



## FIRM PROFILE

### A.C. DELLOVADE, INC.

Tucked away between I-79 and the sleepy borough of Canonsburg, PA is the home office of one of the largest specialty contractors in Pittsburgh. A.C. Dellovade is an erector/installer of the major systems that make up the envelope of a building. Over the years, Dellovade has been the exterior contractor for the newest casinos in Las Vegas, the hangar for Air Force One and Pittsburgh architectural icons like Heinz Field, PPG Paints Arena and the Tower at PNC Plaza. It's the largest architectural metal wall and roofing system contractor in the U.S. and one of a handful of building envelope specialists that are called upon to bid on major projects throughout the country.

For A.C. Dellovade, the past two years have marked a significant transition from the first generation of the Dellovade family to a management team of long-time employees. Three of the four Dellovade brothers retired during that period, triggering the company's succession plan. The good news is that as 2018 unfolds, the change has put Dellovade on pace to have some of its best years going forward.

The management team is comprised of a group of veterans and the next generation of the Dellovade family. Pat Riley is vice president of operations. The vice president of sales is Len Pesce. Michael Dellovade represents the company's ownership and financing, and he manages the construction group with Tom Haught.

The remaining Dellovade is the founder of the company and president. Armand C. Dellovade started his career working for Plasteel Products, a manufacturer of exterior panels in Washington, PA. An ironworker by trade, Dellovade saw an opportunity to fill a niche in the market while in his early 30s and struck out on his own in May 1973. At that time manufacturers had more control over the exterior wall products, selling projects more or less directly to the architect and owner. That approach left manufacturers scrambling to find erectors for the wall or roof systems. Dellovade aligned his new company with a few manufacturers as a reliable source of labor.

During Dellovade's first decade in business, the manufacturers experienced a lot of consolidation and a risk-shifting trend

***“When you come in during the early stages, you’re a team member. They don’t think of us as a subcontractor. When there’s a problem, the approach is to figure out how to solve it.”***

emerged that created demand for installers to expand their business to include buying and erecting the systems. For businesses like A.C. Dellovade, the shift helped mitigate risk because the additional revenues associated with selling the panels came at little risk compared to the risk of just doing erection.

The change in business approach essentially doubled A.C. Dellovade’s revenues, but it also opened up the market because many of its competitors chose not to leave the labor-only business model. Those companies struggled to grow and, in time, found it harder to get business from general contractors that had no interest in holding separate contracts for the materials and the labor. Riley notes that this shift was the catalyst for Dellovade’s pursuit of total building envelope solutions.

As its business grew geographically in the 1980s and 1990s, Dellovade recognized that there was a ceiling to the U.S. market for architectural panels that was \$90 to \$100 million per year. The company began looking at other related building envelope systems that would dovetail with its existing expertise to allow for more growth. The curtain wall business was a natural fit. In 2006, Dellovade acquired Icon

Exterior Building Solutions to optimize the expansion into that business.

“Curtain wall was a fantastic system to bring in because there was a tremendous amount of growth, although it’s not for anyone who can’t tolerate risk. Curtain wall has a lot of risk,” Riley explains. “But if you really control quality, use quality products and do it right, the upside is tremendous in that business. I can see our Icon operation surpassing the original Dellovade company by 2020.”

One of A.C. Dellovade’s principal challenges is to manage the work it does around the country. To do so it has cultivated a network of skilled labor and supervision in all parts of the country. Exterior envelope systems carry significant liability for the building’s performance and the labor force used to install those systems must be skilled. Dellovade invests heavily in training to keep their workforce up-to-date.

“If you are going to be a project manager or foreman or superintendent on one of our projects, we will put you through a three-day training program on that system,” Riley explains. “We take them to one of our manufactures, Centria is one that comes to mind, and they receive classroom and book study as well as hands on installation training. When



**TRAINED.SKILLED.SAFE.PRODUCTIVE**

**“WE ARE PROUD UNION FAMILIES, BUILDING COMMUNITIES & SERVING CONTRACTORS THROUGHOUT WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA”**

**PHILIP AMERIS, PRESIDENT & BUSINESS MANAGER**

**LABORERS’**

**DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WESTERN PA**

**#12 8TH ST. 6TH FLOOR PITTSBURGH, PA 15222**

**PHONE: 412-391-1712 FAX: 412-391-1712 LABORPA.ORG**



they leave, they are certified in a particular product. We try to get our workers certified in as many products as possible so we have people certified in exterior wall products, current wall or roofing products.

"If we have a three-person crew on a project each crew will have at least one certified person. Every superintendent will be a certified installer of all products. That's how we manage the quality control," Riley concludes.

In support of the product training, A.C. Dellovade has produced videos of the mock-up portions of the training. When a Dellovade worker in the field is unsure about a particular window or panel system detail they can view the training session for that system on their iPad or iPhone.

