

PEER REVIEW

Ed Ross

Diverse attraction

Ed Ross considers himself a diverse guy. He said he enjoys hunting and fishing as well as theater and fine arts. He said diversity is what attracted him to architecture. "You get to blend concepts of artistic design with real-world, hard stuff," he said.

Speaking of theater

Ross says he prefers small, intimate shows over large productions. He said he recently enjoyed rock musical "Hedwig and the Angry Inch."

Downtown eateries

Ross says he and his wife enjoy restaurants near Milwaukee's downtown. One of their favorite spots, he said, is Crazy Water. Ross said he and his wife always sit at the bar so they can watch the cooks in action.



PHOTO BY LAWRENCE SILVER

Ed Ross, an architect with Eppstein Uhen Architects Inc., sits inside his cubicle in the firm's Milwaukee office. Ross is part of the firm's EUA recovery and reinvestment team, which aims to help clients secure stimulus money.

Tapping expertise

EUA's Ross becomes authority on the fly

Eppstein Uhen Architects Inc. asked Ed Ross to become an expert on something he knew little about.

Fortunately for Ross, a 36-year-old architect, no one else at the time knew much about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 either.

Eppstein Uhen, Milwaukee, tapped Ross to lead its recovery and reinvestment group, a

small team assembled to help public and private clients extract stimulus money.

Ross said he spent the first few days just reading the ARRA after Congress approved it in February.

He quickly realized reeling in stimulus cash for clients would be complicated, he said, because while some of the act's language is extremely specific, other parts are equally as vague.

“The biggest challenge is trying to expand your knowledge. You have questions and the people you are expecting to have the answers don’t have the answers.”

Ed Ross, Eppstein Uhen Architects Inc.

Ross said another challenge has been finding more information about the act. He attended ARRA seminars put on by various governments only to discover the supposed experts knew little more than he did, he said.

“The biggest challenge is trying to expand your knowledge,” said Ross, who has 13 years experience in the industry. “You have questions and the people you are expecting to have the answers don’t have the answers.”

From a business perspective, though, perhaps the larger challenge for Ross is convincing others to use his expertise.

Medical experts, for example, often are

sought to share their acquired knowledge or unique skills.

But Ross’s position puts him on the offensive to find people willing to listen.

He said Eppstein Uhen sees plenty of stimulus potential in the low-income, multifamily residential market. Federal, state and local grants and bonds are available, he said, for weatherization and sustainable-building projects.

But the problem for Eppstein Uhen is developers of low-income housing projects already are accustomed to receiving money from the government, Ross said, and they are unaware they can get help to find more.

“Developers know how to work with grants,” Ross said. “They don’t think they need our help, but we can find other opportunities for them.”

Looking forward, Ross said, more opportunities to draw in stimulus money will present themselves after details are released to clarify the vague language in the ARRA.

Until then, he said, he plans to remain patient and continue to chase opportunities with potential.

“It’s easy to get frustrated and to think this is never going to happen,” Ross said. “But stuff is going to come up. You just have to work hard at it.”

— Lawrence Silver

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