

INSIDE: CEMENT & CONCRETE PRODUCTS INDUSTRY DIRECTORY

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DOD Projects Rising

**2020 military construction in Islands
remain central to U.S. Pacific strategy**

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STAKING THEIR CLAIM

Islands' builders increasingly
eyeing—and trying—Pacific
commercial ventures

BY BRETT ALEXANDER-ESTES

“We’re
prepared to
handle any
increased loads.”
—Vic Angoco

BASE is engineer on Guam’s 26-story Tsubaki Tower project.
PHOTO COURTESY BALDRIDGE & ASSOCIATES STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING INC.



With the U.S. military expanding in the Pacific and the U.S. economy chugging along, “there’s a lot of work, a lot of backlog” on Guam, says William Beery, vice president of Tutujan Hill Group Ltd.

Hagatna-based THG was general contractor on the Phase 1 refurbishment of JP Superstore, a Guam retail landmark. AHL (formerly Architects Hawaii Ltd.), a Hawaii design firm, worked with THG and Setiadi Architects, a Guam design firm, on Phase I, which wrapped in February.



The future Marama Tahitian Village, designed by G70, will have seven hotels and hotel-related condominiums. RENDERING COURTESY G70



A scale model of Guam's new luxury Tsubaki Tower (red) in BASE's wind tunnel
PHOTO COURTESY BALDRIDGE & ASSOCIATES STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING INC.

Dry Run

Baldrige & Associates Structural Engineering Inc. (BASE) built a scale model of Guam's new 26-story Tsubaki Tower, a BASE project, and tested its structural integrity in a wind tunnel.

Frank Humay, BASE vice president, says buildings in Guam are designed to withstand the highest wind (typhoon) forces in the U.S. and in the world.

BASE designed the tower using a Performance Based Design (PBD) approach. "PBD provides a better understanding of the true performance of the structure ... without sole reliance on some of the prescriptive requirements of the building code," Humay says.

"AHL was asked to create an elegant design that brought cohesion to the store's multiple entry points and various departments," says Lester H. Ng, AHL principal and director of design and sustainability.

The store, established in the 1980s, remained open during the renovation,



Lester H. Ng

notes Colette Lee, AHL associate and senior interior designer, who also worked on the project.



Colette Lee

"Certain physical aspects, such as a low ceiling and tight structural systems created challenges," Ng says. Design solutions, he says, included backlit ceilings and columns that expand the volume of space in the low ceiling area.

"The (new) design allows the architecture and placement of merchandise fixtures to work together to create a natural flow throughout the store," Lee says.

THG put in "new flooring, new ceilings, new lighting," Beery says. "Very little wall work because it's a great big open store, basically. We

added a stair here and there. Dressing rooms, a couple.”

THG and its subcontractors performed all mechanical-electrical-plumbing, he says: “We did the utilities, all the electrical. We put in new air conditioning, duct work, all of that.”

“The lack of qualified labor and increasing military work is driving up construction costs.”

