

## CHAMPION CHIEF EXECUTIVES

The San Diego Business Journal CEO of the Year Awards highlight the achievements of executives across a variety of categories and the lifetime achievements of one standout CEO. This year that honor goes to Dexcom CEO Kevin Sayer.

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Dexcom CEO Kevin Sayer accepting Lifetime Achievement Award at the San Diego Business Journal's CEO of the Year Awards ceremony April 30. Photo by Bob Hoffman



An El Cajon industrial building was designed by Ware Malcomb for GKN Aerospace with a nod to the nearby Gillespie Field and elements that make note of GKN's aviation business. Photo courtesy of Ware Malcomb

## iPark Design Honors Gillespie Field Past

**ARCHITECTURE:** Ware Malcomb Gives Building Aviation Theme

■ By RAY HUARD

**EL CAJON** – A newly finished El Cajon manufacturing building, designed by Ware Malcomb, has architectural elements meant to set it apart from conventional warehouse buildings.

The 80,000 square-foot Gillespie Field iPark is the largest industrial project to be built in El Cajon, according to Ware Malcomb.

Built for GKN Aerospace by Chesnut Properties, based in Del Mar, the structure has

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A QuidelOrtho lab technician holds up a patient's sample vial. QuidelOrtho is a global provider of health care diagnostic products. Photo courtesy QuidelOrtho

## QuidelOrtho Sees Bright Spots in Q1

**BIOTECH:** Labs Biz Up as COVID Testing Winds Down

■ By ELI WALSH

**SAN DIEGO** – Shares of infectious disease diagnostic company QuidelOrtho (Nasdaq: QDEL) jumped more than 40% following the company's announcement of its first quarter financial results.

QuidelOrtho closed the quarter with \$693 million in revenue, a slight dip from the \$711 million the company brought in during the same quarter a year prior. However, the bulk of that revenue decline was driven by continued declines in demand for COVID-19

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## Revitalizing Local Culture with Three Theatre Overhauls

**ARTS:** Performing Arts Centers Boost Community Engagement, Revenue with Renovations

■ By MADISON GEERING

**SAN DIEGO** – Theatres around San Diego are breaking more than just the fourth wall with pivotal renovation projects. Most notably, the San Diego College of Continuing Education Educational Cultural Complex Theatre (ECC), Civic Theatre and The Joan and Irwin Jacobs Performing Arts Center (The Joan) are undergoing major changes to adapt to the city's changing performing arts landscape.

While San Diego has always housed a strong theatre community, according to Cynet Theatre founder and Artistic Director Sean Murray, these new projects are one component of the city's broader push for cultural revitalization.

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SDCCE's storied 275-seat theatre, ECC, is undergoing a \$50 million renovation project, intended to expand performing arts opportunities for the community and boost revenue. Photo courtesy of SDCCE



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## REAL ESTATE

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### San Diego Engineering Co. Expands into Midwest

**REAL ESTATE:** V&K Acquisition Positions Kleinfelder in New Market

■ By RAY HUARD

**SAN DIEGO** — The Kleinfelder Group, a San Diego engineering, design, and construction management company, has expanded into the Midwest through the acquisition of Veenstra & Kimm, based in Des Moines.

"V&K (Veenstra & Kimm) has a strong presence in the Midwest, and we view them as a strong platform to build upon," said Louis Armstrong, CEO and president of The Kleinfelder Group. "Establishing Kleinfelder's presence in the Midwest is an exciting new chapter for us," Armstrong said. "Given V&K's strong reputation and brand recognitions in the Midwest, they will continue to operate under their own name, co-branded as Veenstra & Kimm, A Kleinfelder Company."

V&K "will continue to operate largely as they have, maintaining their strong client relationships while building new ones under the combined Kleinfelder platform," Armstrong said.

Founded in 1961, Veenstra & Kimm focuses on transportation, water resource, and land and site planning.

The company has about 200 employees in nine offices in Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri, which will remain in place and function as Kleinfelder's newly created Midwest Division.

The division will be led by Steve Thompson CEO and board chairman of Veenstra & Kimm.



Louis Armstrong  
CEO & President  
The Kleinfelder Group

#### Deliberate Strategy

"For V&K, this transaction feels like a natural evolution, as our organizational cultures and strategic visions are remarkably aligned," Thompson said. "We are eager to gain access to Kleinfelder's broader resources and capabilities that will enhance our ability to serve our clients' evolving needs."

Headquartered at the edge of the Gaslamp Quarter downtown, with satellite offices in Kearny Mesa, the company was founded in 1961 by Jim Kleinfelder in Stockton.

It has grown to have more than 3,300 employees in 110 locations in the U.S., Canada and Australia with a staff of about 200 in San Diego, according to Armstrong.

Kleinfelder's acquisition of Veenstra & Kimm is its seventh acquisition or merger since 2019.

They included Advantage Engineers in 2019, Garcia and Associates, Poggemeyer Design Group and Gas Transmission Systems in 2020, Century Engineering in 2021 and Doucet & Associates in 2023.

"Kleinfelder's steady growth is part of a deliberate strategy to strengthen our position in key markets, expand technical capabilities, and better serve our clients nationwide," Armstrong said.

Although hinting that more acquisitions are likely, Armstrong declined to set a goal for the company's growth.

