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Project of the Month: BWK Construction Co., Inc. breaks ground on Opportunity Works' new 37,000 s/f, \$6.4 million educational facility

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BWK Construction broke ground on a new 37,000 s/f educational facility for Opportunity Works, Inc. Opportunity Works is a private, non-profit organization that empowers adults with disabilities and their families. The new facility will be built on land abutting Northern Essex Community College and is slated to open in the fall of 2014. The \$6.4 million building will include 12 specialized classrooms to offer a variety of integrated, multi-disciplinary supports and services.

BWK specializes in commercial construction and has served the greater Boston area for 17 years. BWK provided a wide range of preconstruction needs to Opportunity Works including initial pricing, subcontractor selection and initial scheduling. BWK is proud to be an integral part of the project team, and looks forward to completing this much needed and high-profile project over the coming months. The new building was designed by TMS Architects of Portsmouth, NH.

Partial financing of the facility was arranged through the Institution for Savings and the Newburyport Five Cents Savings Bank, both of Newburyport, Mass. A \$2 million capital campaign to complete the funding for the project has been underway since May. The community has already shown its support in myriad ways. In addition to major gifts from both lending institutions, generous pledges have been received from Pentucket Bank, Covanta Energy, Haverhill Bank and many other local businesses and individuals.

Due to the increased demand for services and the high quality of its programs, Opportunity Works has grown dramatically both in the numbers of people served and in the scope of the programs provided. Today, nearly 210 people from across the Merrimack Valley and beyond take part in a diverse selection of support programs offered by the agency. Opportunity Works has maintained a satellite facility at 209R Summer St. in Haverhill for 14 years.

Jane Harris-Fale, a lifelong Haverhill resident and the executive director of the agency, explained the pressing need to expand with a new facility. "Our Haverhill site is at capacity, serving many people with more involved needs, which requires more space", she said. "In 2004, our Haverhill site served 19 individuals with 5 staff. The site now serves 42 people with 15 staff. The expansion is projected to allow us to serve nearly 100 people with some 35 staff by 2017. This major project makes me even prouder that Opportunity Works is recognized as one of the premier human service agencies in New England."

Mayor Fiorentini stated that the city has strongly supported the new building project and will continue to do so. "We fully understand that Haverhill residents will be better served by this initiative by Opportunity Works. We also welcome the individuals from throughout the Merrimack Valley and beyond who will attend this new building, as well as their families and the dedicated professionals who serve within. This project will also contribute to Haverhill's economic development with the

addition of at least 20 new, well-paying positions over the next five years."

Rep. Dempsey, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, said that he has supported the work of Opportunity Works for years. "With this essential new facility, Opportunity Works remains on the cutting edge of serving the growing numbers of our friends and neighbors who deserve our support every single day. The Commonwealth is grateful for non-profit agencies like Opportunity Works that work so hard to fulfill that need. Future partnership opportunities between the agency and the college will also be of tremendous mutual benefit to the city and the entire region."

Diane Fasulo, parent and advocate, whose son attends Opportunity Works and a long-time advocate for people with disabilities, said the new facility fills a vital need in the area. "The need to support individuals with disabilities such as Autism, Down Syndrome and Traumatic Brain Injury grows each year," she said. "My admiration goes out to the Opportunity Works staff for their dedication. It's a top-rate program and I'm pleased to be part of it. This is like a dream come true! The new facility in Haverhill is a great project, a great opportunity."

To make a gift or to view more information about the project, you may visit www.opportunityworksinhaverhill.org

The project team included:

- * Owner: Opportunity Works
- * General Contractor: BWK Construction Co., Inc.
- * Architect: TMS Architects
- * Structural Engineer: Summit Engineering
- * Electric: MEC Electric
- * Metal Building Structure: Can Am Steel

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