—Frank Humay

Branching Out

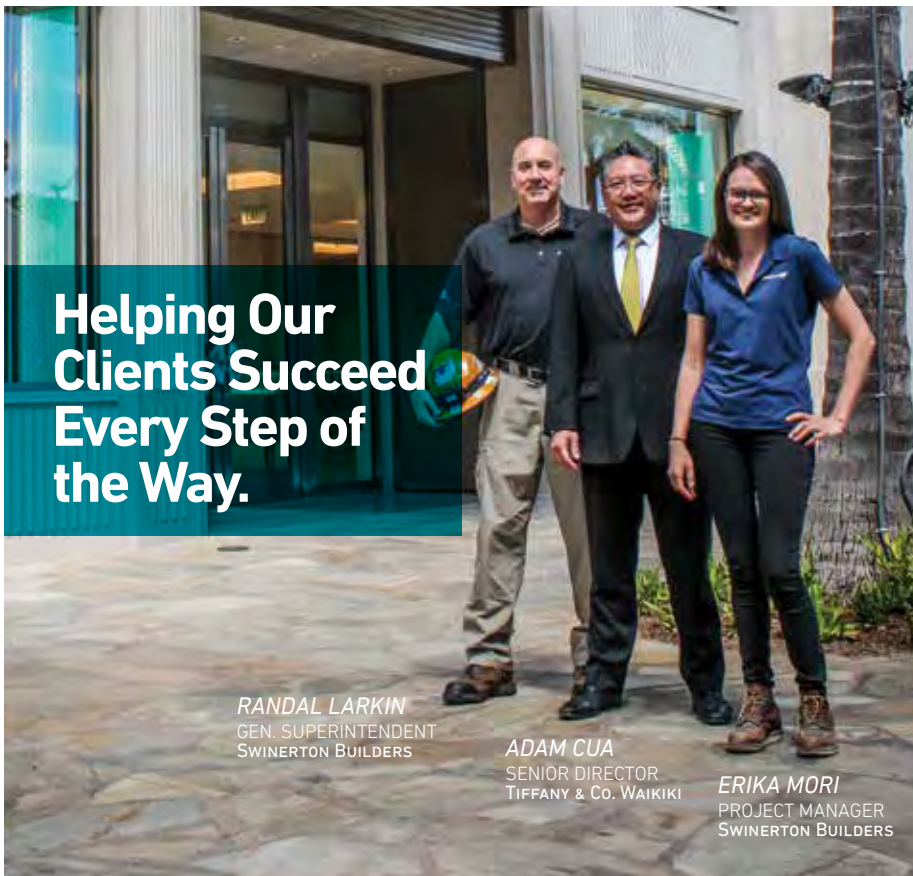
Beery says the sheer magnitude of Phase 1’s 34,000 square feet really set THG’s job apart. So does the “Ifel Tree,” a towering in-store sculpture.

“We used the Ifel Tree and its



THG installed JP Superstore’s new ceilings with customers nearby.

PHOTO COURTESY TUTUJAN HILL GROUP LTD.



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symbolism to help shoppers navigate the store,” Lee says. “The tree spanning the two-story space at the main entry draws the eye up to the main store level.” Additional branches reach further into the store, leading to different departments.

“It was made out of structural steel,

lightweight,” Beery says. “They had it fabricated in Hong Kong.”

Beery estimates Phase I’s value as “somewhere between \$3.2 and \$3.4 million.” The project schedule and building around shoppers were major challenges, Beery says, but he is hoping to work on the project’s next phase.

AHL is also designing Phase II, which is expected to wrap in 2020.

Pacific Pioneers

Offshore construction can be dicey for Hawaii GCs. So it’s no surprise that the Islands’ architects, engineers and developers are taking the first bite of offshore projects.

This past year, Baldridge & Associates

Structural Engineering Inc. (BASE), a Hawaii engineering firm, “has seen an increase in the number of inquiries received about new private sector work in Guam and other Pacific areas,” says Frank Humay, BASE vice president.

While none of these inquiries have



Frank Humay



JP Superstore’s “Ifel Tree,” a joint effort by AHL, Setiadi Architects and THG
PHOTO COURTESY TUTUJAN HILL GROUP LTD.



AHL (formerly Architects Hawaii Ltd.) fabricates JP Superstore’s new in-store “Ifel Tree.”
PHOTO COURTESY AHL

gelled just yet, Humay says, BASE is already busy on Guam.

“Our most significant project is the new luxury 26-story Tsubaki Tower, which is located on the highest point of Tumon Bay along Gun Beach, and is one of the tallest buildings in Guam,” Humay says. “The structure is topped off, and the focus is now on completing the rooms and interior finishes for an opening schedule in April 2020.”

“There’s a lot of work, a lot of backlog (on Guam).”

—William Beery

A top construction challenge, Humay says, is filling Guam’s labor shortfall exacerbated by the buildup of U.S. military facilities. “The lack of qualified labor and increasing military work is driving up construction costs,” he says.



New soffits and dropped ceilings, designed by AHL and installed by THG, open up JP Superstore’s interiors. PHOTO COURTESY TUTUJAN HILL GROUP LTD.

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Existing interior of JL Capital's Los Angeles redevelopment project
PHOTO COURTESY JL CAPITAL



Future interior of JL Capital's Los Angeles redevelopment project
RENDERING COURTESY JL CAPITAL

A High Bar

Offshore builders face other hurdles. “Buildings in Guam are designed for some of the highest wind (typhoon) and seismic forces in the U.S. (and world), as well as for an extremely corrosive environment,” Humay says.

