled. Perreca is actively seeking manufacturers that will accept and reuse returned reels. "Right now," Kaehler states, "we're trying to stay



Above: IBM Building 323 East Fishkill, NY, semiconductor plant completed.