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JULY/AUGUST 2008

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Small Business Giants

TOP 25
Small Businesses
Of The Year

**Big Impressions
and Big Business**

*Robert Feldberg of
Repro Products, Inc.*

Saving NAS Atlanta

Building a Landmark:
**The Cobb Energy
Centre for the
Performing Arts**

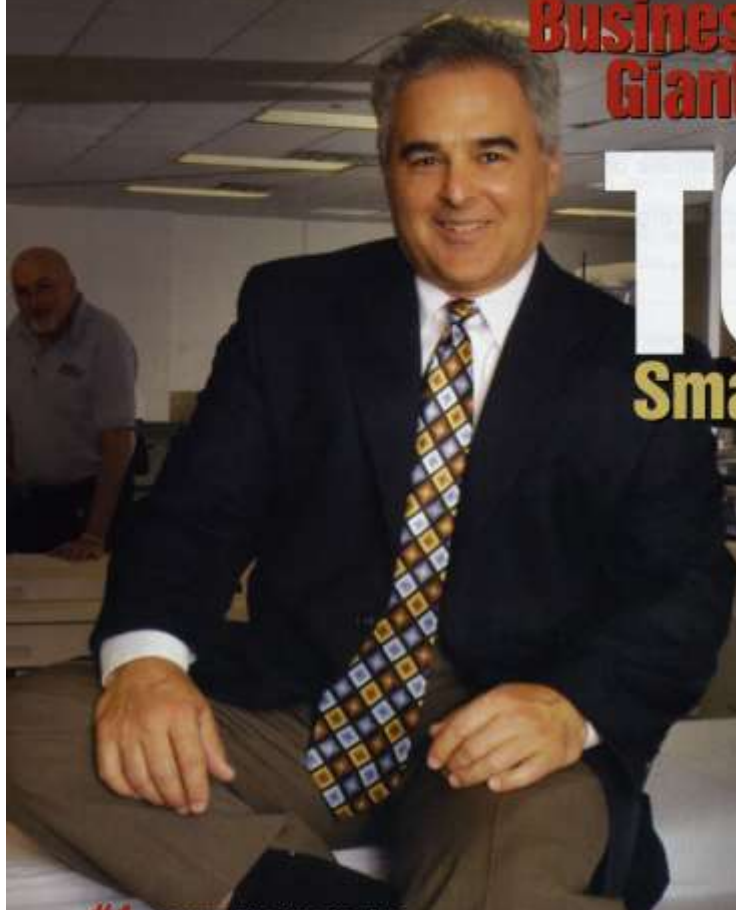
PLUS:

**Labor Day Escapes
Teambuilding Tactics**

{20/20}

Small Business Giants the TOP 25 Small Businesses In Cobb County

By Amy Dusek and Laura Newsome



#1 Repro Products, Inc.

Feldberg differentiates Repro Products from his competitors by hiring the best and offering his customers the best in the industry.

Does size really matter? The companies featured in The Cobb Chamber of Commerce's Top 25 list maybe be considered small, but their impact in their industries and in the community is immeasurable.

Don't be fooled, small business is big business in Cobb County. Since 1981 the Cobb Chamber of Commerce has supported small business owners by bestowing one company with the title of the top small business of the year. Last year Tammy Cohen, chair and president of InfoMart, offered to revamp the small business award program.

Photo: Amy Dusek

The Movers And The Shakers



Arylescence, Inc.
Steve Tanner
Manufacturer and Marketer of Fragrances and Flavors
(770) 924-3775;
arylescence.com



Carceron Systems Group
Chad Massaker
Technology Solutions Provider
(770) 424-3393;
www.carceron.net



Cheryl Draa Interior Designs, LLC
Cheryl Draa
Interior Design Retail Store & Design Studio
(770) 429-1929



Cohutta Water, Inc
Steve Carroll
Bottled Water Service
(800) 537-9283;
www.cohuttawater.com



Cork-Howard Construction Company
Gene Cork and Lori Howard
Commercial Construction Contractor
(770) 690-0800;
www.corkhoward.com

"We expanded it to honor more small businesses in the community. Our main intention was to open more doors of opportunity for all small businesses in Cobb. The Chamber is always looking for a way to support small business," says Cohen.

For the 2005 list, a call for nominations was issued earlier in the year. Each nominee was sent an application form. This year the Chamber received nearly 100 applications. From there, the entries were whittled down to 25 by several judges, including Lydia Jones, director of the Small Business Development Center at Kennesaw State University.

The five businesses that scored the highest number of points on their application earned an on-site evaluation. During their visits Jones looked for anything extraordinary that can't be represented on paper. "I did see a great deal more of innovation. We've come through a period when everyone was doing everything the same way. Now, there are so many people thinking outside of the box, and that's a great thing," says Jones.

This year's list features an eclectic mix including everything from an electrical repair service and a scent and flavor manufacturer to an embroidery shop and aerospace services. There are companies with more than 100,000 clients and several have under 20. The winner, Repro Products, doesn't have the largest staff or client base. But the judges were impressed by the company's value-added product lines and services and its management. "Robert Feldberg [Repro Product's CEO] is just so typical of an innovative leader," comments Jones.

Whether your business is labeled big or small, you can gain inspiration—or a tip

or two—from these small business giants. Without further ado, here's the top 25 small businesses in the county:



LESSONS FROM THE TOP: The Number 1 Small Business in Cobb

REPRO PRODUCTS, INC.

