

TI Firms Back in Business

Top 25 Firms See \$1.3B in '21 Billings

By KATIE MURAR

After two years of uncertainty, Orange County employees are returning to the office.

That's good news for tenant-improvement contractors, as landlords and companies seek to spruce up their space to attract and maintain their staff.

"There's a lot of office work on the books in Orange County," said **Esplanade Builders** CEO **Christian Sorenson**, whose firm works with large area landlords including **Irvine Co.**

"Local landlords are hitting the mark for what tenants want by building low-rise, campus-style buildings," Sorenson added. "That's why the OC market is strong and is outpacing markets like Los Angeles where high rises are the norm."

This employee return has also helped offset some renewed industry headwinds like inflation and longer lead times for materials, which has prompted some clients to be conservative in their renovation or redevelopment plans.

"It's a very expensive time to be in the construction industry," said **RBA Inc.** CEO **Bob Anderson**.

Still, local firms enjoyed a return of industry gains in 2021 after seeing business drop 12% in 2020.

Orange County's top 25 tenant contractors saw a 1.3% increase in business last year, reporting \$1.3 billion in total billings.

That's still below pre-pandemic levels—2019 brought a nearly 30% jump in business



Work at VKCC office complex in Irvine, for Esplanade Builders

over 2018—but last year's return of consumer confidence struck an optimistic tone for local firms.

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Tenant-Improvement Contractors
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"Surviving 2020 was a feat unto itself," said Anderson, whose Huntington Beach firm saw a boost in business last year to \$33 million, good for No. 13 on the list.

Including No. 8 Esplanade and RBA, 15 companies on this week's list saw their business grow in 2021, up from just seven in 2020.

The Right Product

Though total OC office vacancy climbed to 16.2% in the first quarter of 2022 from 15.9% the year prior, some submarkets are enjoying a faster return as part of a "flight to quality" trend that has persisted since the onset of the pandemic.

This is especially true in the Spectrum submarket of Irvine, where Irvine Co. has found success in securing tenants for its newest area office campuses.

"New construction has been well-received, given the full leasing of the first and second phases of Spectrum Terrace," according to a report from the Irvine office of **Newmark**. "The first phase of **Innovation Office Park** delivered last year and is currently 53% leased."

A big portion of Esplanade's local office work stems from contracts with Irvine Co., which includes tenant buildouts at **Spectrum Terrace** and **Innovation Office Park**.

"That is the right product for what tenants are looking for: highly amenitized, new office campuses," Sorenson said.

In addition to office work, Esplanade is staying busy and mitigating market uncertainty by investing in industrial work in OC

and the Inland Empire.

"We are keeping a close eye on the economy, which is in part why we are putting so many eggs into the industrial basket," Sorenson said. "Pricing for materials and equipment has increased drastically, and then you add on labor shortages and competition...it's a challenging environment."

Big Demand for Small Work

Those headwinds have led to some industry consolidation, Anderson notes.

"It has weeded out some of the smaller contractors, which I don't think is a positive thing for the economy," Anderson said. "Clients with small work are having a heck of a time finding anyone that will call them back. Many of those contractors have gone out of business."

RBA said it has taken on more one-off jobs or smaller maintenance projects to help fill this gap.

"We have a division that handles smaller work, called special projects, which I think is going to get busier and busier in the next few years."

The return of tourism and hospitality has helped bolster business for RBA, which counts large OC theme parks among its roster of clients.

The biggest boost on the list was seen at **Morris Construction**, one of two newcomers to this year's list, which saw business surge 174%.

The firm primarily focused on healthcare contracts when it got its start in 2012, but started diversifying into different sectors in 2017, including life science, manufacturing and automotive facilities.

"Diversifying and balancing out our portfolio has really paid off for us," President **Chris Morris** said. ■

