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Nevada Entrepreneur Awards

Supplement to In Business Las Vegas

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In Business

LAS VEGAS

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From the Editor

Dear readers,

Enterprising. Intuitive. Self-starter. Risk taker.
 Each of those words sums up our second class of honorees for the Nevada Entrepreneur Awards. In 2007, we began this program and discovered some amazing companies and remarkable people.



The same is true for this year.

One thing is certain: Whenever you venture into the planning and production of an entrepreneur awards section, you become aware of some great individuals and companies. For instance, we found a company that has had 100-percent employee retention in its eight years of existence. In another instance, we unearthed an owner who grew his business 60 times the national average and still remained profitable.

Inside, you'll find this year's group of award winners. Twelve companies from across the state are honored for their success and entrepreneurship. We accepted nominations, had our writers and editors do some additional research and then a panel made the selections. There were a few criteria the companies had to meet to be eligible:

- Must have been founded between Jan. 1, 1999, and Dec. 31, 2005
- Founder and/or original owner must still be actively involved with the company
- 2007 sales must not exceed \$1 billion
- Company cannot be a spin-off or division of a larger company

Nearly 60 companies received consideration; they are listed below. Some amazing stories came to light, and you can read about the risks that nearly all of these companies had to endure to reap the rewards they see every day now.

The winners include companies in industries such as construction, accounting, engineering and marketing. These are businesses that saw a niche and capitalized on it.

The population growth in Southern Nevada has provided a platform for these companies to shine upon. We applaud them for their achievements.

Rob Langrell
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Good Water Company



eBizAutos

2008 Nominees

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 Bluedial.com
 Brock Rock Insurance Group
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 SH Architecture
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 Sting Surveillance
 Strategic Collection Management
 Tandem
 The Beckley Group
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Sincerely,

Patrick Wisman

Chief Executive Officer
SouthwestUSA Bank



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British billionaire Richard Branson wrote in his autobiography: "My interest in life comes from setting myself huge, apparently unachievable challenges." This quote alone makes him one of my favorite entrepreneurs.

Branson sold discounted LPs during an early venture. Then he gave the Sex Pistols a recording deal. Branson took on the largest market sectors in the United Kingdom, from trains and planes to phones and finance, and threw tradition out the window to achieve success.

A stunt to promote a new Virgin America route turned into a blustery bungee jump with the thrill seeker bouncing around from atop the Palms. No matter. Tourists could eventually arrive in Vegas on a bio-fuel-powered Virgin jet. Branson is now working to reduce his carbon footprint.

It was an entrepreneur, Lamar Marchese, who founded the first National Public Radio affiliate in this state, Nevada Public Radio. Lamar was more Strauss than the Sex Pistols, and I doubt we could have persuaded him to bungee jump off a transmitter tower, but his "apparently

unachievable challenge" now operates six FM stations in two states.

Ninety percent of Nevada Public Radio's annual revenue comes directly from private sources in this community. Colleagues nationwide describe us as innovators in broadcast and digital media. Each month, 300,000 items of original audio content are downloaded from knpr.org.

Social entrepreneurship draws a connecting line from the Richard Bransons of the world to the Lamar Marcheses. When their kind of boundless energy is applied to the shared purpose of addressing community needs, anything is possible. When Andre Agassi, Elaine Wynn, Heather Murren, Michael Saltman, Glen Schaeffer and others pour energy into "apparently unachievable challenges" in education, medicine and culture, they set irresistible standards. They challenge the rest of us to reach for the stars.

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YES! Air Conditioning & Plumbing

By **Brian Sodoma**, Special Publications writer



Ken Goodrich doesn't want to fix your air conditioner. He'd rather have his qualified staff do it. But before you get the impression the founder and president of Yes! Air Conditioning & Plumbing is not concerned about customer service, a look at Goodrich's ability to build a stable and profitable company is in order.

A valley native, Goodrich began his air conditioning technician career at the age of 12. It was the 1970s, and air conditioned homes were becoming the norm in the desert Southwest. Goodrich's father, an engineer at the Nevada Test Site, learned how to repair air conditioning systems and found himself quite busy with side jobs. As a result, Goodrich "held the flashlight" while his father moonlighted as a repairman, bringing in extra income for the family. Years later, when Goodrich finished college, he was offered entry-level finance jobs that paid only one-third of what he had been able to earn moonlighting as a repair technician. Goodrich's decision to take over the family business was a no-brainer.

While building his family's business, Racee Air Conditioning & Heat, Goodrich found that if he really wanted to grow the com-

pany to a level beyond the industry standard of \$1.2 million annual sales, he was going to need to change his focus from being a repairman to a businessman.

"I remember one day going to pick up supplies for some of my workers, and a larger

and sold it in 1997 to ARS (American Residential Services) LLC.

But Goodrich couldn't stay retired for long. In 2001, he started Yes! Air Conditioning & Plumbing. He assembled an accounting staff and brought on two managers who had

"A lot of people look at me and ask sometimes why I'm buying a certain company. They'll say, 'That company is a mess. There's nothing there.' It's that emptiness that makes it valuable."

- Ken Goodrich

company came in and I was told I had to wait," Goodrich said. "Naturally, I was a little upset about that. So I went out to my truck and opened up my dirty yellow notepad, and I said, 'What do I really want to do here?'"

The answers came quickly: build a profitable company with a great team and eventually sell it. The dream came true for Goodrich, as he built Racee up to 40 employees

worked for him at Racee, Lance Fernandez and Jeremy Prevost, to help manage employees and customer relations. He then set out to purchase small, underperforming shops in town. By 2007, the repair company billed \$17.3 million, and despite the temptation of the housing boom, it had not ventured into new-home installations, sticking with the residential repair niche instead.



with Ken Goodrich

What was your first job, and why did you leave?

My first job was when I was 12, working for my father in the air conditioning business, and I've never left. I was enslaved (laughs) at a very young age. It was a moonlighting thing for him, and I held the flashlight. By 16, I was doing service calls.