Type of Business: Design Equipment,
Document Creation for Design

Professionals

CEO/President: Robert "Bob" Feldberg,
President/CEO

Location: Smyrna

Years in Operation: 26

Number of Staff: 55 full-time; 1 part-time

Percentage of Growth in 2004: 23.9%

Number of Clients: 3,561

Never Stop Evolving: At the inception of his company, Feldberg sold drafting innovations. That hasn't changed, but the tools his clients need have evolved. Around 1979, Feldberg was selling T-squares, technical pencils, adhesive lettering and adhesive back film. Today, architects are using Computer-Aided Design (CAD), software that assists and facilitates the design process. As times changed, Feldberg adapted his business. He's still selling the latest equipment, but he

added an Advanced Software Learning Center, where certified software application engineers teach various design technologies. Along with the design center, he has branched out with The Color Spot, a division that focuses on producing large impressions, vehicle banners and the like.

Corporate Communication: With a company that has so many divisions within it, it's tough to keep everyone on the same page. So, Feldberg instituted "Best Practices," a monthly company progress meeting. Held at the beginning of each month, the company gathers together and looks at how they're performing as compared to last year and honors outstanding employees.

Staying Ahead of the Competition: Catering to architects, engineers and design professionals is a competitive niche. Feldberg differentiates Repro Products from other companies by hiring the best and offering his customers the best in the industry.

"I have multiple competitors, but few, if any, do everything that we do. There are a lot of businesses within our company—there's The Color Spot, equipment sales, CAD sales and training. We've gone to great lengths to be "the source" for engineers and contractors, and our competitors aren't doing that."



ARYLESSENCE, INC.

Type of Business: Manufacturer and
Marketer of Fragrances and Flavors

CEO/President: Steve Tanner, CEO

Location: Marietta

Years in Operation: 28

Number of Staff: 60 full-time, 8 part-time

Percentage of Growth in 2004: 10%

Number of Clients: 1,200

The Science of Smell: Whether emulating a forest after a rainstorm or the taste of grandma's apple pie, Arylescence creates unique marketing plans, fragrances and flavors for companies looking to expand their businesses through the science of smell. "Many products on the



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Frontera Mex Mex Grill
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FRONTERA MEX MEX GRILL

Type of Business: Mexican-based Restaurant/Catering
CEO/President: Norberto Sanchez, Chief Operating Officer
Location: Marietta
Years in Operation: one year (Marietta), 17 years (Atlanta)
Number of Staff: 430 full-time, 320 part-time, 22 subcontractors
Percentage of Growth in 2004: 20%
Number of Clients: 280,000 plus

Family Fun: This hacienda-styled restaurant is one of the city's fastest growing chains, with 12 metro Atlanta locations and counting. In addition to a wide selection of grilled Mexican favorites, from fajitas to crazy tacos, Frontera has set itself apart from the competition by offering high quality ingredients, birthday sombreros, a catering service and live entertainment nearly every night.

Beyond Burritos: With non-profit contributions totaling \$61,000 last year, Frontera participated in the Mexican American Business Chamber, the Latin American Association, the Boy Scouts and Muscular Dystrophy Association fundraising among others.

FORTENBERRY CONSTRUCTION, INC.

Type of Business: Custom Home Builder
CEO/President: Christine Fortenberry, CEO
Location: Acworth
Years in Operation: 34
Number of Staff: four full-time, 22 subcontractors
Percentage of Growth in 2004: 50%
Number of Clients: 8

Building Customer Satisfaction: Recognizing that the number one complaint in the homebuilding industry is customer

service, the company goes beyond the industry standard by scheduling four walk-throughs, including inspections and a final walk-through with Fortenberry and the customers.

Going Custom: Fortenberry Construction recently made the move from being a production builder (tract homes) to becoming a custom builder. In order to make this daring business decision work, production was cut in half and the clientele changed dramatically. As a result, the company has altered its budgets, business plans and marketing strategies to remain a leading company.



GBK ENTERPRISES, INC., DBA BRUSTER'S ICE CREAM

Type of Business: Manufacturer of ice cream, yogurt, sherbet, ice and whole ice cakes
CEO/President: Ruth Grisby, CEO
Location: Smyrna
Years in Operation: 3
Number of Staff: 20-30 part-time
Percentage of Growth in 2004: 9%
Number of Clients: 90,000

Screaming for Ice Cream: The Bruster's Brand boasts 180 signature ice cream fla-

vors. Of this flavorful menagerie, at least 24 flavors are made fresh every day and scooped at the Smyrna and Atlanta stores.

Young Workers: With nearly 90 percent of its scoopers between the ages of 16 and 18, Bruster's faces the unique challenge of training and engaging the talents of an energetic, ever-changing workforce. Through employee of the month programs and three college scholarships awarded annually, "we balance nurturing our employees' entrepreneurial spirits while also making Bruster's a fun place to work," Grisby says.

JAT CONSULTING SERVICES, INC.

Type of Business: Financial and Marketing Consultants
CEO/President: Jo Ann Tuttle, President
Location: Kennesaw
Years in Operation: 11
Number of Staff: 25 full-time, 3 part-time
Percentage of Growth in 2004: 14.25%
Number of Clients: 37

Consulting with Adversity: To countermand a loss of a major contract, JAT developed a strategy for optimal growth by carefully assessing the needs of its existing and potential clients, further developing additional target specific services. Five months after losing the contract, JAT had nearly doubled its client base.

Clientele: JAT provides tailored consulting services for high-profile clients like the U.S. Department of Transportation, Cobb County Department of Transportation, Georgia Department of Transportation and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.



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