

GREEN BUSINESS QUARTERLY

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IEI GROUP

Eighteen-year-old company proves its sustainable maturity with PECO projects

BY KATHY KIDWELL

Right: Rendering and realization of the new 45,000-square-foot green roof for the PECO building—the largest green roof ever installed on an existing urban building in Pennsylvania.

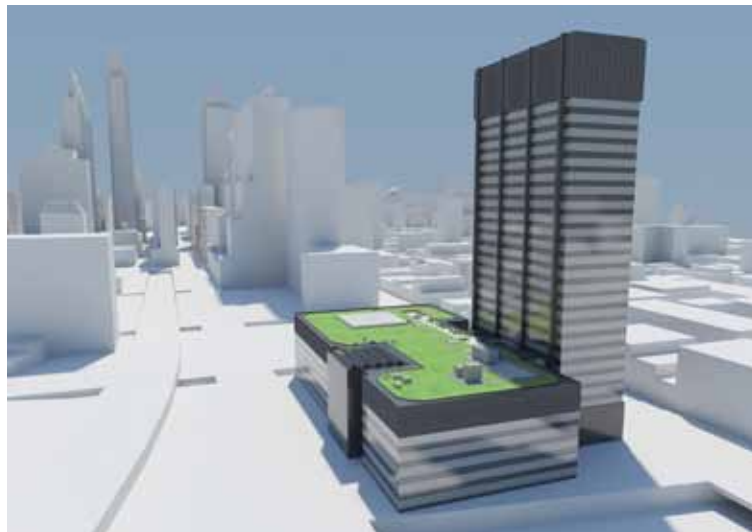
AS THE NIGHT SKY DARKENED ON THE Fourth of July during Philadelphia's 2009 Sunoco Welcome America events, fireworks weren't the only sparkle in the sky. After going dark on December 31, 2008, the PECO Crown Lights—an iconic part of the Philadelphia skyline—dazzled with a seven-minute launch show featuring the new energy-efficient lighting system consisting of two million LEDs.

A landmark change to the Philadelphia skyline, the replacement of PECO's crown lighting system was managed by IEI Group. As architect and project manager of the project, IEI Group and its team of professionals were responsible for the design, documentation, energy analysis, construction, and implementation of the project.

Founded in 1991 as Interior Environments, Inc., IEI Group is an interior design/architectural firm that also offers services in procurement, project management, and facilities planning.

"We started as an interior design and project management firm and expanded into architectural services," says Rosemary Español, president of IEI Group. "As our services expanded, we changed our name."

As a member of the USGBC, and with LEED APs on its staff, IEI Group (including IEI Architects) promotes sustainability in all of its design projects. "Always sensitive to the environment, we recognized in 2005 that sustainable design would be a mainstay in our industry, and we became totally committed," Español says.



Included in the *Philadelphia Business Journal's* 2007 Women of Distinction, Español began her career in the industry in 1976, working for Jackson-Cross Realtors as corporate secretary and director of marketing. From there, she joined Business Interiors, an interior design and furniture firm, as vice president of marketing for two years.

Then, in 1984, she became a founding and managing partner in Business Design Group, an interior design firm in center city Philadelphia. Eight years later, she founded Interior Environments, Inc.

IEI Group is a certified Woman Business Enterprise. The company is also

AT A GLANCE

LOCATIONS:

PHILADELPHIA, PA AND
CHERRY HILL, NJ

AREA OF SPECIALTY:

INTERIOR DESIGN,
ARCHITECTURE AND
PROJECT MANAGEMENT
SERVICES

SALES GROWTH IN PAST YEAR:

6%

AVERAGE ANNUAL SALES:

\$2.8 MILLION

EMPLOYEES:

16



“As the owner of IEI, I strongly worked to create a team of professionals who could deliver superior and relevant design services for the built environment.” *Rosemary Español, President*

listed regularly in the top 200 national design firms in *Interior Design Magazine*.

“As the owner of IEI, I strongly worked to create a team of professionals who could deliver superior and relevant design services for the built environment,” Español says.

That team of professionals, along with Español herself, has been providing on-call planning and design services for PECO for more than 15 years. They collaborated with four other companies for the massive Crown Lights replacement project. Those four companies include:

- The Lighting Practice, providing the lighting design for the project;
- Cloud Gehshan Associates, providing graphic and environmental design;
- Associated Engineering Consultants, providing structural engineering for the project;
- C. Erickson & Sons, the prime construction contractor for the project.

But the replacement of the Crown Lights isn't the only green project PECO had in store for 2009. The company also hired IEI Group to assist in installing a 45,000-square-foot green roof at its downtown Philadelphia headquarters—the largest green roof ever installed on an existing urban building in Pennsylvania.

“It is noteworthy that PECO's vegetated roof was applied to an existing building, which is less-frequently done than with new buildings,” Español says. She adds that by demonstrating this project is both possible and worthwhile, it encourages owners of other existing buildings to consider green roofs for their own facilities, learning from this project's research, analysis, and design processes.

Representing an important step forward in promoting sustainability within Philadelphia's urban community, the PECO green roof absorbs 60–70

percent of the approximately 1.5 million gallons of annual rainfall, greatly reducing stormwater runoff. “This is important because in cities such as Philadelphia, even small storms can overload the combined sewer system, resulting in serious pollution problems downstream,” Español says.

The green roof also provides social and psychological benefits. Aside from the beautiful view, the roof includes an outdoor terrace with built-in seating areas that can be used for different events, from business gatherings to school classes. In fact, PECO has partnered with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society for ongoing events and tours to showcase the green roof.

IEI Group collaborated with six other companies for PECO's green roof project. Those companies include:

- Re:Vision Architecture;
- Systems Design & Analysis;
- Roofscapes;
- AKF Engineers;
- Robert E. Lamb Engineers;
- C. Erickson & Sons.

Both the Crown Lights replacement project and the green roof project are part of PECO's environmental initiative, for which IEI Group is an integral partner. Español's plans for the coming years include hiring or developing a director of sustainability to enhance the company's services. She states, “We are an advocate for sustainable design and are committed to educating our clients on the benefits.” GBQ

A MESSAGE FROM AKF ENGINEERS

AKF is an award-winning, full-service engineering firm, with a staff of more than 400 in seven offices, specializing in HVAC, electrical, plumbing, fire/life safety, controls, central utilities, energy management, technology, critical systems, commissioning, testing, lighting design, and sustainable design for a wide range of facility types.