



## **Design/Build Exec. of the Month: Lee Wasserman of LEW Corp. assists owners and managers with NYC lead-based paint requirements**

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Mine Hill, NJ The New York Real Estate Journal (NYREJ) sat down with Lee Wasserman, president of LEW Corp.. for a question and answer session.

NYREJ: How did you get your start in the Environmental Industry?

Wasserman: After graduating from the University of Maryland with an accounting degree, passing my certification (CPA), and a short stint with a large public accounting firm, I quickly realized at 23 I needed to work for myself! My uncle Doc. Wassy (D.O. Gary Wasserman, Children's Mercy, Kansas City) shared an article in late 1991 about a lead-poisoned child who did not know where to turn for assistance. After making a few inquiries, studying the potential domestic size of the market, and

realizing my strengths and weaknesses I decided to get into the early stages of the indoor air quality and healthy homes industry with a concentration in lead-based paint. I believed very much in the issue and the quickly becoming regulated industry of property-oriented environmental concerns! So, in 1992, against my parents' wishes, I decided to take a bit of a risk, and LEW Corp. was founded from the comfort of my sister's old bedroom.

LEW Corp. Headquarters - Mine Hill, NJ

NYREJ: As an environmental company, how has LEW Corp. grown over the years?

Wasserman: Over the last three decades, LEW Corp. has grown from a 150 s/f bedroom to four Northeast U.S. offices and a national network of strategic partners. Due to our large reach, we can offer our ever-growing multi-state clientele the service, expertise, and fee schedules they are confident and comfortable with. Our 2021 team is comprised of certified industrial hygienists, environmental scientists (lead, asbestos, radon, microbial, IAQ, subsurface/geologists), environmental technicians (DWT, Pbl, IAQ, RRP,) and a superior team of administrative support (accounting, sales, marketing & QA/QC.). Constantly striving to satisfy our client's requests combined with the desire to add additional services, LEW Corp. opened LEW Corp. Remediation and Abatement Services, performing lead-based paint abatement, EPA RRP services, mold remediation, and asbestos abatement. In 2017, team LEW Corp. realized finding talented teammates with environmental skills and knowledge was a challenge. To satisfy this growing need for talent, LEW Corp. made its first acquisition; NAETI a 35-year established environmental multi-state approved training provider. Since acquiring NAETI we have opened a training facility in NYC (213 W 35th St. - NAETI.com), two in N.J. (Ocean and Morris County), and one in Philadelphia (NAETI.com).

NAETI Headquarters - Ocean, NJ

NYREJ: Are there any projects that you are particularly excited about right now?

Wasserman: There are several projects I am excited about right now! NYCHA, American Red Cross (ARC), and Morgan Properties. NYCHA, because there is a tremendous need for assistance and our team likes a challenge. ARC, because helping others is a critical part of humanity and a free society. Morgan properties, because I love entrepreneurs and success stories and I have seen Morgan grow from a few thousand apartments to a portfolio beginning to cover the United States.

NYREJ: What, in your mind, are some of the most important environmental challenges facing owners in NYC today?

Wasserman: I believe that the Pandemic has certainly created a serious challenge for facility

managers and owners, aside from all the rent regulations. Having to deal with residents spending a substantial amount of their time in units and sealing said units from normal air migration has created an uptick in children with elevated blood lead levels, more moisture intrusion, and mold-related concerns, and more indoor air quality concerns. It has also caused more resident complaints followed by city violations and paper production orders and then there are the major changes to NYC lead-based paint laws that will certainly create challenges.

LEW Corp./NAETI - New York, NY

NYREJ: How has LEW Corp./NAETI dealt with the constant changes in regulations proposed in NYC?

Wasserman: NYC environmental regulatory landscape and most recent lead-based paint regulatory changes to LL1 have created yet another very challenging compliance situation for property owners. HUD's most recently released XRF performance characteristic sheet at the 0.5ug/cm<sup>2</sup> creates even more confusion. LEW Corp., with three decades of both public and private sector relationships, state-of-the-art cost-efficient data collection, and report generation mobile technology integrated with NAETI, our training entity, has enabled LEW Corp./NAETI to understand new requirements, meet staff training needs and source the industry expertise we pride our reputation on.

Recently, an NYC property owner client was identified as having a child with an elevated blood lead level. However, per the client's records and annual notices, no child resided in the unit other than a 17 year older who had previously been shot in his native country. Because the child was under 18 (LL1 change) the NYC DOHMH was required to do a blood lead level investigation. Under the new LL1 changes NYC DOHMH is now required to write a violation at an XRF value of 0.5ug/cm<sup>2</sup> even though NYC current lead-based paint regulatory action level is currently still 1.0ug/cm<sup>2</sup>. Because of the NYC DOHMH violation the NYC HPD was requested to do an Audit of the owner's prior records and issued the property owner a Record Production Notice. With violations forthcoming if records cannot be produced. Based on the circumstances, supported by documentation and laboratory proof, LEW Corp. was able to request removal of the DOHMH violation (achieved), and since the HPD audit was predicated on the NYC DOHMH elevated blood lead that was removed, LEW Corp. was successfully able to request HPD to remove their production of records request. Healthy professional relationships, regulatory knowledge, and supportive documentation enabled LEW Corp. and NAETI to assist our clients most efficiently, effectively, and economically.

NYREJ: Moving forward, what do you think are the biggest opportunities for LEW Corp. in the New York market?

Wasserman: I think the biggest opportunity for LEW Corp. in the Metro Northeast and especially the NYC market is to continually leverage, our trilogy (testing/remediation/training) of environmental services to be as effective, efficient and economic as our clients expect us to be! The current NYC politics coupled with the NYC media constantly sensationalizing the news make me feel very

confident that environmental services will play a big part in the success of property owners and facilities teams. I expect if LEW Corp. keeps doing what we have been doing and what we constantly strive to do better, we will be a big part of their success and the future. I also see NYC's Local Law 1 changes related to lead-based paint creating a lot of opportunity for what LEW Corp. does best and is nationally recognized for; assisting property owners and managers with the education to properly manage and comply with the substantial NYC lead-based paint requirements.

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