

25  
years

Phase 3 demolition at Westlawn Gardens, Milwaukee. Stormwater structure installation at Browning Elementary School at Westlawn Gardens, Milwaukee. Wenbin Yuan, CEO of Dakota Intertek Corp. Demolition of the former Dairyland Greyhound Track, Kenosha. Methane liner installation at Potawatomi Hotel & Casino, Milwaukee. All project photos were taken by employees of Dakota Intertek Corp. Wenbin's photo was taken by Matthew Johnson of Johnson Media Consulting, LLC.

# Dakota Intertek



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## DAKOTA INTERTEK CORP.

*Yuan keeps up with changing times at Dakota Intertek*



If there's one thing Wenbin Yuan has learned in his 25 years running Dakota Intertek Corp., it's that every time one source of business begins to dry up, another one will come along.

When Yuan started Dakota Intertek in 1994, the company was mostly doing environmental work. Its principal business was in removing underground storage tanks and treating groundwater. At the peak, the company once found itself taking out 16 tanks at three different sites all in one day.

But with so much of that work now completed, Yuan and his employees have had to look elsewhere.

"The market in our field is a changing target," Yuan said. "In one of these years, we might be doing one thing. In another year, we are doing something else."

The company's next move was into soil cleanup. Initially, this was done through a method known in the industry as "dig and dump." But even that has changed. Now, Yuan said, clients are just as likely to want a liner to be installed over the contaminated soil to prevent it from polluting groundwater.

Even as that transition was happening, Dakota Intertek was moving into other lines of business like hazardous-materials abatement, renovations, and the demolition of commercial and

residential buildings. Yuan estimates his company has worked on more than \$20 million worth of renovation projects for the federal government alone from its GSA IDIQ long-term programs.

This knack for adaptation is something Yuan acquired at a young age. A native of mainland China, he was among the hordes of young people who were "sent down" to work on farms during a tumultuous period in the country's history known as the "Cultural Revolution."

For years, all the universities in China were closed. When they reopened, Yuan was surprised to find himself among the first class admitted.

His studies eventually led him to the United States, where he pursued a master's degree in environmental engineering at Iowa State University. Not long after taking a job at a large environmental company, Yuan met his future business partner, Mike Wan, who was already running a company called Dakota Environmental in South Dakota.

When the company started branching out, the two added the word "Intertek" to make potential clients were aware of their new services. Now Yuan and his employees work hard to live up to the company motto: Make every challenge an inspiring experience.

—Dan Shaw