

Friday, June 12, 2009

South Jersey 25

EHS prospers as Defense helpmate

Philadelphia Business Journal - by [Peter Key](#) Staff Writer

MOORESTOWN — The fifth-fastest growing private company on this year's list of South Jersey 25 not only posted impressive growth between 2006 and 2008, it is bulking up its staff this year, too.

EHS Technologies Corp. has added 25 people since the year began, bringing the total number it employs full- and part-time to 75.

The company's growth isn't from new contracts, since it hadn't won any this year through May 22. Instead, the company's momentum is being driven by its existing customers, most of which are Defense Department branches, which have awarded EHS additional work under current contracts.

"The success of the company has really depended on the relationship that we've built with customers," said EHS CEO Denise Eckerle. "These customers have come back to us with more and more tasking orders and more and more delivery orders on these contracts."

EHS's revenue increased 278.3 percent to \$12.2 million last year from \$3.2 million in 2006.

The company's big jump came last year when its revenue increased by more than \$9 million, fueled by two contracts it won from divisions of the Naval Surface Warfare Center.

The larger of the two was for \$31.8 million and was from the Carderock, Md.-based division. The contract calls for EHS to provide a variety of work on the hull, mechanical and electrical systems of ships docked at the Navy Yard in Philadelphia.

The other was for \$30.8 million, from the center's Indian Head, Md.-based division, for a wide range of information-technology work.

"We're doing a little bit of everything for ... the Navy, Army, Air Force relating to technical support," said Stephen Haas, EHS' director of proposal and business development.


EHS was started in 1996 by Eckerle's husband, Bill Eckerle, now its president, after he left **Semcor Inc.**, a Mount Laurel-based systems engineering and support company that has since been bought.

Two years later, Eckerle, who also worked at Semcor, resigned to join her husband at EHS.

Initially, the company provided just environmental services — working with customers on their plans for responding to environmental problems, helping them comply with environmental regulations, and, when a clean up is necessary, bringing in a contractor.

But after EHS began providing its environmental customers with IT services, it found the market for them was growing faster than the market for its environmental services. So EHS made IT its focus.

EHS still does environmental work, and is hoping that the Obama administration's re-emphasis on the environment will bring more contracts in that area. But IT work provides the majority of its revenue.

EHS' first customer was the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River, Md., where it provided environmental quality assessment services as a subcontractor to  **Universal Technical Resource Services Inc.**, a Cherry Hill provider of scientific, engineering, management and computer services.

It now does work for the Navy all across the country, including Philadelphia; Norfolk, Va.; San Diego; and Barstow, Calif.

The work includes almost everything IT-related, from networking systems to providing help desk and other support, including updates and security.

EHS has been helped in its growth by the Small Business Administration's 8(a) program, which is designed to help businesses owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals get a leg up in competing for federal contracts.

EHS got certified by the program in 2002 as a woman-owned business. It has used the program to get its feet in some doors, but, Eckerle said, "any contract you receive is really just an opportunity. What you do with those contracts is up to you."

EHS has used its contracts to establish a track record that has helped it win larger business outside the program.

"In recent years, pretty much all the large contracts that we've won have been competitive contracts outside 8(a)," Haas said.

Although EHS hasn't won any contracts this year, Eckerle and Haas said it has a number in the pipeline.

The company also is looking at doing more work outside the government, but that's probably going to have to wait for a while.

“Right now, our staff is maxed out on what they’re doing and just keeping up with current customer needs,” Eckerle said.

No. 5

EHS Technologies Corp.

Address: 1219 N. Church St., Suite 106, Moorestown

CEO: Denise Eckerle

description: Provider of environmental and information-technology services.

Year founded: 1996

Startup capital: \$15,000

Profitability: Confidential

Revenue growth 2006-2008: 278.3 percent

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