

NEW MEXICO BUSINESS WEEKLY

SMALL BIZ HEAVYWEIGHTS

25 small companies doing big things

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Small Business Heavyweights

Small business has inspired a gold mine of clichés.

"Small is the new big" ... "Small business is the engine that drives the economy" ... "Small companies add up to big business." You get the picture.

But there's no denying that small business reigns in New Mexico. By anyone's standards, small firms employ more people and pump more money into the local economy than the big guys.

That said, small business is hard to get a handle on. The definition varies depending on whom you ask. The U.S. Small Business Administration, for example, has a complicated rating system, but generally defines a small business as having fewer than 500 employees in manufacturing and less than \$7 million in annual revenue for most non-manufacturing companies.

Right. I can hear you snickering.

A New Mexico company with 500 people is big. So is one with \$7 million in revenue. Small in New Mexico is way smaller than that. I've heard people here use 50 employees and \$1 million in revenue as the cutoff. Bigger than that, and you're big.

The size numbers have floated around for years. So have percentages. No one really knows how many small companies there are in New Mexico, or what percentage of

total business they make up, because no one can agree on a definition. The same holds true for the economic impact of small business in our state. But it's generally agreed the numbers are big. The percentage of small businesses in the state is in the 90s — probably the high 90s — and the economic impact in the billions.

Let me grab some of those hazy numbers and throw them your way.

In 2007, there were about 46,869 businesses in New Mexico. Looking at the total at any time, 13.4 percent are sole proprietorships, 45 percent have one to four employees, 17.5 percent have five to nine employees, 11.7 percent have 10 to 19 employees, 8 percent have 20 to 49 employees, 2.6 percent have 50 to 99 employees, and 1.7 percent have 100 employees or more. In 2007, 100 percent of net new jobs in New Mexico were created by small business.

Yes, small is *big*.

This year, the New Mexico Business Weekly wants to shine a light on small companies and their important contribution to the economy. Taking our cue from leaders in the small business community, we chose 25 companies with 25 or fewer employees and called them Small Business Heavyweights. You'll meet them in these

pages. They come from all parts of the state, and their stories illustrate everything that makes small business and entrepreneurship so inspiring and, ultimately, so powerful.

I want to thank the Business Weekly's Associate Editor, Rachel Sams, who directs all the newspaper's special publications. It's a huge job, and Rachel hits a home run every time. She gets great assistance from Production Director Chan Avery and Photographer Randy Siner, who create the all-important visuals; reporters Megan Kamerick, Kevin Robinson-Avila, Dennis Domrzalski and Steve Ginsberg; and our talented and hardworking freelance contributors. Editor Kathi Schroeder heads up a terrific team.

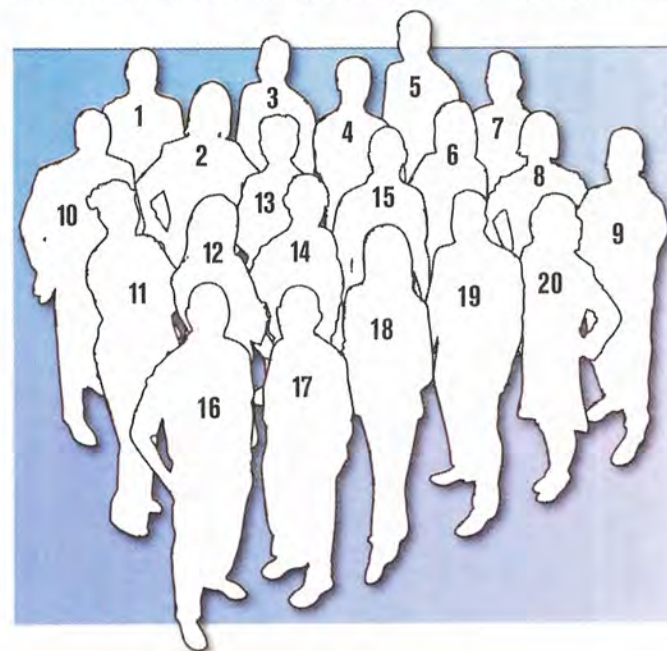
And a huge thank-you to our sponsors, Tanoan Country Club and Sandia National Laboratories Small Business Utilization. Without their support, this publication

would not have been possible.

All clichés aside, I hope you enjoy this tribute to New Mexico's small-business spirit. I know I did.



Nancy Salem
Publisher



ON THE COVER: Executives from 20 of the 25 Small Business Heavyweights honorees attended the paper's photo shoots. They are pictured on the cover and identified below.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Chris Kramer | 11. Nerissa Whittington |
| 2. Caroline Dennis | 12. Jamai Blivin |
| 3. Chris Hanks | 13. Brinda Ramanathan |
| 4. John Horning | 14. Chas Curtis |
| 5. Miles Chaffee | 15. Kendal Billau |
| 6. Viola Otero-Bennett | 16. Guy Berger |
| 7. Ben Sanchez | 17. Lorenzo Pimentel |
| 8. Laura LewAllen | 18. Gina Euell |
| 9. Pete Shufelt | 19. Jack Vigil |
| 10. Louis Uttaro | 20. Caroline Seigel |

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Small Business NEW MEXICO BUSINESS WEEKLY Heavyweights

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Belonging to an American Golf country club is about golf and so much more. Our golf courses will challenge your game, and our active communities will keep you playing and socializing. Tanoan Country Club is a private club catering to active families. When not on the course, you and your family can take advantage of our many amenities, such as tennis courts, swimming pools, dining and lively social events.

