World Trade Center Transportation Hub on Track for Completion in Late 2015

Dereck Baker, a Hill International site coordinator working on the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey’s World Trade Center Transportation Hub in Lower Manhattan, stops abruptly and turns, pointing to the plywood-covered temporary floor beneath his work boots. “Right here, just below us, is the Temporary PATH Hall. Thousands of commuters walk through there every day, just underneath us,” he explains. Huge, curving skeletal beams are visible just beyond a temporary wall. “All of this work has been going on right above the thousands of commuters who use the temporary station every day, and none of them have seen it. None of them know that this is right above them.”
Baker, who has worked for Hill International since 2007, is part of a team hired by the Port Authority to monitor progress of work on the Transportation Hub. Much of the work on the project, however, has taken place out of the public’s view—partitioned off by temporary walls, encased in thick slabs of concrete, enclosed within high-tech security gates, perched high above the ground, or concealed up to 120 feet beneath it.

A couple of stories below, work on the Transportation Hub’s expansive main transit hall is far enough along to get a sense of the mega-station’s potential grandeur. The bright and airy, 365-foot-long great hall—longer than an American football field—is supported by only four columns. Elegant grand staircases grace either end and will be finished so they gleam in the abundant natural light. Marble that lines the space is being painstakingly installed. Its design and sheer expanse are breathtaking.

The Port Authority began planning, designing and building the Transportation Hub in the wake of the 2001 terrorist attacks that felled the Twin Towers and the wrenching and painstaking forensic reclamation that followed. Located on the 16-acre World Trade Center site in Lower Manhattan—home to Wall Street and the World Financial Center—the Transportation Hub has been called one of the world’s most complex, ambitious and symbolic projects to date.

The completed Hub will continue to help transform Lower Manhattan into a thriving 24/7 neighborhood and will serve over 250,000 passengers a day. by what will be high-end retail and restaurant space. There, commuters will be able to access 11 different subway lines, the Port Authority’s Trans-Hudson (PATH) rail line to nearby New Jersey, the adjacent Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Fulton Center, the busy Battery Park City Ferry terminal, the picturesque riverfront Winter Garden business and entertainment complex, the National September 11 Memorial & Museum, and One World Trade Center and Four World Trade Center (as well as Two World Trade Center, Three World Trade Center, and Five World Trade Center, when they’re completed).

The project also includes several ancillary walkways, concourses and street and site improvements, as well as the construction of a state-of-the-art Vehicle Security Center that spans several underground levels. Every tour bus, construction vehicle, delivery truck, cab and car will be required to pass through, and be screened at, the security center before being allowed to enter the site. (To maintain site safety and help ensure that the facility meets the anticipated demand, all construction-related deliveries to the site now are screened there.) “The World Trade Center Transportation Hub is the most integrated underground transit center in New York City, and will serve as a world-class transit gateway when it opens later this year,” said Steve Plate, WTC Director of Construction.

A massive team of Port Authority professionals and outside consultants have spent the past several years shepherding the project’s transformation from a muddy, unrecognizable construction site to an international monument and tangible marker of the city’s resilience. They’ve been in near-darkness more than 100 feet underground, where prehistoric bedrock was chiseled away to make room for new, deeper foundations, where thick slurry walls were poured.
to hold back the adjacent Hudson River, and there again when millions of gallons of rain-and river-water flooded and were pumped (in a matter of days) from the site’s recesses after Hurricane Sandy in 2012. They’ve worked around, under and above an existing—and continually operating—subway line. They’ve seen plans and designs change to meet evolving logistics, security needs and incredibly challenging and unexpected site conditions (including the discovery of the near-fossilized remains of an 18-century wooden ship buried deep underground).

They’ve accommodated myriad schedule changes, as shifting priorities and politics changed everything from major milestones and project delivery dates to how, exactly, materials ordered from around the world got into the hands of workers hunkered four stories below ground. They’ve watched with pride as the stark and stirring National September 11 Memorial & Museum opened to visitors from throughout the world a decade after the attacks, and then again when the 104-story One World Trade Center—the U.S.’s tallest building and the world’s fourth—was completed and opened last November. That same month, the final steel rafter was raised and set on the Trans-

portation Hub, a major milestone, and the Port Authority is eager to show the world the finished product in late 2015.

The Transportation Hub is a one-of-a-kind project, in terms of both scope and scale, and has global significance as well. There isn’t an applicable comparison, Port Authority officials said. While the $3.7-billion project has been criticized for exceeding both budget and schedule, its complexity and seemingly endless array of challenges often are overlooked.

“The Port Authority recognizes the Hub as the most complex project in the world, due to the complexities of the World Trade Center site, such as maintaining service on the No. 1 Subway Line while work on the Hub continued below it, extensive recovery and repairs following the devastation of Hurricane Sandy, repairs to the Slurry Wall after Hurricane Sandy, and the construction of the 9/11 Memorial and Museum and the World Trade Center towers,” Plate said.

The Hub will not only provide vital transportation access, but also be integral to Lower Manhattan’s ascension as a premiere destination. Even before 9/11, this historic section of the city had played sleepy second-fiddle to flashier, busier Midtown, with little to do there after-hours. Today, that’s quickly changing. Renewed interest in the area, largely the result of all of the construction there, has fueled a welcome spate of new business.

Chic restaurants and luxury shops are opening, and high-rise, high-end real estate is going up. And, fashion is following on the heels of finance, as Conde Nast and other industry notables move in. World-class designers as well as celebrated chef Mario Batali already have signed leases for space at the Hub, and are expected to attract more like them.

