

Engineering firm expanding in wake of its contract successes

BY TAMARIND PHINISEE

A locally based engineering firm is expanding both its physical presence as well as its business operations in the city.

Unintech Consulting Engineers Inc. secured an indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity contract with VIA this month to provide civil engineering services for three years.

The pact calls for project work to be performed by Unintech on an as-needed basis.

The work will include performing feasibility studies related to zoning, platting issues, traffic planning and utility relocation, and all preliminary, final design and construction phase services required for those projects.

Company officials says the VIA project could be worth up to \$1 million. Work under the contract is based on an hourly rate.

Last month, the company also secured a two-year contract with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to provide design services for bridges and roadways within the 12 counties of the San Antonio district. The contract has an estimated value of up to \$15 million over the length of the pact. Unintech will be paid an hourly rate based on the nature of the specific project.

As a result of the firm's ability to secure more contracts, company spokeswoman Sandra Lenz says Unintech plans to expand its office here — adding a total of 5,000 square feet of space to its present location.

"Preliminary plans for expansion are already in the works and in the next two years we will add 2,500 square feet onto both sides of our building," Lenz says.

In December, Unintech moved into a newly constructed 10,000-square-foot building at 2431 E. Evans Road on the city's Northeast Side.

In order to accommodate future expansion, Lenz says the company purchased additional land, increasing the size of its property from 1.4 acres to 2.1 acres.

"We bought the additional property so that we could expand our parking area. And now we're already outgrowing this place that we just moved into," Lenz says.

In addition to more building space, Lenz says the firm has plans to expand its civil division in the areas of land development and public works, and structural divisions in the area of transportation and bridge design.



Lenz

"We're interested in getting more bridge projects, ..." she says. "There's a lot of expansion going on in that market right now."

Lenz says projected revenues for this year are between \$2 and \$5 million.

Growing project base

Indeed, Unintech is already involved in the State Highway 130 toll road project in Austin. The firm is providing bridge-consulting services to TxDOT for segments 1 to 4 — extending from Interstate Highway 35 to U.S. Hwy. 79. The estimated costs for these segments is \$1.2 billion. This contract began in August 2002 and expires in April 2007.

Unintech will be compensated at an hourly rate based on specific projects, but firm officials were unable to provide an estimate total value for the company's portion of the contract.

To better service the contract, Unintech opened a satellite office in Austin in 2002. But, Lenz says plans are to keep the office open as long as it receives additional work on the toll road project.

Unintech is also engaged in yet another TxDOT contract, which began in August of last year. Through that pact, the company is providing engineering design and surveying services for various projects in both rural and urban settings within the San Antonio district's 12 counties.



Hew

The two-year project has a total construction value between \$7 million and \$10 million dollars.

Since joining the firm in 1998, W. Elisa Chan, president of the company, has worked to expand Unintech's business operations by adding civil and survey divisions. In addition, she has championed the company in seeking more projects in the public sector.

Chan says she hopes the changes made and yet to come will attract even more business going forward.

"Our firm values quality work and hopes to make a positive contribution to both the San Antonio economy and the community at large," Chan says.

Chan also serves as president of the Alamo Asian Chamber of Commerce and is the wife of Unintech's CEO, Clifford Hew.



Chan