



LACO Associates uses mobile remediation system components such as this to transport oxidants to clean up contaminated sites. The company recently discovered new ways to use the technology, which has garnered interest from international engineering firms. *Courtney Hunt-Munther/The Eureka Reporter*

LACO Associates

expands, ventures into international projects

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Eureka-based engineering consulting firm LACO Associates is looking a little different these days — the company is nearly doubling the size of its office to include the former Redwood Harley Davidson building.

Since its founding in 1954, the firm has grown as a local provider of engineering consulting and design services. From civil engineering consulting to geological and geotechnical engineering capabilities, LACO is constantly evolving with the industry.

Forty-eight employees work at LACO, including registered civil and geotechnical engineers, geologists and engineering geologists, and planners — all of whom have made the best of the company's limited office space for too long, according to President Leonard Osborne.

When Redwood Harley Davidson vacated the building adjacent to the engineering firm, LACO immediately jumped at the opportunity to expand.

"We have the whole building to ourselves," Osborne said. "We're expanding our materials lab and providing shop space so we can fabricate our remediation units ... We'll be able to give some of our staff their own offices and a little more working room."

Approximately 15 new workstations will be added, including cubicles and offices, in addition to the larger materials lab.

On the business front, the company is branching out past its Fourth Street location to areas outside of Humboldt, Del Norte and Trinity counties. Projects in southern Oregon and Nevada are under way, as well as along the Mendocino coast and in Redding.

And, according to Osborne, LACO is currently working on projects in Santa Rosa and Redding that may develop into



LACO Associates is expanding its location on Fourth Street in Eureka and the business itself. Pictured here, in front of one of the company's mobile remediation system components, is (from left) President Leonard Osborne, environmental services practice leader Chris Watt, remediations operations manager Brian Nelson, field services manager Steve Davis and field technicians Rik Daniels and Tom Robblee. *Courtney Hunt-Munther/The Eureka Reporter*

branch offices in those areas within the next few years.

But a road the company had never ventured down was that of international consulting — until now.

LACO has been working on developing mobile remediation units that facilitate contamination cleanup at specific sites, which is not a service many other engineering firms offer, Osborne said.

"We had to come up with a good, strong way to get the sites cleaned up," Osborne said. "It was technology that existed, but we've taken it and put it together in a way that's very effective for us to clean up sites. We took the pieces and are controlling them in a different way."

Instead of having to transport the remediation system components to and from "dirty" sites, LACO has effectively created a mobile unit that travels by truck. There, the system injects oxidants into the ground to break down wood preservatives and hydrocarbon-based contaminants preventing the area from being functional.

"Having (the system) portable and self-contained is something we don't see in the industry," said remediations operations manager Brian Nelson. Nelson went on to explain that the diffi-

culty in transporting remediation units involves the delivery of the oxidants: how, where and in what concentrations.

Because LACO has the ability to easily transport the systems, the company can produce ozone and other oxidants on-site.

LACO cleans up the site as much as possible, then lets nature take it from there. The goal is to return the site as closely as possible to its natural state.

Using remediation systems to clean up sites was previously existing technology, but the way LACO uses it has differentiated the firm from others locally and internationally.

Most recently, LACO engineers traveled to an environmental firm in New Zealand to help them clean up a former mill site that was contaminated.

LACO engineers have also had brief discussions with engineers in Taiwan and China about the same technology.

"I think that's really a heck of an opportunity for us right now. The international potential is definitely there," Osborne said.

For more information about LACO projects, phone 707-443-5054 or visit www.lacoassociates.us.