



Small businesses are leading economy out of the Great Recession

The 2010 Waukesha County Chamber of Commerce Top 10 Small Businesses of the Year Awards were presented to a group of businesses that are committed to high-quality products and services, as well as exceptional customer and employee relations.

Winners were selected from a list of 50 nominated companies. This year's winners are:

- » **Advanced Waste Services, Inc.** – West Allis
- » **AmeriSign & Graphics** – Milwaukee
- » **Central Office Systems** – Waukesha
- » **Custom Service Hardware Inc.** – Cedarburg
- » **Ellenbecker Investment Group, Inc.** – Pewaukee
- » **Enviro-Safe Consulting, LLC** – Brookfield
- » **Lakeland Supply, Inc.** – Waukesha
- » **Tim O'Brien Homes** – Waukesha
- » **Triad Construction Inc.** – West Allis
- » **Zero Zone, Inc.** – North Prairie

One company was also selected for the Chamber's Choice Award:

- » **Minutemen Press** – Waukesha

The winners were selected by an independent panel of judges based upon criteria that included financial growth, employee growth, customer focus, employee relations and community service.

"We are thrilled to recognize and celebrate the achievements of these exceptional companies," said Suzanne Kelley, president of the Waukesha County Chamber of Commerce.

"Small business owners are the economic engine of this community, creating more jobs and employing more people than any other sector. Our award-winning companies exemplify the commitment and passion it takes to be a thriving small business during these challenging economic times," Kelley said. "In learning

about these companies, it became clear that a focus on the "people factor" was a key ingredient of their success. Positive employee relations, a total commitment to customer satisfaction and strong supplier relationships are some of the reasons these winners stand out. Small businesses, defined as those with fewer than 500 employees, comprise about 85 percent of Waukesha County's business community. We are fortunate that through agility, innovation and some tough decision-making, the vast majority of our county's small business base has been able to weather some difficult economic conditions. However, our winning companies' best practices and strategies for growth are useful lessons for any economy."

Dan Meyer, publisher of *BizTimes Milwaukee*, said, "Facilitating commerce in southeastern Wisconsin is at the core of our company's mission. That's why we're proud to present the winners of the Small Businesses of the Year Awards. These companies are the bread and butter of the region's economy. These companies are leading us out of the Great Recession." The winning companies shared some of their best practices and were recognized for their accomplishments at the awards luncheon on Thursday, June 10, at the Country Springs Hotel in Pewaukee.



Suzanne Kelley
President
Waukesha County Chamber of Commerce

Top Small Business of 2010:

Lakeland Supply Inc. 28

Top 10 Award Winners:

Advanced Waste Services Inc. 30
 AmeriSign & Graphics 31
 Central Office Systems 32
 Custom Service Hardware Inc. 33
 Ellenbecker Investment Group, Inc. 34
 Enviro-Safe Consulting LLC 35

Table of Contents

Tim O'Brien Homes 36
 Triad Construction Inc. 37
 Zero Zone Inc. 38
Chamber's Choice Award Winner:
 Minuteman Press - Waukesha 39

These profiles were compiled by BizTimes Milwaukee editorial assistant Liz Ramus. Photos by Paul Gaertner of White Dog Photography.

Minuteman Press - Waukesha

A few years ago Ingrid Herzog, architect and urban planner, and Hansi Herzog, a businessman, were frustrated with their jobs and sought new career paths.

While browsing the newspaper, the couple stumbled upon a franchise opportunity with Minuteman Press International Inc. and purchased Minuteman Press - Waukesha in June of 2007.

"We always talked about a family-owned business, more of just talking, never serious until this point in life," said Ingrid Herzog, co-owner of Minuteman Press - Waukesha.

In the first month after acquiring the franchise from the previous owner, the Herzogs tripled business. In 2009, despite the Great Recession, the couple grew revenue by 45 percent.

Minuteman Press - Waukesha is an individually owned and operated printing company that offers short-run printing, graphics and related services. The Herzogs currently employ three designers who work on custom printing, marketing and branding for clients.

