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Issue SIX

Confluence Arts Center

A defining moment for arts in the Chippewa Valley

Holzman Moss Bottino in conjunction with Strang

THE EMMYLOUS THAT'S WHO

When she's singing and playing guitar, Katie Lowery looks nothing like a mechanical engineer. But outside her day job as Director of Integrated Control Systems at Strang, Katie performs with the Emmylous, a Madison-area folk band.



ADVICE TO YOUR 25-YEAR-OLD SELF

Woulda, Coulda, Shoulda. Even though there was no DeLorean in sight, we asked some of our staff to go back in time and have a little heart-to-heart with... themselves.



EVER GRATEFUL

To our predecessors
who instilled a spirit
of discovery, rigor,
and creativity.



To our clients who
entrust us with their
vision and resources.



To our colleagues who
unify professional
passion with
expertise.

The Readers of *InBusiness Magazine* named
*Strang the 2015 winner of the Executive Choice
Award for Commercial Architectural Firm in Madison*
for the third consecutive year.

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CONFLUENCE ARTS CENTER

4. A new performing arts center in Eau Claire will break ground soon, heralding a new era for arts in the Chippewa Valley.

THE EMMYLOUS THAT'S WHO

10. This mechanical engineer has broken all stereotypes by singing and playing for a Madison area folk band.

ADVICE TO YOUR 25-YEAR-OLD SELF

15. Years of experience in a career will teach you what you wish you knew when you were just 25.



InBusiness Magazine readers named Strang the top commercial architectural firm in Madison.



Where The Rivers Meet



con - flu - ence

'kän-, flü-ən(t)s, kən-'

noun: confluence; *plural noun:* confluences

1. the junction of two rivers, especially rivers of approximately equal width
2. an act or process of merging

C onfluence. For years in Eau Claire the word matched the first definition – the junction of the Eau Claire and Chippewa rivers in the downtown district.

Soon it will fit the second definition as well. The development of the Eau Claire Confluence Center has been a merging process of sorts between the public and private entities. Once it's built, various local arts groups will have an opportunity to work together at the new venue.

The Eau Claire Confluence Center offers the community an expansive performance space for actors, musicians and artists of all ages and talents levels. From the local children's theater group to university students and professionals, it will be a new place to learn, rehearse and perform.

The 130,000-square-foot performance center will stand on the north end of the downtown district, just minutes





Kimera Way
President, UW-Eau Claire Foundation
Exec. Dir. of Univ. Advancement

"I am filled with excitement and anticipation as our hopes and dreams come alive through the beautiful design of Malcom Holzman (Holzman Moss Bottino) and the folks at Strang, Inc. I believe the Arts Center will serve as an iconic gathering space for generations to come. It's been an emotional and humbling experience to be part of something that will have such impact."

from the campus of the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire.

With design in its final stage, construction should begin in the fall be completed by spring 2018. The project offers the community an arts and performance center like nothing it has had before.

A large main theater, a mid-size theater and a third floor gathering space that can be transformed for various types of performances will all be featured in the Confluence Center. Designers included space for art galleries, performance rehearsals, a scene shop, a green room and offices. The Visit Eau Claire visitors' center and the Eau Claire Regional Arts Center both have space in the building.

The Center will provide a striking image on the shore of the two rivers.

A large plaza reaching out to the shoreline where the two rivers meet



serves as a welcome mat into the Confluence Center. Plans for the four-story structure feature a great lobby with 40-foot-high windows visually connecting the interior to the spacious plaza, the rivers and downtown Eau Claire.

On the outside, visitors to the center will see 11 different roof elevations. Designers planned for windows to stretch upward from the plaza floor, dressed in colorful confetti glass. Dark gray stone will cover the main structure while curved bump-outs on the upper floors match the turns of the river. To further the connection with the flowing waters below, copper will cover the upper walls. The golden-brown copper will eventually fade into a blue-green patina.

A prominent lobby is the town center of the complex. Stretching up three stories, the space offers visual cues to the main theater behind it. Balconies on the theaters upper floors also open into the lobby.



Dan Clumpner
Principal,
Commonweal
Development Corp.
Eau Claire

“Our community and local university could not have addressed their arts related facility needs without working together in an unprecedented manner. As our project nears design completion, we are confident that we will have a building impressive in both form and function and a demonstrated model of collaboration that will extend well beyond this project.”

Designed to connect the performance space visually to the outside, the lobby offers walk-outs to the plaza and panoramic views of the plaza, the rivers and downtown Eau Claire.

The large theater, adjacent to its mid-size counterpart, will sit just behind the expansive lobby. On the opposite end of the main floor a gallery area for the visual arts will give visitors more entertainment options.

The third floor venue, Clearwater Hall – the English-equivalent to the French “Eau Claire” – gives the center a large gathering space for everything from banquets to performances.

The idea is to build a space that will not only showcase and embrace Eau Claire’s diverse performing arts community but one that is flexible enough for a variety of performances by a variety of performers. From scene shops to a street-level loading dock, this venue will provide professional-level space for performers.

