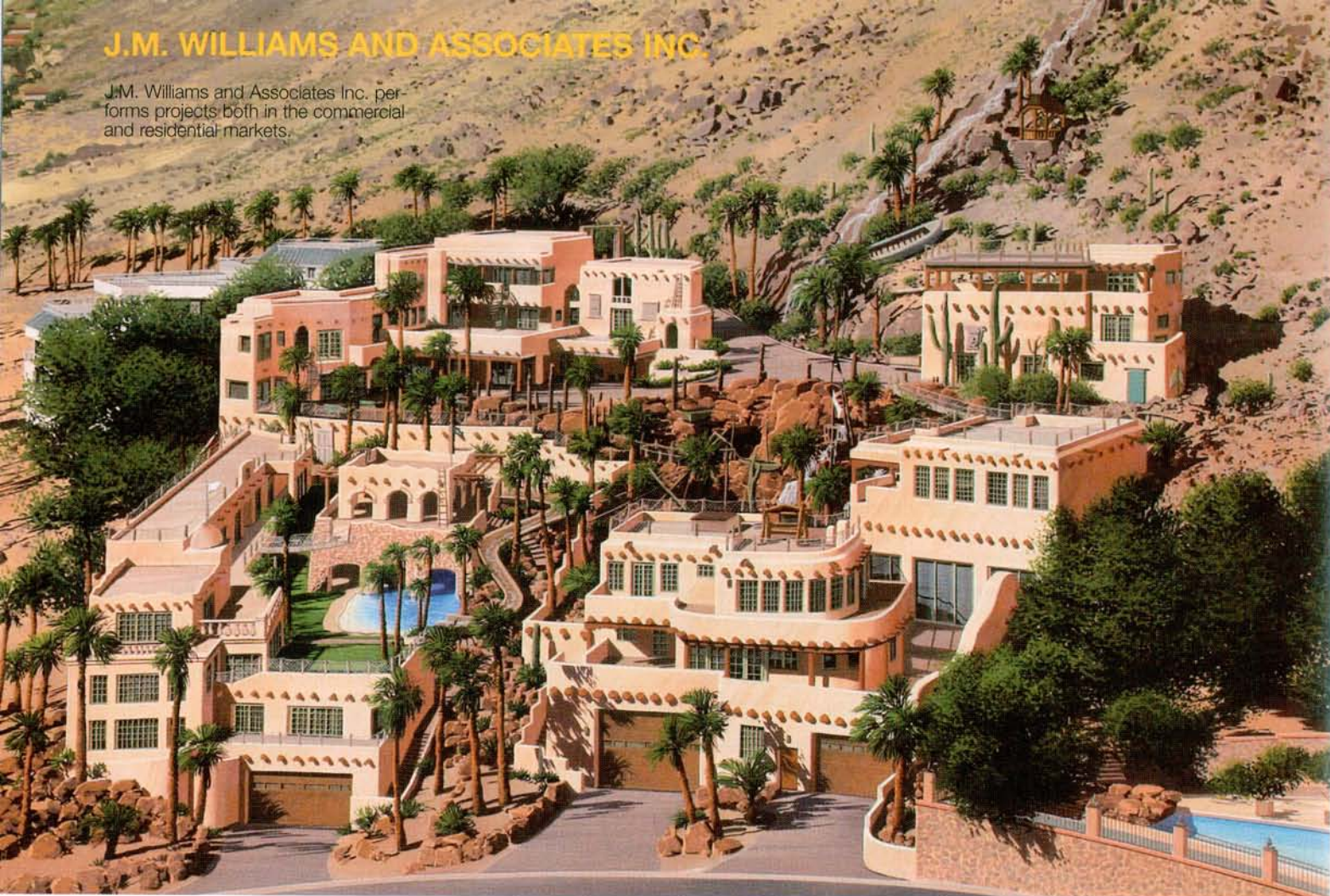


J.M. Williams and Associates Inc. performs projects both in the commercial and residential markets.



Broad Scope of Expertise

Although it is a small firm, Salt Lake City-based J.M. Williams and Associates specializes in a number of project types. It also forms and maintains long-term relationships with its clients.

