

Glass Hospital Rises from Kuwaiti Sand

Chatsworth company ships 5,000 panels to cover exterior.

It was the single biggest contract in the history of **UltraGlas Inc.**

The Chatsworth company made 5,000 teal and translucent white glass panels to cover the exterior of a new hospital under construction in Kuwait. The contract's value was \$7.3 million.

Chief Executive **Jane Skeeter** said the recession had been tough on her business, resulting in taking on debt, reducing employee headcount and a falloff in work from the hospitality and high-end residential markets it had been serving.

But this one job has been huge for the small business and will likely open doors to further work in Kuwait and perhaps other foreign locales.

"The revenue from this project we will leverage to put us back on the map," Skeeter said.

The 5-by-5-foot panels were produced over a period of months and shipped to the new Jaber Al Ahmed Al Jabar Al Sabah Hospital. The company shipped the panels

in the order to be installed on the building's façade. The last shipping crates arrived in March.

"It would have been a nightmare had we not been able to help them properly," Skeeter said.

UltraGlas itself was also on the receiving end of help – from **California Manufacturing Technology Consultants**, a Torrance organization that helps manufacturers create sustainable jobs.

Doug Waterman, a client advisor, worked with UltraGlas on negotiating the contract. A CMTC colleague assisted with creating an efficient process to make the panels.

Negotiating the contract was particularly tough as the Middle East client was trying to keep the costs down and haggled a lot over price, Waterman said.

"They kept trying to find substitutes and said they would find substitutes but the reality is there weren't any," Waterman added. "The quality is obvious."

Completing the shipments likely will not end the involvement of UltraGlas in the project. The interior has not been finished and that provides an opportunity for the company to provide glass and tile for flooring, counters and wall surfaces.

– *Mark R. Madler*