

# AMERICAN BUILDERS QUARTERLY

SPRING 2009

American Subcontractors  
Association, Inc.

RESOURCE COLORADO

PRO STEEL ERECTORS II, INC.

RUSCO, INC.

BALLARD, SPAHR, ANDREWS  
& INGERSOLL, LLP

Highlighting the Best of  
Monarc's Developments

HOUSE OF SWEDEN

THE EMBASSY OF NEW ZEALAND

Q-14 RESIDENCES

THE EMBASSY OF SLOVENIA

# MONARC CONSTRUCTION

HISTORIC RENOVATION, EXQUISITE MODERN ARCHITECTURE, AND STUNNING FOREIGN EMBASSIES



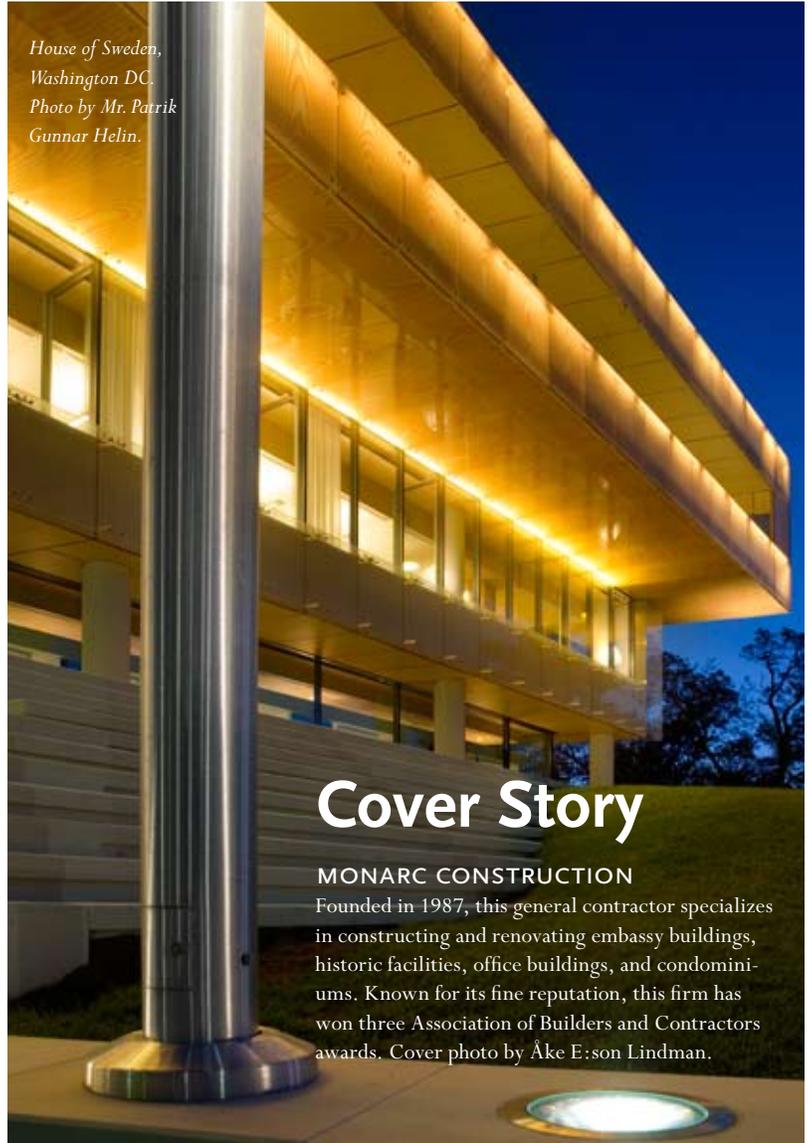
House of Sweden,  
Washington DC.  
Photo by Mr. Patrik  
Gunnar Helin.

**R**esources and connections are invaluable to the life of any business, and this issue of ABQ spotlights a pair of trade associations that offer indispensable organizational assistance to their members. One of these groups is the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), the country's largest and oldest association for the construction trade. With nearly 33,000 members and 96 chapters, the AGC provides training/education programs, a standardized construction contract system, marketing/communications services, and much more, and it is rooted in advocacy through a strong presence on Capitol Hill.

The American Subcontractors Association (ASA) is the second of these groups—one that also is built on advocacy and education. Like the AGC, the ASA works for legislative solutions to issues pertaining to its members. In this case, its members are expert subcontractors, specialty trade contractors, and suppliers, for which the ASA pushes ethical standards, safety initiatives, and improvements to the business environment. "We need to help improve management," says David Mendes, the ASA's senior director of communications and education, "so companies can thrive in the economic environment they're facing."