“The completed Hub will continue to help transform Lower Manhattan into a thriving 24/7 neighborhood and will serve more than 250,000 passengers a day,” Plate said. He added that the Hub’s construction “has generated billions, approximately $5.4 billion in economic growth for the region, and tens of thousands of jobs.”
The Transportation Hub will be the city’s third-largest transportation terminal, behind Grand Central Terminal and Pennsylvania Station, both in Midtown. According to Port Authority spokesperson Erica Dumas, the main hall of the Transportation Hub will be 90 feet longer than the iconic main concourse at Grand Central, completed in 1913.

“[Its incredible architecture will rival Grand Central],” Dumas said. “The Hub’s new retail space will bring an entirely new dynamic to Lower Manhattan.”

From a more practical perspective, the Transportation Hub will fill a long-standing need for easier access to various modes of transportation to and from Lower Manhattan.

“Commuters will have access to a level of interconnectivity that has never existed before. They’ll enjoy improved travel to Lower Manhattan and the Financial District,” Dumas said. “For the Port Authority, this project will serve as an economic engine for the entire Northeast region.”

Port Authority officials are confident that the Hub’s completion and opening will quell its naysayers, who’ve grown increasingly impatient as other parts of the site, including One World Trade Center and the National September 11 Memorial & Museum, were finished and opened. Baker said he considers himself incredibly lucky to have been able to watch the World Trade Center site’s transformation. It’s an almost indescribably impressive sight, from the spire of One World Trade Center, to the tip of the steel girders that rim the Hub’s “oculus,” to the outdoor plaza and grade-level reflecting pools that sit in the Twin Towers’ footprints, to the labyrinth of tunnels, passageways, pipes and power lines a hundred feet underneath all of it.

“It’s like describing a pink elephant,” he added. “You’ve really got to see it, to experience it, to understand just how massive and how complex this project really is.”

**Complex Logistics**

Baker stops again to point out a long, narrow, barely perceptible divide between two huge swaths of concrete flooring in one of the basement levels beneath the site. “See this?” he asks. “This is a perfect example of just how close these individual projects actually were. This,” he says, pointing to the slab on the left, is part of the Greenwich Street Corridor and the 1-Line Subway above, and this” he continues, gesturing to the slab next to it, “is part of Three World Trade Center. “It’s a perfect example of the entire redevelopment program: all of these incredible capital projects, huge projects, going up simultaneously, right next to each other.”

In all, the site includes five new office towers that will provide a total of more than 10 million square feet of new commercial space, the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, which incorporates two, 30-foot-deep cascading pools created in the footprint of the Twin Towers, the new underground Vehicle Security Center, parking areas underneath Towers Two, Three and Four and the Transportation Hub, the Transportation Hub itself; concourses, tunnels, pedestrian bridges and other access-ways to multiple city transit lines, including the new Fulton Transit Center, as well as a new central chiller plant and central fan plants to accommodate the heating, cooling and ventilation needed throughout the site.

“The highly complex infrastructure—including the Memorial pools, repair
of the Slurry Wall, the Museum and One World Trade Center, Towers Two, Three and Four—were under construction simultaneously, and the No. 1 train ran throughout construction,” Dumas said. “The 16-acre site sits adjacent the Hudson River in a busy urban neighborhood, a site with many large-scale construction projects. To say this project is complex is an understatement.”

Managing such incredible logistics requires Port Authority professionals to use every skill and bit of knowledge in their arsenals. It also requires a rare mix of organizational, time management and people skills, as well as a healthy dose of tenacity.

Myriad Stakeholders
Adding to the project’s complexity are its many stakeholders, including the Port Authority, the New York City Mayor’s office and various city agencies, the states of New York and New Jersey and their involved agencies, the Federal Transit Administration, developers, adjacent property owners, project architects, contractors, subcontractors, tenants, 9/11 victims’ families and even the public. Despite the number of stakeholders, they’ve worked well together, and have been doing so for more than a decade, Dumas said.

Good Neighbors
Rumbling through the Transportation Hub project was the need to keep the popular No. 1 subway line, owned and operated by the New York State Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), fully operational during all excavation and construction. The portion of the line that runs through the Hub had to be supported both during construction and into perpetuity.

The Port Authority also has worked with adjoining property owners and residents of the bustling neighborhood, as well as the families of 9/11’s estimated 2,983 victims, Dumas said. “This site is being developed while trying to respect the families of the victims, the needs of our neighbors and the needs of the public. There is an incredible amount of accountability felt by those involved in the rebuilding of the World Trade Center site.”

Port Authority officials are optimistic that those most closely watching the Transportation Hub project will be pleased with its ‘reveal’ later this year. Completing and opening the National September 11 Memorial & Museum, helped sate years of curiosity, and such milestones also were important to the Port Authority and the site’s thousands of workers. Last fall, executives and electricians, CEOs and steelworkers, bosses and bricklayers alike were inspired and spurred on when One World Trade Center was topped off and the Transportation Hub began taking discernable shape nearby.

Baker stops again, only momentarily, to shake the hand of an electrician hard at work in a tiny utility room, and asks about his family. He seems to know almost everyone. Such relationships are easy, Baker says, and are the greatest rewards of this sometimes-controversial and always challenging project.

“”The Port Authority has put together a tremendous team. The people working on this project are one-of-a-kind; the best of the best,” he says proudly. Baker steps through a heavy steel door and into the bracing chill and bright, clear light of a mid-winter Manhattan afternoon. “You’re not going to find this kind of talent, this kind of dedication, in one place at one time—and for such a duration, for such a number of years—ever again.”
Dallas County Builds Model Inmate Healthcare Facility

Hill International, Inc. is managing the design and construction of a unique medical facility in Dallas, Texas, that is expected to dramatically change the way inmates in county jails throughout the U.S. are cared for.

