Spokane general contractor Divcon Inc. is expecting a work volume of about $20 million for 2014, its best year ever, says President Shane Miller.

John Miller, Divcon chairman and Shane’s father, says the work increase is due partly to the company’s expansion into tilt-up concrete construction, which it first began in the late 1990s.

“The tilt-up portion is the fastest-growing (construction) segment in the U.S.,” he says. Tilt-up construction involves designing, pouring, and doing finishes on a building’s concrete walls in a horizontal position, then craning them into place.

Shane Miller says Divcon’s projected work volume for this year is up $8 million from 2013 and also includes some backlogged work contracts that came through late last year.

Divcon’s latest tilt-up effort involves fabricating and installing insulated walls,

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Shane Miller and his father, John Miller, of general contractor Divcon Inc. say the company is on track to record work volume this year.
Miller says, which have two outer layers of concrete and an inner foam layer. The concrete, full buildings, and interior improvements form what Shane Miller calls the company's main "trifecta of services." "They're 100,000-square-foot projects, he says. "One of us as exterior builders, but we do more interior improvements than anything else," he says. "That's one's been a mainstay since the early '90s."

Divcon, which has 38 employees, also offers tenant improvement, pre-development, design-to-build, and cast-in-place concrete services. The company got its start in the late '80s, when building parking garage structures, Shane Miller says. The techniques used for the tilt-up concrete construction correspond in some ways with that cast-in-place concrete work, he says.

"It takes a little more training to deliver that at a quality level that clients want and deserve," he says. "The skill set from guys working tilt-up concrete dovetails into that. It gives our employees some upward mobility and more skill sets."

The company's current projects include subcontracting on the 150,000-square-foot warehouse project on the West Plains and general contracting services on the 64,000-square-foot Meadowbrook Three commercial building in the Meadowbrook Technology Campus building in Liberty Lake. They also include a 23,000-square-foot repair and service building in the West Plains for Kent, Wash.-based Thermo King Manufacturing, a 12,000-square-foot building on the West Plains for the Plains Meadowwood Technology Campus, and a 10,000-square-foot professional building located at the intersection of 29th Avenue and Southeast Boulevard on the South Hill, owned by Spokane-based 29th Street Investments LLC.

Divcon was founded by John Miller and his wife, Susan in the basement of their Spokane home in 1976, John Miller says. "We've done a variety of work over the years and progressed by adding lots of specialties," he says.

The company got its start constructing athletic fields, campgrounds, and parks, Miller says. When those government-funded projects slowed down, Divcon began to do more building and design projects, he says. "When we're on the team, we're on the team," he says. "It's about finding the best solution for the project."

Divcon also is continuing work on the Pinecraft Business Park, at 12310 E. Mirabeau Parkway in Spokane Valley. The company is a subcontractor for two projects for, some of which are direct competitors on other jobs. "When we're on the team, we're on the team," he says. "It's about finding the best solution for the project."

"We focus on skill sets other contractors have shed, and then they hire us to do them." Shane Miller Divcon Inc.

After the company decided to become a tilt-up specialist in the late 1980s, it went from constructing one or two tilt-up buildings a year to five or six a year currently, he says. "It's been interesting to watch the growth in that sector," Miller says.

One thing that distinguishes Divcon, he claims, is that it is "the fifth company in the U.S. to be certified in tilt-construction by the Tilt-Up Construction Association, a Mount Vernon, Iowa-based nonprofit trade organization. To receive the certification, companies had to complete multiple tilt-up projects, meet specific quality control standards, and present third-party verification of its tilt-up projects, among other requirements.

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