And as the economy and construction landscape have changed over the last decade, some builders have found themselves branching into civic and public works. Our section on these multi-focused general contractors highlights companies that have built educational facilities, bridges, fire stations, airport additions, recycling plants, landfills, ambassador's residences, and even secure facilities for the Department of Homeland Security. As much as any other builder, these companies must exhibit reliability, pragmatism, and trust. Monarc Construction, featured on our cover, is no exception. Founded more than 20 years ago, Monarc situated itself in Washington, DC to handle all sorts of new construction and renovation. Along the way, it has worked on majestic foreign embassies and historic local landmarks. "We have done Decatur House, but we haven't done the White House yet. I guess that will come eventually," jokes president John Bellingham. At the rate his company is going, it just might.

Scott Morrow, *Managing Editor*



## Cover Story

### MONARC CONSTRUCTION

Founded in 1987, this general contractor specializes in constructing and renovating embassy buildings, historic facilities, office buildings, and condominiums. Known for its fine reputation, this firm has won three Association of Builders and Contractors awards. Cover photo by Åke E:son Lindman.

# MONARC CONSTRUCTION

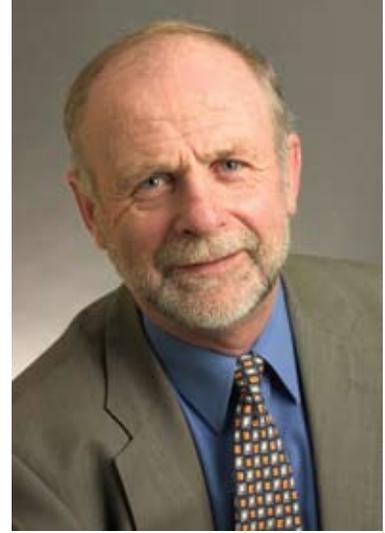
DC-AREA GENERAL CONTRACTOR FINDS A NICHE IN BUILDING FOREIGN EMBASSIES

by Regina Raiford Babcock



## THE EMBASSY OF SWEDEN—HOUSE OF SWEDEN

The House of Sweden was completed by Monarc Construction in 2006, which includes living areas, dining areas, and meeting rooms. The new space was created by a complete renovation and expansion of this 1920s mansion, including the installation of perimeter security enclosures and service facilities. The House of Sweden is the home of the Embassy of Sweden and serves the representatives of the Swedish Commerce. It is located in Washington, DC and is owned by the Embassy of Sweden. Architects: Gert Wingårdh and Tomas Hansen. Architect of record: Richard C. Brown, AIA. Photograph by Åke E:son Lindman.



Above: House of Sweden. Photos by Åke E:son Lindman.  
Right: John Bellingham, president.

**S**ituated in Lafayette Square across from the White House in Washington, DC, St. John's Church—sometimes known as the Church of the Presidents—was founded in 1815. Every US president has attended a service there. It's currently being occupied by another powerful-sounding entity: Monarc Construction, a Falls Church, VA general contractor that's renovating the church and updating its HVAC system.

Building and renovating embassies and historic facilities is the focus of

---

**MONARC CONSTRUCTION  
AT A GLANCE:**

---

**LOCATION:**  
FALLS CHURCH, VA

**EMPLOYEES:**  
110

**ANNUAL PROJECTS:**  
35

**2007 ANNUAL REVENUE:**  
\$65 MILLION+

**SERVICES:**  
PRE-CONSTRUCTION, NEW  
CONSTRUCTION, TENANT FIT-OUT,  
AND HISTORIC RENOVATION

Monarc's work, and to this end, the firm carved out a section under St. John's Church so as to accommodate the new HVAC equipment while maintaining the historic exterior. Next door to the church is the former home of the British Embassy, which is also being revitalized by Monarc. "When I first came to America, I came as an illegal alien," jokes John Bellingham, Monarc's president. "I took a job as the property manager at the British Embassy so I wouldn't get thrown in jail." So it was a thrill for Bellingham to restore his former workplace, which was on track for completion in November 2008.

During the late 1960s, Bellingham received his industrial training certificate in Britain and worked for several large construction firms based in England and, later, the United States. He founded Monarc in 1987 with the Trammel Crow Company. During the 1990s, Monarc separated from Trammel Crow and started off on its own. "We basically developed our business around working in the center of Washington, where there is so much diversity," says Bellingham.

The Lithuanian Embassy is another notable Monarc project. During the 1950s, the Lithuanian government had to sell half of its embassy due to economic hardships. In 1991, as a newly



### **Q-14 RESIDENCES**

This upscale condominium complex is located at 14th and Q Street NW, Washington, DC. The interior of the Q-14 Residences was completed in 2007. The building, with 5 units per floor on 7 levels, is served by 2 high-speed elevators. Two levels of below-grade parking are accessed from the rear alley, containing up to 37 parking spaces. A terraced courtyard at the ground level will provide a visual respite from urban life, with unit balconies visually linked to this "urban oasis." A rooftop terrace serves the recreational needs of the residents, providing dramatic views of the surrounding cityscape. Architects: Bonstra/Harestine. Photographs by Max MacKenzie.