According to John H. Sousa, AIA, a Hill Project Executive, the Dallas County Jail Medical Modification (DCJMM) project is designed to provide on-site medical, dental and mental health services to Dallas County’s estimated 6,500 inmates.

Dallas County and the Dallas County Sheriff’s Office operate the jail, the seventh largest in the U.S. Many inmates there, like those in the rest of the country, suffer from chronic medical and mental illnesses. According to the Dallas County Sheriff’s Department, up to half of all inmates at the jail require some type of medical or mental health care. Previously, basic medical care was provided on-site. Inmates who required acute or emergency medical care were transported from the jail complex to the nearby county facility of Parkland Health & Hospital System (PHHS), with which Dallas County partnered to provide necessary health care. Now, inmates will have fast, direct access to medical and dental health care, as well as screening and treatment for mental illnesses.

The medical and mental health facility will be the first of its kind, Sousa said, and its inmate handling and operations processes already are being held up as examples in the corrections industry. “This project is becoming a model for all of the other counties in the country, helping to ensure that inmates have access to basic healthcare and mental health care,” he said.

Dallas County has set the bar high for other county jails across the nation, said Eric M. Short, CCM, LEED AP, a Hill Senior Project Manager. The facility’s bed space and treatment programs for those suffering from mental illness are particularly groundbreaking he said. “This facility is the first of its kind in terms of mental health,” Short said. “All jail administrators are now realizing that they need to address the mental health issues that play a part in crime, and that putting those with mental illness into jail facilities with the general population is not the answer.”

In addition to comprehensive mental health services, including crisis care and a suicide prevention program, the facility will offer health screening of all inmates upon arrival and annual screenings after that, tuberculosis screening, acute and intermediate inpatient care, inpatient care for those with chronic illnesses and urgent needs, as well as dental care. The facility also includes a full-service pharmacy, which will dispense prescribed and over-the-counter medications to more than 3,200 of the jail’s 6,500 inmates, who regularly take medications for illnesses ranging from respiratory illness, kidney disease, orthopedic ailments,
The medical facility will reduce by 85 percent the number of inmates who have to be transported to the hospital, and the cost savings mean that the facility will be able to pay for itself within just five to ten years, which is incredibly fast.

Sousa and Short said that the $52-million facility will have both immediate and lasting benefits for inmates. In addition, treating inmates on-site saves countless dollars spent on transporting and guarding inmates while being treated at PHHS, and keeps hospitals from having to build separate entrances and facilities for prisoners. All of which keeps Dallas County’s 2.3 million residents safer as well, they added.

“The cost to transport, guard and treat inmate at a regular hospital has skyrocketed,” said Hill Senior Vice President Robert A. Ferguson, CCM, CCPM, LEED AP, who oversaw Sousa’s and Short’s work for Dallas County. “For example, an inmate accused or convicted of murder needs to be constantly guarded—around the clock—by no less than four corrections or police officers. Other, less violent crimes mandate that two officers be on guard at all times,” Ferguson said. “Plus, hospitals weren’t built to have two separate entrances, two separate waiting areas or two separate treatment areas—one for inmates and other for the general public.” Everyone wins, Ferguson said.

Already, the soon-to-be completed facility has been toured by other county corrections staff from inside and outside the state who hope to replicate Dallas County’s model in their own counties. “According to Department of Justice, this will be the model for all other counties to follow. Representatives from counties across the country are visiting the DCJMM to understand the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of the inmate health care operations and safety processes,” Sousa said.

Less than a decade ago, the Dallas County Jail was getting a great deal of attention, and not all of it good, Sousa said. In 2004, due to an inmate treatment lawsuit, the U.S. Department of Justice investigated conditions at the jail, and found its medical and mental health care inadequate, its response to illness slow and its facilities outdated. Following its investigation, the Department of Justice issued a series of corrective mandates to Dallas County for immediate remedial action “regarding medical care, mental health care, sanitation and environmental health to alleviate conditions that violated the constitutional rights of individuals confined to the jail.”

To the county’s credit, Sousa said, it did. Six years later, pleased with the county’s quick and effective progress, the Department of Justice recommended an end to court supervision of the jail and its remedial program. “In light of the progress the county has made in complying with the agreed order regarding the conditions at the jail, the United States has joined Dallas County in filing a notice of termination ending court oversight. Dallas County has implemented the remedial measures so that inmates at the jail are safe and receive the services necessary to meet their constitutional rights,” the Justice Department said in a statement in November 2011.

“We commend Sheriff [Lupe] Valdez, Dallas County, Parkland Hospital and jail staff for their willingness to work aggressively to address the problems found,” the Justice Department’s statement continued.

While the county worked hard to improve its existing health care ser-
Dallas County Builds Model Inmate Healthcare Facility

...of both the Dallas County Sheriff’s Department and Parkland Health & Hospital System—including a fully functioning pharmacy—had to be relocated from disparate locations to the newly renovated basement space at the North Tower. Under the second stage, to be completed in March 2015, the ground and first floors will be fitted with male and female infirmaries, isolation cells, dorms and acute care areas. Myriad equipment for the medical, dental and mental care of inmates also will be installed.

