Interior contractors responding to challenges

Florida firm comes home a double winner

When pictures are taken of award-winning craftsmanship they usually show building exteriors. Yet when color slides were screened at the 24th annual Broward County Craftsmanship Awards Dinner an interior contracting firm was shown to be a double winner.

Two of the nine jobs selected for honors this year were done by veteran employees of Lotspeich Company of Florida Inc.

Lotspeich is a longtime South Florida company, formed in 1928 in Miami and located in Fort Lauderdale (at 4180 N.W. 10th Ave.) since 1966.

The individual Lotspeich craftsmen who received plaques at the dinner are Ray Wilcox, Ron Streicher, Peter Benjamin and Gary Maes.

Wilcox was honored for his drywalling work at the Saks Fifth Avenue location in Fort Lauderdale’s Sunrise Shopping Center (now the Galleria). Streicher, Benjamin and Maes completed what judges called “an exceptionally good” wall and ceiling system for the Margate Jewish Center building at Royal Palm Boulevard and Rock Island Road.

In lauding all four men, Lotspeich President Edward H. Fee said their achievements reflected imagination, expertise and conscientiousness.

The drywalling necessitated a framing of soffits and verticals; the wall-ceiling system called for painstaking effort along with a high degree of skill.

Lotspeich also is responsible for installing acoustical ceilings for the downtown high-rise building at 1 Corporate Plaza, as well as acoustical treatments for the Federal Office Building along E. Broward Boulevard.

Ongoing duty includes acoustical work for the Bendix Avionics addi-
tion at 2100 N.W. 62nd St. and for the IBM and Arvida Financial Plaza buildings in Boca Raton. The IBM job involves acoustical systems, interior remodeling and computer flooring; the Plaza work, drywalling for corporate offices and various rental units.

Lotspeich employs about 100 persons. According to Ed Fee, the company “can take an empty space and install walls, ceilings, floors and whatever else is necessary for completed offices.”

Growth of the firm was sidetracked during the building crunch of 1974, but Lotspeich has been expanding ever since.

Fee commented on a reason why interior contractors are kept so busy. “A year or two ago we had a serious shortage of gypsum board, but now there’s no supply problem. Clients can be assured of a ready availability of drywall and acoustical materials.”

He foresees considerable new commercial-industrial construction in Broward and Palm Beach Counties and says his firm is prepared for its share of the load. An office computer has been installed to assure better service and cost control.

James H. Schlegel, Lotspeich’s senior sales estimator, recognizes a trend in the availability of supplies sold to interior constructors.

“We used to have our choice of colors in acoustical material as long as the color was white,” he said, grinning. “Now it’s very different, for due to pointed suggestions by architects and interior designers, materials and textures come in a wide range of colors.”