“ We basically developed our business around working in the center of Washington, DC, where there is so much diversity. ” *John Bellingham, President*

free and sovereign nation, Lithuania hired Monarc to renovate its existing historic building and build an addition. Many of these embassy projects involve working with foreign architects and building in the sponsoring countries' architectural styles. "Sometimes it can be very complicated because the architects may not understand what we have to do because of codes, and we may not understand what the architects

want in terms of detailing, but it all gets worked out," says Bellingham. "It's a matter of sitting down and scratching your head and translating."

Annually, Monarc completes four major projects in the \$10–20 million range and handles 30 small projects in the \$1–2 million range. The company has worked on several embassies for nations like Slovenia, Iraq, Germany, and oth



*Apartment in the Q-14 Residences.*



### **THE EMBASSY OF NEW ZEALAND**

Monarc Construction renovated the entrance, lobby and library and made a security upgrade for the New Zealand Embassy, which is located in Washington, DC and owned by the New Zealand government. Shatter proof glass was installed, handicap access ramps were put in place, and stone imported from Asia was used for the floor in the front entrance and lobby.

“You do one embassy and then another, and things snowball. We’ve been working for some of these governments for 21 years now.” *John Bellingham, President*

ers. With the exception of electrical and plumbing services, Monarc manages all aspects of the building process and coordinates the unique needs of its clients.

In addition to embassies, Monarc has served as the general contractor for several historic facilities across Washington, DC, including the Warden Mansion, the Tivoli Theater, and the Decatur House Museum. It also handles new construction of condo-

miniums and office facilities.

Due to Bellingham’s association with the British Embassy and his company’s devotion to quality workmanship, Monarc has emerged as a leader in the Washington, DC market. “You do one embassy and then another, and things snowball. We’ve been working for some of these governments for 21 years now,” Bellingham says. An example of this momentum is the company’s



Monarc Construction has received numerous awards for craftsmanship and contracting work. The following are recent awards for featured work.

- Q-14 Residences – Association Builders’ and Contractors of Washington, “Award of Excellence”
- House of Sweden – The American Architecture Award 2007
- House of Sweden, Embassy of Sweden – Washington Building Congress, “2007 Craftsmanship Award for Drywall”

*New Embassy of New Zealand.*

## THE EMBASSY OF SLOVENIA

Monarc Construction completed renovations on the entrance, lobby, and library and performed a security upgrade at the Embassy of Slovenia, which is located in Washington, DC and owned by the Slovenian government. Shown are the dining room (top right), interior hall (bottom right), and exterior of the Embassy of Slovenia. Architect: Powe Jones Architects.



work with Sweden; after completing the Swedish Embassy and the House of Sweden—a five-story, 75,000-square-foot, multi-purpose facility devoted to Scandinavian industry—Monarc is beginning construction on the new environmentally sensitive Swedish ambassador’s residence.

Bellingham says these foreign governments appreciate the consistency that Monarc brings to the construction process. “We are the liaison; we are here; we know all about the building

and we are the people they can rely on,” he says.

Excited by the potential of green design, Bellingham hopes to start more sustainable design projects and expand into federal building construction. In the meantime, he’s working on several new embassies and historic buildings. “We have done Decatur House, which is on the other corner across from St. John’s Church, but we haven’t done the White House yet. I guess that will come eventually,” jokes Bellingham. *ABQ*



*Dining Room Interior of The Embassy of Slovenia*



*Hall Interior of The Embassy of Slovenia*

The list of embassies Monarc Construction has worked on is impressive. Here are a few more:

- The Embassy of Lithuania – The mansion on is undergoing extensive renovations to the existing five-story building to include some historic restorations to the exterior façade. Also under construction is a new five-story addition to the rear of the existing building doubling the square footage of the original building.
- The Embassy of Kazakhstan – Restoration of a historic mansion.
- The Embassy of Botswana – The construction of a new buildings to tie in two diverse façades located on opposite streets into a focal point.
- Swedish Ambassador’s Residence – Complete renovation and expansion of this 1920s mansion, including the installation of perimeter security enclosure and service facilities.
- Delegation of the Commission of the European Ambassador’s Residence - Included addition of new penthouse with new structural system and underground garage, expansion of living areas, upgrading of all utilities and installation of full commercial kitchen and state-of-the-art communication and wiring systems.
- The Embassy of the Ukraine – Restoration of Marbury House with original material to reflect the Greek Revival Period (circa 1835) based upon a Civil War era photograph of the house. All work conforms to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Preservation. Complementing the rehabilitation of the Forrest-Marbury House, construction of what is now called Forrest-Marbury Court, was in strict keeping with the historical significance of the property.
- Namibia Ambassador’s Residence – Renovations to the Ambassador’s residence including complete renovation of the interior structure, new kitchen cabinets and appliances, new wood flooring, ceramic tile, carpeting, architectural wood trim, new fireplace mantels, painting, roofing, and master bath remodel.