The second phase of the project also incorporates a two- to three-month “activation/shake-down” period, during which the Sheriff’s Department, Parkland medical staff and Facilities Management staff will gauge the facilities’ operations, how well they’re working, and how safe they are. This test period is important, Sousa and Short explained, because no similar facility now exists. Everything—from the power system, to the medical equipment, to the beds, sinks and toilets being installed—has been designed as a hybrid of sorts to meet the demands of a facility that must function, seamlessly and simultaneously, as both a jail and a medical facility.

Equipment that seems entirely appropriate in a hospital setting could pose unseen risks in a jail setting, Sousa said.

“Basically, it’s a county health care clinic that’s run in the jail,” Sousa said. “Everything, including beds, toilets, the nurse stations, life-safety and security equipment—has its own use and each is used differently in each setting. Working with the designers and Parkland staff, we had to think about every detail and its intended use. The design and placement of elements as benign as a sink, for example, is far different in a jail than in a hospital setting. Every item has to meet the hospital’s needs and requirements, and continue to provide the essential security required by the Dallas County Jail.”

Hill will oversee both the construction and the crucial activation period after the work is completed. Of special concern are the jail’s new security and life-safety systems and their successful integration with existing systems in the 20-year-old building. “We need to make sure that the jail works exactly as it is intended to before we leave. There is no room for error, especially when it comes to security. That’s
Dallas County Builds Model Inmate Healthcare Facility

been the challenge from the very beginning,” Sousa said.

Maintaining operations on the site, as well as preserving the highest levels of security while work progresses also has been a challenge, requiring careful planning and meticulous, consistent implementation, Short said. First, every employee of the contractor and subcontractors was required to submit completed and signed background forms and undergo background checks. Employees vetted by the background checks then were assigned a temporary badge that allowed them limited access to the specific areas within the construction site. Construction personnel were required to enter and exit the job site via specific guarded doors and gates. While the areas in which construction crews most often worked were vacant, Hill coordinated all work efforts and workers’ movements with the Sheriff’s Department, so that inmates could be temporarily moved if needed, Sousa explained. Delivery of needed materials and equipment likewise required ample notice and close coordination with the Sheriff’s Department. Entry points for deliveries were well guarded, and deliveries were carefully inspected, Sousa added.

To reduce disruption to staff, inmates and visitors, the project team had to ensure that construction noise was kept to a minimum and, specifically, that vibration, dust and other factors didn’t affect the delicate pharmacy equipment. “Prior to any disruptive work taking place, we met and coordinated with Parkland staff, the Sheriff’s Department and the Facilities staff to anticipate when this type of work could be performed, and how it could be completed so that disruptions were kept to a minimum,” Sousa said. Sousa and Short also regularly met with the contractor to come up with ways to reduce vibration and unnecessary dust. “We used non-impact hammer drills to reduce noise transmission and built temporary sound reduction walls throughout the building, covered return air ducts and used extra ventilation fans,” Short explained.

In addition, all existing utilities at the building, including mechanical, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, life safety and emergency systems had to remain “live” during the work. “Any necessary outage that impacted the entire facility had to be scheduled with the Sheriff’s Department and Facilities Management personnel at least one or two weeks in advance,” Sousa said. The project team also required power-related work to be performed over weekends, when building use was minimal. “And water-related work was completed in the evenings between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., when water usage was minimal,” Short added.

But Hill’s hands-on management of the DCJMM project began long before utilities work, Sousa said. “As soon as Hill joined the team, we developed and presented to Dallas County a project management plan and a project delivery plan,” Sousa said. “As soon as Hill joined the team, we developed and presented to Dallas County a project management plan and a project delivery plan,” Sousa said. “And, due to the complexity of the project—building a health care facility inside an active, operating jail, Hill recommended to the commissioners that the County use Construction Management-at-Risk to improve budgetary, schedule and quality performance.”

Ferguson agreed. “Dallas County had never done a large CM-at-Risk project; they always did a hard bid, which, due to its complexity, would not have worked well with this project,” he said.

Hill also oversaw the design process, and helped the team shape the project into phases when it became clear that it shouldn’t be built all at once. “Many of the areas scheduled for renovation were occupied by Parkland and Dallas Sheriff Office staff, we recommended completing the basement area first as a stand-alone facility with both temporary and permanent life safety systems,” Sousa said. “That way, occupants could move into their new facility and free up the remaining space in the upper two floors that needed to be renovated.”

As part of the selection process, as soon as the CM-at-Risk contractor and subcontractors were chosen, the Hill team recommended to Dallas County that they be allowed to visit the project site as many times as possible, and become familiar with the scopes of work. That way, Sousa and Short explained,
concerns and potential problems could be discussed and resolved as early in the process and possible, saving time and expense later.

Creating an effective, cohesive team among members who had very different plans, goals and methods of working wasn’t easy, but was essential to the success of the project, Sousa, Short and Ferguson said. Making personal connections early also was essential to creating a cohesive team.

“The DCJMM project stakeholders included the Dallas County Commissioners Court, the county Sheriff’s Department, Parkland Health & Hospital System, and (Dallas County) Facilities Management, all with different interests,” Sousa said. “Sometimes those differences were wide,” Sousa added. “Understandably, each stakeholder was concerned with their specific line of work. Not realizing initially that every stakeholder’s decision affected everyone else. Hill’s job was to keep the team players focused on planning, the design process and the construction challenges that lay ahead. In our opinion, this team approach led to the successful completion of the DCJMM project.”

Sousa realized that he and Short had their work cut out for them when they began calling regular meetings with the different stakeholders. “We noticed that, depending on the subject, not everyone was in synch with the design intent, safety, maintenance and operational issues,” Sousa said. One critical aspect/component to the success of the project was the Dallas County Facilities staff. “They were responsible for maintenance of all of the new and existing HVAC and life safety systems, which needed to tie together seamlessly and work perfectly, with no room for system failure,” Sousa said.