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Prev. Rank	•Address •Headquarters		•yearly % change	•yearly % change	•yearly % change	•yearly % change		•Title •Phone/fax	
1	Howard Building Corp. 3184 Airway Ave., Ste. K Costa Mesa 92626-4619 Los Angeles Website: howardbuilding.com Email: info@howardbuilding.com		\$193 million -33%	1.1 million -28%	46 -4%	150 -7%	would not disclose	Bryan Howard/Genevieve West president/VP (714) 438-2272/(714) 444-3446	
2	KPRS Construction Services Inc. 2850 Saturn St. Brea 92821-6201 Brea Website: kprsinc.com Email: joels@kprsinc.com		\$171.5 million 21%	1.8 million -5%	300 7%	350 17%	FivePoint Holdings Inc., CT Realty, Zillow, Alteryx Inc.	Joel Stensby founder/president (714) 672-0800/(714) 672-0871	
3	Swinerton 200 N. Main St. Santa Ana 92701-4800 Concord Website: swinerton.com Email: rcarpe@swinerton.com		\$160 million -14%	735,000 -14%	1,312 -6%	4,798 7%	Confidential electric automotive client, Orange County Sanitation District HQ building, Applied Medical, Quest Diagnostics, County of Orange administration buildings, confidential technology client - Irvine	Lia Tatevosian VP/division manager (949) 622-7000/(877) 349-1894	
4	Ram Construction LLC 20 Executive Park, Ste. 250 Irvine 92614-4732 Irvine Website: ramconstruction-us.com Email: matt@ramconstruction-us.com		\$138 million 82%	1.2 million 158%	77 83%	77 83%	Jenavalve, Urovant, Technicolor, Eurfofins Labs, Kaiser Labs	Matt Renault/Spencer Moran co-founders (949) 418-7688	
5	Turelk Inc. 4685 MacArthur Court, Ste. 422 Newport Beach 92660-1855 Long Beach Website: turelk.com Email: marcos.ramirez@turelk.com		\$95 million -5%	1.5 million -14%	60 0%	127 0%	Irvine Co., Glaukos, Google	Craig Powell general manager/VP, Orange County Operations (949) 640-8679	
6	Snyder Langston 17962 Cowan Irvine 92614-6026 Irvine Website: snyderlangston.com Email: info@snyderlangston.com		\$61 million ⁽¹⁾ NA	150,000 ⁽¹⁾ NA	75 ⁽¹⁾ NA	160 ⁽¹⁾ NA	Christ Cathedral, Be Well, Innovation Office Park, Leonard Cancer Institute, Irvine Spectrum, The Boardwalk, Concordia University	John Rochford/Jason Rich chairman, CEO/president (949) 863-9200/(949) 863-1087	
7	Casco Contractors 9850 Irvine Center Drive Irvine 92618-4353 Irvine Website: cascocontractors.com Email: info@cascocontractors.com		\$60.2 million 6%	3.1 million 27%	56 -11%	56 -11%	would not disclose	Cheryl Osborn founder/president (949) 679-6880/(949) 679-6890	
8	Esplanade Builders Inc. 3002 Dow Ave., Ste. 102 Tustin 92780-7247 Torrance Website: esplanadebuilders.com Email: info@esplanadebuilders.com		\$50.3 million 29%	837,940 43%	20 18%	75 23%	OC Sheriffs, Sega, Thomas James Homes, AMP Research, Easterseals, Thales, Orgain	Greg Guba VP, OC office (949) 556-4930	
9	Pacific Tusk Builders 1301 Dove St., Ste. 130 Newport Beach 92660-2491 Newport Beach Website: pacifictusk.com Email: info@pacifictusk.com		\$48 million 14%	2 million 18%	71 8%	71 8%	would not disclose	Eric Prendergast/David Goldberg principals (949) 679-4580/(949) 484-7866	
10	Driver SPG 1501 S. Harris Court Anaheim 92806-5932 Anaheim Website: driverspg.com Email: kkreutziger@cwdriver.com		\$47.2 million -7%	685,210 -3%	40 -2%	287 0%	Chapman University - Rinker Health Science renovation, Crean Lutheran High School - Band Building, Diocese of Orange - St. Kilian Catholic Church, Parish Hall renovation, Griffin Structures - office tenant improvement, SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union - HQ RH2 office improvements	Karl Kreutziger president (855) 300-4774/(855) 329-2774	
11	Coastline Development Inc. 13911 Enterprise Drive Garden Grove 92843-4022 Garden Grove Website: coastlinedevelopment.com Email: general@coastlinedevelopment.com		\$39.9 million 11%	749,122 59%	52 27%	52 27%	Comerica Bank, Charles Schwab Corp., CBRE Group Inc., Wells Fargo & Co., California Bank & Trust	Todd Layman president (714) 265-0250/(714) 265-1701	
12	Slater Builders Inc. 3100-B Pullman St. Costa Mesa 92626-4500 Costa Mesa Website: slaterbuilders.com Email: info@slaterbuilders.com		\$39.1 million 14%	425,000 11%	37 -8%	37 -8%	Friends of Newport Beach Animal Shelter, Hoag Hospital Leadership Center, Our Lady Queen of Angels Athletic and Activity Center, Quay Works - 3101 W. PCH, Little Tree Montessori School	Lizabeth S. Slater CEO (714) 434-4887/(714) 434-6173	
13	RBA Builders Inc. 17601 Sampson Lane Huntington Beach 92647-6750 Huntington Beach Website: rbabuildersinc.com Email: marketing@rbabinc.com		\$33 million 70%	422,000 21%	98 29%	98 29%	UCI Medical Center GHEI 2nd Floor Shell, UCI Medical Center B478 3rd Floor TI	Robert Anderson founder/CEO (714) 895-9000/(714) 895-9001	
14	Caribou Industries Inc. 1103 N. Broadway Santa Ana 92701-3409 Santa Ana Website: caribouind.com Email: info@caribouind.com		\$31.8 million ⁽¹⁾ NA	130,000 ⁽¹⁾ NA	209 -50%	925 ⁽¹⁾ NA	625 N. Grand, Santa Ana; 888 N. Main, Santa Ana; 3rd and Broadway, Santa Ana; YMCA; One Broadway Plaza	Michael F. Harrah president (714) 543-9484/(714) 543-9972	
15	Caliber Construction Inc. 240 N. Orange Ave. Brea 92821-4026 Brea Website: caliberconstructioninc.com Email: info@caliberconst.net		\$26.6 million 8%	355,000 -5%	41 0%	41 0%	would not disclose	Doug Bassett/Jim Roy co-owner, president/co-owner, VP (714) 255-2700/(714) 255-2730	

