

## PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

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# Baldrige's mission: 'Bring best value to the project'

Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - by [Janis L. Magin](#) Pacific Business News

An innovative, practical approach to making buildings stronger, safer and more cost-efficient has helped Baldrige & Associates Structural Engineering Inc. to more than double its revenue in the past couple of years.

The company, which has been on PBN's list honoring 50 fast-growing companies in Hawaii five times, increased its revenue from \$1.5 million in 2004 to \$3 million in 2006.

That innovation and growth helped Baldrige & Associates earn the top spot in PBN's 2007 Business Leadership Hawaii Best in Business, Division II category.

### Employee count doubles

Founded by President Steven Baldrige in 1995, Baldrige & Associates grew from a dozen employees in 2004 to 25 employees today.

"There hasn't been a 100 percent increase in construction over the last two years," Baldrige noted as a comparison.

Perhaps not 100 percent, but Hawaii has seen a boom in construction. And Baldrige and his team of engineers have worked with architects and contractors on some of the more notable projects, including Trump International Hotel & Tower in Waikiki, Honua Kai Resort on Maui, Capitol Place and Pinnacle condominiums downtown, and the military's Hawaii Regional Security Operations Center.

Baldrige attributes only about a third of the company's growth to the construction boom, which reached its peak this year. Other factors include providing additional services to clients and expanding the client base of architects and contractors.

But those who work with the firm say Baldrige's drive to stay on the cutting edge of new technology distinguishes it from his competitors.



Tina Yuen, PBN

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When the federal government brought in new requirements for military construction, the regulations required structural engineers to develop new solutions.

Baldrige made a strong effort to get out in front and understand the new requirements, said Dennis Watts, president and CEO of Watts Constructors, which has worked with Baldrige for 10 years on a number of military construction projects, including the Pacific Command headquarters and the new C-17 hangar at Hickam Air Force Base.

"He has kind of embraced a lot of this security-type design, especially as it connects to the military," said David McVeigh, principal of Rim Architects, who also has worked on military projects with Baldrige. "He has gone above and beyond the call in learning and becoming an expert in this particular area."

And, while most local firms bring in people from the Mainland to work on the military projects, Baldrige says his company is able to provide expert service that normally would be outsourced.

He keeps himself updated on changes in the industry and passes that knowledge on to his staff, Watts said.

"He's surrounded himself with some extremely talented people, which I think is a key role of leadership anyway," Watts said.

Baldrige said diversification is one of the keys to his firm's success. In addition to providing structural engineering services, the company also has gotten into materials testing, construction inspection and research-based engineering, which involves writing new standards for the industry.

"You're basically helping to advance the industry, but you get paid for it at the same time," Baldrige said.

The company's research and development staff's work in keeping ahead of technology has resulted in grants for such things as natural hazard mitigation, and two significant publications on "Prevention of Progressive Collapse in Multistory Concrete Buildings" and "Design of Structures for Vertical Evacuation from Tsunamis."

The company also does value engineering for clients. Finding ways to build more efficiently often saves substantial amounts of money. Baldrige performed a basic review on the 909 Kapiolani high-rise condominium in Kakaako and found several million dollars in savings for the owner.

### **Improving quality**

"Often, people think that means cutting corners, but if it's done right, it can get the same or better quality," Baldrige said.

The company also is broadening its client base in other places, such as Guam, where it has worked on several military projects, and Chicago, where Baldrige is considering opening an office.

"We don't want to be a structural engineering company," he said. "We want to be a company that collaborates with the owner, the architect and the contractor to bring the best value to the project. And we just happen to be a structural engineering company."

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**CORRECTIONS**

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■ Hoku Scientific, a publicly traded company, is not involved in efforts by three University of Hawaii professors to bring a device called LifeReader to market. A Page 8 story and headline on Nov. 9 suggested such a connection.



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■ Radley Llego, Aubrey Renteria and Ben Renteria are special inspectors with Baldrige & Associates Structural Engineering Inc. A photo caption on page B19 on Nov. 9 misidentified them as structural engineers. Baldrige & Associates Structural Engineering did construction material testing work on the Capitol Place and Pinnacle condominiums and peer review on Capitol Place. A Page B19 story on Nov. 9 suggested the company had done the engineering work on the two projects.

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