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CLOSE-UP: JEFF BINGHAM**Bingham Construction keeps family business alive**

By **MONICA UNHOLD**, The Daily Transcript
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Construction is a family tradition for Jeff Bingham, president of **Bingham Construction**.

The company began in Sacramento in 1942 by Roy, Richard and William Bingham. Many high rises and government buildings in the Sacramento area were built by Bingham Construction. However, after the death of Richard Bingham in 1984, the company dissolved.

In February of 2008, Jeff Bingham decided to re-establish the family business in San Diego. He now has six full-time employees with plans for expansion within the next year despite hard times for the construction industry.

Bingham is far from new to the construction industry, having spent his entire career in the business. Prior to reinstating Bingham Construction, Bingham served as a senior project manager at **Reno Contracting** and project director at **Pacific Building Group**.

Bingham Construction specializes in commercial construction and tenant improvements. Some of the more visible projects built by Bingham Construction include the window-replacements at St. Paul's Manor on Third Avenue in Banker's Hill and tenant improvements for Genesis Logistics' nearly 30,000-square-foot warehouse in Rancho Bernardo.



Jeff Bingham is president of Bingham Construction.
Photo: J. Kat Woronowicz

The company likes to participate in design-build projects and finds the delivery method to be particularly advantageous when constructing office buildings, Bingham said. Many offices tend to have certain elements out of place, such as visible wiring running along wall seams or across the floor.

"What happens is you build it and then the tech guys come and set everything up," Bingham said.

The design-build method allows the building to meet the needs of the tenant and in most cases eliminates the need for later improvements. Involving the designer, contractor and tenant in the construction process makes the building far more cohesive, Bingham said.

Like many general contractors, Bingham plans to turn to other construction sectors to carry his company through the recession. Over the past six months the company has seen a 50-percent drop in business and a vast increase in competition to garner projects. Bingham Construction recently bid on projects with as many as 25 other contractors, whereas only a handful would have bid previously.

One sector into which the company plans to expand is electrical and solar. Bingham hopes to partner with a locally-based solar company to take advantage of the market created by new federal and state tax credits targeted at increasing the amount of energy drawn from renewable sources.

The expansion into the solar market goes in hand with its philosophy of offering comprehensive services. The company plans to install panels and wiring on existing buildings and ground-up projects. With the goal in mind of saving his clients money, Bingham hopes offering solar installation services will cut the cost of appliances and utility bills.

The company also plans to bid on more public sector projects, however not as soon as other contractors. Many contractors are bidding on school and road improvement projects to keep their workforce busy while residential and commercial projects are scarce. Bingham's strategy is to not waste time bidding on public works projects now, but wait for the commercial and residential sectors to return before moving into a less-busy sector. He expects the transition to be a smooth one having worked on projects at public schools in the past and hopes staying behind the crowd will ultimately put his company ahead of the curve.

"We have a tendency to go against the herd a little bit," Bingham said.

Although Bingham Construction has only operated for a short time in San Diego, the company was nominated in November for a Peak Performance award by National University. The awards recognize companies that have demonstrated commitment to their core values, customers and employees, as well as the ability to sustain profitability throughout the year.

Bingham plans to keep up his company's relationship with the private university and has offered to help teach construction courses or work on new buildings. Forming strong relationships with past, current and potential future clients is an integral part of Bingham Construction's business model. The company was founded on the principals of "exceeding expectations, operating efficiently, continuing to service current clients and getting new ones," Bingham said.

Despite the recent decline in the company's business caused by the poor economy, Bingham is optimistic about the potential of growing the company. He is hopeful that economic forecasts predicting a revival of the commercial construction industry during the second quarter of 2009 will come to fruition. He plans to aggressively expand the company as demand grows. Short-term business goals include increasing volume steadily from year to year and eventually, within 20 to 25 years, expanding the company worldwide, Bingham said.

"I am very optimistic, despite the economy," Bingham said.

Send your comments to Monica.Unhold@sddt.com.