What was your best business decision?

To allow people to participate in the profits and proceeds from the sale of the company. It makes for more dedicated employees.

Who is your mentor and why?

Cash Wilson, president of Gary Guy Wilson Architects and Civilworks. Cash and I have been passionate about business since the 10th grade. He opened our eyes on how to develop our business by creating business systems to deliver consistent service to our clients. Cash helped us look at our business as businessmen rather than tradesmen.

"It's the kind of thing where nobody really saw us coming (because of staying with repairs)," Goodrich said. "A lot of people look at me and ask sometimes why I'm buying a certain company. They'll say, 'That company is a mess. There's nothing there.' It's that emptiness that makes it valuable."

About two years ago, Goodrich again was approached by ARS about purchasing Yes! Earlier this year, Goodrich negotiated a reverse merger with ARS, in which Yes!'s three offices will be folded in with ARS' five existing Southwest Region offices. Goodrich and his management team also are tasked with bringing operational excellence to ARS' existing offices.

"Our whole plan has always been buy it, repair it, build it and sell it," Goodrich added.

It's a strategy that appears to be working for employees as well. Many Yes! Air Conditioning & Plumbing technicians can make \$100,000 a year, according to Goodrich.

"You hear a lot of people talk about having a hard time hiring good people — we have a line," the president said.

"A lot of our happiest employees are former businessmen," added Prevost.

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Imagine Marketing

By Danielle Birkin, Contributing writer



D.J. Allen has been calling the shots at Imagine Marketing of Nevada since he founded the company as a part-time, home-based solo operation in 2000. Eight years later, the full-service advertising, marketing and public relations firm has 15 full-time employees whom Allen credits for the company's continued growth and expansion. In fact, Allen recently stepped down as managing shareholder of the company, an inspired move he said will help to sustain its future success.

"At some point, entrepreneurs understand that if they are successful at what they do, the company will ultimately outgrow them and their leadership style," said Allen, a third-generation Southern Nevadan who earned a bachelor's degree

and a Master of Business Administration from UNLV. "So in January, I stepped down because it was most beneficial for the company and the clients and the team, and it has enabled me to focus on what I am good at: strategic planning and business development. I view myself as a coach leading a team, and I am still president and majority shareholder and have a role in determining direction, but it was in our best interest to turn the day-to-day over to people who are better at it than I am. It has been very liberating, and we have had growth because of it."

Indeed, if annual gross revenue serves as a viable indicator of success, Imagine Marketing of Nevada is clearly flourishing, despite the recent economic downturn

that has stymied industries across the board. While many businesses have reported stagnant or declining revenue figures during the past few years, Imagine Marketing of Nevada continues to prosper, bringing in \$945,000 in 2005, nearly \$1.25

million in 2006 and just less than \$1.7 million in 2007. Allen anticipates gross annual revenue this year will sustain momentum and surpass \$2 million. Not too shabby for a sports enthusiast who once worked for free as a freelance sports reporter while attending school.

Also noteworthy: Since its genesis in 2000, Imagine Marketing of Nevada has reported 100-percent retention of its full-time staff, a remarkable feat that Allen attributes to the firm's nurturing corporate environment and business philosophy.

"We have had no turnover of our full-time employees, which is practically unheard of in our market and in our industry," said Allen, whose clients include UNLV Runnin' Rebels, Nevada State College, Galleria at Sunset and Henderson Nevada Chamber of Commerce. "Our unofficial motto is that we work to live, not live to work, so we have created an atmosphere that people want to be a



with D.J. Allen

What was your first job, and why did you leave it?

When I was 13 years old, I started working in a baseball card shop, and I did that until my 16th birthday, when I got a job with Blockbuster Video because I wanted to get paid more than \$1 in trade an hour. At the end of the day, I'd get about \$8 to \$10 in trade, but I loved every minute of it.

What was your best business decision?

To hire the people that we have hired. A lot of times, it seems as though business leaders don't take enough time and energy to select the people they want on their team, but we really went out and handpicked the people we wanted to have as part of our organization. The most important thing is getting people on board who can run the business better than I can.

Who is your mentor and why?

Lon Kruger, the head coach for the UNLV basketball team. We wrote a book together called *The Xs and Os of Success: A Playbook for Leaders in Business and Life*. Lon is a businessman and a brilliant communicator with a brilliant strategic mind who just happens to coach basketball. A lot of people learned at an early age how to compete and be disciplined through sports and have successfully applied it to business."

part of. At Imagine Marketing, we don't say 'employees' or 'staff,' we say 'team' or 'family,' which may sound hokey, but when you have

"We have had no turnover of our full-time employees, which is practically unheard of in our market and in our industry."

- D.J. Allen



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PostNet

By Liz Gamble, Contributing writer



When husband and wife team Tom and Jill Emanuel decided to go into business for themselves, they looked for something that would allow them to work together, use Tom's experience in shipping and inventory and Jill's background in creative services, promotion and printing. The answer became obvious: purchase a PostNet franchise.

In October 2005, the Emanuels became the proprietors of the PostNet at Stephanie Street and Horizon Ridge Parkway in Henderson. At the time of purchase, the store was doing very poorly. However, the Emanuels recognized that the reason for

the poor performance was due to the previous owner limiting its product line to packaging and shipping. Seeing the tremendous potential, they began concentrating on offering services that help the small-business owner succeed.

"Unlike many franchises, the PostNet company allows its franchisees the freedom to make a store their own by adding, or not including, various services," said Tom.

According to the Emanuels, they decided to take a leap of faith and invest in digital design and printing equipment. Today, the majority of customers come to the Emanuel's PostNet for graphic design

services and printing. "We're tailor-made to help small businesses and entrepreneurs survive and maybe even thrive in these tough times," added Tom.

"It's one of the reasons we wanted to go into business for ourselves," said Jill. "We wanted to make a difference by being in a position to help other people succeed. Neither of us found that in our previous jobs."

