



Micah McRae, president and owner of McRae Enterprises LLC, is shown in the waiting area of the John Kenyon Eye Center in New Albany. His company is remodeling the whole building. Areas of the wall behind McRae still needed to be painted.

Commercial contractor McRae Enterprises has found niche in medical facility construction

Ron Bath | Business First

When Micah McRae started McRae Enterprises LLC in 2006, he knew he wanted to do more commercial construction than residential construction.

In the past year, McRae has refined his business model to focus primarily on medical facility construction projects in Louisville and Southern Indiana. He launched a new company Web site in May to help market this new focus.

Projects include ambulatory surgery centers, emergency rooms and physicians' practices.

The company has two full-time employees and one part-time employee, in addition to McRae, and uses a variety of subcontractors, depending on the project. McRae plans to hire an additional full-time worker this summer.

"Our target is to work with some of the smaller medical practices by managing some of their new construction for growth and expansion," said McRae. "We're really not targeting large hospital systems because we are best suited to work in closer relationships with those smaller practices."

FINDING HIS NICHE

A native of Sellersburg, McRae studied business at Ivy Tech State College and worked as a site foreman in new residential construction for about four years before deciding to go out on his own.

When he started McRae Enterprises with personal savings in 2006, McRae did insurance

restoration work and property management for the first couple of years.

He declined to disclose startup costs or current revenue figures but said he has invested about \$100,000 in tools and equipment during the past five years.

In 2008, McRae ventured further into the commercial sector, adding Valvoline Instant Oil Change and Verizon Wireless stores to his list of commercial accounts.

Then in 2011, McRae Enterprises gained its first quasi-medical facility customer — a build-out of a salon and spa at Horseshoe Southern Indiana.

"That was our first taste of working on exam rooms and patient rooms," McRae said.

After Horseshoe, McRae did small projects for several doctors' offices.

"That's when I started to do more research to see what was out there and who my competitors are," he said. "I started thinking outside the box and retooling my business plan to put me into the health care market."

About a year ago, McRae landed his first major medical client, the John-Kenyon American Eye Institute in New Albany.

In fall 2012, he completed an exterior renovation project — facade improvements, a parking lot expansion and repairs for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In May 2013, McRae Enterprises completed interior renovations for John-Kenyon. That work



McRae Enterprises LLC

Owner: Micah McRae, president

Type of business: Residential and commercial building contractor specializing in medical facility construction

Location: Home-based office in New Albany

Year founded: 2006

Employees: Three in addition to McRae; plans to hire one additional employee this summer

Phone: (812) 725-4446

Web site: www.mcraeenterprises.com

took place on six consecutive weekends as part of McRae's commitment to minimize disruptions for his clients. (See related item below.)

McRae's next project will be construction of a 3,000-square-foot storage warehouse for Bennett & Bloom Eye Centers in the South End, starting in July. He hopes this is one of many new medical projects on the horizon for his company.

"There's a lot of expansion in the health care market going on, and I'm trying to put myself in a position where I can capitalize on that."

THE CHALLENGES OF HEALTH CARE CONSTRUCTION

Construction for the health care industry is a specialized field, McRae said, and he continues to learn about its challenges and nuances.

"There is a lot that goes into the permitting side, with state boards of health that we have to work within, as well as the basic municipal regulations," he said.

"A lot of the construction techniques are very similar" to other commercial construction, he added. "That's my background, and I'm comfortable with the technical side of it. But we're learning as we go how to make things more efficient and minimize any collateral damage for our customers."

That damage might include noise disruptions, dust and construction debris. One of McRae's solutions is to do much of his work during off-hours to ease the effect construction has on patients and staff.

"We spend a lot of time in development, researching ways to minimize" disruptions, McRae said. "We have to be careful not to allow dust into sensitive areas, (so) we use equipment for dust collection," he added.

"We work in surgery centers where there is expensive equipment that affects people's lives. We can't be careless. The more planning we can do ahead of time, the smoother those projects run once we get deep into them."

