

Small Business Achievement Award Winners



Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce

Speir and Associates Electrical Contractors

In the early stages of planning an industrial construction project, one of the earliest decisions to make is who to trust in creating a safe and effective structure. In a modern space, nothing could be more important than effective electrical work. Speir and Associates is often trusted for this important task. This family-oriented business gains most of its clients from public buildings and large scale commercial structures. Also, on some rare occasions they will work on large residential structures. Much like the service Speir provides, the staff is of high quality. Largely consisting of young workers and families, they choose projects that do not stray too far from Central Georgia. This allows families to spend more time together and less on the road.

Since each construction job is somewhat different, Speir must have an effective

system of customer service, and that system is certainly in place. The most obvious sign of their strength as a company is expansion. In a time when many similar businesses are closing their doors, Speir has grown out of their offices three times in the past decade. As they continue to grow, they must credit the economic forecasting of Harold Speir. Through his ability to effectively predict the upcoming demand based on certain factors, the company has been able to prepare for the ups and downs of the economy.

Thankfully, Speir has completed many exceptional projects in recent times. Most notably, Veteran's High School in Warner Robins serves an example of their work. Other projects, however, are less publicized but incredibly important. Speir and Associates has done extensive charitable work. The Ronald McDonald house of

Middle Georgia has greatly benefited from this work, and will continue to over the years. Also, Speir wired a Habitat for Humanity house last year.

Speir is incredibly lucky to have a dedicated staff that prides themselves on customer relations. They get to work early and stay late, getting the job done no matter what. Any business or individual will quickly see why they received their Small Business Award.



Small Business Achievement Award Winners

- Speir and Associates Electrical Contractors
- Preston Testing and Engineering
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Preston Testing and Engineering Company

Before any construction project can begin, there are necessary steps that are crucial to the future success of the structure. One of the most important of these is subsurface testing. Preston Testing and Engineering conducts a variety of tests in order to determine the prop-

erties of soils and rock so that the construction should compensate accordingly. In a business such as this, professionalism and trust are paramount. To aid these, Preston has every report prepared by a professional engineer. Whether entrusting soil, rock, or concrete

testing, a business can be sure that a proper job has been performed. Preston Testing has over 30 years of experience in the area, and it shows. Over the years counties, municipalities, contractors, developers and owners have endured the quality of their construction project to Preston, and it has paid off. (Cont'd.)

Preston Testing and Engineering, continued



Over time, the services offered by Preston Testing have increased as both the market and regulation moves forward. For example, federal regulations inspired the firm to start offering environmental monitoring services which have increased even more in recent years.

When one thinks of all the large-scale projects in Middle Georgia as of late, most of those in mind were projects undertaken by Preston Testing. For example, Bass Pro Shops and the upcoming Kuhmo Tire site are both shining examples of their hard work and quality

output. Not just Middle Georgia, benefits from this great company; they have recently expanded to the Columbus area and Alabama.

A key sign of a business is its expansion. A few years ago Preston Testing moved to a new office with twice as many square feet as their previous one. This allowed them to have a full concrete testing laboratory, asphalt and soil labs, as well as space for additional staff that was needed.

In a business where their work determines the work

of hundreds of others to follow on a project, the key to success is accurate and timely information. Preston excels at providing those. By being a trusted source of information through professional expertise and full service laboratories, an architect, school board, county, or contractor can be sure that their structure will be correctly built and last for years to come. Preston Testing and engineering is a great example of who is a deserving winner for the Professional Services category of the Small Business Awards.

Natalia's Restaurant

Natalia Del Basso Orsini is a true American Dream story. After coming to this country at a young age, she became a waitress in several restaurants. As she tirelessly worked her way to success, she noticed that the places at which she worked lacked quality that she thought she could provide. So, she created Natalia's Restaurant. The Italian eatery is "an oasis in a troubled life," as Natalia puts it. The basic purpose of her business is to deliver culinary art as a value, while creating a memorable experience not easily rivaled. As she simply says, "I want to be the best of the best."

The key to her business success is not hidden in some formula of management from a textbook, but proven old-world success. There is one leader and she is that leader. Through hard work and determinations, Natalia controls the quality of both her cuisine and her business. She guards both of these qualities dearly,

as a restaurant cannot live without them. Natalia is an award-winning, strong, business woman because she adheres to the principal of putting the customer first. She pays close attention to the comments they make to the point she says "I care too much sometimes. However, that care is paying off.

In this down economy, some restaurants have closed or have been forced to raise prices. Natalia's is different. Throughout the current downturn, people have asked for discounts or lower prices, or even wondered how she did not raise prices. Yet, Natalia's is a place where value is shown. Natalia's is more affected by the customer's wishes than the ups and downs of the economy. In fact, her large fan base of locals and out of town travelers provides a constant stream of business. Natalia herself says that "I know it may be pricey for Macon standards, but you get a great value here and changing

prices would hide that." Natalia tells many customers from New York, Chicago, and even Atlanta that marvel at how low her prices are for fine-dining, its all about value. Most would expect to pay up to four times as much in other places. You get what you pay for at Natalia's—an excellent experience and a palate pleasing tour of Italy on your plate.