Their leap has proven fruitful. From 2006 to 2007, gross revenues grew 65 percent, with a projected leap of another 20 percent for 2008. The Emanuels anticipate having seven employees by fourth-quarter end.

At the PostNet National Convention in April 2008, the Emanuels were recognized as the 2008 Chairman's Choice and included in the PostNet Chairman's Club. The annual award is given to one franchisee, selected from more than 500 stores nationwide, by the chairman and co-founder of PostNet, Steve Greenbaum. Additionally, the Emanuel's were awarded, for the second consecutive year, an Overachiever Award for outstanding sales growth and performance.

"Our biggest challenge was letting people know that we weren't just a packaging and shipping place," Tom said. "That became Jill's department. She is the heart of the business. She's out there in the community, not only letting people know about our business but participating in activities that make a difference, like our Halloween costume drive for S.A.F.E. House and book drive for Spread the Word."

Jill also has been responsible for writing an employee training manual and creating marketing and promotional programs for the business.

One of the Emanuel's greatest assets is the loyalty they have created with their customers. "We get to know our customers. They become like family," Jill added. The couple's customers come from all over the Las Vegas Valley. "We even have one customer who moved to Hawaii and still orders her printed materials from us."

The Emanuels count among their customers everything from restaurants, to handyman services, to medical facilities, to casino headliner shows.

As for the future, "we continue to plan for the purchase of further equipment that will better serve our customers," Tom commented. "Our commitment to our customers and community, the PostNet brand and to each other has helped

us find success in only three years of business ownership. We are grateful for all that has come our way thus far and are excited to see what the future holds."

A lot of people ask us how it is to work together. "We are simply building our future, and we couldn't do it without one another," concluded Tom.

"We're two people trying to make a difference," added Jill.



with Tom and Jill Emanuel

What was your first job, and why did you leave it?

Jill: My first job was as a tennis instructor in Maui, and like most people who leave their first job, I outgrew it and eventually went into advertising.

Tom: In high school, I worked as a security guard to earn money for school. I then became an accountant. We both left our careers because we wanted the opportunity to spend more time getting involved with and giving back to the community.

What was your best business decision?

Jill: First, it would have to be starting our own business together. After that, it would be deciding to offer design and printing followed by hiring an in-house graphic designer. About 90 percent of PostNet stores don't offer printing services; we're glad we recognized the opportunity.

Who was your mentor and why?

Jill: Our parents; seeing them work hard every day is an inspiration. They also were very active in their communities.

Tom: For me, my dad is a role model. He was a VP of sales, and his customers loved and trusted him."

WAY TO GO, DAVID!

Nevada Association Services, Inc. is a licensed collections agency specializing exclusively in collections for homeowners associations.

As we get ready to celebrate our tenth year in business, we congratulate our company President, David Stone, for his vision and growth in the area of HOA collections...not to mention being honored with a 2008 Nevada Entrepreneur Award!

Sincerely,

The NAS, Inc. team

David Stone
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Advanced Imaging Solutions

By Liz Gamble, Contributing writer

When Gary Harouff opened the doors of Advanced Imaging Solutions on tax day in 2002, he did so with a little help from his friends. "I was working hard for another company in the same industry when it was sold," said Harouff. "Suddenly, people who had been with that company for years were unappreciated. I left, five other longtime employees came with me, and AIS was born.

"People are everything in a company. They're the ones that keep a company moving forward."

And advance AIS did. Selling printing products and providing copier, printer, fax and software products and services to businesses in Southern Nevada and Southern California, the company grew up fast and smart. For the second consecutive year, Advanced Imaging Solutions is ranked as one of *Inc.* magazine's 5000 fastest growing private companies in America. According to the prestigious list, AIS's 128.6-percent growth between 2002 and 2008 is due in part to the company's success with offering business solutions that, on average, save clients up to 50 percent on their copying costs by enabling them to analyze and control operating costs asso-

ciated with document production and distribution.

"Approximately \$.70 per page is a soft cost," said Harouff. "Most companies don't have a clear understanding of how much money they can save in regard to document production and distribution. With the amount of information doubling every two to three years, those costs can be astronomical."

Today, Harouff's leadership, along with the original five: Jeff Legreca, Marc Surette, Nick Deascensis, Richard Sawyer and Marv Angell, have helped AIS grow to more than \$11 million in revenues in 2007, with more than 2400 customers and a projected 56 employees, and \$14 million in revenues by the end of 2008.

In addition to the "Inc. 5000," AIS is the recipient of numerous marketplace recognitions including the Supplier of the Year for the Clark County Bar Association and the State of Nevada Association of Purchasing and Supply Management (NAPSM); Kyocera's Premiere Dealer Award every year since becoming a dealer in 2002; the JD Powers Certification; Honor Roll member of the Southern Nevada Better Business Bureau; a complaint-free status with the



Better Business Bureau since the company's inception; being voted one of the nation's Elite Dealers of the Year by *OfficeDEALER* magazine and was featured as the cover story in *imageSource* magazine.

Moving toward a goal of capturing 40 percent of the marketplace, AIS continues to improve its product offerings and customer service. "As the top of our industry continues to transition out of 'box sales' into solution sales, AIS has developed vertical market specialists," said Harouff. "We are keenly attuned to the needs of the medical, legal and educational markets, combining MFP hardware with customized solution-based applications to offer a technology bundle that separates us from our competition."

Additionally, the company can boast about a service department and sales force that have earned the highest technical cer-



with Gary Harouff

What was your first job, and why did you leave it?

My first job as an adult was as an intern for a private investigator. Then my dad opened a company, and I went to work for him. It changed my life. I saw that you could be successful and help other people.

What was your best business decision?

Starting a company of my own. I was able to share the wealth with people who worked hard and deserved its rewards.

Who was your mentor and why?

My parents. They gave me a sound business sense.

tification in the industry, including CNE, CAN, CDIA, NOVELL and MCSE. "Three of our sales staff are CDIA certified and, by the end of this calendar year, we will require that all of our 18 sales representatives have this certification," added Harouff.