“As Project Managers, we understood that ensuring the project’s success started early in the planning and review process, and with an educated and cohesive team. Hill’s job was to bring all of the individual client groups together, and help them recognize that each decision made affected everyone else and that the project’s complexity demanded that we find common ground,” Sousa said.

Sousa, Short and their team met with each stakeholder individually to hear their concerns and relate the importance of working together. “We figured out how to convey the same clear message to all stakeholders. It’s like learning to speak four different languages so they all understand it and that your message is in the vernacular they’re comfortable with,” Short said. “For example, during the critical design-review process, the Facilities Management staff was given the opportunity to review the design, which often doesn’t happen. Once we gave them the opportunity to participate, we empowered them and made them realize that they were an integral part of the team and that their opinions were here 24-7 for the client.”

The City of Dallas is the hub of Dallas County, the nation’s ninth largest county.
were important to the project. Subsequently, they were able to share valuable information that no one else knew. This had a huge impact in minimizing potential change orders.”

Hill also took steps to streamline communication and problem-solving, Short said. “We recommended that the Sheriff’s Department, Parkland, the Facilities group and the County designate a single point-of-contact person who would be responsible for the project, which is important to prevent miscommunication between stakeholders. Sometimes, you have a concern and you don’t know who to talk to, and this was invaluable to the communication process.”

Sousa agreed. “We explained to the client that the single point of contact was important and that time and speed was of the essence to prevent potential delays by the client. Throughout the project, visiting agencies would sit in on our client meetings and would comment on how efficient the meetings were structured, with clear agenda items and a defined to-do list for each stakeholder that was always less than one page long. Every item identified on the list was completed as quickly as possible. If we knew that someone was behind, Hill was there to help them get their work done. That, in turn, helped us in our relationship with the various clients and the entire project team.”

“While the scope of the project often is limited, we go outside of the scope to make sure that the client team members understand their responsibilities, and that we understand their issues and challenges. So, the project scope isn’t the only thing we focus on,” Ferguson said.

Sousa and Short, along with Ferguson and Eric Christianson of the Foster Group, made helping their client a daily mantra. “We were here 24-7 for the client,” Sousa said. They reported directly to the Assistant County Administrator Shannon Brown, who was responsible for reporting on the progress of the project to her County superiors. “We were her right hand from the beginning of the project. We worked to make her life easier and, believe it or not, we actually wrote that on the white board in our office: ‘We make the client’s life easier.’ And we stuck to that from the very beginning of the project,” Sousa said.

Forethought and careful planning reduced surprises, which no one likes, and kept the project moving forward. “Assisting the client team anticipate and plan for issues weeks, and in cases months, in advance.” Sousa said. “So, when an issue arose, we had already discussed it and knew how to handle it.”

The early team-building meetings particularly paid off when complex work involving many logistical items had to be planned. “The Sheriff’s Department has been diligent in recognizing the importance of the construction efforts within this aging facility, so their approach is something like taking off a Band-Aid. They wanted to plan for unforeseen conditions, have safety backups and complete the work with minimal disruption,” Short said. “They realized that the faster we complete, the faster their lives will return to normal.”

Busy, complicated days don’t leave much time for introspection. But occasionally, Sousa, Short and Ferguson take time to marvel at the project and its far-reaching ramifications. The Department of Justice is mandating that county facilities across the country start planning to provide and operate similar medical and mental health care services for its growing inmate population.

“Counties that don’t comply run the risk of losing federal funding, being shut down or face legal action,” Sousa said. “This will impact the entire country.”
Hill’s New CEO Announces Executive-Level Changes

Shortly after taking over as Chief Executive Officer of Hill International, David L. Richter announced changes to the firm’s executive management team.

Raouf S. Ghali, of Hill’s Athens, Greece office, has been promoted to Richter’s former role as Chief Operating Officer. In this position, he will have management responsibility for all of Hill’s business operations globally.

Ghali has nearly 30 years of experience in program, project and construction management. Prior to this promotion, he served in a variety of positions at Hill, including President of Hill’s Project Management Group (International) from 2005 to 2015, Senior Vice President from 2001 to 2004, and Vice President from 1993 to 2001. Ghali earned his B.S. in business administration/economics and his M.S. in business organizational management from the University of LaVerne.

“Raouf, who has been with Hill since 1993, has been the major driver of Hill’s growth and success in the international Project Management market, and his promotion is very well deserved,” Richter said.

Mohammed Al Rais, of Hill’s Dubai, United Arab Emirates office, has been promoted to Regional President (Middle East) with Hill’s Project Management Group. In this newly-created position, he will continue to be in charge of all of Hill’s project management operations throughout the Middle East.

Al Rais, who joined Hill in 2006, has more than 35 years of program, project and construction management experience. Prior to this promotion, he had been Senior Vice President and Managing Director since 2010. Al Rais earned his B.Sc. in city and regional planning from the University of Engineering and Technology in Pakistan and his M.Sc. in project management from the University of Reading in the United Kingdom.

“Mohammed has been a key contributor to our recent growth and success in the Middle East since he took over the leadership of that operation five years ago,” Richter said. “With responsibility for more than 1,600 professionals throughout the Gulf region, this new title more accurately reflects his importance to our management team.”

