

## Project Control: ARENA BUILDERS

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PC Sports proved its mettle early in its evolution when the construction management consulting firm won over the many factions trying to build FedEx Forum in Memphis, Tenn.

The future home of the Memphis Grizzlies was a partnership between the city, Shelby County, the Public Building Authority and a National Basketball Association franchise temporarily housed at Pyramid Arena.

The county wanted its own consultant, and so did everybody else, recalled Charles Carpenter, acting executive director for the Public Building Authority. Critics resentful of any public funding raised doubts that the arena could be finished in time.

But FedEx Forum opened right on schedule in September 2004 and within budget at \$225 million, Carpenter said. He gives PC Sports a lot of thanks for that.

"It worked out excellent," he said. "Many have commented that for the price we paid for it, the city of Memphis got a steal. We got the best bargain in the league."

PC Sports, a division of San Antonio-based **Project Control** of Texas, followed in its parent company's footsteps, bringing together the best experts in construction, engineering and architecture to assure developers that big jobs get done smoothly.

PC Sports, founded in 2002, was created by Bob Crittenden, president of **Project Control**. The firm began 29 years ago when the late Jim Turner decided there had to be a better way for owners to have some control over large commercial construction projects.

Son of the founder of the Dallas-based Turner Corp., a multinational construction firm, Jim Turner saw that the various professionals on a project often didn't work in concert. There was a need for a project manager to oversee budgets, select the best professionals for each job, keep the work on track and enforce agreements.

Up to that time, most contracts were simply awarded to the low bidder, and they tended to cause headaches for owners because change orders would invariably creep in and projects would go over budget. Crittenden credits his predecessor with pioneering a process of selecting the construction team before the project starts.

"The idea was to bring them on early to assist," Crittenden said -- "work out more of the kinks in the planning phase."

The concept, usually referred to as design-build, is now well respected in the industry. But in the late 1970s, Turner had to convince somebody he knew what he was talking about.

Patrick J. Kennedy, founder of La Mansión del Rio, became friends with Turner and offered him office space when he decided to start his own company. Kennedy was Turner's first client and handled a major renovation of the hotel in the mid-1980s.

"**Project Control** had a good understanding of the problems contractors face and a good understanding of what an architect needs," Kennedy said.

**Project Control** went on to oversee construction of all of Kennedy's hotel projects. The work led to many other assignments, such as construction of Frost Bank Tower, and all three corporate headquarter developments for Valero, including the current expansion. To date, Crittenden estimates the total worth of construction jobs completed is approaching \$4 billion.

When the Bexar County commissioners and the San Antonio Spurs decided to build an arena next to Freeman Coliseum, a confident Crittenden went after the contract of project manager.

"The Spurs told us, 'You don't have any experience in building NBA arenas,'" Crittenden said. So **Project Control** hired John Hilke, a Floridian who had managed construction of arenas in Cleveland, Indianapolis and Washington, D.C., as a consultant.

"We got along well and saw an opportunity to provide this service," Crittenden said.

With PC Sports, Crittenden intended to go after other sports facility projects. When the Charlotte Hornets moved to New Orleans, the team hired PC Sports to oversee a major upgrade of New Orleans Arena.

Paula Yancey, PC Sports' representative in Kansas City, Mo., is working with the city on its \$250 million Sprint Center project. The city hopes the \$250 million, multipurpose facility will attract an NBA or National Hockey League franchise, and National Collegiate Athletic Association Big 12 basketball events.

The development company is AEG, the Los Angeles-based entertainment company owned by former Denver railroad and communications magnate Phil Anschutz. AEG has primary responsibility for delivering the facility and a lead role in attracting a major sports team.

Ralph Davis, project delivery manager for Kansas City, said Yancey functions as an extension of his staff to help complete the project. As a subcontractor to the general contractor, she will oversee day-to-day construction and follow it through to completion.

"We're so happy with this particular company," Davis said. "This is her third project. She's extremely knowledgeable about this building type."

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## **PROJECT CONTROL**

--Mission: Management oversight for property owners on major construction projects.

--Projects: Frost Bank Tower, Valero campuses, Watermark Hotel & Spa.

--PC Sports division: Construction of NBA arenas in San Antonio, New Orleans and Memphis.