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Draft Call: InStep Software is Hitting a Healthy Stride.

A five-year, \$15 million contract landed this week with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will give the Chicago firm a prominent role in the continuing development of national standards for engineers working with computer-aided design tools. InStep's CAD software automatically makes changes that ensure a user's work conforms to standards.

Under the agreement, several government agencies, including all branches of the U.S. military and NASA, also will be authorized to employ the company's services.

Time-saving applications support a variety of operations. For example, InStep's Web-based eDNA software collects data in real time, allowing Corp engineers to monitor water levels in dams and locks along the Mississippi River and DePaul University officials to analyze power usage on campus right down to a particular classroom.

The company has maintained a low profile and a rising revenue stream since launching in 1994. InStep generated \$10 million in revenue last year and projects about \$13 million in revenue this year. The company has been profitable since its first year in business, President John Kalanik said.

More online: Read how InStep plans to help consumers save money on their energy bills at chicagotribune.com/profiles.