

ENR Midwest

Construction News and Analysis From Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin

TOP DESIGN FIRM ■ ENR MIDWEST DESIGN FIRM OF THE YEAR



Kimley-Horn Culture Drives Growth, Profit

Design Firm of the Year Kimley-Horn grew its revenue organically by 65% in the Midwest region over last year **BY JENNIE L. PHIPPS**

PLANNING AHEAD Kimley-Horn prepared 30% preliminary engineering plans and specifications for an extension of the Green Line serving the Twin Cities.

Kimley-Horn and Associates Inc., a surveying, engineering and design consulting firm, has been named ENR Midwest's Design Firm of the Year for 2023. ENR ranked Kimley-Horn No. 10 in its national Top 500 Design Firms list in 2022.

Kimley-Horn revenue grew organically by 65% year over year in the Midwest region, one of the biggest revenue jumps in the survey. The firm maintains a balance between public sector clients, including highway,

aviation, transportation, water, utilities and others, as well as private sector work, which includes retail, multi-unit residential, health care, education, hospitality, sports and entertainment. The company saw its Midwest revenue rise from \$117 million in 2021 to \$192.72 million in 2022.

Kimley-Horn opened four new offices in the Midwest last year. There are now 14 offices in the region, including Chicago downtown and Chicago northern

and western suburbs; Columbus and Northeast Ohio; Detroit; Indianapolis and West Lafayette, Ind.; Kansas City, Mo.; Milwaukee and Madison, Wis.; and Rochester, Twin Cities, and Twin Cities West in Minnesota.

The company is a privately held firm that is owned 100% by its employees via an employee stock ownership program with no single individual owning more than 2% of its stock.

“Since our founding, Kimley-Horn has pursued opportunities that benefit our people and the clients we serve,” says Steven E. Lefton, president and CEO. “In 2012, we had 59 offices. Today, we have nearly 7,000 employees in more than 125 offices across the country. We’re in more places, serving more clients with an ever-broadening array of services. And that is especially true in the Midwest.”

Kimley-Horn attributes its success to its Practice Builder philosophy, which focuses on bottom-up management.

“The growth we’ve seen as a firm in the Midwest is organic. It is not about mergers and acquisitions. That’s not a part of who we are,” says Chris Leverett, principal and Midwest regional leader. “We grow by hiring talented people one or two at a time. We are focused on hiring what we call practice builders. Practice builders are the people who are serving clients every day, and who clients want to hire to do their work.”

It’s a people-to-people perspective. “Our approach entering new markets has been to go to that market, talk to clients and understand who they like serving them. And then, frankly, to go and find those people and convince them they should be at Kimley-Horn,” Leverett says. “They join us, and they lead our new offices in those places. They identify the talent that they think we should hire, and we build around them. It’s a very bottom-up, organic, entrepreneurial kind of approach to growth that is in stark contrast, I believe, to anything else you see in our industry.”

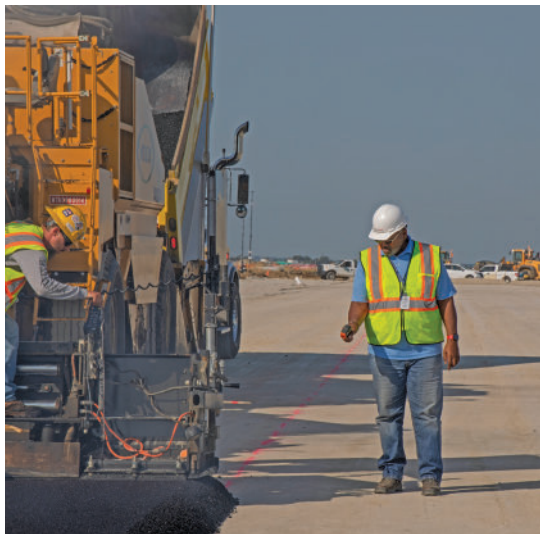
That approach apparently worked in Indianapolis, where Kimley-Horn first opened an office in 2017.

“Kimley-Horn is one of the finest engineering companies I’ve had the pleasure to work with,” says Mario Rodriguez, executive director of the Indianapolis Airport Authority. Kimley-Horn is in the process of overseeing a three-year, massive runway reconstruction project at the airport.

“I think Kimley-Horn has the same values as we do,” Rodriguez says. “It might sound corny, but what we’re trying to do is make our community better with everything we do. I think Kimley-Horn also focuses in on that each and every day.”

Projects that make a difference

Kimley-Horn is a leader in using technology in ways that preserve and enhance the environment. One ex-



DETAIL-MINDED
Kimley-Horn checks the asphalt base course for thickness and temperature at the Indianapolis Airport.