Dellovade keeps a contingent of skilled workers, experienced in their products, in regions throughout the U.S. While their average project employs about 20 workers, it's not uncommon for there to be the need for 60 or 80 workers on larger projects. The challenge is to keep enough work going in the various parts of the country to maintain that contingent of skilled workers. To do so, Dellovade pursues about 300 project leads each year, ultimately bidding about half that number. On average they will book 45 to 60 projects in a year.

The approach to the market that A.C. Dellovade takes also gives them opportunities to work on projects during design.



*A. C. Dellovade erects both the curtain wall and the wall panels for SUNY Colleges of Nanoscale Science and Engineering, Albany, NY*



## American Subcontractors Association of Western PA

An advocate for an equitable business environment for subcontractors, specialty contractors, suppliers and service providers in the construction industry since 1966. Become a member now.

### COMING EVENTS

**August 20: Golf outing at Chartiers Country Club**

565 Callery Road  
Cranberry Township, PA 16066  
(724) 538-8227  
Angela Wentz, Executive Director  
asawpa@zoominternet.net

For information about membership opportunities contact  
ASA of Western PA or go to [www.asawpa.org](http://www.asawpa.org)



avisonyoung.com

©2017 Avison Young (U.S.A.) Inc. All rights reserved.  
(Disclaimer copy goes here.)



## A Proven Team. A Different Approach.

Avison Young's integrated team approach to commercial real estate engages deep expertise from a broad range of professionals across our organization. In a partnership, focused on your strategic business objectives, we deliver intelligent, best-in-class solutions that add value and build a competitive advantage for your enterprise.

**Brad Totten, Principal & Managing Director**

4 PPG Place | Suite 300 | Pittsburgh, PA 15222 | T 412.944.2132

## EPOXY, TERRAZZO & POLISHED CONCRETE FLOORING



Allegheny Installations is a commercial flooring company specializing in epoxy, terrazzo and polished concrete.

- Terrazzo
- Underlayments
- Surface Preparation
- Decorative Concrete
- Epoxy
- Waterproofing
- Polished Concrete
- Multipurpose Floors

For a free flooring consultation contact us at 1-800-229-9983 or visit [www.alleghenyinstallations.com](http://www.alleghenyinstallations.com).



**Quality You Can Stand On**

Exterior building systems are critical design elements and Dellovade looks forward to working with construction managers and architects to add its staff's experience with budget and constructability issues. Many of the projects that the company wins involve design-assist relationships that make the projects successful before construction starts.

Like many construction executives, Riley expresses frustration about the projects on which Dellovade staff has invested a lot of time up front, only to have to bid the job in the end. Armed with too much knowledge about the project, it's usually difficult to be the low bidder in those situations. He is a firm believer in the value of investing in projects during the design stages nonetheless, since the effort results in a win more often than not, and the project that results is more successful.

"You know exactly how the project is going to go. You build such a relationship with the project team that you don't have problems," Riley says. "You don't have the kinds of disputes you get when you come into a project when it's out to bid and the project is getting under construction. When you come in during the early stages, you're a team member. They don't think of us as a subcontractor. When there's a problem, the approach is to figure out how to solve it."

In recent years, the health of the Pittsburgh market has changed the geographic mix of Dellovade's business. In a normal year, as much as 90 percent of Dellovade's annual revenue will be from projects located in other parts of the country than home. Since 2016, the share of local projects in Dellovade's portfolio has been 20 percent, and Riley sees the opportunity to have that share go higher.

Riley says that the company's preferred approach is to provide a total building envelope system but has found that approach is less popular with local general contractors than with the national

construction managers with whom Dellovade works. He says he understands the impulse to bid more packages but argues that there is a benefit to the owner that supersedes low bid.

"Every time you break that exterior into another package - bringing somebody different in to do the wall panels, the curtain wall, the metal work and vapor barriers, or whatever - unless you're very good as a manager to make sure all of those things come together and have proper seals and a good monolithic barriers across all the products, you're better off with a total enclosure application."

The company maintains a shop in Avella, PA to do fabrication of the specialty items - like flashing products - that are ancillary to its main exterior wall systems. Dellovade also fabricates aluminum composite wall panels at its shop, almost exclusively for projects located within a 200-mile radius of Pittsburgh. A.C. Dellovade has offices in Phoenix and Los Angeles, and the Icon office in Baltimore.

There are 45 employees at the headquarters location, 38 of whom have been with the company at least 20 years. Fifteen of those have been with the company either since the beginning or for more than 30 years. Riley, who joined the company in 1979, believes the low turnover is the result of a family-focused culture that is the key to the company's success.

"Armand runs this business like it was family," he says. "I came from Columbia Architectural Metals but I always felt like I was family, even though there was blood family working here. I think that's the feeling everybody has."

Riley recalls being asked to speak at the 2017 office Christmas dinner by Armand Dellovade at the last minute. He says being caught unprepared made him speak from the heart about the culture of family at A.C. Dellovade.

