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JAN NORMAN ON SMALL BUSINESS



News and practical tips for Orange County small business owners

O.C. firm builds first West Nile Virus lab

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LCS Constructors in Irvine has built the nation's first testing lab for West Nile Virus.

When your company specializes in an uncommon niche, you get such unusual contracts. The 50-employee

Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center, Texas

construction company, started in 1990, builds only laboratories and technical facilities.

This job was for the **Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center** in Houston, Texas, which provides blood and blood components to patients in more than 220 hospitals and healthcare facilities. It is one of only three blood centers in the United States that specialize in West Nile virus, screening as many as up to 2,000 samples of donated blood daily to make sure the blood supply is safe from the virus.

Within a six-week deadline set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, LCS remodeled 1,440 square feet of storage space within an existing Gulf Coast laboratory to create this testing facility. The sensitive nature of the facility's purpose is reflected in a variety of its design features:

- The dedicated HVAC system delivers six to ten air changes per hour and its exhaust vents to the outside.
- The lab's refrigeration system has a redundant compressor that both preserves the shelf life of test samples and extends the operating life of the equipment.
- The electrical system operates with a back-up generator to ensure uninterrupted power supply.
- The slurry epoxy flooring system is seamless to prevent the growth of bacterial and viral agents that might contaminate samples.
- The lab is self-contained with its own secure access and storage.

Among LCS's medical clients are **Clariant**, **Siemens** and **Quest Diagnostics**. It also builds labs for industrial clients such as **ExxonMobil**, **Boeing** and **Chevron**.

Inside West Nile Virus Testing Lab, photos from LCS Constructors