Advanced Imaging Solutions gives back to the community through its involvement with the Sports Dream Foundation, which gives scholarships to local children to continue their education.

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Gerety and Associates

By Liz Gamble, Contributing writer



While in college, a professor once asked a room full of accounting students which of them planned on having their own business one day; Dan Gerety was the only student to raise his hand.

Years later, while in the midst of a highly successful career with one of the nation's largest accounting firms, Gerety spent two years preparing for the launch of his own accounting firm. "I would advise anyone who is considering starting their own business to think it through thoroughly, be prepared financially and be conservative with your projections," he said.

When Gerety opened the doors to his business on Nov. 1, 2004, clients followed him from his previous position with McGladrey & Pullen and RSM McGladrey. That first rolling 12-month period between November 2004 and October 2005 saw revenues increase 77 percent. For the same periods ending October 2006 and 2007, revenues grew 83.4 and 56.3 percent, respectively. For the rolling 12-month period ending September 2008, revenues grew 48.9 percent.

"All of our growth has come from referrals, which have been accomplished by maintaining a great reputation as a tax consulting CPA firm," said Gerety.

The firm brings its primary services of accounting, taxation and business consulting to a client base of high-wealth individuals and large companies with \$100

million or more in sales.

Among its specialties are IRS and state and/or local representation; estate and gift tax planning; estate, gift and trust tax return preparation; buying and selling a business; litigation support; financial forecast and projections; bookkeeping; and financial statements.

"We're always looking for ways to improve our service to our clients. I like change, and I look for ways to make things better," Gerety said.

Most recently, Gerety & Associates went completely paperless. "All of our records and correspondences are electronic. We've even scanned all the old documents," said Gerety. Clients benefit from this paperless approach to business through increased staff efficiency. "Even the little things like being on the phone with a client and having immediate access to a document enhances our service to that client."

Advances in technology aside, the firm's success, according to Gerety, are a reflection of the quality and dedication of its staff, and Gerety & Associates places a great deal of emphasis on creating a great work environment.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, a yoga instructor visits the office, and during tax season, a masseuse helps relieve the stress. There used to be a room dedicated to exercise equipment, but the firm had to turn the area into an office.

"We're looking for a new location for

the equipment," added Gerety. "It also says a lot that employees from across the hall have commented that they often hear laughing coming from our offices."

In addition to the stress-busting activities, laughter and flexible employee schedules, Gerety & Associates offers employees the opportunity for continuing professional education.

Gerety gives back to the community through a variety of activities, including serving as a past board member and current committee member of the Las Vegas chapter of the World Wide Marriage Encounter, which provides weekend educational retreats for married couples to help them communicate better and express their feelings in a positive manner. He also serves on the Taxation Committee for the Nevada State Society of Certified Public Accountants, advising on taxation matters and writing articles to help educate Nevada's CPAs.

Gerety & Associates participates in the Variety Special School's recycling program by setting up recycling bins in the company's office, as well as being involved in an annual United Way campaign.

Gerety is adding five new professional staff members in November and expects an additional two by tax season. Like his clients, most new employees seek out Gerety & Associates.

"We do very little recruiting. The best find us," said Gerety.



with Dan Gerety

What was your first job, and why did you leave it?

My first job was as a paperboy. I left my route because I got a better offer. When I was 14 years old, I took a job with the Cheyenne Camping Center installing trailer hitches. We did good quality work, but people did sometimes look like, "I can't believe that kid is installing my hitch."

What was your best business decision?

My best business decision was going off on my own and alleviating the stress that comes from the politics associated with working for a large company. That's not to say there isn't stress involved with having your own business. Expect to work harder and longer than you ever have in your life; anticipate that you won't make projections and plan, plan, plan before opening your doors.

Who was your mentor and why?

My wife is my mentor. She keeps me grounded and focused on the consequences. She also reminds me to think of others before myself and brings me down to earth when I need it.



Danoski Clutts Building Group

By Brian Sodoma, Special Publications writer

Shawn Danoski knows the value of a good dumpster enclosure. Having quit his job as a project manager with a valley contractor in 2001, Danoski was eager to start his own contracting company. His first job as a business owner was to build a trash dumpster enclosure at McCarran International Airport.

"And we've been doing work at McCarran ever since," added a chuckling Bryce Clutts,

president and partner in Danoski Clutts Building Group, the company initiated by Danoski's humble first foray into the contracting business. While Clutts' statement comes across as a joke, there is plenty of truth to it. Danoski Clutts

has done tenant improvement work for Starbucks, Southwest Airlines and other notable tenants at the airport. Today the company, which boasts an unrestricted contractors license that is rare for its age and size, has worked on area churches, the valley's 107,000-square-foot Desert Marketplace located on the southwest side of town, the 84,000-square-foot Spencer Distribution Center near McCarran and many other developments. This year, Danoski Clutts will bill \$25 million while boasting 32 employees.

Both Danoski and Clutts are products of the valley's contracting industry, having grown up in Las Vegas and worked for or been mentored in some way by prominent figures, such as Doug Carson and Frank Martin.

the valley's development.

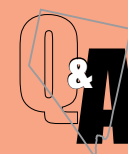
Today, the pair candidly mix optimism with realism when discussing the troubles in the local and national development arena and the credit crisis. Danoski proudly states that the firm's revenues have climbed about 40 percent in the past year, and employees have been added to the company payroll. However, Danoski Clutts is still looking to beef up its personnel a bit.

"In a down cycle, you're deepening your foundation," said Danoski.

"The talent pool is tremendous. And it's a great opportunity to buy resources right now," Clutts added.

The principals have hired an executive vice president to handle the day-to-day operations so Danoski and Clutts can focus on future growth opportunities. With the swing away from the frantic economic growth of a few years ago, Clutts sees a shift coming for many companies to the type of relationship-based business model and philosophy that Danoski Clutts has embraced from day one.

