

Cincinnati architecture firm expands to new city with acquisition

January 10, 2022

A Cincinnati architecture firm has expanded to Indianapolis with the acquisition of another firm.

Luminaut, a Pendleton-based architecture and interior design firm, acquired Indianapolis-based Rowland Design last year. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Matt Erdman, CEO of Luminaut, said the acquisition of Rowland Design, Indiana's 2019 AIA Design Firm of the Year, helps Luminaut expand into new markets both geographically and in specialties. The addition of Rowland Design also will allow Luminaut to work on larger projects and service clients at the level needed.

"To be able to do bigger and better projects, to compete with larger firms in Cincinnati and Indianapolis, this takes us to that next level with resources," Erdman said.

Jill Rose, president of Rowland Design, said this marks a new chapter for the firm where it can "forge connections between our neighboring communities of Cincinnati and Indianapolis and continue to reignite the spark our company was founded upon by Sallie Rowland."

When going through strategic planning several years ago, Erdman said the firm had created a culture that was people-centric. To foster an environment that promotes expansion, Luminaut needed to look for ways to sustainably grow. Acquiring another firm was a path to do just that.

"We needed to add another market segment and geographic diversity to have growth that was sustainable," Erdman said.

Luminaut identified higher education as a market segment it wanted to be in and looked for firms with that specialty in a two-hour drive of Cincinnati. Rowland Design, a 52-year-old firm, has extensive experience in higher education. In fact, the firm's first client was Purdue University.

The firm also has national expertise in Greek housing on college campuses across the country. Rowland Design also has experience in segments that are key to Luminaut, such as corporate workplace, historic preservation and nonprofit work. Plus, the team at Rowland Design ranged from 16 years with the firm to 33 years.

"The depth and breadth of experience was really attractive to us," Erdman said. Once Luminaut and Rowland Design connected, it took about six months for the two firms to get to know one another before deciding to move forward with the acquisition.

"We found a real synergy with our cultures, our internal corporate culture, our outlook with projects and the way we build," Erdman said.

In Indianapolis, the firm will operate as Luminaut Rowland, where it will maintain an office. All 17 Rowland Design employees, including five partners, joined Luminaut. The combined firm now has a total of 48 employees. And Erdman is looking to hire.

He is looking to fill positions in human resources, marketing and is always looking for talent in architecture, graphic design and interior design at all levels. He expects to add at least five employees between the two offices over the next 12 months.

While Luminaut is still putting together its final numbers for 2021, Erdman said the firm grew about 20%. Now combined with Rowland Design, he expects 2022 revenue to be about \$10 million.

Link to original press release:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/cincinnati/news/2022/01/10/architecture-firm-expands-with-acquisition.html>

