

Fund boosts Warrior's Army work

Woman-owned firm gets \$2M

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Headed to El Paso: Gail Warrior Lawrence will be spending a bit less time in the DeSoto offices of her modular-construction firm and more time in El Paso, where the firm is a subcontractor on a project for the Army.

To help fulfill two large contracts it has landed, The **Warrior Group**, a DeSoto modular construction firm, has received \$2 million in financing from a group led by Dallas' Texas Women Ventures Fund. The cash will help fund the company's bid to more than triple its revenue this year.

The other investor in the subordinate-debt infusion is the Dallas-based **Pinnacle Minority Supplier Development Fund LP**.

Gail Warrior Lawrence, president and CEO of the Warrior Group, says the company has been named a subcontractor on a \$40 million contract to put in custom-designed barracks for the U.S. Army at Fort Bliss in El Paso.

The company was one of three contractors chosen for some \$20 million worth of Army medical facilities around the country. Warrior Lawrence says her business could get as much as \$15 million of that pie, depending on how it performs.

Assembling buildings

Due in large part to the new contracts, Warrior Lawrence expects to expand her roughly 30-person staff by 35 to 36 people by year's end. Revenue should grow from \$16 million in 2006 to between \$55 million and \$60 million this year.

"We've had more projects than (people), which is a great problem to have," she says.

Enter the financing, which she said she plans to use partly for hiring for the firm's existing work.

"We didn't have enough resources or enough capital to pay the different subcontractors (on Fort Bliss) as the project progresses," Warrior Lawrence says.

The Warrior Group's products are manufactured at a factory, fitted with stuff like plumbing, heating, doors and windows, moved to the desired location, and then put up.

The manufacturing of the building's pieces is done at the same time as site work, which saves time. In addition, modular buildings supposedly offer more flexibility than conventional facilities, as walls and other parts can be moved easily from one area to the next.

Modular buildings themselves can also be moved, though they can be permanent as well. While they traditionally have been used for purposes like classrooms and military barracks, they are increasingly found in offices, emergency rooms and airport terminals.

Though it's grown, the Warrior Group remains tiny compared to rivals like Pennsylvania-based **Modular Space Corp.**, known in the industry as ModSpace. Nonetheless, the company has landed contracts with the likes of the Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Army, and the **U.S. Department of Energy** thanks partly to Warrior's certification in the Small Business Administration's 8(a) program.

That helps small companies by allowing them to win contracts through negotiation rather than bidding.

The Texas Women Ventures Fund prides itself on providing more than money.

The fund's investors include around 40 wealthy individuals and Dallas oil tycoon Ray Hunt's private-investment arm, **Hunt Investment Corp.** Recipients of TWVF cash can get access to its backers. "We have a lot of expertise and experience among our investors that can be very useful to our current companies," says Whitney Johns Martin, TWVF co-founder and managing member.

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