FLYING HIGH
Kimley-Horn is overseeing a three-year runway reconstruction project at the Indianapolis Airport.

ample is its work in Minnesota, where it has worked on virtually every transit corridor in the state over the last 15 years. It led the design of the Blue Line Light Rail Transit (LRT) in Minneapolis. Currently, it is designing and preparing to build the Metro Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit Project, which received \$239 million in April from the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. It is also supporting construction since designing the Metro Green Line extension in St. Paul.

“We think that it is important to have transportation that can serve a lot of people and do it in an environmentally friendly way,” says Leverett.

Simultaneously, the company is involved in developing and building infrastructure to support zero tailpipe emissions vehicles (ZEV).

“We see the coming transition to electric and autonomous vehicles,” Craig West, vice president and Midwest Regional marketing manager says. “We have people actively involved in both the rollout of electric vehicle charging systems across the Midwest and across the

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Principal and
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URBAN OASIS

Kimley-Horn provided civil, structural and other services to the Heart of the City in Rochester, Minn.



BUSY HUB

Kimley-Horn designed a major reconfiguration of the Mall of America Transit Station.



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country. We also are helping the industry understand how the grid has to work to support electric vehicles.”

Colleen Marnell, senior associate and marketing leader, Kimley-Horn, led the firm’s national solar practice. She also is involved in ZEV projects. “Every client is curious about it, talking about it and trying to figure out how to incorporate it into their projects or plan for it in the future,” she says.

For Kimley-Horn, that includes helping clients rethink roads and highways to accommodate EVs; building charging stations in multifamily developments; and helping governments change parking requirements to consider electric vehicle transportation.

“It’s interesting to consult with our clients on how ZEV is going to affect them,” Marnell says. “What are the things they need to be thinking about so they are prepared and won’t be left behind. There’s a lot of

working together to solve these problems, which is what engineers love to do, right?”

Taking off at Indy’s airport

Kimley-Horn is involved in a \$190-million runway and taxiway reconstruction project at Indianapolis International Airport—home to the second-largest FedEx Express Hub in the world.

The project reduces carbon emissions by mixing captured carbon dioxide in the concrete, a process known as carbon cap-

ture. It’s the equivalent of planting 1.2 million trees, according to Indianapolis Airport Authority senior planning and development director Jarod Klaas.

The concrete from the existing runways will be crushed into gravel onsite and recycled directly back into the project. The design also includes a 1,000-kW, direct current solar photovoltaic system that is expected to produce 1,552,341 kWh annually to serve both the runways and other parts of the airport.

The project, designed by Kimley-Horn in partnership with C&S Cos., was honored with the Envision Platinum Award, which is the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure’s top award for sustainability and resiliency.

Indianapolis airport director Rodriguez says, “I’ve been working in aviation for about 35 years, and this is the best project I have ever been associated with. My team and the team at Kimley-Horn, they’re all incred-



AT PEACE
A path lined with greenery is part of the Heart of the City in Rochester, Minn.

ibly professional. Everybody working, focusing on this runway, really understands the meaning. There's an environmental meaning, obviously, but it has a greater meaning. Kimley-Horn completely understands what's at stake here—the safety and security of passengers landing here, eight-and-a-half-million passengers a year.”

Doing well by doing good

Kimley-Horn has long been recognized for its culture of caring for its employees.

In 2022, for the sixth time, the company was named by Fortune magazine as one of the Best Workplaces for Women.

The company's Lasting Impact for Tomorrow (LIFT) initiative focuses on recruiting, training and retaining women. It also offers extensive fertility benefits to support employees seeking to be parents.

Kimley-Horn also offers employees My Way dollars to use for benefits that matter to them, including child care, student loan repayment, travel and other uses. There are also \$50 teamwork awards that any employee can award to another at any time.

Another benefit allows employees to work a half day



UPGRADE
Kimley-Horn provided design services for the reconstruction of Louisiana Avenue over Minnehaha Creek in St. Louis County in Minnesota.

on Fridays. They also can choose an alternative schedule to give them the flexibility that they need.

Recently, nearly 6,000 Kimley-Horn employees participated in a firmwide Rock, Paper, Scissors competition for charity.

The eight regional champions flew to St. Petersburg, Fla., for an in-person showdown, winning more than \$300,000 from the Kimley-Horn Foundation to give to their own favorite charities.

As Leverett says, “I think we, as a firm, are so unique and so centered around our people that it puts us in a position to provide opportunities for people to flourish. And that makes us a lot different.” ■

ON THE WEB

For more stories on design firms in the **Midwest**, visit enr.com/midwest.

For more information, please visit <https://www.kimley-horn.com/>.