"Price will get you in the door, but customer service will keep you there. ... Things have been moving so fast for so long, you've been able to identify the greed, and people are learning how to be happy to be part of a healthy, stable organization," Clutts said.



with Shawn Danoski & Bryce Clutts

What was your first job, and why did you leave?

Danoski: Working for Doug Carson (Carson Construction) out of college. After nine years, I left to start this company, with his guidance.

Clutts: Sheet metal worker. I left because I wanted to use my head instead of my hands.

What was your best business decision?

Danoski: Starting this company. Taking the risk and jumping out of the plane.

Who is your mentor and why?

Danoski: Frank Martin (founder of Martin-Harris Construction). He's helped me a lot with business and personally. He can relate to what's happening in our industry and our company because of his 35 years of success.

Clutts: My grandfathers. They always were and always will be the men I look up to. Every day, they help to keep me grounded through this whole process of life.



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Walker Engineering

By Brian Sodoma, Special Publications writer

As a native Las Vegas, Jody Walker Belsick has seen firsthand the evolution of her city's hyper-speed culture. But the 35-year-old business owner's style tends more toward the slow and methodical, a pace that has paid dividends and brought satisfaction to her and her staff at Walker Engineering LLC.

Belsick, an outdoors enthusiast who has climbed two of the world's seven great summits — Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa and Mount Elbrus in Russia — took naturally to the male-dominated engineering world.

"There's no real big story about why I became an engineer. I just like math and science. So I geared my studies toward that," she said while showing an almost indifference to being a woman in the field. She asserts the engineering world has a sense of camaraderie. "We're all in it together. We try to help each other out, in general."

After graduating from UNLV's Howard Hughes School of Engineering in 1997, Belsick landed her first valley civil engineering job with the Keith Companies. After picking up some valuable experience, she considered a shift in her career and was accepted into the Peace Corps. But when a colleague recommended her to work on the 25-acre, 444,000-square-foot Rainbow Sunset Pavilion, she saw it as a once in a lifetime opportunity.

"I'm in this now, and I plan to do this forever," Belsick said about her decision to go into business instead of pursuing the Peace Corps.

Starting as a two-person company with one client, Walker Engineering has grown to a staff of 12 with three licensed engineers since it began operations in 2003. Revenues have increased by 250 percent since 2004, and the company was profitable in its first year. Other notable projects for the firm include: North Las Vegas' CDW Industrial Park and Spencer Crossings in Henderson, an office and retail mixed-use site. Belsick hopes to land more mixed-use projects in the future while also steering her firm into public sector work as well.

For now, focusing on the current workload and finding quality staff remain priorities. "When we first started, getting the right people was a real challenge for us. One of the smartest things we did was not hire just to hire," Belsick explained. "We turned down work and kept the staff at a certain level where we could provide quality service. ... For us, it's about steady growth with the right people. We're not looking to have 50 people in five years," she added.

While growing the firm is a priority, Belsick also plans on traveling and making sure her employees take vacations.



"I believe strongly that travel really helps to maintain perspective. As a business owner, I encourage everyone to take vacations as I believe they are important to keep from getting burned out. ... I maintain that philosophy for myself as well," Belsick explained.

As her firm grows and the opportunity to delegate more duties surfaces, Belsick sees herself working with local engineering societies in a mentor role for local youth.

"A lot of kids need our help. I've been fortunate in my life, and I just want to be able to give back," she added.



with Jody Walker Belsick

What was your first job, and why did you leave?

The Keith Companies, a civil engineering firm was a good starting point in my career. I left to change my career direction and joined the Peace Corps program. At that time, I was approached to do civil engineering work for the 30-acre Sunset Pavilion project, a once in a life-time opportunity.

What was your best business decision?

In today's economy, I would have to say the decision to grow the company slowly with the right people. During the first few years of operation, it was very difficult to find qualified people to join our team. We made the decision to only take on projects that matched our staff level instead of hiring people that weren't really qualified for the positions we needed.

Who is your mentor and why?

Although it is cliché, I would have to say my biggest mentors are my mother and father. It is amazing what you can accomplish in life with the love and support of your family. My father is one of the smartest men I know, and he has taught me over the years the importance of education and accountability and what good things come from your hard work.



WorldDoc Inc.

By Liz Gamble, Contributing writer

With a formal business plan in hand, Dr. Rahul Singal and 14 other physicians founded WorldDoc in 2001.

This year, with a three-year sales growth of 487.9 percent, the company was ranked No. 31 on *Inc.*'s Top 100 Companies in the Health Industry list. And, for the second consecutive year, WorldDoc is included in the magazine's annual ranking of the 5,000 fastest growing private companies in America.

Accounting partially for WorldDoc's success, according to Singal, the company's president and CEO, is the consumerism of health care. While the company's direct customers of its consumer care management systems are health plans, third-party administrators and large employers, the end users of its Web-based Interactive Consumer Health Tools, such as MyHealth 24/7, are the individual members of those plans.

"MyHealth 24/7 gives individuals a tool that empowers them to take control of their health," said Singal.

A patient portal, MyHealth 24/7 provides patients with secure, personalized health information, including a personal

health record for storing data, an interactive self-triage symptom evaluator, health assessment tools and a medical library.

"Statistics have shown that among member participants, there has been a 30-percent decrease in unnecessary physician office visits and a 50-percent decrease in unwarranted emergency room visits, significantly reducing the cost of health care delivery," said Singal.

Working synergistically with MyHealth 24/7, WorldDoc integrates an individual's health risk assessment with his or her medical and pharmacy claims, laboratory testing results, medical care provider data and self-administered medical testing results to provide a comprehensive care management solution that includes personalized medical goals, care gap identification and communication about suggested treatments.

With a comprehensive picture of a patient's health including personal wellness objectives, WorldDoc provides patients' physicians with secure access to patient information, such as lab and test results, medication histories, allergies, vital signs, inputs/outputs, schedules and other vital clinical information, through desktop and



mobile applications.

