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ENGINEERS

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Established:
Sumner, Wash., 1969

Number of Local Employees
44

Annual Revenue:
\$36 million

Local Senior Executives:
Terry Belunes, regional manager; Mel Sears, VP/chief operations officer

Judge's Comment
"By designating one week a year as 'Health and Safety Week' at Parametrix, the importance of safety and health awareness is promoted to its employees."

Parametrix Inc.



Parametrix was named "The Employee Owned Company of the Year for 2001" by the National ESOP Association. The Portland office balances professional involvement, fun and community participation. Last year it sponsored the annual Society of Wetland Scientists meeting in Hood River, celebrated Employee Appreciation Month with a putt-putt golf course throughout the office and participated in fundraising efforts for the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund, United Way and the Susan B. Komen Breast Cancer Research Fund.

Compensation and Benefits

Parametrix recently enhanced its ESOP program by allowing new employees to be eligible to participate in the ESOP from their date of hire. In 1998, a record year for Parametrix, employees received 20 percent of their salaries in stock contributions and there was a 40 percent increase in stock price. The company expects the ESOP to continue to return back to its employee-owners an average of 8 percent or more per year. The company offers a variety of benefits including health care, life insurance and AD&D, supplemental life insurance, long-term disability, a flexible spending plan, AFLAC supplemental insurance, an Employee Assistance Program, access to 24-Hour NurseLine Services, vacation, holiday and sick leave, and a 401 (k) plan. It recently added vacation days and a floating holiday to the benefits package. Parametrix also offers flexible work hours and telecommuting options. Employees also can take advantage of educational assistance, credit union membership and company-sponsored brown-bag presentations.

Incentives

Parametrix recognizes employee-owners individually and collectively. A formal incentive pay program was designed by a committee of employee-owners and encompasses share bonuses, special awards, spot awards, client service recognition and incentive bonuses. In October — National Employee Ownership Month — the firm hosts an annual Employee-Owner party and the Employee-Owner of the Year is announced. Employee-Owner of the Year nominations begin at the office level. One person is selected from each office by their co-workers. The winner is voted on by the ESOP Committee. The winner receives a high level of recognition internally and is part of the delegation from Parametrix that goes to Washington, D.C., for the annual ESOP Association convention. Others attending the conference include the chairperson of the internal Employee Ownership Committee, two other EOC members, one of the ESOP trustees and the CEO.

The company also presents length-of-service awards and has an annual summer picnic.

Training and Education

Training and education are approached through various avenues: seminar/conference attendance, publishing technical papers, continuing education and in-house training. The company has a formal continuing education policy for work-related college and university courses. The firm will reimburse employees for 50 percent of the tuition, not to exceed \$2,000 per year. In some instances, a reduced work schedule is an optional agreement.

Community Involvement

Each of the company's seven offices is given flexibility to decide which organizations to support in their local area. Corporate programs involve United Way, the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund, recycling, Employee Ownership Month community service and the "Adopt A Highway" program. The Portland office volunteered at the Parry Center, a residence and outpatient facility for abused and emotionally disturbed children. The staff embarked on a grounds cleanup on the 25-acre facility. This was the first step in creating the center's "Healing Garden," an area where children plant seeds, nurture the fledgling plants and watch them grow. Each office close to Washington state has "adopted a highway." This involves being responsible for cleaning up a one- to two-mile stretch of roadway at least four times per year. The Portland office is currently adopting a highway in the Vancouver area.

Safety/Employee Wellness Programs

The Washington Department of Labor and Industries recently recognized the success of several corporate programs and benefits targeting safety and wellness. Parametrix was one of two employers in Washington state that publicly received a premium refund check in the small business category. The firm has a corporate health and safety officer who meets quarterly with the health and safety committee. Periodically, the company pays for CPR and first aid training in all offices. The company also has a return-to-work program, an Employee Assistance Program and offers employees access to a 24-Hour NurseLine.