Abbreviations: NA: not applicable; NR: not ranked
Note: To the best of our knowledge, this information is accurate as of press time. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy and thoroughness of the list, omissions and typographical errors sometimes occur. Unless otherwise noted, the information on this list was provided by the companies themselves. List may not be reprinted without permission of the editor. Photos show the first top official listed.
⁽¹⁾ Business Journal estimate

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16 (13)	Smith and Severson Builders 21072 Bake Parkway, Ste. 106 Lake Forest 92630-2180 Lake Forest Website: smithandseverson.com Email: dsmith@smithandseverson.com		\$25.5 million -19%	80,000 -73%	28 27%	28 27%	660 Baker T.I.'s- Dunbar Real Estate, Mark IV Capital, Greenlaw Partners	David Smith president (949) 232-1222	
17 (NR)	Morris Inc. 5151 California Ave., Ste. 250 Irvine 92617-3205 Irvine Website: morris-usa.com Email: daniellec@morris-usa.com		\$20.7 million 174%	300,000 137%	31 24%	31 24%	would not disclose	Chris Morris president (949) 333-7000	
18 (16)	Gray West Construction 421 E. Cerritos Ave. Anaheim 92805-6320 Lexington, Ky. Website: gray.com Email: jwilson@gray.com		\$16.9 million -27%	192,800 -38%	172 15%	178 19%	Firmenich, Disneyland, Starbucks, Irvine Co., Best Buy, WSS, Parsons, Verizon, Diocese of Orange, Pepsi, Athleta, Capital One, Thrive	Robert Moore president, West region (714) 491-1317/(714) 333-9700	
19 (18)	Coastal Pacific Construction Inc. 28 Edelman Irvine 92618-4312 Irvine Website: coastalpacificconstruction.com Email: gmason@coastalpacificconstruction.com		\$16.7 million -2%	182,670 -14%	32 0%	32 0%	Calo Kitchen + Tequila, Western Digital, LBA Realty, SGI-USA	Gary Mason CEO/president (949) 770-1555	
20 (19)	Pacific Design Directions Inc. 8171 E. Kaiser Blvd. Anaheim 92808-2214 Anaheim Website: pacdesign.com Email: sstoneburner@pacdesign.com		\$16.5 million 10%	450,000 6%	24 0%	31 -30%	In-N-Out Burger Corporate Offices, Matranga Motor Sports, State of CA EDD, 2020 Main, 17900 MacArthur, 100 Bayview	Susan S. Stoneburner founder/president (714) 685-7733/(714) 685-7799	

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21 (NR)	CRM Construction Inc. 184 E. Liberty Ave. Anaheim 92801-1011 Long Beach Website: teamcrminc.com Email: info@teamcrminc.com		\$11.9 million 23%	145,000 -4%	16 23%	16 0%	would not disclose	Gary Tracy president (714) 921-3030/(714) 921-0183	
22 (21)	VR Mason Commercial Builder 16371 Gothard St., Ste. B Huntington Beach 92647-3652 Huntington Beach Website: vrmasonbuilder.com Email: nicole.kluve@vrmasonbuilder.com		\$10.5 million 9%	1.2 million 19%	20 -13%	20 -13%	Kimco Realty Corp., Healthcare Realty Services, PS Business Parks, Tenet, Cushman & Wakefield, CBRE, Fountain Valley Regional Hospital, Duke Realty, LabCorp of America, Pacific Coast Commercial Real Estate, Physical Rehabilitation Network, Mathis Bros., Sasco Electric	Nicole Kluve VP, project manager (714) 843-0707/(714) 843-9996	
23 (NR)	SCGWest Development 18001 Sky Park Circle, Ste. LM Irvine 92614-6511 Irvine Website: scgwest.com Email: team@scgwest.com		\$8 million -12%	127,500 -15%	10 43%	10 43%	Chase Bank, Glidewell Laboratories, Las Brisas, Veg'n, Acapulco, Waters Edge Winery, Capriotti's	Kyle Gorman co-founder/partner (855) 348-5505/(855) 348-5505	
24 (NR)	CMD Construction Inc. 9272 Jeronimo Road, Ste. 101 Irvine 92618-1978 Irvine Website: cmdconstructioninc.com Email: natasha@cmdconstructioninc.com		\$8 million 33%	175,000 17%	16 60%	16 60%	Trusted Tech, Tailored Space, Vit-Best	Nick Dedmon CEO (800) 406-6394	
25 (23)	KNR Builders 1300 Quail St., Ste. 102 Newport Beach 92660-2711 Newport Beach Website: knrbuilder.com Email: kurt.werner@knrbuilder.com		\$7.5 million 15%	95,000 252%	6 20%	6 20%	would not disclose	Kurt K. Werner president (714) 259-1700/(714) 259-1707	

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