Hill, with 4,600 professionals in 100 offices worldwide, has seen unprecedented growth over the past decade. Hill recently reported that revenue for the fourth quarter of 2014 was a record $169.1 million, an increase of 16.7 percent from the fourth quarter of 2013. In addition, consulting fee revenue for the fourth quarter was a record $148.7 million, an increase of 13.6 percent from the prior year’s fourth quarter. Hill’s backlog also saw an increase, up 0.7 percent over the last three months of 2014 to a record total of $1.080 billion.

Hill’s two primary operating groups also achieved impressive gains. Total revenue at Hill’s Project Management Group during the fourth quarter of 2014 was a record $129.5 million, an increase of 15.8 percent from the fourth quarter of 2013. Total revenue at Hill’s Construction Claims Group during the fourth quarter of 2014 was $39.7 million, an increase of 19.7 percent from the fourth quarter of 2013.

Richter is confident that the executive-level changes will position the firm for even greater levels of success in the years to come. “The changes will allow Hill to more effectively manage our business going forward,” he said. “Raouf, Tom and Mohammed have made major contributions to Hill’s growth and success, and I congratulate them on both their past achievements and their current promotions.”
Sitting comfortably in a conservatively chic conference room with near-panoramic views, Irv Richer is a long way from the cramped home office from which he launched Hill International 38 years ago. Over the past three-plus decades, Irvin E. Richter has guided Hill International from a fledgling, boutique claims consulting firm with a staff of one to a full-service claims and construction consulting powerhouse, with more than 4,600 employees in 100 offices throughout the world.

From the beginning, Irv was dreaming big. “When I started, I gave myself the title of vice president, and tacked on the ‘international’ to make Hill seem bigger than it was,” he recalled. “I started the company based on the principles of hard work, dedication and an unfailing commitment to providing professional services of the highest caliber, and I’ve never deviated from that.”

Along the way, Irv, now 70, has parlayed top-notch customer service into countless repeat clients—some of which have been relying on Hill for decades. He’s also invented services that have become industry standards, has overseen Hill’s management of some of the world’s most notable construction projects, was one of the first U.S. firms to establish business relationships in the Middle East and Asia, and acquired or partnered with some of his fiercest competitors. He’s weathered critics and naysayers, market saturations, economic downturns, personal and professional losses, and ill-fated projects scrapped due to civil unrest, outright war or natural disaster.

He’s written two books, contributed to several others, and has been featured in countless newspaper and magazine articles. He’s personally helped resolve some of the construction industry’s most contentious disputes, and is a sought-after lecturer at industry and business conferences across the globe. In January 2015, Irv will turn over the position of Chief Executive Officer to his son, David. David, now President, joined the business more nearly two decades ago and has helped steer the company to record success. Irv will continue as Chairman of Hill’s board of directors, but will leave the day-to-day operations and growth of Hill to his eldest son. It’s a decision that wasn’t made lightly, but he feels it’s the right one.

“The thing you have to understand that I didn’t build Hill alone. David was a major part of what I’ve done, so I’m not giving the job to somebody who’s a stranger to this business,” Irv said. “I’m giving it to someone who has been a part of this business and part of the growth of this business. I feel very comfortable with that.”

Father and son have worked well together over the last 19 years, but have different temperaments and tastes, and don’t always agree. Neither seems to be bothered by those differences. “David is very conservative. He’s not the liberal entrepreneur that I am, but he’s got the ability to make sure that the company goes in the right direction. I know that David will do very well,” Irv said.

Both Irv and David said they don’t expect Hill’s basic lines of business to change. “I’ve been president of the company for ten years, and have been part of the development of our strategy. “It’s not going to change much,” David said. “Every CEO puts his own stamp on the business, and no two CEOs are same, but I like the businesses we’re in. We provide two world-class services: project management and construction claims services.”
"There are a lot of diversified companies in our industry, but we don't want to become a designer; we don't want to become a contractor," David added. "We like what we do, and we've got lots of avenues for growth before we ever would decide to do something else."

Irv, on the other hand, is looking forward to having the time to mix things up a bit. He and his wife, Anne Marie, are relishing the idea of more free time and more travel. Irv also would love to delve back to a line of business that suits him perfectly, but one that he hasn't had much time for in the past four decades. "I'll do more of what I don't have the time to do now, like arbitrations or mediations, which take up a lot of time. I've done a number of them in Florida, for both existing clients such as Disney, and new clients, and I'll be happy to be able to do more of them," Irv said.

Irv is also looking into some new business ventures, but couldn't divulge details. "I'll have fun doing something a little bit different, a little more closely aligned with construction as opposed to construction services," he said. Of course, Hill would benefit, he added. "Hill can do the project management on jobs I'm involved in. I think that would be great."

David is looking forward to taking the helm. Ironically, Hill wasn’t David’s first choice of jobs after college and law school. “When we were talking about me joining the business, I was only a couple of years out of law school. I was in my late twenties, and my Dad had wanted me to come on board into the claims business, which was still a predominant part of what we did, probably 60 percent at that time. I’m a civil engineer. I’m an attorney. It seemed like a natural fit,” David said. “I said, Absolutely not. I’m a corporate attorney by training, and I want to continue to be a corporate lawyer. I’m happy to work at Hill and do that, if I can focus on being the general counsel of the company and getting a much broader background than just corporate transactional law.”

David joined Hill shortly after that conversation. He admits that he has some early misgivings. “I was 28 years old and three years out of law school. The first day I said, I’m in way over my head. This is a tough job,” David said with a laugh. “Five years later, we started talking about me moving over to the business side. “In 2001, I gave up being general counsel, and became President of the Project Management group, which, at that time had grown to become about 60 percent of our business,” David continued. “Even though I’m an attorney and the claims side of our business, which involves disputes and litigation consulting on construction projects, would seem like a more natural fit, my interest was primarily in project management.”

