

Small engineering firm offers big-firm expertise

One sure sign of Brighton's growth is the continued growth of Western Engineering Consultants, Inc., which opened four years ago at 20 S. Fifth Ave., across the street from City Hall.

Western is a professional civil engineering firm that specializes in a combination of in-house services designed specifically for land development. At Western, civil engineering, land planning and landscape architecture are under one roof, giving great flexibility to handle diverse projects.

Western's range of clientele spans from local churches to the Longmont campus of one of the world's largest biomedical pharmaceutical companies.

UNIQUE CONCEPT LAUNCHED

When Chad Cox began Western in 2003, he started from his Brighton home basement. Today, the company has 12 employees, including four professional engineers, a registered landscape architect, two engineers seeking licensure and five support staff. A certified planner will join the firm in 2008.

The firm's genesis occurred while Cox and former supervisor Leland Askeland worked together at the Longmont office of a NASDAQ-traded engineering company. They discovered they had an opportunity to provide greater personalized attention and palatable costs as a small local business.

Namely, larger firms took different aspects of a project and either passed them to a different company department or subcontracted them to outside companies. Both avenues created convoluted communication. Likewise, each step down the tier added extra costs, time extensions and potential problems.

"One of our strengths is we have one department – the whole company. We work together to accomplish each project," Cox said.

"And while we still subcontract surveying, geotechnical, environmental and structural services, we work with local small business owners with whom we

have great relationships. I've found a stronger commitment from small businesses than many large firms when it comes to accomplishing the client's goals."

"As a small business, we understand our small business clients are like us, and therefore we have a real genuine care for quality and costs. We know they are trying to grow and succeed with limited resources," Cox said.

UNSEEN BUT CRITICAL

Professional land development engineering provides a long-term critical component that most folks do not realize ensures a quality infrastructure for their community.

Each component must adhere to a stringent list of local and state regulations, governing everything from environmental impacts to structural integrity to landscape and aesthetic building materials. All Front Range municipalities have detailed design standards, ensuring each project brings value to their communities.

"We do it all," said Cox, who has assembled a big-firm staff into a small-firm operation.

Large clients include airport projects for SunBorne Companies, a business responsible for 120 acres of airport and hanger development at Centennial Airport. SunBorne recommended Western to another aviation company, XJet, to design their 100,000 square foot luxury jet facility.

"There are a couple of reasons we hired and continue to use Chad's firm," said Mike Packard, SunBorne owner. "His guys are very good at integrating with the existing design and development team. That's unusual.

"Another reason we find Western attractive is that they took on the responsibility to educate themselves about airport environments, such as regulations, rules and other elements unique to aviation."

Another large developer, Everest Development Company, handed Western responsibility for managing the civil engineering related approval processes through several districts and entities for its 15-acre, \$160 million Landmark residential



The Professionals at Western Engineering Consultants: Front Row, L to R, Merrie Cox, Chad Cox. Back Row: Jerry Cox, Leland Askeland, Claudette Wham, Jacob Hoban, Matt Knight, Matt Alms, Josh Cruze, Dale Jackson. Not shown is Vadim Podinovsky.

and retail project in the Tech Center.

BRIGHTON IDEAL

Cox, a Brush native, believes Brighton is an ideal central location for Western.

"We have projects all over the metro area," said Cox, explaining the advantage of the area's transportation routes.

Western projects sites range from Loveland to Castle Rock and Brush to Golden, and from Colorado to New Mexico and Arizona.

"Thus Brighton is as advantageous a location as any, and even more important to me is the small town atmosphere with large city amenities," Cox said.

"My wife, Merrie, and I moved back to Brighton in March of 2003 for its proximity to her work (DIA), family in northeast Colorado and the feeling of being outside of Denver," Cox said.

Hometown work has included four church projects, including a proposed new parish center for St. Augustine, and the new preschool building for Brighton Seventh Day Adventists' congregation.

"We have been thoroughly satisfied with their work" says Seventh Days' Pastor Bell. "They have gone above and beyond the call of duty to get this project done"

Other past and current commercial projects have included Brighton Feed and Saddlery's future site roadway improvements, Fort Lupton's Salud building, Lauer Krauts restaurant, Long Manor properties, Brighton Animal Clinic's Play Stay and More, Remax 2000's new office location, Staples and Western Consolidated's Broadview annexation.

Local residential projects include Brighton Reserve's large-acreage subdivision and Whitfield Construction's Chapel Hill subdivision.

Western also completed and proposed Keenesburg annexations for Sparrow Farms and Kauffman Farms, significantly increasing the town's annexed area.

Another Keenesburg project is Northside I-76, a 10-acre commercial development proposed at the Market Street and former Phippen Lane intersection.

Three projects were done for local builder Jeff Bernard, Bernard's Custom Construction, specifically planning and civil engineering for the Integrated Medical & Wellness Center, Tabor Funeral Home and Sabott Dental Center. "Chad understands the city and the in fill development requirements" says Jeff Bernard. "Because of that he's able to meet the needs of the new structure and blend them with the existing property."

"Over one-third of our staff has been working together for nearly 10 years in much larger firms. When someone becomes concerned with our small size, they find comfort knowing we have a core group that have worked together and managed some very large projects.

"The best results are seeing a project be successfully completed, knowing our work plays a small, but important, part in helping businesses begin or expand," Cox said.

To reach Western Engineering Inc., call 720-685-9951 and ask for any member of the Western Engineering Consultants team.