

DESIGNING FOR TRIBAL SUSTAINABILITY

Out in the high desert east of the City of Temecula in southern California, on a 20,000-acre reservation, a team of Michael Baker International architects and planners has been working to bring to life the administrative, governmental and commercial future of the Cahuilla band of Mission Indians.

The Michael Baker team, led by Richard Beck, natural resources/regulatory vice president, as well as architects Bruce Preston and Pawel Paszczuk, and designer Scott Waltenburg of the firm's Irvine and Phoenix offices, has helped the tribe design a new 43,765-square-foot tribal administration complex to support the growth of the tribe's government. Located on a hillside 12 miles south of Interstate 10, the radially designed complex will face the tribe's sacred Cahuilla Mountain.

Waltenburg describes the complex as representing the patterns of the tribe's hand-crafted baskets, with materials and colors representing both the tribe and the surrounding land. This design effort comes on the heels of two years of multi-disciplinary services provided by Michael Baker to the tribe, including biological, regulatory, architectural and land-use planning services.

"Our work effort started with outreach and surveys to get a thorough understanding of tribal traditions, needs and culture," Preston says. "This project will be completed in three phases and will contain the administrative functions, tribal meeting rooms and a multi-purpose room."

The Michael Baker team continues to work closely with the tribe to move the project into the next design phase and into construction documentation.

"Our team takes great pride in the marriage of function and design throughout all phases of the Cahuilla project," Preston says. "By meeting the immediate and future needs of the tribe, the project should stand the test of time as a treasured center for their community to come together and also to celebrate their rich cultural heritage and the land they cherish."

