

BEST NEW  
DEVELOPMENT OR RENOVATION  
INDUSTRIAL



PHOTOGRAPHER / SCOTT PAULUS

## DERSE INC. NATIONAL CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

3800 W. CANAL ST., MILWAUKEE

### PROJECT CREDITS

OWNER/DEVELOPER:  
HSI Development Partners LLC

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:  
Hunzinger Construction Co.

ARCHITECT:  
Eppstein Uhen Architects Inc.

ENGINEER:  
Sigma Environmental Inc. (environmental); Terracon Consultants Inc. (soil stability testing)

LEGAL COUNSEL:  
Davis & Kuelthau SC

LEAD FINANCE:  
M&I Bank

PROJECT COST:  
\$10 million

Derse Inc., a national designer and manufacturer of trade show exhibits, joined the list of emerging businesses moving into Milwaukee's revitalized Menomonee Valley when it moved in 2008 into its new \$10 million national headquarters on Canal Street, near Miller Park.

"We chose this site over several others," said Ryan Schultz, principal and co-owner of HSI Development Partners LLC, which managed the project and leases the building to Derse. "We wanted to be the gateway into the Menomonee Valley."

The location offers Derse lots of visibility both from traffic within the valley and Interstate 94 overhead, HSI co-owner Brett Haney said.

Derse, which has six other locations nationwide, designs and builds promotional exhibits for trade shows and marketing events. Therefore, the site of its headquarters needed to accommodate both the company's creative design component with 25,000 square feet of class A office space, along with 130,000 square feet of industrial space sufficient for warehousing and light manufacturing operations.

"We wanted to design and create something that reflects what we actually do for our clients," said Derse vice president and co-owner Bill McNamara. "It's what we're about."

The company's expansion was funded through the assistance of \$4 million in New Markets Tax Credits issued by M&I Bank and \$4.175 million from industrial revenue bonds issued through

Baird and backed by M&I. The company's move brings more than 150 "family-supporting" jobs to Milwaukee, Haney said. As Derse's national headquarters, the Milwaukee location will host all corporate and training meetings, drawing employees from its other locations to the city.

The new building is on a former brownfield left behind after a rail manufacturer went out of business in the 1980s. For 20 years, there was no activity on the site until public-private partnerships like the nonprofit Menomonee Valley Partners LLC began redeveloping the land for new industrial companies to move into the valley.

"They (Derse) are one of six businesses that have purchased land there. They will be the fifth to have a ribbon-cutting," said Menomonee Valley Partners executive director Laura Bray.

Hunzinger Construction Co., Brookfield, began construction in May 2008, building a passive methane recovery system that ventilates gases produced by decomposition in the ground through pipes into the air. Derse moved in at the end of 2008.

HSI Development applied for LEED silver-industrial certification, Schultz said, and if approved will be the first industrial building in Milwaukee

to receive that certification level. Sensors detect activity levels in different areas of the building and adjust lighting on HVAC to save energy. Derse's McNamara said the green design will reduce energy use by 14 percent and water use by 40 percent. The energy-saving features cost \$125,000, which Schultz said will be recovered within eight years through energy utility savings.



RENDERING PROVIDED BY DERSE INC.

Elements of new urban design, including pedestrian-friendly walkways and rear parking that allows buildings to be closer to the street, give the Derse building a modern take on the smokestacks of old-time industrial buildings and help give the valley a fresh look.

"We put in a huge amount of capital to make this really a cutting-edge design center," Schultz said.

— Jim McLaughlin