

# UPDate



A Project Update from  
The Douglas Company

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## Loretto Geriatric Center

Utica, New York

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Renovation and New Construction of 176 Unit  
Assisted Living Facility

370,000 Square Feet

Construction Cost \$15 million

## Loretto Geriatric Center

Utica, New York

In 1989, The Sutton Companies filed an application for establishment of a 120-bed nursing home in Utica, New York. During the early development of this project, they were approached by the Oneida County Department of Social Services to see if they would be willing to take over the operation of The Hunter House, a 130-bed adult home, and expand the new project to include a replacement facility. Because the originally contemplated site was no longer adequate, The Sutton Companies began the search for a replacement site which, given its size, proved difficult within the city limits of Utica. One of the sites presented was the Utica Free Academy High School, which Utica had recently abandoned in a consolidation of its school district.

Initial tours of the facility by The Sutton Companies and the Project Architect, Schleicher-Soper Architects, were discouraging. At first, the enormity of the 370,000 square foot structure was intimidating. One of the most significant issues was finding a contractor willing to undertake a \$15 million construction contract, which included \$2 million in asbestos remediation and 200,000 square feet of rehabilitation. Jim Woods asked The Douglas Company to be involved with the project, and working with Bud Soper, the Project Architect, a program that met the needs was designed, and the \$15 million “estimate” was made literally on the back of a napkin at a restaurant in Utica. With great creativity in utilizing various governmental programs, and giving up their ownership in favor of a not-for-profit to obtain tax-exempt financing, The Sutton Companies was able to make this project viable. What has resulted is an amazing facility. One whole building was demolished, and the upper two floors of another were removed. The school’s large theater was filled in to have a level floor, and a stunning reception and services area has been added.

The conversion of the UFA site will provide the cornerstone for an entire neighborhood revitalization. Jobs will be created with a commitment to hiring from within the community, programs will be developed which will prepare neighborhood residents and, as is the case with the sound economic development of urban centers, an increase in the economic viability will help offset the potential costs of crime, drug abuse, and environmental destruction.