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Weber Group design firm spreads its magic around the world in fanciful displays, more traditional construction projects

Premium content from Business First by John R. Karman III, Reporter

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Whether it's designing and building an apartment complex for medical students near downtown Louisville, creating an indoor water park at a ski resort in Vermont or transforming part of the **Galt House Hotel** into a winter wonderland, Sellersburg-based general contractor the **Weber Group Inc.** has stayed busy during the recession.

The company, on average, works on 40 to 60 projects of varying sizes each year, according to company officials, and it's not unusual for four or five large displays to be under construction at one time at the Weber Group's main, 25,000-square-foot Southern Indiana workshop.

In early November, the shop was humming with activity as the company's artists and designers put the finishing touches on the Christmas Village and Snow Fairy Castle that were created as part of this year's "Christmas at the Galt House Hotel" festivities.

"The schedule is always a challenge," said company president [Tom Weber](#) of the workload.

"You would like to have more time ... just to try to make it better and better," Weber said. "Over the years, you learn how to deal with that."

Different work, different divisions

The Weber Group operates three divisions:

- There is a traditional design-build construction unit;
- An entertainment arm handles the company's more fanciful projects for amusement parks, zoos and tourist attractions;
- And an asset-maintenance concern performs tenant finish work and upkeep for clients.

Of those divisions, the more traditional design and maintenance work annually accounts for about 60 percent of the company's revenue.

The entertainment-oriented projects make up the remaining 40 percent, according to Penny Peavler, the Weber Group's director of brand development and marketing.

Some projects have been scaled back

Peavler said the company has stayed active throughout the economic downturn, and it saw little decline in the number of projects it completed in recent years.

But clients across divisions scaled back the scope of the work they wanted the Weber Group to do, she said, and that affected the company's revenue.

Even so, the Weber Group stays in motion.

"We're still doing well," she said. "We're busy."

John R. Karman III covers these beats: Economic development and government, commercial real estate, transportation, utilities, sports business, lottery, tourism/conventions, higher education, nonprofits, Jeffersontown, Downtown, Central Area.