

August 12, 2009

## SBA Success Story: Southeast Cherokee Construction, Inc. - Montgomery, AL



### **Southeast Cherokee Construction, Inc** Montgomery, AL

Southeast Cherokee Construction, Inc. has gone through significant growth and evolution under the leadership of Mrs. Lynn M. Carter. Since inheriting control of the company in 1987, Mrs. Carter has faced many challenges. She has dealt with each one head-on, resulting in a stronger, more diverse company.

Southeast Cherokee Construction, Inc., a Wetumpka, Alabama, based company, was founded in 1983 by Mrs. Carter's mother, Jean Matthew. Shortly afterwards, the company was certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise/Minority Business Enterprise (DBE/MBE) by the State of Alabama and primarily provided grading and storm drainage installation for the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT).

After Mrs. Carter graduated from Auburn University Montgomery (AUM) in 1985, she began working with her mother, performing day-to-day clerical duties. In 1987 Mrs. Carter's life changed dramatically - her mother passed away leaving the majority stockholder interest to Mrs. Carter. At a young age, Mrs. Carter was suddenly faced with dealing with the loss of her mother while taking on the role of entrepreneur. At the time Mrs. Carter took control, the company had twelve full time employees and annual revenues of less than \$500,000.

In 1992, Mrs. Carter purchased the remaining shares of stock making her sole stockholder of Southeast Cherokee Construction, Inc. While continuing to strengthen the company's reputation as a dependable heavy construction company, Mrs. Carter began developing and executing a plan to grow her business by entering new markets and expanding existing services. This brought with it many challenges, the first of which was the obvious challenge of a woman-owned company operating in a male-dominated industry.

To move her company forward, Mrs. Carter decided to expand into the federal government market which she felt offered many opportunities for a small construction company. She turned to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for assistance and in 2003 the company was accepted into SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program. She then began marketing her business in the federal government market as an 8(a) certified, Native American, Woman-Owned Business.

Southeast Cherokee is unique because of their ability to self-perform the majority of the work on most construction projects. The horizontal division self-performs the site grading; sanitary sewer, wet well; lift station installation; storm drainage work; storm structures; culvert installation; domestic water and fire protection; various soil and aggregate base courses in preparation of asphalt paving; and building pads; as well as final grading in preparation for landscaping. The vertical division handles the construction management, quality control and carpentry for building construction projects. This 'turn Key' project approach gives Southeast Cherokee an innovative competitive advantage over their competition.

**Southeast Cherokee Construction, Inc.**

Lynn M. Carter

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For more information, visit the Alabama Development Office Web Site: <http://www.ado.alabama.gov/>