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(photo courtesy of Kevin Blayne Photography)

When Ike Nwabuonwu and Gabriel Okafor opened the doors of Alpha Energy and Electric Inc. in 2005, the operation was small, to say the least. It consisted of three people in two little rooms at 18th and Vine. Nwabuonwu and Okafor shared an office and had to walk sideways to squeeze between their desks. Having invested all their money in the company, they often pooled funds to buy boxes of crackers for lunch.

Although their beginnings were humble, they had a big vision to be a prime contractor providing energy and electrical services for industrial, commercial, institutional and residential structures. Three years later, after establishing itself among the ranks of Kansas City's prominent energy and electrical construction companies, Alpha Energy purchased and moved to a 10,000 sq. foot corporate headquarters located in the heart of Kansas City. In April 2011, the company opened its second office in Knob Knoster, Missouri, and an on-base satellite office at Whiteman Air Force Base and Fort Riley, Kansas.

The company's management team has more than 90 years of experience in energy and electrical services, information technology, urban planning and development, real estate, civil engineering and engineering technology.

Services

The company's portfolio of services for its commercial, institutional, industrial, retail, office, condominium and residential

customers includes, not limited to, the following:

- Design build services
- Installation of energy and electrical systems
- Thermograph, inspections, energy assessments and modifications
- HVAC Control cabling and installation
- Energy audit and retrofitting services
- Power plant design and installation
- Solar and wind energy design and installation
- Building automation systems
- Fire alarm and security systems
- Data and voice, audio visual systems
- Long-term maintenance and service agreements
- General Contracting and Construction Management

Current Projects

Alpha Energy and Electric has been part of some of the region's highest-profile construction projects.

Some of their major projects include Sprint Center, Arrowhead and Kauffman stadiums, Schlitterbahn Vacation Village, the new JE Dunn headquarters, the Miller Nichols Library at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, the new Saint Luke's Hospital, Kansas City International Airport, the Swope Ridge Geriatric Center and KCP&L Solar System installation. Alpha Energy is currently working on major facility retrofits at Fort Leavenworth, and Fort Riley.

The company has also expanded its footprint outside of Kansas and



Missouri, with the successful completion of projects at the federal building in Lincoln, Nebraska, and the U. S. Department of Agriculture at USDA-APHIS facility in Ames, Iowa.

Keys to success

Instead of focusing solely on renewable energy, Nwabuonwu and Okafor decided to add a traditional electrical component to their services. Currently, Alpha Energy operates at about 35% and 65% split between renewable energy and traditional electrical design/installation projects respectively. However, they aim to reach a 60%/40% split with renewable energy projects taking the lead.

Alpha's collaboration with organizations such as JE Dunn and KCP&L have been a key factor to the company's success, evidenced by the ongoing and successful installations of energy-efficient appliances in homes participating

in KCP&L's Smart Grid project. Our collaborative efforts with KCP&L have also led to the construction of Kansas City's single largest photovoltaic system at Paseo School of Performing Arts and the Tendril Thermostat Project, which will increase energy efficiency in Kansas City's Urban Core.

Charging Ahead

Nwabuonwu and Okafor continue to dream big. They are researching the viability of creating a factory to build solar powered modular systems. They also are looking into the possibility of building power plants in emerging or developing countries using solar and wind power.

As for the overall business, Nwabuonwu said they hope to double the amount of work they are doing now, in the next five years.