

NOVA GROUP STANDS TALL AS

Nova Group installed a 174-foot pre-fabricated bridge ramp to one of the first open ocean piers supplying the remote San Nicolas Island, Calif.

Earning

If the word “merit” means deserving recognition or commendation, then Nova Group, Inc., Napa, Calif., certainly merits receiving Associated Builders and Contractors’ (ABC) 2007 Contractor of the Year award.

Nova Group not only stands out among the nation’s premier government contractors, with specialized skills in hydrant fueling, waterfront and utility construction, but the company also adheres to the principles of merit shop construction on all levels.

The company’s commitment to safety, quality control and advanced training shines through in every project it builds, from the West Coast to remote islands across the globe.

“The merit shop philosophy defines our corporate culture. We believe you get the benefit out of the work you put into something,” Nova Group President Ron Fedrick says. “It’s the American way.”

“We need to demonstrate that we are a contractor of choice and continue to demonstrate that ability. That is the merit shop philosophy in practice.”

QUALITY

Founded in 1976, with just two employees, \$4,000 in cash and a \$32,000 loan, the company began by building steam lines at the decommissioned Mare Island Naval Shipyard in Vallejo, Calif. During the late 1970s, it refined its expertise in mechanical construction at several Bay Area military bases.

In the 1980s, Nova expanded its workforce to Hawaii, where it earned extensive mechanical and utility construction project

contracts with the U.S. Navy.

Nova Group is now one of the U.S. Department of Defense’s (DoD) go-to contractors, a status that requires a rare level of experience and professionalism.

The company today builds approximately 30 percent of the fuel systems in the United States, and acquires at least 50 percent of the work it bids because of its reputation as a leader in this niche.

“Our hit rate is tremendous,” Fedrick says. “It’s based on 30 years of having the right safety programs and people in place.”

Nova Group has engineered, manufactured and installed more than 1 million feet of Class A steam and condensate piping systems. It specializes in marine projects

Nova’s Mission Statement

To be continuously recognized for using innovation to construct quality projects that exceed customers’ expectations, safely and profitably in a manner that rewards teamwork.

ABC'S CONTRACTOR OF THE YEAR

Its Stripes

BY LAUREN PINCH

Board of Directors:

Ron Fedrick, president, 1976
Scott Victor, vice president of operations, 1984
Walt Birdsall, vice president, administration
and finance, CFO, 2005
Carole Bionda, vice president, 1986

Ron Fedrick accepted
Nova Group's award
at ABC's National
Convention in San
Juan, Puerto Rico.

EARNING ITS STRIPES

including cofferdams, dry dock upgrades and wharf construction, and it also builds high-voltage power distribution systems, transformers and switchgear, as well as emergency power generation facilities.

With the capability to fabricate structural steel for the nation's most complex structures, Nova Group holds American Society of Mechanical Engineers and government certifications to manufacture pre-insulated piping and piling systems for various DoD projects. In addition, its 50,000-square-foot fabrication facility is certified by the American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC).

Nova works in 34 states and installs fuel systems at U.S. military installations throughout the world—including Canada, Diego Garcia, Guam, Israel and Qatar. Its annual revenues last year approached \$100 million.

PEOPLE

While every DoD and general contracting job is different, the company's core values permeate each complex assignment. One of those core values is people: building a strong workforce and fostering relationships with clients and peers.



Nova Group designed the San Nicolas Island pier to withstand the Pacific Ocean swell.



Nova Group constructed a specialized pumphouse at McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas.



Nova Group designed and built booms that support power cables for submarines in Bangor, Wash.



Nova Group dewatered trenches and retention ponds to build a hydrant fueling system at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii.



Nova Group stands by the principle of exceeding customers' expectations through innovative construction, quality and outstanding customer service.

The company has kept some of its leaders on board for a quarter of a century, and maintains a staff of more than 200 employees worldwide.

"We've got a great team of people here. I've had the privilege of working with some of the same individuals for 25 years," Fedrick says. "You need to have good management and good corporate structure, but more than anything else, you need to have good people."

Fedrick's commitment to another important group of people, the merit shop leaders of ABC, began in 1980 when he eagerly joined several committees and advanced up the ranks to serve as Golden

Project Experience

Nova Group's mechanical engineering, heavy construction and fuel systems experience includes the following noteworthy projects.

