

Business

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Arcata maintains family atmosphere

Arcata Associates prides itself on being a "family-oriented" business.

After all, it was started more than 30 years ago by Buck Wong and his wife, Aurora, who served as corporate counsel.

Then, Buck retired in 1993 and handed the reins over to his son, Tim, who took over as president/CEO, and daughter, Nancy, who became executive vice president.

But the family theme isn't just along bloodlines.

"This is a great company to work for," said Vice President Allan McCaleb. "It's a



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family atmosphere and it carries over to our customers."

Tim Wong said the family emphasis is one of Arcata's strengths in helping the employees' morale and they

help the customers feel like they're part of the family, as well.

"You can't have high customer satisfaction without high employee satisfaction," he said. "Our employees work side-by-side with the customers, so we're right there if something is needed."

Wong said the company tries to "create a culture that allows people to excel."

That "culture" includes helping with tuition for employees who want to further their education as well as other benefits "necessary to keep a family afloat."

And that sort of relationship with customers helped lead to a major honor for Arcata, too.

NASA named Arcata its 2011 Small Business Prime Contractor of the Year Award, the second time in four years that the company has achieved this prestigious honor. The award recognizes Arcata's work on the Research Facilities and Engineering Support Services contract at NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center in California.

"We are really, really pleased with that," said Tim Wong. "To be recognized by

NASA and for the second time speaks well to the work our employees are doing."

The work Arcata does is IT support, engineering software design and development; range work - providing systems and equipment, Wong said.

"It's not simulators," he said. "It's all live events."

McCaleb said employees are in North Carolina, Florida and Mississippi.

"(The work is) a mixture of Navy, Marine Corps, NASA," he said. "We've got about 50 (people) at Stennis."

Wong said his father

started the business in 1979 primarily to support the Air Force in Las Vegas.

Then, after his father's retirement, Wong said he "wanted to extend ourselves with work for NASA."

Arcata worked with Lockheed Martin and won some work with the Marshall Space Flight Center. Then, things continued to look up.

"We're just fortunate to have a great group of people," he said. "We try to treat everyone like family."

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