"Size is not a primary concern in Kleinfelder's long-term strategy," Armstrong said, adding that "Kleinfelder focuses on cultural and strategic fits, like V&K."

In San Diego County, Kleinfelder has worked on the San Diego International Airport Terminal 1 project, the retrofit of the 100-year-old George Street Bridge in Hillcrest, the mid-coast trolley expansion from Santa Fe Depot to University City.

The firm also worked on the Miramar Water Treatment Plant, the Lakeside Valve Program, and repairing large pipelines throughout San Diego. ■



Wermers Properties and R&V Management broke ground in April on the 156-unit Hope Apartments in Carlsbad Village. Rendering courtesy of Wermers Properties

### Market Rate Housing Coming to Carlsbad Village

**REAL ESTATE:** Wermers Investing in 'Long-Term Viability' of City with Fourth Project

■ By RAY HUARD

**CARLSBAD** — Wermers Properties, based in University City, and R&V Management, based in UTC, are building a market-rate apartment project in the heart of Carlsbad Village that will have 156 apartments.

"We love the Village of Carlsbad," said Austin Wermers, principal of Wermers Properties, which is part of Wermers Companies.

Wermers said that Hope Apartments is named for its location on Hope Avenue, between Carlsbad Village Drive and Grand Avenue.

The project will have a mix of one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom apartments, including 20 apartments for low-income tenants, according to Wermers.

"We're excited to break ground on Hope Apartments, a project that not only brings much-needed housing to Carlsbad but also invests in the long-term vitality of the Village," Wermers said.

Like some of Wermers Properties other projects, Wermers said that Hope Apartments is designed with a California contemporary feel, "reflecting the character and vibrancy of Carlsbad Village while aligning with the Village and Barrio Master plan."

"California contemporary design is about creating inviting spaces that balance modern sophistication with casual comfort, making it ideal for both entertaining guests and enjoying everyday life," Wermers said.

With Architects Orange, based in Orange, as the architect, Hope Apartments was designed with a palette of metal wood and tile, meant to reflect "the relaxed elegance of Carlsbad's coastal lifestyle," according to the architect.

The four-story, 201,611-square-foot building has a tower-like segment at one corner with a cantilevered roof.

Portions of the building are recessed to break up the mass of the building and the exterior facade is a mix of different shades of gray, from dark charcoal to a light gray.

Averaging 900 square feet, all of the apartments will have balconies or patios.

"We feel that people need a personal outdoor space," Wermers said.

With construction set to be finished in 2028, "The rents are not set because we are a few years out," Wermers said.

As part of the project, Wermers Properties is widening sidewalks near the property, adding street trees as part of the landscaping, pedestrian-scale lighting and ADA (Americans with Disability Act) ramps aimed at "fostering greater walkability and connectivity for the community," Wermers said.

#### Built on Former Hotel Site

The project will have 272 parking spaces in a below-ground garage.

Amenities will include a resort style pool and hot tub, barbecue and fire pits areas, a 4,200-square-foot clubhouse, a 1,800-square-foot roof deck, coworking spaces, a gym, pet spa, and surf garage to store and repair surf boards, electric vehicle charging stations, storage and a bike cafe with a tool bench.

"Including a bike cafe and tool bench among the amenities is a strategic move to cater to the growing demographic of cyclists and environmentally conscious individuals," Wermers said. "This approach not only enhances the appeal of a location for cyclists but also promotes a culture of sustainability and health."

The 2.95-acre site had been home to an aging Motel 6 hotel and three single-family homes, which were demolished.

Wermers acquired the former hotel and single-family homes in 2019 and 2020.

The new project is next to the Lofts, a four-story apartment building with 106 apartments and ground-floor retail that Wermers Properties built in 2021.

Wermers said that replacing the old buildings with Hope "cleaned up the corner next to our Carlsbad Lofts project next door."

Wermers Properties has several other projects in North County, including Sunshine Gardens, built on the 3.4-acre site of a former nursery in Encinitas.

Wermers and R&V Management is also building a 259-unit market-rate apartment project in Carlsbad, Avira West Apartments at 1205 Avira Parkway, and the 70-unit Avira East, an affordable apartment complex at 1380 Laurel Tree Lane. ■

#### Wermers Companies

**FOUNDED:** 1957  
**HEADQUARTERS:** University City  
**PRINCIPAL:** Austin Wermers  
**BUSINESS:** multifamily housing developer  
**EMPLOYEES:** 50  
**WEBSITE:** [www.wermerscompanies.com](http://www.wermerscompanies.com)  
**CONTACT:** 858-535-1475

**NOTABLE:** Wermers Companies has built hundreds of projects and tens of thousands of units creating billions of dollars in value across the Western United States

#### The Kleinfelder Group

**FOUNDED:** 1961  
**HEADQUARTERS:** Downtown San Diego  
**CEO:** Louis Armstrong  
**BUSINESS:** engineering, design, construction management, construction material inspection and testing, and environmental services  
**EMPLOYEES:** 3,300  
**WEBSITE:** [www.kleinfelder.com](http://www.kleinfelder.com)  
**NOTABLE:** The Kleinfelder Group operates from more than 110 offices in the U.S., Canada and Australia