Natalia's has recently moved into a new location off Bass Road, and is looking forward to a bright future. Natalia's is strong, according to its namesake, because of strong credit. She stresses that without that, she would not be where she is today. In every visit, a customer should easily see why Natalia's is deserving of a Small Business Award.



*"I want to be
the best
of the best."*

Larry Bush's Riverside Tire

When Larry Bush was growing up, he wanted nothing to do with the automotive repair business. Now, he's one of the most successful members of said business in the community. He has been active in some sort of tire and service business for over 34 years—an impressive statistic. In those 34 years he has learned a great deal, and it shows. Since buying his current business seven years ago, he has increased his business volume roughly four times what it was at that point. He provides various automotive services and as the name suggests, specializes in the tires sales and maintenance.

"The key to Riverside Tire is integrity," says Bush. Overall, he says the automotive industry has a negative image in society when it comes to service and facilities. Through his staff and new location, he hopes to improve that image. In his new Downtown Macon loca-

tion Bush has provided many comforts one would never expect in a repair shop. For example, there is a business center for people who need to check e-mail or stock quotes, there are leather chairs to sit in while you wait, and an HDTV on the wall to help pass the time. Bush says many improvements are to help the image of the industry, and especially his shop, with female customers. Bush is keenly able to see a need and address it, such as making a possible dirty place both clean and family friendly.

Riverside Tire is trusted by regular customers and business fleets as well. Bush says that the key to securing the commercial customers is a quick turnaround, and with individuals it takes openness and honesty about cost and down time. When dealing with both of these groups, Bush has a unique way of doing business. In down times, Bush says that

the staff often tells people, "what they have to have, what they should have, and what they could possibly put off," in order to save money when times are tough. It's hard to imagine a mechanic shop saving you money, but it's also hard to imagine the great service you can easily get at Riverside Tire. It feels like you're special when you work with Mr. Bush, something people rarely feel in a retail or repair setting.

It's the little things that people remember, and those little things are all positive at Riverside Tire. Whether it's having an open and honest salesman, or having a free Coke while you wait, it's a great place to be a customer. Riverside Tire is a deserving recipient of the Retail Category Winner of the Small Business Awards.



"The key to Riverside Tire is integrity."

Taylor Restrooms 2 Go

When hosting an event or in times of need, Taylor Restrooms 2 Go provides a superior product and exceptional customer service. The winner of the Specialized Service category is certainly deserving. Taylor specializes in portable restrooms and septic tank work. However, the restrooms account for a large portion of their business. Susan Taylor says that the company came about after noticing

there was a lack of both local and upscale portable restrooms. Already possessing some equipment and having some contacts, Taylor switched from nursing to a new career. As Taylor and her husband "fell into" the business, they were able to fill a niche that the community needs. Specifically, Taylor targets female customers who would not commonly use a portable restroom. To combat

this, Taylor offers luxury restrooms that have everything from purse holders and mirrors to pink walls. These are in full trailers, as opposed to what would typically imagine.

Taylor Restrooms 2 Go serves upscale events such as weddings and outdoor corporate parties to construction sites and those who have a short term need in the case of a crisis. Taylor says the prime (cont'd)

Taylor Restrooms 2 Go, continued

Example of their customer service came when a local woman was hosting many family members. In the middle of the night, the septic tank failed at the woman's house. Taylor was called and both her and her husband awoke in the middle of the night to help the customer. Taylor says the pride of her company is their service and equipment. By offering a superior product with superior service, Taylor hopes that the public will see beyond the bottom line when it comes to choosing a service. She says it's worth a little more to have a higher quality portable restroom that you would actually use, and based on their award, it seems to be a fact.

Lately the economy has taken a toll on Taylor, but they are seeing an upturn in business, as more residential and some more commercial construction has begun. Taylor says that to weather the storm, she has gone to educational lectures offered by the Chamber of Commerce and is using Chamber contacts to stay successful. Thankfully, Taylor can see the light ahead. Also their continuous customer loyalty has helped them stay strong. Taylor says that she wishes all businesses could start to see value in a superior product instead of always going with the "lowest bidder". Taylor Restrooms 2 Go through its customer service and quality products will likely

continue to win awards such as these in the future. They are truly a deserving company.



Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce

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Small Business is the backbone of commerce, and the Chamber celebrated the role they play in driving a vibrant economy in Central Georgia at the Small Business Achievement Awards on May 13, 2010. Small businesses headquartered in Central Georgia were nominated by their peers. Qualifying businesses completed 3 or more years of operation, generated less than \$5 million in sales, and have fewer than 100 employees. Winners were awarded in the categories of Contractors/Service Providers, Restaurants, Professional Services, Retail, and Specialized Services. Congratulations to our Small Business Achievement Award Winners!