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Subject to Prevailing
Wage Requirements?

PDCA
Young
Guns

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Pacific Pile & Marine

Seattle-based company has built a solid reputation as a solutions contractor for logistically challenging and technically complex projects

By Mark Halsall

Since forming in 2008, Pacific Pile & Marine (PPM) has built a reputation for taking on tough jobs in the pile foundation and marine construction markets. The Seattle-based company prides itself on delivering comprehensive solutions to complex projects – many tucked away in remote corners of the Pacific Northwest and Alaska.

“Remote construction projects that are logistically challenging are definitely a focus area for us. These projects often have seasonal restrictions, which is a competency of ours as well,” said Steve Spencer, project manager as well as chief engineer for PPM.

One example is the Swift Reservoir Trestle Installation Project performed on a reservoir near Cougar, Wash., which required specialized equipment and an exceptionally complicated drilling program. The construction of the permanent trestle involved drilling rock anchors in 150 feet of water and driving 36-inch piles 250 feet down through as much as 60 feet of overburden.

PPM has also developed a reputation as the go-to contractor for technically demanding scopes of work, such as the SR 99 S. Holgate to S. King St.–Alaska Way Viaduct Replacement Project in downtown Seattle. That project required PPM to fur-

“We often find ourselves discussing projects some of our more risk-averse counterparts have a rare appetite for these days. From the concept stage to planning and execution, we welcome the opportunity to demonstrate our ability to deliver world-class projects to our clients.”

– Steve Spencer, Project Manager and Chief Engineer, Pacific Pile & Marine

nish, splice and drive steel pilings ranging from 16 to 60 inches in diameter up to 258 feet in length. Careful planning and coordination were also necessary due to limited space that was being shared by numerous contractors.

Wealth of expertise

Spencer says one reason PPM excels at logistically and technically challenging projects is the wealth of expertise it possesses from top to bottom. Owners Wil Clark (COO), Mike Mansfield (CFO) and chief estimators Eric Reichelt and Chris Willis all bring a tremendous amount of experience and complementary strengths to the table.

“There isn’t a member on our team who doesn’t elevate our group to even greater heights,” said Spencer. “Our project manag-

ers, engineers and crafts people in the field all have strong backgrounds in heavy-civil and marine construction as well.”

According to Spencer, it is this knowledge center – coupled with a well-rounded blend of experience – that allows the PPM team to deliver such a varied range of complex projects so effectively.

“We have a great mix of personnel. We openly communicate and collaborate with each other on projects, from the planning stage all the way through construction,” said Spencer. “It’s the same thing for the crews. We have a core team of specialists, superintendents and foremen who have been with this group for a long time, well beyond the company’s inception date.”

In his role as project manager for PPM, Spencer says his daily routine often includes overseeing pile and shoring projects. He also



oversees design efforts as the chief engineer for the company.

“Performing and coordinating design and review processes as well as design-build projects and other professional engineering in support of pile installation plays a major role,” he said.

The company has a full-time staff of about 25 with a total workforce that fluctuates in accordance with its ongoing and upcoming projects. Spencer says PPM’s success can be attributed to its people, which translate into strong client relationships.

“Our industry is largely dependent upon the quality of your workforce and ours is among the best in the industry. Our team has a unique understanding of the specialized equipment needed to perform the projects we undertake and continually adapts that knowledge to the changing needs of the market,” noted Spencer.

“Our efforts are guided by a strict mission: deliver exceptional results as safely and efficiently as possible. Paramount to those efforts is keeping costs down while staying on schedule. Clients recognize and appreciate they can rely on PPM to deliver the best product to meet their needs.”

Safety is highest priority

There’s no question PPM was built around a culture of safety. According to Spencer, safeguarding the health and safety of its workers is PPM’s highest priority.

“Our attitude towards safety is critical to our success and is at the core of everything we do,” he said. “Our workforce receives continuous training and on-the-job experience to ensure they remain among the top in the industry.”