"It makes a difference when we can do cus-

tomized design and not be the cookie cutter thing," said Ingrid Herzog.

Neither Ingrid nor Hansi had direct experience in the printing business. However, both

Minuteman Press - Waukesha

ADDRESS: 300 Travis Lane, Suite 14, Waukesha

WEBSITE: www.mmpwaukesha.com

INDUSTRY: Printing and graphics

REVENUE: \$460,560

EMPLOYEES: Seven

brought value-added skill sets to the business that have dramatically increased the bottom line.

Pulling from her previous career, Ingrid facilitates "live crits (critiques)" with the designers, giving each the chance to interpret the customer's vision and allow for a creative

brainstorming session.

"It is amazing to see how three designers interpret the customer's request," said Ingrid Herzog. "It works well for our organization."

In 2009, Hansi was diagnosed with Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS), an autoimmune disorder affecting the peripheral nervous system that paralyzed him. The Herzogs relied on the franchise, their banker, accountant and their current employees to assist in business operations as he recovered.

"We are so appreciative of our team," said Ingrid Herzog. "GBS paralyzed Hansi for two months, and how people came together and for our business to stay open says a lot about our employees."

Today, the Herzogs continue to grow their printing business and acquired the printing business from Waukesha-based Webz Sunset Printers in April 2009.

They are working on more growth plans.

"The goal is to purchase a building, and the next five-year goal is to grow the business and grow our team and give back to them as well,"



Minuteman Press - Waukesha Team

said Ingrid Herzog. "We want to create an environment they enjoy to work in and provide as much as we can and continue to give back to the community."

The Herzogs are committed to serving the people of Waukesha County and invest in area talent. They partner with Wisconsin's Youth Apprenticeship programs at area high schools and Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC) providing employment opportunities for current students. MMP Waukesha has played an integral role in Waukesha County through the Christmas Clearing Council, Waukesha Food Pantry and coaching Waukesha South High School boy soccer.

Local small businesses get Chamber's Top 10 honors

The Waukesha County Chamber of Commerce with media sponsor BizTimes Media has announced the 2010 Top 10 Small Businesses of the Year. The annual awards program recognizes companies with 250 employees or less that are headquartered in southeastern Wisconsin, not just in Waukesha County. However, six of the 10 businesses honored are located in Waukesha County.

A panel of business people affiliated with the Chamber judged the entries. Over 50 nominations were received. Applicants were judged on the basis of financial growth and consistency, a customer focus commitment, employee relations and community involvement.

Top 10 Small Businesses of the Year:

• **Advanced Waste Services Inc.** An environmental services firm based in West Allis specializing in chemical and

liquid waste removal.

• **AmeriSign & Graphics.** A provider of signs, commercial printing and graphic services with two locations in Pewaukee and Glendale.

• **Central Office Systems.** A Waukesha-based provider of digital copies, printers and related service, support and supplies.

• **Custom Service Hardware Inc.** A wholesale distributor of kitchen cabinet and furniture hardware based in Cedarburg.

• **Ellenbecker Investment Group Inc.** A Pewaukee-based provider of financial planning, estate planning and investment services.

• **Enviro-Safe Consulting LLCA** Brookfield-based provider of environmental, safety and resource recovery services to manufacturers throughout the country.

• **Lakeland Supply Inc.** A distributor of packaging, paper and janitorial products

based in Waukesha.

• **Tim O'Brien Homes.** A Waukesha-based semi-custom single family home builder focused on affordable green and energy efficient projects.

• **Triad Construction Inc.** A construction management and general contracting company based in West Allis.

• **Zero Zone Inc.** A manufacturer of refrigerated display cases and refrigeration systems for the food industry with headquarters in North Prairie.

Chamber's Choice Award:

Minuteman Press of Waukesha. A Waukesha-based company providing printing and graphics services in southeastern Wisconsin.

The announcement of the Small Business of the Year will take place at the awards luncheon on Thursday, June 10, 2010 from 11:30a.m.-1:30p.m. at the Country Springs Hotel. To reserve your seat, visit www.waukesha.org!