Enjoy personal concierge services such as bag storage, lockers and a staff to care for your clubs and shoes. We offer swim, tennis and golf instruction to children, adults and seniors. At Tanoan, you can enjoy picturesque views of our city and the majestic Sandia Mountains.

If you are looking for the country club experience at an affordable price, Tanoan Country Club is your home away from home. We are nestled within the Tanoan Community and its guarded gates, which keep your family in a safe and relaxing environment.

If you are not a member, you can enjoy spectacular views and service by hosting your next social event or golf tournament at Tanoan. Indoor and outdoor wedding ceremonies, private meeting space and 27 holes of golf are available for your event needs.

Membership is more affordable than you think. We invite you to make Tanoan Country Club your home away from home.

Looking forward to having you,



Bill Gaspard
General Manager
Tanoan Country Club



SILVER SPONSOR

Sandia National Laboratories and the Sandia Small Business Utilization Team are proud to join the New Mexico Business Weekly and Tanoan Country Club in sponsoring the inaugural Small Business Heavyweights awards publication and breakfast. Congratulations to all the outstanding small businesses that are being recognized – you are the backbone and strength of our local and state economies, and you serve as an inspiration to us all!

Sandia is committed to the discovery and utilization of diverse, highly qualified small business suppliers to assist us in achieving our national security mission. Our highest goal is to become the laboratory the United States turns to first for innovative, science-based systems engineering solutions to the most challenging problems that threaten peace and freedom for our nation and the globe. We partner with companies of all sizes that share our values of conducting business in an ethical and safe manner and who consistently demonstrate innovation and responsiveness, customer focus, product and service leadership, and a shared commitment to mission success.

My Small Business Utilization team and I stand firmly in your corner. Together we can withstand any punches this economy delivers.

Weigh in by doing your research: Is Sandia your market? Know who we are. Know what we buy. Know how we buy. Sell your capabilities: Identify your “uniqueness,” technical expertise, financial strength and quality systems. Supply best value: Ensure customer satisfaction and provide quality products/services. And make contact: Network, forge relationships, build trust, be persistent and be patient.

Go ahead, hit me with your best shot!



Don Devoti
Manager, Small Business Utilization
Sandia National Laboratories



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How the honorees were chosen

The Business Weekly turned to a panel of five small business experts to nominate and select honorees for our first Small Business Heavyweights awards. The paper also made some nominations for the judges' consideration.

Our judges were Lisa J. Adkins of the New Mexico Technology Council, Elizabeth C. Gonzales of Sandia National Laboratories, Anna Muller of the New Mexico 8(a) & Minority Business Association, Agnes Noonan of WESST Corp. and Carol Wight of the New Mexico Restaurant Association.

Judges were asked to consider only New Mexico companies that had been in business for at least a year (nonprofits were eligible). They were asked to rank the companies on the uniqueness of their product or service offerings, their staying power in business and their contribution to the community.

Many thanks to our judges for their hard work and thoughtful suggestions on this first-time publication.

Voss Scientific

Voss creates innovations by tapping into the mystery of fusion

BY CHRISTIE CHISHOLM | SPECIAL TO NMBW

Dr. Donald Voss works with something most people know little about, even though it makes up the majority of the universe: plasma.

Not the kind of plasma you donate at blood banks, the kind that powers stars.

For decades, physicists have tried to master the reaction that occurs within stars, which somehow produces more energy than it consumes. If scientists can replicate this reaction, a process referred to as fusion, humankind could find itself with an endless supply of sustainable, waste-free energy.

This is the mission Voss and his business, Voss Scientific, are on.

Voss started his company in 1988, a few years after completing a Ph.D. in physics at Princeton University. He had worked for Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California and the New Mexico-based Mission Research Corp., but decided he wanted to work for himself.

"I liked the idea that by starting my own business, there were no boundaries in terms of what areas of technology I could pursue," he says.

He got off the ground with a contract from the federal government's Small

Business Innovation Research program. Twenty-two years later, his clients include Sandia and Los Alamos national laboratories, Livermore, Princeton and Ohio University.

Voss Scientific sells a code called LsP that labs use to predict how plasmas will react under certain conditions. The company also provides scientific, engineering and research and development support to its clients.

Adam Sefkow has been a client of Voss' for more than five years — first as a physicist in the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory, and now as a senior member of the technical staff at Sandia.

He maintained his connection to Voss when he moved to Sandia because he knows how important the code is.

"In the modeling world, it's important to be able to evaluate problems without having to wait too long," he says. "LsP can be run on hundreds of thousands of processors at a time."

But Sefkow says Voss' services go beyond selling a license for the code. The company fixes any bugs right away, and it can collaborate on projects, increasing speed and efficiency. The fact that physicists, and not just information technology consultants, work at Voss Scientific



RANDY SINER | NMBW

has helped keep the company relevant, Sefkow says.

Voss has been relatively unaffected by the economic downturn, because the projects the business works on are so long-term. The company had about \$5 million in revenue last year, which is



Year founded: 1988

Founder and principal scientist: Dr. Donald Voss (pictured)

2009 revenue: \$5 million

Employees: 25

If your company was a superhero, which one would it be and why? The Green Lantern. The Green Lantern began when a mystical 'green flame' meteor fell to Earth. The flame instructed a young engineer how to fashion a ring from its metal. The ring gave the user great control over a physical world, as long as the wielder has sufficient willpower and strength to wield it. The engineer became the crime-fighting superhero known as the Green Lantern.

If you were writing a story about your company, what would the headline say? Voss Scientific ends global energy crisis and provides crucial breakthrough for low-cost, clean energy

about where revenue has stood for the past three years.

That's good, because it means Voss can keep trying to solve the world's biggest energy problems, one plasma experiment at a time.