

# The Year In Review: 2020

## Holland Construction stayed busy in a very challenging year

By DENNIS GRUBAUGH

COVID-19 presented challenges, but work continued at a brisk pace this past year for Swansea-based Holland Construction Services Inc., and many projects are in the pipeline for months to come.

The jobs represent a cross-section of sectors, including apartments, senior living, industrial, education, retail and public, said Scott Schanuel, senior director of business development.

Schanuel said 2020 largely followed niches that Holland has served the last few years.

“We experienced very little in the way of slowdowns or shutdowns related to COVID. Decisions regarding large facilities usually take place over a long period of time. The six-month hiatus in the economy didn’t derail those projects. We continued to move forward,” he said. “There is optimism in terms of what the economy is going to look like on the back side (of the virus).”

Holland has 15 active projects, split up about 50-50 in revenue between Missouri and Illinois.

Some of those (with their construction value) include:

- The Lofts on the Square in Belleville, the \$9 million conversion of the former Hotel Belleville into independent senior living and commercial space.
- The second building in the 11 South complex in Columbia, a new, \$7 million, 35,000-square-foot office structure for an undisclosed, medical canvassing company that will be moving from St. Louis.
- Keystone Place at Richland Creek, a four-story, \$24 million senior living facility in O’Fallon, which is scheduled to be wrapped up in early 2021.
- An industrial food processing facility in Union, Mo., for St. Louis-based Volpi Foods.
- The upcoming kickoff of Phase 2 of the airport terminal expansion for MidAmerica St. Louis Airport in Mascoutah. The terminal is to grow by more than 40,000 square feet.
- The rebuild of Wolf Branch Middle School in Swansea, which will replace the portion of the school stricken by mine subsidence three years ago. That \$15 million project will be done the end of July for the 2021-22 school year.

In addition, several projects were wrapped up in the past year. Those included:

Whispering Heights, a \$32 million, two-building living and commercial complex in Edwardsville.

A \$6 million competition football and track complex at Missouri Baptist University in Creve Coeur, Mo.

Sports fields for Jersey Community School District in Jersey County and North Mac School District in Macoupin County.

Glen Carbon’s new, \$5 million fire house.

“There is broad market activity, not just the education market, or health care, or warehouse/distribution. We’re also seeing it in the public sector regionally, which is starting to ramp up projects for recreational facilities, police and fire facilities, and administrative facilities,” he said.

The backlog of projects for 2021 and 2022 “is very strong,” he said.

One emerging market is smaller office space, with clients wanting renovations to existing structures or to build their own facilities.

“That’s more a Southwestern Illinois

phenomenon than St. Louis,” he said.

The virus provided some hurdles during the past year, among them getting municipal officials to review plans when those same communities were closed down or not having public meetings for weeks on end.

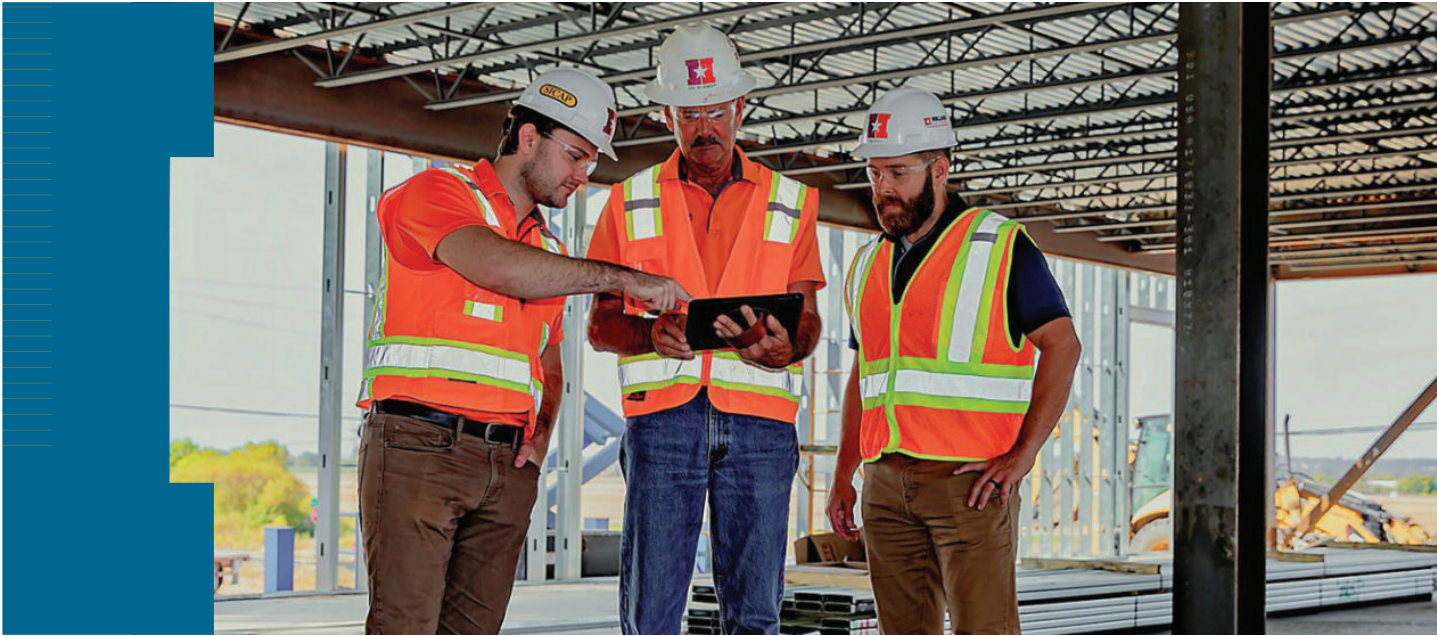
Those issues are now over, and there is generally a positive outlook.

“Everything you read about the economy going to bounce back with vigor is definitely reflected in the development community and the financing of those projects. It looks good for us and it looks good for the region over the next couple of years,” he said.

Holland’s own staff grew in 2020. The firm added 10 new employees and lost three, all due to retirement. That means a net of seven, or 10 percent, of the 70 now on board. Many of them are younger project engineers who began as college interns, but also include experienced project managers and field superintendents.



Holland Construction Services is constructing a \$4 million addition to Carlyle High School. The project includes a 10,000 square-foot building addition which will consist of a new multipurpose cafeteria and kitchen area as well as offices, bathrooms, and a lobby.



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