WorldDoc has contracts nationwide and has grown from 22 employees in 2005 to a projected 62 by the year's end.

With an operating strategy that includes extending products and markets through partnerships and joint ventures, and to pursuing new markets and distribution channels for its core product, "We anticipate the possibility of capturing \$3 million of a \$50 million marketplace," added Singal.



with Dr. Rahul Singal

What was your first job, and why did you leave it?

My first job was as a paperboy. It was there that I learned the value of customer service. The better the service, the higher my tips. I outgrew the paper route, eventually graduating from Stanford University School of Medicine. Immediately before becoming a founding partner of WorldDoc, I was the vice president and medical director for Southwest Medical Associates, a publicly traded managed care organization under the umbrella of Sierra Health Services.

What was your best business decision?

Choosing the right business partners and creating WorldDoc's business platform on acute care, preventative health and chronic conditions.

Who is your mentor and why?

I've been blessed with a variety of mentors including Sig Rogich, who is WorldDoc's chairman, Jerry Reeves, a WorldDoc co-founder, and Dave Wheeler, who showed me how to create a win-win business model.



World Tea Expo

By Brian Sodoma, Special Publications writer

George Jage is a builder. Blessed with the ability to spot a need and capitalize on it, he built the World Tea Expo into a company that will hit \$1.7 million in revenues in 2008 and has an annual trade show that now hosts nearly 300 exhibitors.

Growing up in Wisconsin, Jage's career path seemed more poised for beer than tea, he notes with a laugh. He held summer jobs at Milwaukee's Pabst Blue Ribbon headquarters and, at one time, was an assistant to a brewmaster at a brewpub. But Jage had different, nonbeverage-related plans. He went to school for microbiology, which he hoped to translate into a career in pharmaceutical sales, but his career took a turn in graduate school.

Jage was nearly finished with his MBA from Marquette University when the successful trade show business he'd created with his father, the Off Price Specialist Show, grew to a level that required his full-time commitment. The Off Price shows offered attendees the opportunity to purchase clothing, accessories, footwear and other merchandise from liquidators at a fraction of the manufacturers wholesale price. After selling the show in 1999, Jage's father retired, and Jage had some capital for his next business venture.

companies, tearoom owners, as well as other businesses such as specialty grocery stores, spas, bakeries, restaurants and other retailers that may offer tea to customers. In his first year, Jage managed to find 65 exhibitors and boasted more than 1,000 attendees. Today the show has more than 300 exhibitors. By 2010, Jage is expecting revenues to top \$4 million, more than doubling his current level.

As Jage becomes a more knowledgeable tea drinker, he is setting out to separate the tea and coffee worlds. In the past year, he published the *World Tea Buyers Guide*, which employs a rating system for teas similar to the system for wine. An expert panel of eight tasters, the tea industry's version



There's a fundamental belief that tea is associated with coffee. But really, it's far more similar to wine. It's much more artistic. Beer and coffee are more scientific.

-George Jage

Then a friend asked him if there was a trade show for the tea industry. Since Jage found there wasn't one, he set out to create his own.

"I had more people tell me this would never work than those saying it was a great idea. ... The more someone thought this couldn't work, the more determined I was to make it work," Jage said. "But, by December 2002, I was looking in the mirror thinking, 'I'm the biggest idiot in the world.'"

Jage had fewer than 20 companies signed up for his March 2003 debut show, and his pursuit of larger tea companies was a fruitless, time-consuming effort, since most already had established distribution channels in place and had no use for an annual trade show.

But Jage found there was a niche for bringing together small specialty tea

of master sommeliers, was established to create the guide and rating system.

"There's a fundamental belief that tea is associated with coffee. But really, it's far more similar to wine. It's much more artistic. Beer and coffee are more scientific," Jage said, while explaining that tea is hand-harvested and how it is handled and processed makes a huge impact on its flavor profile. "I really believe by shifting tea simulations toward wine, it's going to increase the perceived value to the market."

The *World Tea Buyers Guide* is available for free online, and Jage has also ventured into an online news trade publication for the industry.

"With everything we're doing, we're really providing some valuable tools to business owners," he added. "It's great to see the industry come together like this."



with George Jage

What was your first job, and why did you leave?

Helping my dad solve some problems with his business, which launched us into another business. It was my intention from day one to grow it and sell it and go on and do my own thing."

What was your best business decision?

Having my wife (Kim) join the business. She's an incredibly talented sales and marketing executive. She's done a lot of amazing things that helped get the business where it is today.

Who is your mentor and why?

My dad, in business and in life. I also have a dear friend, Val Moon, a director of sales at the Excalibur. She's been exceptional with helping me grow personally and professionally.