Fuel:

- Design/Build/Own/Operate-Maintain/Finance Petroleum Storage Facility and Related Services, Al Udeid Air Force Base, Qatar
- Jet Fuel System, Nevatim Air Force Base, Israel
- Fuel Projects, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam
- Hydrant System Repair, Diego Garcia, B.I.O.T.
- Fueling Systems, Vancouver Airport, Vancouver, B.C.
- C-17 Ramp/Hydrant Fuels Project, McChord Air Force Base, Seattle
- Pumphouse, McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas
- Fuel Trench Drain, Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma, Ariz.
- Hydrant Fueling System, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii

Marine:

- Mission Support Facilities, P-345, Bangor, Wash.
- CVN Dry Dock Floor Repairs at Naval Base Kitsap, Bremerton, Wash.
- Design-Build Open Ocean Supply Pier, San Nicolas Island, Calif.
- Dry Dock #2 Waterfront Support Facilities and Dry Dock Electrical System Distribution Improvement, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
- P-700 Berthing Wharf, Phase II, San Diego, Calif.
- Pier and Shore Improvement, Ford Island, Hawaii

Mechanical:

- Mach 10 10,000-degree Wind Tunnel, NASA Ames Research Center, Moffett Field, Calif.
- Upgrade Steam Distribution System (steam lines running into the White House), Washington, D.C.

Gate Chapter president in 1985, and later for two terms as Region 1 vice chairman.

"I can't say enough about what ABC has meant to Nova Group and myself," he says. "I have yet to serve on a committee and not get something out of it. Whatever we've given, we've received back tenfold."

Fedrick helped ABC form the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) in 1996, combining the best aspects of ABC's, Associated General Contractors' (AGC) and other groups' construction craft training programs to set a new standard for the industry.

As the NCCER's first chairman, Fedrick helped overcome significant hurdles to address pride of ownership issues and encourage collaboration.

"I think I clocked at least 200 hours on that task!" he remarks. "Everyone wanted to keep the individuality of their programs, but we got people to understand that this wasn't an independent effort. I feel lucky to have been there at the very beginning."

Today, Nova continues to partner with other construction groups, including the Construction Users Roundtable (CURT), Women Construction Owners and Executives, and the Beavers, a heavy engineering construction association based in Los Altos, Calif.

The company asks its managers to invest 5 percent of their paid time working with nonprofit groups that benefit the community or the construction industry.

SAFETY

While the firm has several accomplishments under its belt, with impressive craftsmanship evident at U.S. Air Force bases and ports from coast to coast, Fedrick says he considers the company's consistent and reliable safety culture to be its gold-star achievement.

"If I could name one true greatest accomplishment, it's how we've taken safety and driven it from the top down," he says.

For example, on a recent \$115 million project in Qatar, Nova Group employees completed one million manhours of work and walked away with only one minor injury. Nova entered a complex joint venture contract (design-build, own, operate, construction manage, maintain and finance) with contractors BE&K and Fluor Corporation to install an entirely new fuel system for the U.S. Air Force base.

The base, which is the DoD's largest



Crews used plasma torches to cut pipe for the project at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii.

EARNING ITS STRIPES



in the world in terms of fuel pumped per day, is in its second year of operation, and is running exceptionally well.

“It’s taken years to get our safety systems driven through our corporate culture—our craft professionals, home office and across the whole organization,” Fedrick says.

Nova Group built a fuel trench drain (here and above) at the Marine Corps Air Station in Yuma, Ariz.



Nova Group is a repeat winner of ABC’s National Safety Excellence Award for 250,000 to 500,000 worker hours, and last year it received ABC’s Safety Training and Evaluation Process Platinum Award.

In addition, AGC, AISC, the Fabricators & Manufacturer’s Association, the U.S. Naval Facilities Engineering Command, CURT, American Society of Civil Engineers and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers each have commended the firm for its safety record, year after year.

Nova Group walked away with its biggest award yet as Contractor of the Year at the ABC National Convention last month in San Juan, Puerto Rico—and considering its achievements in safety, team-building and project excellence, it won’t be its last.

Lauren Pinch is assistant editor of *Construction Executive*.