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## **Dirigo Architectural Engineering celebrates 15 years in business**

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Scarborough, ME Founded in 2009 during the peak of the Great Recession, Dirigo Architectural Engineering (DirigoAE) now celebrates fifteen years in business. Founded by a Mainer hoping to reshape parts of the industry, the nimble firm was initially launched in Turner.

Over the years, DirigoAE has consistently punched above its weight, landing work with the nation's largest brands, including Costco, Flagship Cinemas, the University of Maine, Tyler Technologies, and dozens of municipalities, universities, and hospitals from Fort Kent to Princeton, N.J.

Over 99% of companies in the U.S. are small businesses, with the average life span being 8.5 years, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Only 25% of businesses last 15 years or more.

"The secret to our success is not our skill, but our ability to listen and deliver, regardless of how many pivots must happen during the job," said Tom Perkins, principal, Dirigo Architectural Engineering. "We've been through massive economic waves and a global pandemic – the only way to get through is by honoring relationships and keeping your word – that's the Maine way," Perkins said. 86% of DirigoAE's business comes from repeat clients.

Tyler Technologies, a leading provider of public sector software with 56 offices and 7,300 employees, has four buildings and 1,250 employees in Maine. DirigoAE was retained for three large-scale projects, including its \$30 million, 100,000 s/f expansion in Yarmouth, a 25,000 s/f location in Orono, and another in New York. "Regardless of complexity or challenge, we continue to choose DirigoAE because Tom delivers on time and on budget, with a calming presence during the chaos of construction," said Chris Webster, president of the ERP & Civic Division at Tyler Technologies.

In 2010, as the movie industry shifted away from stadium seating in favor of more comfortable recliner chairs, Flagship Cinemas hired DirigoAE to design and renovate its five Maine-based locations. "Theaters weren't filling seats, and there was a steady nationwide shift, which required total renovation," said Andrew Poore, senior vice president at Flagship Cinemas. "DirigoAE handled everything – from obtaining all permits, to ensuring ADA compliance, and delivering flawless floor plans. We hire them so we can remain focused on what we do best," Poore said.

In 2018, DirigoAE's work caught the attention of M&R Holdings, the multi-discipline development

company behind The Downs, a 577-acre master-planned development with a 50-lot business park, a 2,000-unit mixed-use housing sector, and Maine's first-ever new-build Town Center. Perkins and his seven-person staff were hired by M&R Holdings for several key projects and acquired shortly after – all employees were retained. Most recently, the DirigoAE team completed its largest project to date: the delivery of Maine's first Costco.

“When Costco announced it was coming to Scarborough, DirigoAE was hired by the big-box retailer, and they delivered on-time, and on budget in a complex set of requirements – Costco's leadership team was thrilled with the work,” said Richard Michaud, partner, M&R Holdings, “It was a natural decision for us to combine the talent of our teams,” Michaud said.

With a niche in historic restoration projects, DirigoAE's work in the public sector is expansive, including Scarborough's public safety building and two similar projects currently underway in Rockland and Dixfield. The firm is well-known for its work on Maine hospital and college campuses, including the University of Maine's DeepCWind, an international initiative to develop a floating offshore wind turbine to deliver renewable energy.

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