

Web Posted: 12/03/2009 12:00 CST

Jasmine Engineering celebrates a quarter century of business

By Jason P. Olivarri - Contributing Writer/Southside Reporter

While many locals recognize The Alamodome and Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center as structural landmarks, they may not know a female-owned engineering firm played a key role in molding their familiarity.

Jasmine Engineering was founded by then 25-year-old Jasmine Azima, in December 1984 after spending several years working for engineering firms in both Houston and Austin. A 1981 mechanical engineering graduate from the University of Texas in Austin, she chose San Antonio as a home base for her firm so not to directly compete with prior employers.

She also felt this city would be more welcoming to a new engineering venture driven by her unique vision.

"I see the need for what I do getting greater all the time," Azima said. "In some ways, more sophisticated technology has actually compounded the problems of getting a construction project accurately built and working right."

Azima also sets herself apart from the competition by making her client's projects as cost-effective and environmentally friendly as possible.

She states one of the reasons she first studied engineering was an interest in both "encouraging and implementing energy conservation and sustainability standards in design and construction."

Over the years, that interest has only grown stronger, allowing Azima to see more energy-saving possibilities either overlooked or completely ignored in a building's construction.

"This usually happens simply because there is no one really being an advocate for owners, designers, and builders and watching out for these opportunities," Azima said.

The A-list of Jasmine's projects include Harlandale Independent School District's bond program, as well as the aforementioned Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center and Alamodome.

Azima admits out of all her projects, The Alamodome was quite significant in that it was her firm's first project in a management role and not merely in design.

“The Alamodome project really got us focused on doing work directly for owners rather than being a consultant to architects or others in a design capacity,” Azima said.

School districts, however, have a special place in Jasmine's services, with more than 50 percent aimed at K-12 projects for Austin ISD and the San Antonio area.

Harlandale ISD, in particular, has had favor with Jasmine, being one of its earliest K-12 projects.

Since taking management of Harlandale's 2006 \$53 million school bond program two years ago, improvement projects for McCollum High School and Terrell Wells Middle School, for instance, have been completed ahead of schedule and under budget. “Like so many school districts, they have always been faced with many challenges, but the Harlandale community is such a good example to everyone for their hard work, genuine concern for their children's future and always moving forward to overcome and realize their goals,” Azima said.

Her key for success these last 25 years? Azima says that simply revolves around the same key for success in any business-doing good work.

“I like to say that Jasmine Engineering has always been “client oriented” not “project oriented,” she said.

As a female professional in an industry generally governed by males, Azima admits the road to success hasn't been without its' challenges. In establishing herself as an industry leader, Azima hopes other female professionals will be inspired to set their own sights as high as possible and never sell themselves short or give up on their dreams.

“My advice for young female professionals would be to know what you are talking about, do what you do well and better than your competition, and work harder than everyone else,” Azima said.