The Tsubaki Tower is Guam’s first private sector building that is designed using a Performance Based Design (PBD) approach, he says.

“JL Capital plans to further ... develop another 1,000 dwelling units in the area.”

—Michael Vachio

“PBD provides a better understanding of the true performance of the structure when subjected to seismic excitations without sole reliance on some of the prescriptive requirements of the building code. Since PBD is a departure from (these) code requirements, independent peer review by a panel of experts in seismic design is conducted.” BASE also tested a scale model of the tower in a wind tunnel.

Golden State

Directing its focus to the opposite side of the Pacific, JL Capital, co-developer with Avalon of Sky Ala Moana, is breaking ground this month on an \$8 million Los Angeles project.

The Honolulu-based real estate and private equity firm will renovate a historic wood-and-brick building with L.A.-based Gensler Architects.

The mixed-use project includes office renovation of five levels and a basement, electrical upgrades and site work, and shell build-out and utilities for current and future restaurant tenants. Pacific National Group, the project GC, expects to wrap in June 2020.

Back home, JL Capital currently owns 165,000 square feet of re-development properties in the transit-oriented development corridor along Kapiolani Boulevard.

“In addition to Sky Ala Moana,

JL Capital plans to further invest and develop another 1,000 dwelling units in the area,” says Michael Vachio, the firm’s construction and development vice president.



Michael Vachio

Big Plans

Since winning the bid on a new Tahiti resort a few years ago, Francis Oda, chairman of G70, a Hawaii design firm, has guided the development of the \$3 billion project.



Francis Oda

“The much-awaited Marama Tahitian Village, previously known as Mahana Bay Resort, will be submitted for government approval on Dec. 16, 2019,” Oda announced in November. “The project includes seven hotels and hotel-related condominiums, 200,000 square feet of retail and commercial spaces, a cultural village and a marina.

“Of 12 component parts of the development, 10 have been committed with financing, developers and operators. Raffine Development, a Tahitian company, is the master developer with G70 of Honolulu, architects.”

“The project includes seven hotels and hotel-related condominiums.”

—Francis Oda

Polynesian cultural protocol requires that a smaller resort hotel be built first. The Westin Taputapuetea Hotel will pay homage to Marae Taputapuetea, “the seat of the Polynesian voyaging culture during the great voyages to Hawaii and New Zealand in the 1200s, and (which) continues in this role today,” Oda says.

“The Westin Taputapuetea will be a five-star beach hotel operated by Marriott Hotels,” Oda says. “The

cornerstone laying for the hotel will occur in February 2020 ...Raffine Development will own and develop the project, and its architects are G70.”

2020 Voyages

All local builders who try their luck offshore depend on Hawaii’s Pacific carriers, including Matson Inc.

“Matson vessels serving Guam include *Kaimana Hila, Manoa, Maunalei, Manulani* and *RJ Pfeffer*,” says Vic Angoco, Matson senior vice president, Pacific division. “Our



Vic Angoco

vessel currently serving the Marshall Islands (Kwajalein, Ebeye and Majuro) is *Kamokuiki*. None are Con-Ro ships, but we have the capability to carry vehicles, rolling stock and oversized cargo on all these ships.”

Matson offers weekly service from Hawaii to Guam, and serves Kwajalein and the Republic of the Marshall

Islands every 21 days. Matson’s West Coast service to these Pacific areas follows the same schedule.

“The speed of our new vessels improves our ability to make up time when necessary to maintain our on-time service,” Angoco says.

While Pacific cargo volumes have been more or less stable this year, “we have been hearing from our general contractor customers that plans for the long-awaited military build-up on Guam may be gaining momentum,” Angoco says. “We’re prepared to handle any increased loads that may come with that.”

Since commercial construction usually follows on the heels of military expansion, Hawaii builders in the Pacific are also playing a waiting game.

Humay says BASE military work in Guam should remain robust during the next two years. But whether this translates into more commercial work “is hard to say at this point,” he says.

“We are getting more inquiries, but it will depend on how many of these inquiries turn into real projects.” 🏠



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