

continued from page 42

and remain independent. We immediately met with the school's representatives and, due to our expertise, we were retained immediately. We acted as part of the internal accounting department and assisted them in getting their financial records in order so that they were ready to be audited by the external audit firm on a timely basis. We worked closely with the staff and management of the school and they were extremely pleased with our attention to detail, availability to answer any questions or concerns and dedication to meet their deadlines. Due to our quick response, attention to detail and efficiency, we are now a vendor of choice and look forward to continuing our relationship with college.



Giordano, Halleran & Ciesla, P.C.

By Steven M. Dalton, Shareholder

Giordano Halleran & Ciesla recently helped an independent elementary school located in Monmouth County obtain approvals from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) for a major expansion project consisting of a state-of-the-art, 8,650-

square-foot science and environmental center. The property contained areas of wetlands and regulated streams. The approval process was complicated by compliance and enforcement issues related to prior approvals obtained for the existing facility. Additionally, the science center was separated from the existing school by wetlands and wetlands buffers that were placed within a conservation easement. The firm spearheaded the creation of a workable development plan that resulted in the issuance of wetlands and flood hazard general permit authorizations from the NJDEP while avoiding rigorous individual permitting requirements. The permitting process was complicated by the need to construct a walkway through the conservation easement area to connect the science center to the existing school, an integral logistical and educational element. Giordano secured a de minimus modification of the conservation easement to accommodate the walkway. Giordano also successfully resolved the compliance and enforcement issues pertaining to the prior approvals with minimal monetary penalties and beneficial enhancement and management of the wetland buffers.

With municipalities strapped for cash, schools have called upon law firms for help in defending their tax-exempt status and for issues related to property taxes.