

Pinkerton Electric & Mr. Electric
“Success Story”
April 17, 2008

Keith Pinkerton, owner of Pinkerton Electrical Services, Inc., dba Mr. Electric, quit school at 16 and started work. “I got the bug after my Dad allowed me to help him wire a friend’s house,” Keith said. “After that, I was hooked.” He was only 13 years old at the time.

That was over 25 years ago. He began in earnest doing contract electrical work. He continued to focus on working new construction electrical jobs even when he established Pinkerton Electrical Services, Inc. in September 1993, using four or five part-timers to help him on jobs.

Meanwhile, Pinkerton held down a fulltime job with the City of Huntsville. He ended that 12-year career job in 2001 when he realized he had to devote more time to his growing business.

The business continued to flourish. He hired his first full-time employee in 1998. He continued electrical work on new residential construction. He didn’t really have a business plan at the time. “I regret that now because I have seen a better way to do business,” Keith emphasized. “But there was plenty of work at the time.”

Still, he sought a better way to grow his business -- not just go from job-to-job. He went out on a limb and brought into a “Mr. Electric” franchise from the Dwyer group from Texas. He hasn’t looked back since. He now owns five franchises. “The WBC and Community Express loans (2 loans totally some \$120,000 in 2005 and 2007) came a little later, and gave me the guidance and money to really plan a growth strategy. It helped with working capital and planning for strategic asset purchases, in other words,” Pinkerton said.

He quickly added: “I must give the Good Lord credit; without Him, I couldn’t have done anything.” Amen, eh?

With this franchise support and help, he now had access to a proven business model centered on trained professionals with integrity and customer-focus. Doing exclusively electrical service, remodeling, and electrical repair, Mr. Electric works 28 employees in the Huntsville area.

It has been wildly successful. “Our growth rate from 2003 to 2008 has been over 40 percent per year,” Keith said. He now has crews throughout the Huntsville metropolitan area. “Right now, we serve the entire area out of one location in Huntsville, but we will be opening satellite offices soon,” he added.

Keith is married to the same woman for 23 years. He and his wife have two children, the oldest in high school. Words of advice for others who might want to start and grow a

business? “Absolutely, do a business plan, and stick with it. Make corrections if required, but don’t do it like I did – with no planning at all,” Keith emphasized.

An early affinity for working, sparked by a father’s teaching, and then years of experience pushing part-time crews while holding two jobs. Then, taking a chance and quitting the steady job to devote himself to growing what had become a successful business...and eventually getting the planning help and money he needed all along from Womens’ Business Center (WBC), from the US Small Business Administration (SBA), and others -- is this the recipe for success? For Keith Pinkerton it has been.

Congratulations to Keith Pinkerton Electric, and to Huntsville’s Mr. Electric franchise. You have made your community and SBA proud.