

Manufacturing

Growing steel fabrication company moves to Cohoes

    

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David Sowinski, owner of Sowinski Steel, at the company's new space in Cohoes.

DONNA ABBOTT-VLAHOS | ALBANY BUSINESS REVIEW



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Story Highlights



- Sowinski Steel relocates to larger facility in Cohoes.
- Company fabricates structural steel and other metal products for projects.
- Revenue expected to increase from \$3.2 million to \$4.3 million.

A maker of structural steel and other metal products has relocated from Mechanicville to a larger facility in Cohoes.

The 7,500-square-foot complex at 39 Ontario St., near the 112th Street Bridge that links Cohoes to Troy, is nearly double the size of Sowinski Steel's previous home in Saratoga County, according to owner David Sowinski, who founded the subcontracting business about seven years ago.

Sowinski bought the Cohoes real estate this summer for \$525,000, according to Albany County records. Colonie-based community bank Pioneer provided financing.

Though most recently used by an industrial cleaning business, the facility for decades served as a chain-fabrication shop and is equipped with two overhead cranes – appealing assets for a manufacturer that deals with heavy metal.

“Now we’re in a building that was built for what we do,” Sowinski said.

Sowinski and his approximately 15 employees fabricate structural steel as well as auxiliary products like handrails and stairs, mostly for state or local government projects.

The company's ability to make those "miscellaneous metal" products has helped it win jobs, Sowinski said.

General contractors typically want to select a single steel fabricator, and larger providers of structural steel tend not to want to make stairs and handrails, he said.

Revenue in 2024 was \$3.2 million, and Sowinski expects to hit \$4.3 million this year.

The company is in the midst of making handrails for MVP Arena in downtown Albany and a wastewater treatment plant in Saratoga County, among other jobs.

Sowinski, an Albany native, at 18 joined the U.S. Coast Guard, where he served for four years. He then studied construction management at Alfred State College in New York's Southern Tier and landed project-management roles with U.W. Marx and Consigli Construction.

Later on in his career, as a pipe-welding shop where he worked was closing its doors, general contractors with jobs to share encouraged him to start his own business, he said.

“I’m not a natural risk-taker/entrepreneur by any stretch,” he said. “So it was a little scary.”

Sowinski credited Kivort Steel in Waterford, his primary supplier, for working with him on payment terms as he was starting out. A credit line from Pioneer also helped him grow the business, he said.

On the recruitment and retention front, Sowinski said he tries to keep overhead low to better reward employees. He makes accommodations for their particular schedules, he said, eschewing a more rigid approach to shift work that's sometimes associated with manufacturing.

"I think that'll generate the better talent," he said.