

Awaiting orders: Companies come to Guam seeking military contracts

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BY LARA OZAKI
Journal Staff

Members of the contracting industry are beginning to notice an influx of new companies arriving to Guam in anticipation of the military buildup involving the arrival of 5,000 Marines and 1,300 dependents beginning in 2022 and related contract opportunities.

"We're starting to see some new off-island companies come to Guam, and there have been companies interested inquiring about Guam. The news of the military buildup goes around. The previous buildup news that went around six years ago, we had a ton of companies that came to see what was going on here on Guam. So that's started again," said James A. Martinez, president of Guam Contractors Association.



Martinez

GCA regularly welcomes around four to five new members a month, including both companies that have been on Guam and new companies to Guam, Martinez said.

"Every time we have new companies here, it always raises the standards on Guam, and it's just the competitive nature. We get new innovations from a new company, and then our local companies have to pick up on that. Based on that, we're seeing a lot of improvements in our industry, through technology, safety practices and others," Martinez said.

Relyant Global LLC, a service-disabled veteran owned small business based in Maryville, Tenn., opened a Guam office earlier this year. The company was awarded its inaugural contract on Guam in November. Awarded by the Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific contracting office, the contract is for the construction of ground support equipment shops at North Ramp on Andersen Air Force Base. And in August, Relyant was awarded a multiple-award construction contract through the Naval Facilities Engineering Command Marianas contracting office for renovation, modernization, repair and maintenance of various shore based facilities in Guam.

"Relyant has worked in numerous locations across the globe with a vested interest in Guam, including an established office and a full-time staff in Dededo," said Alix King, Tennessee-based senior business development manager at Relyant Global.

Established in 2006, the company specializes in horizontal and vertical construction, military contracts, military munitions response, environmental services and deployed troop support services.

"Our project experience includes work for both U.S. and other governments, commercial, residential and industrial facilities worldwide," King said.

Relyant is a licensed Guam contractor, a member of the Guam Contractors Association and sustaining member of the Society of American Military Engineers Guam Post.

"Relyant's footprint and commitment to the local community across Guam and the Pacific continues to grow," King said.

The company employs around six employees.

"This number will at least double to 12 within the next 60 days and possibly more depending on forecasted growth," King said.

Relyant plans to recruit and train locally and believes gaining local trust and support is central to its corporate philosophy, particularly when entering and operating in new locations. King said. Relyant employs Guam Guard and Reserve members as part of its local workforce, and approximately 80% of its management is former service men and women.

Martinez said some new-to-Guam companies are finding out that it is difficult to get workers if they are not based here.

"They're going to have to bring in their workers, which will be more expensive. The chances of getting the new contracts won't be as good because they don't hire locally or hire even H-2 workers. If they bring in their workers, they probably have to pay more than what people pay here on average," Martinez said.

GCA is working with the local government to address the 99% denial rate of H-2B visas.

"At the peak of the buildup we're looking at anywhere from 5,000 to 7,000 H-2B workers, probably, that will be participating. Those that don't get renewed, those contractors probably won't be able to finish their jobs if their workers have to go back to their point of origin," he said.

Companies that are not able to finish their projects due to losing contract workers may be debarred from military projects in the future for not



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being able to complete the contracts.

For other types of businesses, including cloud data company Source ILS, securing workers may not be a problem as collaborating online allows for teams to work across different regions.

"Source ILS is new to Guam and is currently in the process of building a data science team here to provide [outside of the continental United States] managed data services, cloud migrations, big data, analytics, backups, disaster recovery and security for government and enterprise businesses," said Robert W. Wilson, president of Source ILS. He is the only local staff on Guam and works closely with his team in Washington, D.C.

Source ILS's intelligent logic systems are information systems that can make decisions by themselves. The company also provides comprehensive security capabilities for complex and sensitive cloud initiatives using data flow modeling illustrating security requirements and measuring risk tolerance, integration creating security protocols and systems for data encryption schemes, audit and data retention policies.


"We are encouraged by this opportunity for Guam to become better prepared to deal with threats in the region by the military buildup. I think it's an opportunity for the community and military to work together to accommodate the needs of our armed forces while creating mutually beneficial economic opportunities," Wilson said. "I understand the military has already given large sums of grants [to improve] Guam infrastructure."


Wilson said he looks at the Federal Business Opportunities website, where federal government contract opportunities are posted, every day but has not found any contracts in data management yet.


"That tells you that they're still at the barebones beginning. ... It's going to happen. The stage is just being built. They have a project manager in place, and there's some infrastructure going on in terms of planning. Most of the contracts, they will start flooding out," Wilson said. "Any data systems contract that will come out from this military buildup is definitely stuff we would be working on and actively bidding on. There's just not anything really rolling out right now, but I do know it's coming out."


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