



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

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African American Architectural Engineering Firm Succeeds An SBA Success Story

Milwaukee: Professional engineers Theophilus Iyasele and Olaitan Olapo founded Toki & Associates, Inc. in 1987. Toki provides engineering and architectural services to both government and private clients. Their services include architectural design, civil engineering, construction, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and structural engineering.

For the past nine years, Toki & Associates have been in SBA's 8(a) program. Toki is not being recognized as a very good architectural/engineering firm and not just a minority business enterprise firm. They are now being awarded large contracts as the prime contractor and not being hired because of a minority requirement by local and federal governments.

Getting those contracts proved to be a large challenge. Marketing was difficult because larger firms look at hiring minority firms as a chore or duty imposed on them by the hiring agency. Even the hiring agencies had a reluctance to hire Black-owned firms because of the stigma of appearance and of past poor performance. Toki overcame this stigma by replying to every Request for Proposal (RFP) for which they qualified. Gradually, Toki began to be recognized as a reliable architectural and engineering firm. If Toki didn't have the experience required by the proposal, they associated with a firm that did.

In September of 2003, Toki & Associates was selected as one of the firms to meet the FAA qualifications to provide Architectural/Engineering services for air traffic control towers, administration office buildings and modernization of existing FAA buildings in the Great Lakes Region. This region includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Toki was the only minority firm chosen. Some of the other projects Toki have completed include the Midwest Express Center, Miller Park, Todd Wehr Metcalfe Community Center, Old World Third Street Parking Structure, to name a few.

Today, Toki is a firm of 25 professionals with a goal to serving their clients by listening to their needs and desires and responding with efficient and cost effective solutions. Their relatively small size allows the principals to be actively involved in the management of all their projects and to provide quality services on-time/on-budget. They assign one project manager to work directly with a client throughout all phases of the project.

SBA is proud to have been an integral part in the success of Toki & Associates.

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