

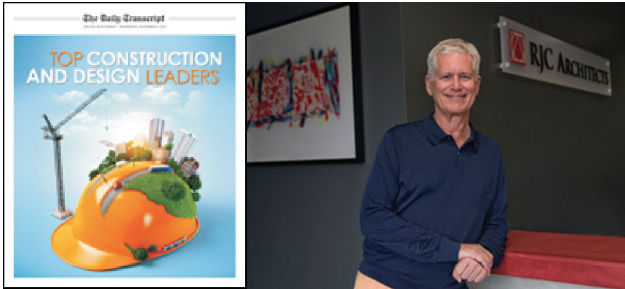
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James K. Robbins



When RJC Architects was founded 25 years ago, the goal was to find San Diego clients who owned their own buildings and might have an ongoing need for the firm's architecture services.

Robbins, cofounder and principal in charge of design for RJC Architects, said the ideal clientele became obvious: public works.

"We started by doing repair jobs that nobody else wanted to do," he said.

The architecture firm was able to land larger and larger jobs. Today, RJC Architects has grown to a staff of 25 and has since worked on more than 300 civic, federal, commercial and industrial projects with a total construction value exceeding \$2.5 billion.

Sustainable design is important to Robbins. His firm has so far completed 26 LEED-certified projects, including three that achieved Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Platinum status and 14 certified as Gold. By RJC Architects' estimates, that's 2.1 million square feet of "green" buildings worth more than \$790 million.

"We consider it an obligation to the future," Robbins said.

Recent commissions have included the \$320 million San Diego County Operations Center, with a LEED-certified office and conference buildings, parking structure and central plant, and a \$66 million enlisted quarters at Naval Base Coronado. Significant projects underway include the \$50 million renovation of several buildings at San Diego City College and a \$12 million, energy-efficient renovation of the historic customs house at the San Ysidro Port of Entry.

"We like to think we've been involved in some of the most important projects in the region," he said.

Robbins has seen an uptick in defense clients in recent years. His firm is halfway through a 10-year, \$1 billion build for the Naval Base Coronado coastal campus. That project will include 25 buildings in all, spanning 1.5 million square feet and resulting in new operations, logistics, administrative and training facilities for the Naval Special Warfare Command.

"The coastal campus may be the largest project the Navy has in this region," Robbins said. "It's a great honor."

Robbins is past president of the American Institute of Architects CQ' San Diego chapter and a past director of the AIA California Council. Architects today are benefitting from exceptional strides in technology and sustainable design, he said.

"We try to make places that enrich the human experience," Robbins said. "The goal is to develop economically while reducing our carbon footprint and raising living standards. It's an exciting challenge. I think we're well-positioned to make a difference."

— Jennifer McEntee