University students will have the opportunity to both perform on stages and work behind-the-scenes building sets and designing theater lighting in a state-of-the-art facility. Actors, singers and musicians will all benefit from the high-end acoustical engineering in the main theater.

The Confluence project is funded through a public-private partnership. It's being developed by a team consisting of Commonweal Development Corporation, Blugold Real Estate (a subsidiary of the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire Foundation), and Market & Johnson.



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Playing Her Song

Folk singer, mechanical engineer? Truth is, Katie Lowery is both.

Katie, Director of Integrated Control Systems at Strang, has enjoyed singing since she was a child. But with neither opportunity nor encouragement, the avocation remained dormant. She went to college, got married and started an engineering career.



It drove her to inquire about joining a church band led by talented musician Jeff Rohlwing. When Jeff asked Katie if she could sing, she modestly told him, “I guess I can carry a tune.”

When he heard her sing, Jeff was impressed. “You have a great voice,” he said.

Then, a few years ago, she read a comment from singer Brandi Carlile who said it’s important for a singers to surround themselves with a community of musicians.

She soon joined the church band and it opened the door for more opportunities. Katie began considering performing folk songs at open-mic nights and asked a couple choir friends to sing with her.



When they performed during an open-mic at the Crossroads Coffee Shop in Cross Plains, the owner was impressed and encouraged them to come back later that week and play. It was the beginning of The Emmylous.

The group currently includes Katie on guitar and vocals, Ryn Thoen on accordion, keyboards and vocals, Kristi Blitz on keyboards and vocals and one man – Ed Boswell who plays percussion, guitar and an occasional vocal part.



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While The Emmylous perform mostly covers of folk and light rock songs, they have written a number of originals. They would love to record those songs someday, but their only real goal is to entertain people and have fun doing it.

“None of us is trying to hang our hat on this as an income source,” she said.

So for now, anyway, Katie will keep her day job as an engineer. The people at Strang are glad to hear that.

Photos by Sweeney Photography



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www.rmhcmadison.org

Please consider joining Strang in support of Ronald McDonald House





Engineering A Music Series

When Waunakee locals gather at the park with their blankets and lawn chairs on Tuesday nights, they have Katie Lowery to thank for the music.

Katie came up with the idea for Waunakee's Live From the Park series two years ago and has organized the summertime program ever since.

"Village Administrator Todd Schmidt showed me his Creative Economy Initiative and asked me if I had any ideas. I told him I'd like to see a summer concert series," Katie said.

So the singer/guitarist developed a family-friendly event with food trucks, and two hours of live music at the Waunakee Village Park Gazebo each Tuesday.

She's done everything from fundraising to grant-writing to hiring bands. Oh, and she also

performs. The Emmylous kick off the first half-hour of every program. A different band fills the role of featured performer each week.



NOTEBOOK

> Interior Designer Earns Certification

Strang Interior Design Specialist Britt Madelung has earned her certification by the NCIDQ – the highest qualification in the industry. The NCIDQ Examination, run by the Council for Interior Design Qualification, is the global leader in establishing standards of competence for interior design professionals. Requirements include specialized education and more than 3,520 hours of experience under a certified designer. Britt has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Interior Design from the University of Wisconsin – Madison and has been with Strang for three years.



> How I Spent My Summer Vacation

School may be out of session, but there was still work to be done. So for the first time in our long relationship with Madison College, a member of the architectural faculty spent the summer working at Strang. A licensed architect, Aaron Johnson has taught a variety of classes including Sustainable Design and Building Information Modeling. His addition brought even more depth to the talent at Strang while the project experience supplemented his teaching skills. Aaron will go back to teaching this fall.



Q & A

What Professional Advice Would You Give To Your 25-Year-Old Self?



Tom Zalewski, Architectural Design Specialist:

Besides advising myself to learn how to type, I would advise my 25-year-old self to “keep a sense of wonder and stay in touch with the reasons why I got into the profession in the first place.”



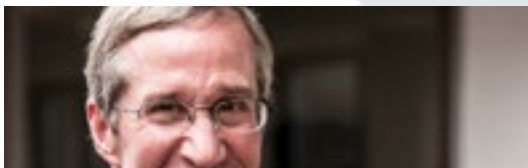
Roger Kuick, Senior Project Architect

The most challenging thing you will need to learn, and constantly work on, is how you relate to people, especially clients. One or two great client interactions will sustain you through the challenging times.



Jered Hartwell, Senior Electrical Designer

Approach everything with a positive mental attitude. Even in failures there is knowledge to be gained. Learn to collaborate; the greatest success is achieved when you and your colleagues are jointly successful. Above all keep and maintain a good sense of humor.



Bruce Kimball, Executive VP/Chief Engineering Officer

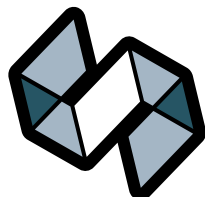
“You don’t have to know for certain what you want to do for the rest of your life. Pick a direction and give it your all. Try something, learn something, do something and see if you like it. If it doesn’t work, do something else. Ultimately you will find something you enjoy and are good at.”

From Best Practices To Next Practices
www.strang-inc.com

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Questions or comments, please contact Randy Banks at RBanks@strang-inc.com

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