

## Willow Construction continues to grow after opening Delaware office

**Easton** — When looking at area construction sites, it is not uncommon to see a sign with the green tree logo of Willow Construction. The business, founded in 1973 in Easton, gets its name from a combination of founder William Ditman and his wife Lois' first names.

Willow Construction has grown up to become one of the largest commercial, industrial and residential construction companies in the area. In 2001, the company was reorganized, dividing it equally among its three officers: founder and Chairman Ditman, President Michael S. Hiner and Vice President Bernard A. "Andy" Cheezum Jr.

Today, the company has nearly 80 employees and last year they opened a second office in Georgetown, Del.

Hiner, who has worked with the company since 1983 and worked in the wholesale building supply business before joining the firm, said that the business has grown since opening its office in Delaware.

"We are very fortunate to be doing well in that office as well as here," he said. "[Our projects are] really across the entire Shore."

He said Willow always has approximately 30 projects in various stages going on at one time. Their projects are located all over the Delmarva Peninsula. Over the years, Willow has earned numerous awards in both residential and commercial categories, including "Project of the Year." In earning the prestigious honor of Accredited Quality Contractor by Associated Builders and Contractors, Willow has demonstrated outstanding commitment to employees, clients and community, as well as consistent, superior construction.

Willow's current projects include an apartment complex in Cecil County, a church in Lewes, Del., the Cambridge Harbor condominiums, a hotel in Easton, multiple buildings at the Talbot Commerce Park in Easton, the new office building for Choptank Electric in Denton and a new clubhouse for Prospect Bay Country Club in Grasonville.

Recent projects that Willow was proud to be a part of include the \$14 million addition and remodeling of The Inn at Perry Cabin in St. Michaels, the conversion of the former Rowen's Stationery to Scossa Restaurant & Lounge in Easton and the construction of the Learning Resource Center at Chesapeake College in Wye Mills, Hiner said.

Willow handles three different types of construction: commercial, custom residential and Butler pre-Engineered buildings. Hiner said the firm has done a lot of



Willow Construction is the general contractor on the construction of the Hampton Inn on U.S. Route 50 in Easton.

medical building and accommodation and resort work including The Inn at Perry Cabin a couple of years ago. The firm also has constructed many large homes and estates mostly on the waterfront.

Why choose Willow Construction? According to Hiner, "Our expertise and our reputation of providing services with the highest level of integrity" and "our customer focus on construction management."

Clients contact Willow in various ways. Sometimes the contact is through an architectural firm that solicits Willow's services in the form of a bid, other times it is through direct contact with an owner and the most formal way is a bid process through an advertisement in the newspaper.

Another option is design build, which allows an owner to negotiate the complete package of services through Willow. Willow hires the architect and engineer and incorporates them into a design build team, which works out all the kinks, Hiner said.

"It is one way to acquire more value for the dollar," he said.

There are some factors affecting the construction industry that Willow is concerned about, Hiner said.

"There is an ongoing concern about development and growth that does impact our future, but also having lived here I can understand the concern, so it is a double-bladed sword," he said.



President of Willow Construction  
Michael Hiner

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### Willow Construction Projects

Chesapeake Bay Beach Club, Stevensville  
 Easton Club Clubhouse & Pro Shop, Easton  
 Tred Avon Yacht Club, St. Michaels  
 Washington Street Pub, Easton  
 The Inn at Perry Cabin, St. Michaels  
 Hampton Inn, Easton  
 William Hill Gardens, Easton  
 Heartfields, Easton  
 St. Michaels Bank, Easton  
 Centreville National Bank, Chester and Denton  
 First Federal Savings, Easton  
 ISG International, Cambridge  
 Wye Institute Corporate Retreat, Wye Mills  
 3DI, Easton  
 Chesapeake College Learning Resource Center, Wye Mills  
 Mace's Lane Middle School, Cambridge  
 Chapel District Elementary School, Cordova  
 Salisbury Pewter, Easton  
 Chesapeake Cardiology Clinic, Easton  
 Easton Utilities Offices, Easton  
 Cambridge - Dorchester Airport, Cambridge  
 The Liberty Building, Centreville  
 Queen Anne's County 911 Center, Centreville  
 Talbot County Department of Roads, Easton  
 Rite Aid, Chester  
 Lowe's, Easton  
 Hill's Drug Store, Easton  
 Academy Art Museum, Easton  
 Bob Smith Automotive, Easton  
 Regina USA, Cambridge

"I think smart growth is an important initiative to be able to manage the amount of growth in any given jurisdiction or community with the understanding that growth does help fuel the economic engine and the prosperity of all of Delmarva's residents either directly or indirectly."

Another hot topic is immigration reform. The use of immigrant and migrant laborers is a must for the construction industry. Hiner said he thinks President George W. Bush's immigration reform proposal is fair and the process should be made easier for immigrants to enter the country, secure work and prosper like every other American.

"I do think there needs to be some reforms to reduce the complexity of the process and allow immigrants to enter the country on a legal basis," Hiner said.

World events often affect the supply of raw building goods like lumber and steel, Hiner said. For example, hurricane season has a tremendous effect on the demand on the lumber industry causing shortages and price increases.

"Fuel prices affect every aspect of our industry whether it be petroleum-based products or shipping," Hiner said.

On the positive side, construction technology continues to advance, making products safer, stronger and more resistant to climatic conditions. Overall, the work site has become much safer and more efficient thanks to advancing technology, Hiner said.

The construction industry has also been improved with the use of computers, specialized software and cell phones.

Hiner said that Willow wants to maintain the projects they have in the region and continue on the path started more than 30 years ago. Do not be surprised if you continue to see the green tree logo on signs in front of many area construction sites.

For information on Willow Construction, visit [www.willowconstruction.com](http://www.willowconstruction.com) or call 410-822-6000.



Pictured is a Willow Construction Project at the Talbot Commerce Park.