

Area business continues to grow by staying true to roots

By Graham Sweeney

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At a time when growth has become stagnant for many area businesses, Conway Services continues to increase its profits by staying true to its roots.

From its humble beginnings in 1990 as a one-truck operation, the second-generation family business is now thriving thanks to its sustained focus on “great customer service.”

Now going into its 21st year, the Cordova-based heating, cooling and plumbing company recently showed record growth with a 107-percent increase in revenue from 2009 to 2010.

John Conway, general manager, attributes the success of the company to staying true to his father’s founding principles. “The customer is always right,” Conway said, “even when they are wrong. That’s what my dad taught me. Our core commitment to providing customer service excellence with a personal touch continues to be our driving force.”

Raymond F. Conway Sr. started the company more than 20 years ago in a pole-barn behind his Millington house. In 1994, Conway’s son joined the operation. According to John, the business made \$250,000 that year. John purchased the nascent business from his father in 1998 and moved it to Bartlett. “That was during the construction boom,” he said. “By then we had ramped up to \$2 million in revenue.” Conway said the business “took a personality” in 2004 when it began putting images of the owner on service trucks. “That really added a face to who people are doing business with,” Conway said.

The company moved again last December to accommodate its growing fleet of 40 trucks and 60-plus employees. The 11,200-square-foot building at 1220 Big Orange Road includes a 2,000-square-foot training facility and a large call center. “We didn’t realize how cramped we were in the old building until we got here,” Conway said.

Last September, Conway Services – now a subsidiary of ARS/Rescue Rooter – entered into an agreement with the Memphis-area Home Depots to install all heating and air conditioning systems. “They have really high standards about who they let do their work,” Conway said. “We have those same standards, so it’s a natural fit.”

And while the business is expected to gross more than \$14 million this year, Conway has not forgotten his roots. “If we have a strip shopping center with no air, or Mrs. Smith with no air,” he said, “we go to Mrs. Smith every time. That’s just what we do.”

