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Eagle Mountain begins on green technology site

By MARY STONE

An Ontario County company is breaking ground today on a 22,000-square-foot monument to green building.

The building is to be the Center for Green Technology and Innovation and serve as the headquarters for Eagle Mountain Inc., a designer and manufacturer of energy-efficient systems for houses and small commercial properties.

Company officials say the building will serve as an example of the possibilities in green building—and provide a laboratory for research, development and education.

Founded in 1978, the 18-person Bristol firm just made the Rochester Business Alliance Inc.'s Rochester Top 100 list of fastest-growing local companies. Eagle Mountain ranked 87th. The company declined to reveal revenues except to say that from 2005 to 2006 revenues rose 58 percent and that double-digit growth is expected in 2007.

The new headquarters, approximately five miles north of Bristol Mountain, will be across the street from its current facility. The new building is designed for 30 acres, out of a total 100 acres Eagle Mountain owns there.

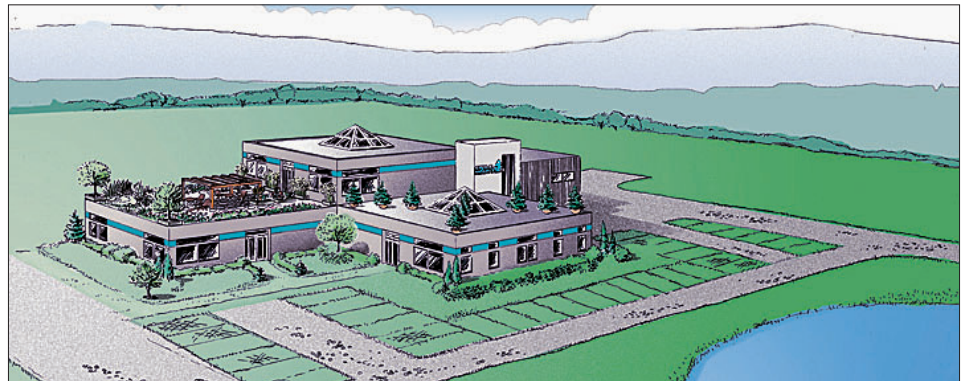
The current facility has a few thousand square feet. With the added space, Eagle Mountain plans to add 11 new hires over the next two years. The building should be completed by early 2008.

Incorporating sustainable-design technologies into the new building is the company's way of walking the walk, officials say. The plan to obtain LEED silver certification for building it underscores the point.

LEED—the standard in sustainable building—stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. The U.S. Green Building Council grants LEED certification at four levels: certified, silver, gold and platinum, according to the extent to which a building incorporates sustainable-design principles.

For Eagle Mountain, those are going to include geothermal heating and cooling, solar panels for water heating, a rainwater capture system and a green roof system.

Mark Tolbert, director of business development at Eagle Mountain, said the 22,000-square-foot facility will consume as much energy as a house and cost less to build than it would with traditional building methods and materials.



Rendering courtesy of Eagle Mountain Inc.

Eagle Mountain's building will include geothermal heating and cooling, solar panels for water heating, a rainwater capture system and a green roof system.

Eagle Mountain specializes in the building mechanicals: heating, cooling, domestic hot water, electricity—and adapts them to the customer.

"We look at the efficiencies of all the systems," Tolbert said. "What makes our products unique is we integrate all of those solutions, so it's all pulled into one control system as opposed to having everything split apart, (with) duplication and so forth."

When the business started almost 30 years ago it specialized in timber frame construction under the name Eagle Mountain Homes. A few years after its inception, the company began installing geothermal systems and by the mid-1980s was installing solar systems.

Around that same time, Eagle Mountain shifted out of construction and into the heating, ventilation and air conditioning business.

The firm began developing and manufacturing its own green technologies and, in 2001, started selling its products beyond New York borders, where most of its business is now. Rochester has not been a strong market.

"Rochester can be such a conservative market when it comes to doing anything new," Tolbert said.

Eagle Mountain designs its systems for houses, mainly, and commercial facilities up to 30,000 square feet.

The firm refers larger-scale work to Energy Concepts Engineering P.C., a mechanical, electrical and plumbing design firm specializing in energy conservation.

Bruce Keeley, project engineer there, said, "It's not out of their repertoire to design large house systems and even small commercial systems. If it's \$500,000 worth

of construction, you absolutely have to get a licensed engineer to stamp the work. They do a lot of design work underneath that threshold. They do it very competently."

Because of Eagle Mountain's installation experience, the company has been a sounding board for Energy Concepts.

"Somebody who is doing it day in and day out, they learn things that we just can't know because we're not doing it from an installation standpoint. I have a lot of respect for those guys," Keeley said.

Tolbert said Eagle Mountain's new building is going to be used for manufacturing and office space, but most of it will be for research and education.

"We'll have programs not only for those who install and use our equipment but for consumers and average people who are looking to learn more about environmental building and how all of the alternative energies work," Tolbert said.

Eagle Mountain has been evolving with the demand for sustainable homes, which Tolbert said has risen significantly over the past five years, due in part to the higher profile the environment has now, but mainly because of rising energy costs.

"Ultimately, when it comes to the general consumer, I think what's really driven the attention to these new technologies is the increased cost of fossil fuels. I think that's the primary driver.

Developers, he said, are looking to employ green technologies for cost savings and to distinguish themselves from the competition, while baby boomers—the company's most frequent consumer—are

looking to control costs long term.

During the real estate boom, a lot of baby boomers began to think about building their own homes with the long term in mind, Tolbert said. To ensure they can stabilize their expenses under a fixed income, the

baby boomers have been investing more in construction early on to save later in energy consumption.

“Our demographic is a very precise demographic actually, as to the age group, the income,” Tolbert said. It makes marketing

and advertising a little simpler, he added. “It’s actually quite easy to target our customers because we know who’s interested in the types of services and products we offer.”

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