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## What's New in Princeton & Central New Jersey?

Reprinted from the April 17, 2013, issue of U.S. 1 Newspaper

### Princeton Design Collaborative Opens in Lawrenceville

by Bill Sanservino

About a year and a half after RMJM-Hillier Architects shuttered the doors on its Princeton office, a long-time former employee has started a new firm that he is hoping will fill the void left by the architectural giant.

Princeton Design Collaborative (PDC), based in Lawrenceville, offers a combination of architecture, interior design, and graphic and web design services.

"We offer a unique selection of expertise that ranges from town and campus planning to corporate branding and everything in-between, says John Conroy, founder and principal of PDC, which opened last May on Lakedale Drive.

Full-time employees at the firm are Conroy, Hee Young Ahn, project architect, and Kevin Frankenfield, IT specialist and webmaster.

"Our staff has vast experience in their individual disciplines," says Conroy. "With our distinctive set of skills we can offer our clients architectural design combined with useful tools to assist in the promotion of their projects with our graphic and web team."

PDC's most recent project is an upgrade to the corporate headquarters of Rockwood Holdings, a leading manufacturer of lithium-based compounds located at 100 Overlook Center. "The design will bring sustainable qualities to their work environment while achieving a return on investment under a four-year time frame compared to a more traditional approach," says a PDC company release.

PDC is also developing a master plan for Terhune Orchards in Lawrenceville. The plan includes a wine tasting center, bakery, and cider processing facility.

For Conroy, the new firm is the culmination of a 25-year career in design. Born and raised in Lawrenceville, his father recently retired from his job as a machinist at Certified Steel, and his mother currently works as a paralegal for a firm in Pennington.

He earned a degree in architecture from Syracuse University and became a full-time employee of Hillier Architecture, where he had worked as a college student. He then worked at the Liberty Science Center while it was being built before leaving to earn his master's degree in a Syracuse University program in urban design in Florence, Italy.

He then returned to work for Hillier for many years until the company merged with RMJM. Conroy has worked on projects for Rutgers University, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Glaxo SmithKline, Merck, and Hyatt in countries around the world including India, Singapore, Vietnam, and Russia.

Conroy is a member of the Lawrence Township Growth and Redevelopment Committee. He also chairs the Route One Redevelopment Committee in Lawrence to foster design excellence along the corridor.

Conroy says he decided to start his own firm after RMJM closed the Hillier Princeton office and transferred him to New York. There were a few of us from that office who wanted to start our own thing and serve the local community." Conroy says PDC is able to offer web design as an added service because the company's IT person is proficient in the area.

"We don't do a lot of complicated sites, but we can work with small companies who need to promote their business. For example, if there are developers who are developing new corporate facilities and want to publicize them, we can help them get jump started on that."

"Clients today need more than just a great building or interior design, they need imagery and



John Conroy

vehicles to draw tenants, promote events, and attract funding," says Conroy. "PDC is a true design firm, providing the full range of options and services to our clients."

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