

Revitalizing Renovations

Although Rafn Co.'s range of services has grown, the company remains focused on renovations, Beaulieu says.

"It has consistently been a significant part of our business throughout the years," she says.

"We have as much, if not more, renovation experience in Seattle than any other contractor in town," she notes. "Very complicated, difficult renovations are really our expertise."

One complicated project is Colman School, one of the most visible renovation projects in Seattle, Beaulieu says.

The 49,000-square-foot building was built in 1909, but closed in 1985. The project has a budget exceeding \$9 million.

"[It] has really been kind of a hotbed of community discord about what would happen with that building," Beaulieu says. "The building was finally sold by the school district to the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle in 2003."

When finished in March, the building will house the Northwest African American history museum, as well as provide 36 affordable housing units in its upstairs

portions. "[It will be] revitalizing an entire neighborhood," Beaulieu says.

Seattle Structures

Rafn Co. is currently underway on Northgate and 5th, a \$35 million mixed-use project in Seattle, Beaulieu says.

The 320,000-square-foot building features 164 apartment units, 50,000 square feet of retail and three levels of underground parking.

She also highlights Terry Avenue, a \$9.5 million office building that is designed by a firm that will be one of its primary tenants, Weber + Thompson PLLC. Located in Seattle's South Lake Union neighborhood, Terry Avenue will be the first privately funded LEED gold-certified office project in the Pacific Northwest.

For instance, instead of an HVAC system, Terry Avenue uses passive ventilation, with a central courtyard that acts as a chimney to draw warm air through the building, even in the winter.

In addition, "There are operable sunshading devices on both the east and west sides of the building, and a hydronic heating system," she says. "The build-

ing's designed to use 30 percent less energy than a typical office space."

Sustainable initiatives are a focus of the ownership and employees of Rafn Co., Beaulieu says.

"We've had some employees who have a particularly strong interest," according to Beaulieu. "Our first, initial foray into sustainable construction came from the practical aspect of saving money during construction."

The company has engaged in jobsite recycling, salvaging and the construction of energy efficient multifamily housing since the early 1990s.

Expanding Capabilities

Beaulieu predicts growth for Rafn Co., but not necessarily in volume.

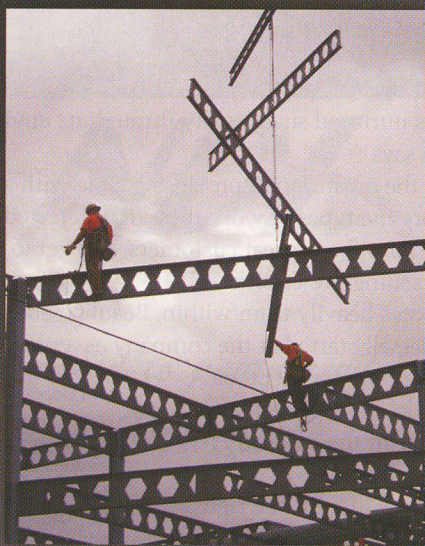
Instead, "I do anticipate there will be some diversity added to our business plan, and expansions of [our] self-performed work," she explains. "We feel like it provides a greater degree of growth opportunities for our employees, as an attempt to retain people.

"[We] find places for them to be able to expand their capabilities and skills." ■

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