By LIBBY JOHN

The standard in the construction industry today is to specialize in one thing, says James Williams, president of J.M. Williams and Associates (JMWA) Inc. "Our one thing happens to be an expertise in construction, which includes architecture and structural engineering of all types of buildings and structures," he says. "I guess we are old school."

The Salt Lake City-based company performs projects both in the commercial and residential markets. It is licensed in multiple states and has worked in 15 different countries. It currently has projects in Dubai and the

Caribbean, as well as stateside. "What used to be a community market grew into a regional market, then a national market and is now growing into a world market," he says.

Markets are changing continually, which is why the company decided not to focus in one area or building type. Some of the projects it is currently working on

include Arnold Palmer Signature Hotel, Arnold Palmer Signature Homes, golf cottages, a water park, a theme park, a 150,000-square-foot assisted living center and a 20-story mixed-use building. "If you were to ask our clients, some would say our expertise is with water structures, others resorts, others themed rides, others private estates, office buildings, etc.," he says.

Although it is a small company and is all over the map, it has been awarded for its work. JMWA has been ranked in the top two structural engineering firms in Utah for the past several years by the *Utah Business Magazine* and named top regional engineers and top regional architects in 2007 by McGraw-Hill Companies *Intermountain Contractor*. *Residential Design and Build* recently gave the company two national awards: Best Vacation Home located at Lead Better Farms on the coast of Washington; and Best Detached Structure for a private residence for "Pirates Cove," in Henderson, Nev.

The structure consisted of a guesthouse, gym, racquetball court, pools, waterfalls, cave, tunnel and a life-size pirate ship.

J.M. Williams and Associates Inc.

www.jmwa.com

2006 construction revenue: \$100 million

Headquarters: Salt Lake City

Employees: 20+

Services: Architecture and structural engineering

James Williams, president: "I guess we are old school."

Combining 'Form and Function'

Williams founded JMWA in 1992 after working for six years as a structural engineer. In the beginning, the company's only asset was Williams' reputation. "I used credit cards to finance the new operation," he recalls. "I probably should have taken a business class in college, but hey, everyone knows engineers are not businessmen."

But the hard work has paid off. The company recently signed a \$19 million contract for a new resort located in southern Utah. "For years, we have provided architectural and engineering services as consultants to other companies on large resort projects with no recognition," he says. "Over time, owners and contractors are becoming more and more familiar with who we are and have started contracting with us directly."

Part of that reason is also because the company forms relationships with owners and contractors. "As architects and engineers, we have a tendency to focus on the project, our new creation, and oftentimes miss the opportunity of developing a relationship with the client,

who will lead us to future projects," he says. "[However] the majority of our projects result from someone we know or someone we have worked with calling us and asking us to work on their job. We must be doing something right."

The company approaches each project as a new problem and works to find solutions for that problem. Although JMWA is a small firm, it does work that can rival larger firms, Williams says. "Being a licensed professional engineer, civil engineer, structural engineer and architect gives me a perspective and advantage in the design process that others don't have," he says. "It results in more opportunities and being able to find the solution faster and, oftentimes, more economically."

JMWA strives to make each project special and unique so that its clients have the opportunity to experience good architecture.

"We strive to combine form and function with feeling," Williams says. "I think in the future, more people will start to understand and appreciate architecture and have more opportunities to experience it and help with its creation."

AE URBIA LC

As a way to showcase its architectural services, JMWA formed an architectural and engineering firm, AE URBIA LC, in 2003. The company is a joint effort with Alex Schiel architects. "Past clients thought of us as an engineering firm and forgot about our architectural capabilities," Williams explains. "AE URBIA provided a way to market our architectural services in our local market while maintaining the JMWA brand."

JMWA's organizational structure is horizontal: All employees are treated equally and are encouraged to reach their full potential, Williams explains. "Everyone is important to the company and has their assigned roles and roles they may have created themselves, filling a certain need," he says.

Its employees have a good work ethic and enthusiasm to improve and learn. For example, although office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., most employees are in an hour or two earlier. Also, the company pays for seminars and encourages continued education. "We constantly have to learn and re-learn," he says. ■

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