



A Dream Realized for Encotech Engineering

This is an updated version of a story I wrote in 2004 for Encotech Engineering Consultants, Inc. about the firm's role as the MEP engineer for the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless. In 2005, [the project](#) was awarded as one of the top ten projects of the year by the American Institute of Architects. It was [LEED certified Silver](#) in 2008. I was incredibly proud to support the engineers who worked tirelessly on the project and to attend a private tour before the facility was open to the public for use.

When LZT Architects approached Ali Khataw, President of Encotech Engineering Consultants, Inc. about being the MEP sub-contractor for the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH), Khataw couldn't believe what he was hearing. "It was a phenomenal opportunity for us," exclaimed Khataw, "bigger than anything we had done so far!"

ARCH sits on a piece of prime real estate in downtown Austin, walking distance from the areas that most of Austin's growing homeless population frequents. LZT knew from the start that the City of Austin wanted the center to be LEED certified and worked hard to incorporate energy-saving details into every part of the building. Encotech's contribution to the energy savings as the Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing (MEP) engineer on record was engineering the 13,000-gallon rainwater collection system for landscape irrigation and gray water for toilets and urinals.

Since Encotech has never been content to merely design for function, the firm contributed to the idea of eight eye-catching galvanized steel tubes, each standing 21 feet tall, just outside the front door of the building to hold all the water. "The effect was awesome," said David Mitchell, head of the MEP Engineering department at Encotech. "They looked like artwork – People walking by would never guess they're storing rainwater!"

For Khataw, a native of Pakistan who came to the US to study engineering, the opportunity to work on a building that helped the homeless felt like coming full circle. "My grandfather taught me that draping a blanket on someone homeless sleeping in the cold goes beyond delivering the object itself and drapes that person in kindness," explained Khataw. With this building, Khataw felt that his firm's contributions to the MEP systems could help the City of Austin deliver kindness and compassion to the homeless for many years to come. Khataw is no stranger to kindness, donating his time, services, and financial support to numerous non-profit organizations in the Austin area. "I'll pass by this building many times

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in the coming years as downtown Austin continues to redesign itself,” said Khataw, “and it will always remind me of how my American dream came true and fill me with hope that other people who take shelter in the building will eventually find themselves in a better place.”

Founded by President Ali Khataw in 1990, Encotech Engineering is an MBE Structural and MEP Engineering firm located in Austin, TX. For more information on the firm's services, call 512-338-1101.