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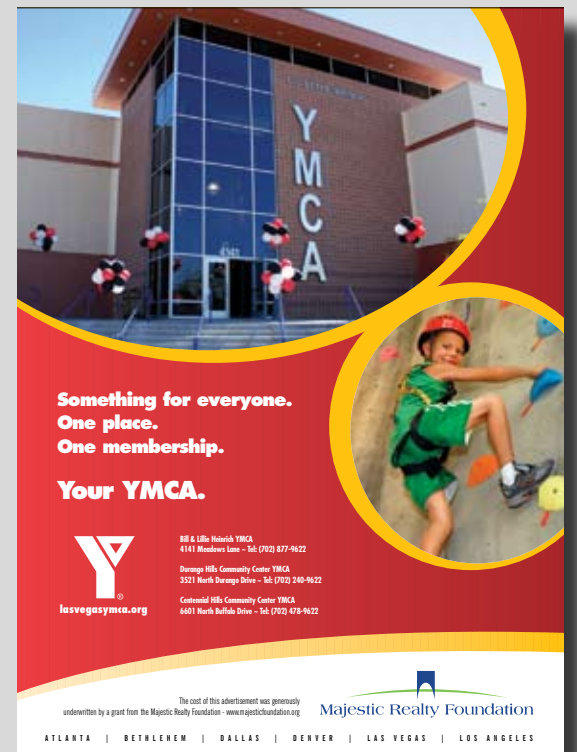
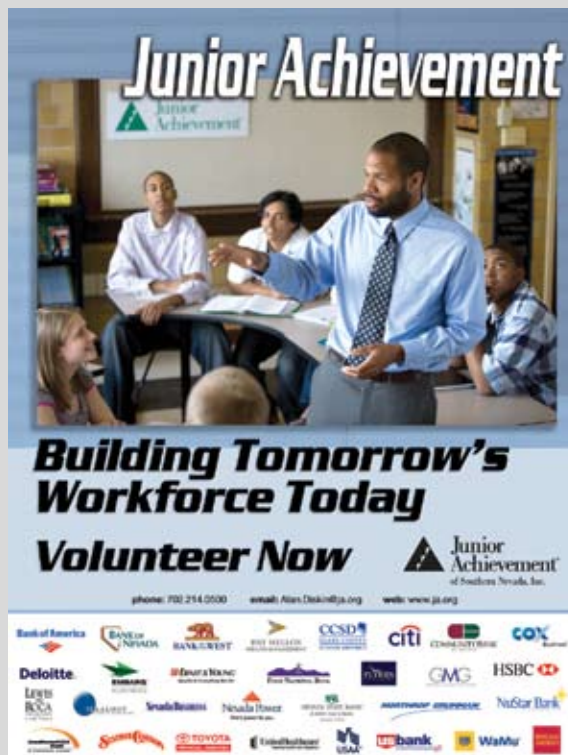
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Nevada Association Services

By Danielle Birkin, Contributing writer

In 2007, Las Vegas posted the third-highest metro foreclosure rate among the 100 largest U.S. metropolitan cities, with 4.228 percent of valley households entering some stage of foreclosure during the year, according to housing research firm RealtyTrac. Indeed, local foreclosure filings jumped 169 percent from 2006 to 2007.

Given these figures, which represent unparalleled increases, local collections agencies have no shortage of business.

But entrepreneur David Stone, president of Nevada Association Services Inc., a licensed collections agency that handles assessment collections for more than 1,000 homeowners associations in the state, is also committed to helping Nevadans remain in their homes.

"I am especially happy that our 'work out' program, which is geared toward assisting people in getting their accounts paid in full, thereby staying out of foreclosure, has increased by more than 50 percent," said Stone, who specializes in delinquent assessments. "That means we are helping an unprecedented number of homeowners stay in their homes and avoid HOA foreclosure. Unfortunately, but not too often, we foreclose on people. But we try to encourage delinquent homeowners to pay or get on a payment plan; we don't want to take anybody's home."

Stone, a native of upstate New York who was raised in Phoenix, developed an interest in finance and real estate at an early age. A graduate of the University of Arizona and a licensed real estate broker and investor, Stone owned a California-based company that provided assessment collection ser-

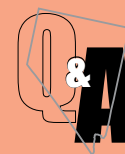
vices for HOAs prior to relocating to Las Vegas in 1998.

"I thought the growth potential here was huge," Stone said. "I had this instinct that Las Vegas would be the place to be, and boy was I right. There's been an explosion of homeowners associations."

Stone, who launched Nevada Association Services in 1999, said the company has been profitable since its inception. Annual growth revenue figures in recent years support this assertion: From 2005 to 2006, NAS grew 46 percent, while from 2006 to 2007, the company grew by 74 percent. Continued growth of 72 percent is expected this year. Meanwhile, the size of the company's

staff has increased as well, from 12 employees in 2005 to a projected 24 employees by the end of 2008.

Stone said NAS, which provides its services at no cost to the HOAs, recently experienced a significant growth spurt and has successfully absorbed the new business, expanding the office and staffing up in order to accommodate the new accounts and foreclosures. NAS also added a team of part-time night-shift employees to help meet demand for the company's services. In addition, Nevada Association Services has been responding to opportunities to educate and inform the board members of homeowners associations about the state of



with David Stone

What was your first job, and why did you leave it?

When I was 15, I worked at a buffet cutting meat in Phoenix. Then I turned 16, and other low-level job opportunities came up. In my field, my first job was in the early 1990s doing collections for community associations, also in Phoenix. But I didn't like working for other people and wanted to stretch my wings and see if I could fly on my own.

What was your best business decision?

Moving to Las Vegas in late 1998 for business opportunities. I owned a company in California doing the same thing I do now, and a friend called and said, "We need your services out here." So I came out, met with him, drove around and said, "Okay." Also, marrying my wife, because she gave me a lot of encouragement when I was apprehensive about taking risks.

Who is your mentor and why?

My father is, without question, my mentor because I respect his life and business experience and common sense, and I sort of gauge my decisions by what he would have done or not done. Although sometimes, I do just the opposite of what he would have done. He lives in Phoenix, and I talk to him a couple of times a week, though not always for business.



the real estate market.

"We've been doing a lot of educational seminars for board members and property management companies to help them deal with the higher foreclosure trends," Stone said.

"Eventually, the foreclosure business will slow down as the economy improves, so we are trying to lay the future expressway of our relationship with clients so they realize we are not just available when the economy is shaky but when it improves as well."

So is Stone ever perceived as the bad guy?

"Sometime, but the way I look at it, we are protecting the people who follow the rules and pay their assessments," he said.



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Good Water Company

By Danielle Birkin, Contributing writer

Mike Paice is immersed in the business of water purification, having perfected and patented the design for an innovative water treatment system that has been helping to eliminate the need for bottled water in the homes and businesses of Southern Nevada residents while also reducing the salt discharge and chemical cleanser residue in the Valley's water supply.

Paice is president of the two-year-old Good Water Company, manufacturer of the PureOFlow Reverse Osmosis System, which purifies water at each tap or point of entry — from the kitchen sink, to the shower, to the dishwasher, to the washing machine — without the use of salt or other chemicals.

