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## Wipfli Helps Fill Arbor Gate

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More space and a higher profile were two reasons Wipfli CPAs and Consultants moved in November to Arbor Gate, the recently completed office building project along the Beltline near Todd Drive. With 215,000 square feet in two towers, Arbor Gate is one of the largest Dane County office developments completed this year.

While Wipfli anchors the east tower, Wisconsin Heart & Vascular Institute is the main tenant in the west tower. Other tenants include Meriter Heart and Wellness Center and Silver Mine Subs.

The \$55 million building was made with energy-efficient and environmentally friendly features such as motion-controlled lighting and efficient heating and cooling systems, but an application has not been filed for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification.

Bradley Hutter, president of Mortenson Investment Group, co-developer of Arbor Gate, said the priorities were the timely completion of the building and promotion of South Side economic development. He said a LEED application could be filed later.

Wipfli's new office comprises 40,000 square feet on two floors and offers views of the UW Arboretum and the State Capitol. About 5,000 square feet has been set aside for future growth, and the Wipfli name atop the building provides visibility.

The move, which took place over Thanksgiving weekend from the firm's former 28,000-square-foot office a few blocks west along the Beltline, went smoothly.

"We did not lose a minute of productivity in moving from one building to the other," said partner Steven Lipton. Growth at Wipfli Wipfli's new Madison office provides room to add 40 or more employees, and the firm has considered expanding into Iowa and Illinois. The firm has clients in both states.

"When you've got 60 to 70 percent of a market, you've got to expand your territory," Butler said. "The success of these practices is forcing us to look at where we can continue to grow." The Madison office is one of 15 Wipfli offices in Wisconsin and Minnesota. With its headquarters in Milwaukee, Wipfli has more than 800 employees, including 110 in Madison, and has grown into a large regional accounting firm through a series of mergers with smaller firms.

The company is named after Clarence Wipfli, who founded the firm in 1930 in Wausau. The first of 16 mergers and acquisitions occurred a dozen years later.

Since 2000, Wipfli has had 11 mergers and acquisitions, including five in Minnesota and the 2003 acquisition of Williams Young & Associates of Madison, which enhanced its local presence.

Diverse client base The firm is organized into six regions in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Its clients include auto dealerships; nonprofit and government organizations; financial institutions; manufacturers and distributors; construction and real estate firms; and health-care companies.

"The key to success is expertise, depth of knowledge in these practices," Lipton said. "You try to see opportunities based on the needs of your clients."

Developing that expertise has helped Wipfli gain more than half of the Wisconsin market share among clients like hospitals and helped attract more than 300 bank clients.

While larger accounting firms may seek business from public companies, "We don't focus on publicly traded companies at all, but on family-owned and small firms," said Madison managing partner Jim Butler. "Most job creation is not with publicly traded companies."

Wipfli has experienced growth of about 15 percent over the past five years and has added clients this year, Butler said. "We're still continuing to grow, although a lot of our clients are struggling," he said.

#### \ WIPFLI CPAS AND CONSULTANTS

Madison office: 2501 W. Beltline, 274-1980 Other offices: Appleton, Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Green Bay, Hudson, La Crosse, Marshfield, Menomonie, Milwaukee (headquarters), Minneapolis, Rhinelander, Rice Lake, St. Paul, Wausau Web site: [www.wipfli.com](http://www.wipfli.com) Employees 800, including 110 in Madison Services: Accounting, auditing, consulting