David liked the pace and potential for growth in Hill’s project management business. “Project management is a much bigger market with much greater opportunities for growth, much more opportunity to grow internationally on big construction projects. I saw project management as the future of the company,” he explained. David headed the project management group from 2001 to 2004. “In those three years, the group tripled in size,” he added. In 2004, David became Hill’s President and Chief Operating Officer.

“Major Milestone” Hill Joins NYSE Stock Exchange, 2008
Things weren’t always rosy, both point out. “When David joined the business, we were in the middle of some tough times,” Irv said. “Hill was private and smaller, and answering to banks that weren’t keen on lending money to a company with so much tied up in foreign receivables.”

“Being a private company limited our financial strength,” Irv explained. “We had a difficult time making sure that we could get the kind of financial support from our banks that we needed. We were limited to $10 million in borrowings. We don’t have those issues today.”

Both father and son point to 2006 as one of the firm’s pivotal years, when Hill became a publicly traded company. That step, on which the two had worked for years, changed everything.

“It’s a big change to be able to get money from financial institutions as a public company as opposed to a private company,” Irv said. David agreed. “A fast-growing global business requires access to capital, and we have that today as a public company. We didn’t have that ten years ago as a private company.”

Hill began its current pace of growth “around the first half of the last decade,” David said. “We have really evolved—and a lot of this was my Dad’s vision from early on—from a U.S. company to a global company.”

Getting into world markets early has helped position Hill as the go-to firm in the Middle East and, now, Asia and other emerging markets. “We made a very smart decision back in the 1980s when we opened our first office outside of the U.S. We picked a great location, in Abu Dhabi,” David said. “Since then, the construction boom that we’ve seen in the last 20 years in the Middle East is just unprecedented. Maybe only China, today, is bigger.”

“We were there early on, and we won some of their earliest projects,” David continued. “We got those projects under our belt and began winning more and more projects. We were able to become a major player there. If we got there ten years later, we would have missed that window completely,” David continued. “We were able to use that growth to grow elsewhere, to North Africa initially, and then Asia and Europe. Then, we started making acquisitions in Australia, in Brazil and South Africa. And today, we’re a truly global company.” Irv and David both see a bright future.

“We’re just getting started. This company has so much potential,” David said. “We’re grown in 19 years from $20 million a year in revenue to an estimated $650 million this year. We’ve grown the business thirty-fold and we’re just scratching the surface. We’ll be at a billion in revenue in a couple of years, and I expect to grow from there as well. There’s so much opportunity.”

“We are part of an industry that does $7 trillion a year, and it is expected that, by 2025, the industry will do $15 trillion a year,” Irv added. “If we did nothing in the coming years but stand around and get our fair share, we would double our revenue in a ten-year period. I think...”
we’ll more than do more than double it,” Irv predicted. “And, we have a very bright group of business development people—marketing and sales people—and a bright management team to help us do that.”

David agreed. “We foresee getting involved in bigger and bigger projects. In construction claims, we’re the biggest firm in the world by far. We’re two or three times the size of our number-two competitor. Our goal there is to continue our lead in that business, and continue to provide great service for our clients,” he said. “In project management, we have tremendous growth opportunities. It’s probably a $50 billion a year industry, and we now have about one percent of the market share. That leaves a lot of room for us to grow in an industry that’s growing.”

While the numbers are impressive, even dizzying, both men remain pragmatic. “Look, there’s construction happening everywhere on the planet, and every major project needs to be managed,” David said. “Those are the services we sell, so why not be a global company?”

David recognizes his attitude toward Hill and his contribution to it has changed over the years. He and his younger brother, Brady, both planned to make their mark in Manhattan, where Brady still lives and works. “When I was younger, I had my own mindset. I was only going to make the move [to Hill] if it was the right move for me. Some kids grow up thinking, ‘I’m absolutely going to join the family business.’ I had the opposite view. My view was ‘Okay, Hill is there if I need it, but I’m going to go out in the world and accomplish my own things and achieve my own successes.’”

How does he feel today? David smiles. “I feel I’ve accomplished my own things and achieved my own success.” Irv and David’s successes—and Hill’s—are evident. The hallways in Hill’s corporate headquarters in suburban Philadelphia that lead to the executive conference room are lined with plaques touting myriad industry and business awards. More plaques line the walls of the conference room. Irv smiles at his son, and his pride also is evident.

“I’m a parent who’s raised children. I raised David, I raised Brady and I feel I’ve raised Hill. They’re all my children,” Irv said. “It’s a very good feeling to know that your children are going to not just survive, but truly succeed. I feel really, really good about that.”

Three years is not a particularly long time in the world of project and construction management. But,
since opening its office at Gurgaon, India, in the summer of 2012, Hill International has covered significant ground.

Hill currently has seven projects—six in Gurgaon and New Delhi, and one in Mumbai—in various stages of execution. But, despite this success, the firm has its eye on even larger gains.

“We are looking into projects in the highway, railway and oil and gas industries, which could come to fruition by the end of 2015,” said Abdo Kardous, Managing Director and Senior Vice President of Hill’s Asia-Pacific operations.

Kardous noted that pursuing major Indian infrastructure and energy projects has been a Hill priority since it opened shop in the country. “Those sectors will continue to be high on our list throughout 2015,” he said.

Kardous is confident that Hill’s experience in managing some of the world’s most complex infrastructure projects will help it win work on similarly complex projects throughout the Asia-Pacific region and in India, in particular.

