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Findorff earns building awards, repeat business through commitment to clients' visions

By **Rena Archwamety**

MADISON, Wis. — A famous name in Wisconsin construction for more than 135 years, Findorff has constructed landmark projects across the state, from the iconic Monona Terrace in Madison to The Couture in Milwaukee, a luxury apartment building and newest addition to the city's skyline. Findorff's footprint can be seen throughout many of Wisconsin's food and dairy manufacturing plants as well, including Emmi Roth, Great Lakes Cheese and Schoep's Ice Cream.

Findorff began in downtown Madison and over the years has expanded its projects throughout Wisconsin and beyond, completing \$1 billion in annual construction revenue across a wide range of industries from education and multifamily to corporate and manufacturing. The employee-owned company now has offices in Madison, Milwaukee and Wausau and employs 900 of its own tradespeople. Findorff consistently wins awards from industry organizations and publications, including Wisconsin Builder of the Year.

"At Findorff, one thing we strive for is expert craftsmanship and continuing to be a best-in-class builder. We don't just issue a contract, we actually build food and beverage facilities and apply our industry expertise in constructing them," says Joe Schuchardt, vice president-Wausau.

While Findorff has a reputation for building large projects from the ground up, it also takes on smaller and ongoing tasks for its clients.

"We work on a lot of things you don't see, and we're as excited about bigger projects as we are with smaller ones. In fact, we do more smaller-scale jobs each year than anything else," says Alex Johnson, group lead, food and beverage. "People see cranes and signs that represent large projects, but we do \$1,000 jobs, too. We can take our expertise into a facility, and our people are well-equipped to do what they need, whether a door replacement or a new building."

Oftentimes these smaller jobs lead to larger contracts, and 92% of Findorff's work is done for repeat clients. This was the case when Findorff partnered with Emmi Roth to build its new headquarters and conversion plant in Stoughton, Wisconsin, which opened in 2023.

"We had a relationship with Emmi Roth over the past 10 years and did a lot of work in their existing facilities in the state. We showed what we can do on a smaller scale, and then they trusted us with their headquarters," Johnson says.

Findorff, which has been recognized as a Top Green Builder in Wisconsin, worked with Emmi Roth to build one of the only 100% electric cheese plants in the country, making sure components were in place for regenerative power. This work included solar panels that offset 25% of the building's electricity, helping the company reach its carbon reduction goals.

"Sustainability over the last 10-plus years has become a major focus and is always on the table as an option for our clients," Johnson says. "We have dedicated, full-time resources focused on sustainability. We're always looking for ways to help."

Another important aspect in working with food and beverage manufacturers has been accommodating strict timelines, reducing downtime and working in occupied spaces, Johnson notes.

"We've built in the food and beverage industry for 50 years, and we understand that speed to market is greatly important," he says. "We take a variety of approaches to

deliver a new facility on time, such as doing off-hours work when a local cheese plant is shut down. About 90% of our work is in occupied spaces, so we collaborate frequently with owners to find solutions and ensure our work is as minimally disruptive as possible to day-to-day operations."

Findorff sets high standards of transparency, honesty, integrity and commitment to excellence, and everyone in the company strives to embody this culture, Schuchardt says.

"We're a trusted partner, whether that's in budgeting or accountability for the work we're doing. We work closely

with food and beverage clients to understand their goals and achieve them," he says. "That's why we get repeat clients — it goes back to our core competencies: action, accountability and our dedication to going beyond."

Johnson says another thing that keeps Findorff's clients loyal is the company's follow-up after the build.

"We're around and active to make sure that the building is being used for its intended purpose," he says. "Our goal is to be a partner for life. As your needs or goals evolve, we're just a phone call or email away." **CMN**

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