

## Merger of local firms creates architectural powerhouse

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St. Petersburg-based Wannemacher Jensen Architects has merged with Hoffman Architects, headquartered in Tarpon Springs. The deal brings together two of Pinellas County's most venerable, locally owned design architecture firms and creates a new company that boasts significant strengths in municipal, museum and education projects.

Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed, but WJA principal Jason Jensen, speaking with the Catalyst, said Hoffman Architects will become a subsidiary of WJA. The Hoffman Architects office in Tarpon Springs will be renamed the Wannemacher Jensen Architects Hoffman Studio, with Todd Willsie serving as studio director. Hoffman Architects founder Ed Hoffman will remain a principal of the newly merged company, Jensen said.

"They are a well-rounded design firm," he said, "and they do have a particular focus in public schools, but they've also done fire stations; they've done the Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art; they just have a wide breadth of work, a lot of residential work, as well. They just have a great presence in northern Pinellas County, Hernando County and Pasco County that legitimately extends our reach north."

Jensen said geographical diversity was a key consideration. WJA, with annual revenue of \$4.5 million and a staff of 21, also has an office in Miami but had been wanting to pursue work in other parts of Florida.

The deal also made a lot of sense because of the friendship of Jensen and Hoffman. The two met via the Leadership Pinellas program, Jensen said, and quickly hit it off.

"He and I have known each other for a long time," Jensen said. "About a year ago, we started talking in earnest about joining forces to give ourselves a competitive advantage."

Hoffman Architects, with \$2.1 million in annual revenue and six employees, provided architectural design services for Quail Hollow Elementary School in Pasco County, Palmetto Elementary School in Manatee County, 16 elementary schools in Pinellas County, the Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art in Tarpon Springs, the Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center and the Jacobson Culinary Arts Academy.

*Link to original press release:*

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