Growth and Challenges in the Public Sector
While India presents seemingly endless possibilities, operating there comes with its own set of challenges, Kardous said, including hard-to-navigate eligibility criteria; issues related to work permits and visas for experienced foreign nationals, and ever-changing rules on forming joint ventures, among others.

“For some infrastructure projects, there are restrictions on joint ventures,” Kardous explained. “Also, potential clients often mandate that a company must hire all of the personnel to be assigned to a project even before it goes to bid. Failure to do so can result in a monetary penalization that could total up to ten percent of the billing rates. All of these things mean that Hill and companies like us must assume a great deal of risk.”

Dr. Panagiotis Kefalas, recently named Vice President for Business Development in India, agreed. “It is important to remember that India is a sub-continent—not just a country—and the ‘localization factor’ is very strong,” Kefalas said. “Also, India is a ‘multi-driver vehicle,’ with many, many people involved in decision-making.”

Although both concede that changes in how India does business with foreign companies will take time, Kardous and Panagiotis are hopeful that those changes will come, and remain focused on growing Hill’s operations in India.

Hill employs about 80 professionals in its India office, and about 60 in Afghanistan, another challenging location. Still, the firm is committed to growth there, despite the challenges.

“‘We’ve been shortlisted on a 180-kilometer [105-mile] Chennai Road upgrade project in southern India that is funded by the World Bank,” Kardous said. International funding agencies, such as the World Bank, the Japan International Co-operation Agency, and the Asian Development Bank, remains high on Hill’s list of priorities, he added.

Opportunities are available, too, under the new NDA government in India, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Kardous and Kefalas said. Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party were elected to lead India’s government in an historic, near-landslide
victory last May. Modi was the overwhelming choice in a highly publicized national election—the world’s largest—that spanned more than five weeks, and brought voters out in record numbers to more than 930,000 polling places in 28 states and 7 union territories throughout the country. Modi and his party unseated the long-standing Gandhi dynasty, fronted by candidate Rahul Gandhi. Modi, due to complete its first year in office this May, is riding on the wave of major promises to stimulate the sagging economy and apply good governance, and already has ushered in major changes. But more still need to be done, Kefalas said.

“We are impressed with the new rail budget [announced in late February], and plans for several new Public-Private-Partnership projects have been unveiled,” Kefalas said. “However, for this rail budget to work, changes still need to be made in India’s overall procurement strategy. They can’t work with the same tools.”

Growth in the Private Sector
While Hill and other firms await policy changes regarding public projects, increasing numbers of private-sector clients are realizing the value of hiring Western project and construction management consultants.

Bob Houser, Vice President of Hill India and Project Manager of the highly visible Camellias development, said the project owner, DLF, is one such private developer. “DLF understands the benefits that a Western project management firm can bring to the table,” Houser said.

Hill is managing six projects for DLF, including The Camellias, which involves the construction of nine high-end residential towers totalling more than 4.6 million square feet. The apartments are reputed to be India’s first multi-million-dollar homes that are being sold on an “invitation only” basis. “The project is 30 percent complete, and is due for completion in September 2017,” Houser said.

In addition to The Camellias, Hill is managing for DLF the nearly completed Horizon 2 office complex; the fast-tracked YPCC shopping mall, for which design work is soon to be completed; the GE Plastic/Cyber Park Sector 20 project, which calls for three eight-story office blocks; the Cyber City upgrade; and the T3 shopping mall, all in Gurgaon and New Delhi.

Another private client, Bombay Reality, hired Hill last fall to provide project management consultancy and site supervision services for One and Two Island City Center (ICC) in Mumbai. One Island City Center will be 39 stories tall, and Two Island City Center will reach 67 stories tall, and provide nearly 2.6 million square feet of luxury residential space on 29 acres.

“Work has started on the foundations package, and there are already ten Hill professionals on site in Mumbai,” Kefalas said.

In addition, Hill is pursuing opportunities in another major Indian metropolis: Bengaluru. “The private sector is coming to us. There is a younger generation of Indian entrepreneurs who have been educated in the West and they realize the value we offer,” Kardous said.

Growth throughout Asia-Pacific

In addition, myriad commercial and infrastructure projects are being planned in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar and Shanghai, among other locales, keeping Kardous and his business development team busy.

“The Asia-Pacific region is one of great significance and will likely play a bigger role in Hill’s success in the years ahead,” Kardous said. Kefalas agreed. “Nearly 60 percent of the global population is in Asia and this will grow, resulting in more construction projects being rolled out. The United States and Europe already have developed their infrastructure, so the action now will move to Asia,” he said.

Despite inherent challenges, the climate looks similarly sunny in India.
“In India, we are maintaining operating profit of 35 percent, thanks to a younger generation of clients who recognize the value of our services. Once the public sector fully recognizes that value, we expect Hill to be the ‘go-to’ firm for project consulting and construction management,” Kardous said. “The outlook is very bright.”

About Hill International, Inc.

Hill International, with 4,600 employees in 100 offices worldwide, provides program management, project management, construction management and construction claims consulting services primarily to the buildings, transportation, environmental, energy and industrial; markets. Engineering News-Record magazine recently ranked Hill as the ninth-largest construction management firm in the United States.

Hill International is proud to be a publicly traded company listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: HIL).

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Call us at 856-810-6210, or write to us at:
Hill International, Inc.
Attn: John P. Paolin, Executive Editor
News from the Hill
303 Lippincott Centre
Marlton, New Jersey 08053
or via e-mail at info@hillintl.com

John P. Paolin - Executive Editor
Tricia M. McCunney - Managing Editor and Senior Writer
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