Originally designed for residential use as a replacement for existing salt-using water softeners, which contribute more than 200 million pounds of salt to the local water supply each year. But it also has taken the commercial market by storm, particularly in the food and beverage industry where the system has copious applications in restaurants, hotels and convenience stores. And since its 2006 inception, Good Water Company has established a national presence as well.

"We are in 17 or 18 states now, and have installed over 1,000 systems," said Paice, who was raised in Florida and made his foray into the water industry when he was 14, working for his father's water conditioning company.

"Historically, our business has been

about 70 percent residential and 30 percent commercial, but it's now about 80 percent commercial."

The technology for the system was first developed by Good Water CEO Tom Cartwright, who previously served as global business manager for General Electric. In 2007, Good Water Company established a commercial partnership with GE Water and Process Technologies.

Good Water currently has nine employees, although that figure is expected to increase to 14 by the end of 2008, when the company opens its new 8,500-square-foot manufacturing facility in Minnesota. And the business of water purification is not only good for the environment, it seems to be lucrative as well: From 2006 to 2007, the company's gross annual revenue increased by nearly 350 percent. Gross revenue from 2007 to 2008 is expected to increase by nearly 65 percent.

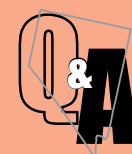
Paice — who has been in the water business for some 30 years and previously owned a soft-water and drinking-system franchise as well as a bottled water company — has seen the contamination caused by traditional salt water filtration systems, and said the government has taken notice as well.

"There are laws they are trying to put into effect in California, Michigan, Wisconsin and several other states to ban water softeners for commercial and residential use because of the load they are putting on the water reclamation plants to

remove salt," Paice said, adding that the water softener companies and salt retailers are fighting the legislation, and noting that Southern Nevada's water supply is at risk as well. "With all the discharge going into Lake Mead, we will have an ocean out there if it continues."

As for the future of Good Water Company, Paice anticipates continued expansion.

"Our goals are to get in as many states as possible, working with a lot of chain fast-food restaurants and convenience stores, and we would love to have the system on every ice maker in the country," he said. "International expansion is in our plans as well, and with Tom's background, I think in 10 years we will be world-wide and profitable. And this may sound hokey, but we also want to have a program where we can do something for the countries that can't afford clean water."



with Mike Paice

What was your first job, and why did you leave it?

When I was 14 years old, I started digging ditches and installing water softeners for my dad, who owned a water conditioning company in Florida. As I got older, I worked in the warehouse unloading salt and doing things around the office. Then when I was 16 or 17, my dad took me out selling and knocking on doors. I left because I had a football scholarship at the University of Kentucky.

What was your best business decision?

I sold a water treatment company called Rayne in 1997. At the time, two other companies were fighting to acquire it, and we were able to take advantage of that and negotiate a very good price. It was one of those offers-you-can't-refuse-type deals.

Who is your mentor and why?

My mentor would be my dad. He always persevered; no matter what situation he was in, he would find a way to make the best of it. No matter how bad times could be, his teaching was that as long as you could sell your product, introduce your product or help somebody with a product, you will always be successful.



eBizAutos

By Brian Sodoma, Special Publications writer

For Parker Dunn, giving away services has made him an entrepreneurial success story. The CEO of eBizAutos, a locally based technology company with a niche in Web marketing auto dealers' inventory, used his lack of car industry expertise as an asset that his eventual clients couldn't afford not to pay him for.

Dunn moved to Las Vegas from San Francisco in 2001 in hopes of starting his own technology company. He was convinced Las Vegas' business-friendly environment offered great opportunity for his entrepreneurial itch. The jump into auto dealers, however, was a pure accident.

A self-described Porsche fanatic, Dunn had bought two Porsche's through the years and needed to sell them to create working capital for his business, though he still wasn't quite sure what that business would be.

When he posted his cars on eBay, Dunn's work was immediately noticed by car dealerships, and the phone started ringing. Instead of shooting a handful of generic photos with a white backdrop, Dunn's advertisements had 16 professional shots. He viewed the ads as a true opportunity to sell

the cars sight unseen. Auto dealerships everywhere called, asking who created his professional-looking ads for him. It was these conversations that got Dunn thinking that maybe he could help sell cars using his Web expertise.

He approached several car dealerships in town, asking them to allow him to work for free while getting their inventory on the Web. He would accept payment only if the dealer got results from his services. His first client was the valley's Gaudin Jaguar Porsche Aston Martin. He helped the dealership sell about one out of every three cars that he marketed on the Web. After a few months, Gaudin hired eBizAutos and cancelled three other marketing contracts it had in place. Dunn's first client is still a satisfied customer today.

"I had zero auto experience. So I let them tell me what to do. I let the dealer tell me what didn't exist and what needed to exist. I had no choice but to listen. I wasn't in charge. My first client was in charge," Dunn said.

Today, eBizAutos employs 70 and will do about \$9.7 million in sales for 2008. The



company also does search-engine optimization, tracks leads and gives clients feedback on marketing efforts. The company works with about 2,000 auto dealers around the country.

With about 50,000 franchised and independent dealers nationwide, the potential for growth is immense. To help him, Dunn's wife, Sarah, handles chief financial officer duties. A past colleague and now business partner, Steve Mooneyhan, helps with business development, and his wife, Susan, handles client support.

"You don't need to know the industry. You just need to identify the problems that need to be solved," Dunn added.



with Parker Dunn

What was your first job, and why did you leave it?

I worked at my father's manufacturing business in North Carolina after graduating college in 1991. I left in 1994 to pursue a career in software in the (then-) developing Internet.

What was your best business decision?

Offering to work for free at first. Then I listened to the clients and based the business on their input. It helped me create a good model very quickly.

Who is your mentor and why?

My dad, Tom Dunn. He had a manufacturing business. I worked for him for a few years after college. ... I also learned a lot from all the bad things I saw at prior jobs.



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