"I reminded people that have been coming to these dinners for years that the same people are sitting to their left and right. It reminded me of my own family's holiday dinners, that I could count on the people sitting at that table," he says. "This is our family too, our work family. I ended by encouraging everyone to be thankful. We should be thankful for each other and, really, thankful to Armand for starting this company and building this culture." **BG**

**A.C. Dellovade, Inc.**  
108 Cavasina Drive  
Canonsburg, PA 15317  
412-873-8190  
[www.acdellovade.com](http://www.acdellovade.com)  
[len.pesce@acdellovade.com](mailto:len.pesce@acdellovade.com)



Armand Dellovade



Pat Riley



Mike Dellovade



Len Pesce



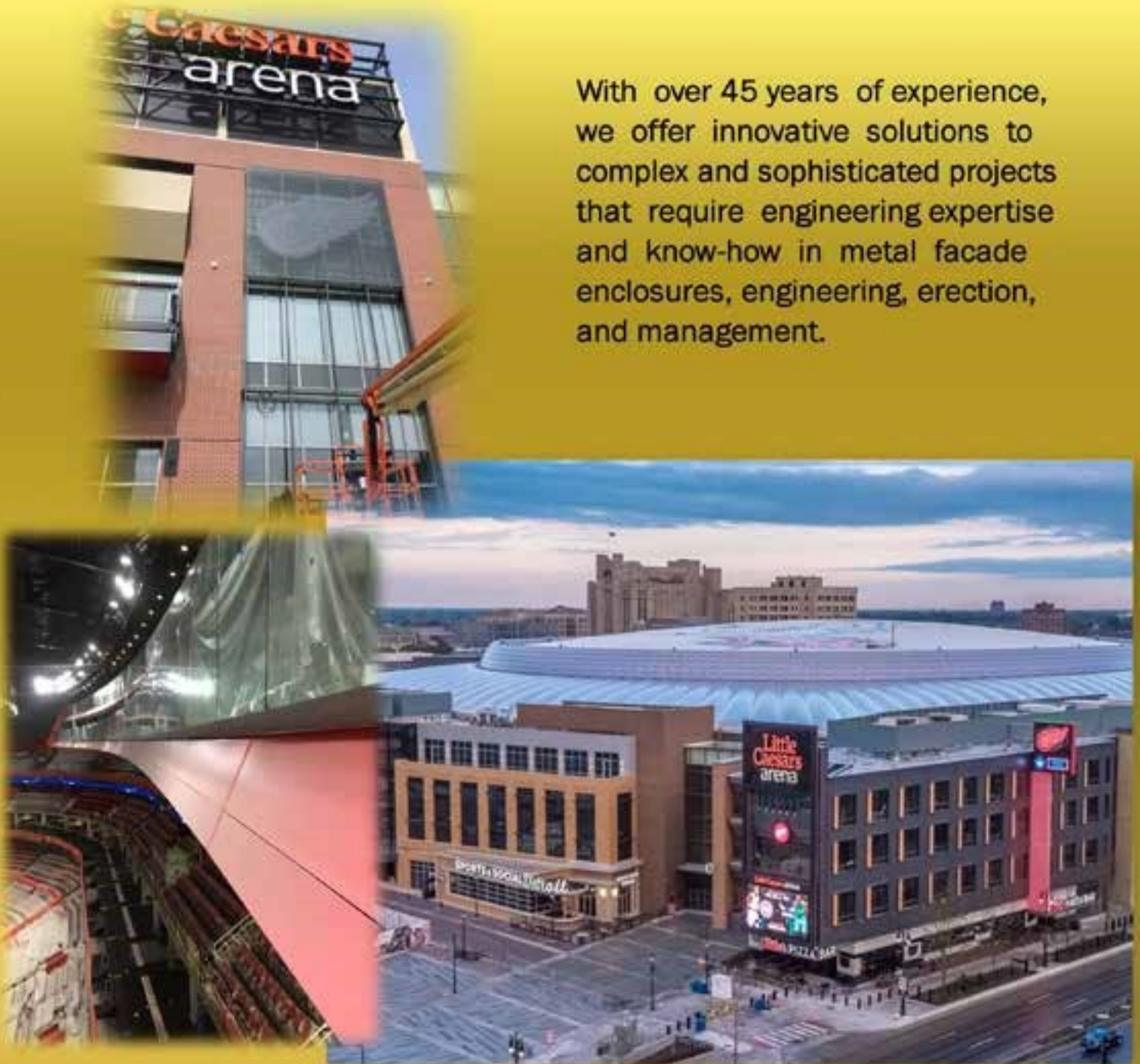
Tom Haught



# A.C. DELLOVADE, INC.

Providing Sophisticated Building Enclosures Nationally

With over 45 years of experience, we offer innovative solutions to complex and sophisticated projects that require engineering expertise and know-how in metal facade enclosures, engineering, erection, and management.



1-800-245-1556  
[www.acdellovade.com](http://www.acdellovade.com)