

INDUSTRY NEWS

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MIDWEST

"We need more collaboration than ever here at Burns & McDonnell, not less. We draw resources from different areas of expertise within our company for every project."

—Ray Kowalik,
Chairman and
CEO, Burns &
McDonnell



Burns & McDonnell Plans Kansas City Headquarters Expansion, New Hires

Architecture and engineering firm pledges to hire 1,000 employees annually through 2022.

BY JEFF YODERS

Burns & McDonnell announced in August plans for a \$42-million, 142,000-sq-ft expansion of its 37-acre Kansas City, Mo., headquarters campus. The expansion is the second since 2016 and calls for a four-story office building that will cost \$30 million, along with a \$12-million, 550-spot parking garage addition.

The architecture and engineering firm, which ranked No. 1 on ENR Midwest's Top Design Firms ranking this year, says the expansion is necessary to accommodate

the 1,000 new hires it plans to make by the end of 2018. Burns & McDonnell also plans to maintain that level of annual hiring for the foreseeable future.

Chairman and CEO Ray Kowalik says the expansion and new hires are necessary to meet current demand. In 2016, Burns & McDonnell opened the first phase of its expansion, a 310,000-sq-ft building that accommodated an additional 1,400 employees.

"We're hiring over 1,000 a year, and probably about two-thirds

PHASE 2 This \$42-million, 147,000-sq-ft expansion will be the second Burns & McDonnell has added to its Kansas City, Mo., campus since 2016.

of that will be outside of Kansas City," Kowalik says. "Chicago is a high-growth area for us. We're growing in Denver. We're actually growing every location we're in, simply because the fundamentals are strong everywhere."

Kowalik says the company's airport work, power segment (which includes both oil and gas processing and distribution) and infrastructure work (which includes both mass transit and road and bridge design) are the markets where most of the new hires will be needed. He also cited project owners wanting more schedule and budget certainty as factors that contributed to the firm's growth forecast.

Burns & McDonnell is designing its own addition and developing the property with VanTrust Real Estate. Kowalik says the new building will have the capacity to house 780 architects and engineers. There could be further expansion necessary if the firm's growth targets are met as well, he notes. Burns & McDonnell expects to have 3,225 employees in Kansas City and 6,650 globally when the new addition opens in 2020.

"We think by the summer of 2021 we'll be full here in Kansas City," Kowalik says. "We're starting

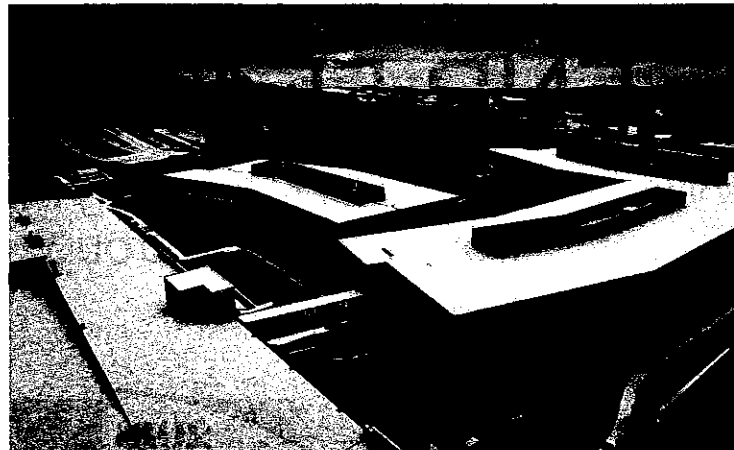
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some alternative plans. When we finish this building, there's really no more room on the site to expand any more. So, in the long term, we're going to have to either move our campus or we're going to try to buy some property in the nearby area. We could, maybe, split into a couple of campuses. Who knows?"

While the firm is planning to hire young talent for most of its planned expansion, it's also looking to move against the grain when it comes to telecommuting, which lets employees work from home. The necessity for side-by-side collaboration on architecture and engineering design is something the firm sees increasing, not lessening, as technology evolves.

"There are a lot of people that think that telecommuting's the future," Kowalik says. "I think



CAMPUS EXPANSION Burns & McDonnell says the planned expansion of its Kansas City campus will make room for 780 more employees.

telecommuting's the future if you're in a type of environment that you're working on your own. When you're doing big projects—the big, massive, complicated projects we do—it takes a lot of collaboration. We need more collaboration than ever here at Burns & McDonnell, not less. We draw resources from different areas of

expertise within our company for every project, and having them all sitting in one spot—having an expert on every subject in your location that you can go talk to, not call, or telecommute with—then it makes our ability to deliver projects faster and with higher quality much better and much easier to do."

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