PPM offers a robust fleet of equipment including cranes, hammers, drilling equipment, excavators and barges suitable for a large variety of driven and drilled pile applications.

“We have strategic partnerships with our vendors to further compliment our own extensive fleet of equipment,” said Spencer.

Spencer maintains the adaptability of the company’s equipment, operated by a seasoned workforce, allows the company to take on a wide range of projects.

“We’re able to adapt to the project requirements. This is important, because no two projects are exactly alike,” he said.

PPM may service niche markets but it has an expansive reach geographically. In addition to serving the Pacific Northwest (Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana) and Alaska, it has undertaken projects in both Canada and Mexico.

The company is also increasing its role in Alaska as a heavy-lift solutions provider.

“The Alaskan Division added a 600-ton heavy lift crane barge to its fleet for supporting the oil and gas industry in Cook Inlet and Western Alaska,” said Jason Davis, the company’s Alaska division manager, based in Anchorage. “While PPM has traditionally performed about half of its volume in Alaska, having a heavy-lift crane permanently stationed in south central Alaska is new to the state and industry’s response has been very supportive.”

Renowned for design-build work

According to Spencer, design-build work is an element the company is best known for.

“We’ve done design-build projects from the beginning and we continue to seek them out,” he said. “We often find ourselves discussing projects some of our more risk-averse counterparts have a rare appetite for these days. From the concept stage to planning and execution, we welcome the opportunity to demonstrate our ability to deliver world-class projects to our clients.”

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PPM’s exceptional work has resulted in numerous industry and civil awards, including PDCA Project of the Year 2010, AGC Project of the Year Award finalists in 2010 and 2011 and annual Seabright Safety Awards 2009 to 2011. Several of the company’s projects also received civil engineering accolades at the regional level, including the ASCE Civil Engineering Achievement Honor Award and ASCE Outstanding Civil Engineering Project of the Year 2012.

This year, the company is expanding its ownership base, with Steve Spencer and Jason Davis both slated to join the company’s group of four owners.

Spencer acknowledges that there is heavy competition these



days within the heavy-civil marine construction industry, made even more competitive due to a changed marketplace that reflects the economic downturn.

“It’s a different animal than it used to be, even four years ago. There are fewer projects, fewer opportunities. It’s a brave new world for the emboldened contractor,” he said, adding that PPM has performed very well despite the tightened market.

“It’s a highly-competitive field but we’re continuing to deliver premier services, expand our operations and secure opportunities both now and in the future. We’re looking forward to the next stage of our growth. Frankly, we’re optimistic.” ▼

Photos courtesy of Aerolist Photography

The following is a rundown of the different types of services provided by PPM:

Heavy Civil Land Services

- ✦ Bridges
- ✦ Pile driving
- ✦ Foundation
- ✦ Shoring
- ✦ Access trestles
- ✦ Large diameter drilling
- ✦ Drilled shafts

Heavy Civil Marine Services

- ✦ Docks/Piers/Wharves
- ✦ Dredging
- ✦ Capping
- ✦ Hydrographic survey
- ✦ Marine structures
- ✦ Breakwaters
- ✦ Cofferdams

Additional Services

- ✦ Design-build
- ✦ Barge support
- ✦ Construction support
- ✦ Temporary works
- ✦ Marine salvage
- ✦ Emergency response

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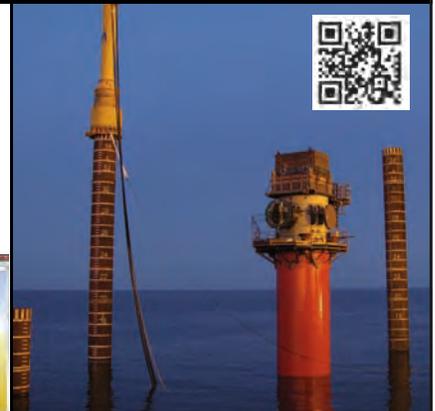
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