



Hopewell-Prince George
Chamber of Commerce
210 N. 2nd Ave.
Hopewell, VA 23860

Phone: 804-458-5536
Email: admin@hpgchamber.org
Web: www.hpgchamber.org

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Prince George County firm finalist for award for its growth, change and innovation

Joint Logistics Managers Inc. (JLMI), one of 12 finalists for the prestigious statewide Resilience Award, brought in an outside consultant during the first half of this year to help the Prince George-based firm adjust to changing economic conditions.

The award is presented by the W. Tayloe Murphy Center at the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business. It's designed to recognize successful entrepreneurial businesses located in the state's most economically challenged communities.

JLMI manages a worldwide logistics support network that specializes in design, development, acquisition, movement, sustainment, and training in automated logistics support systems.

The company did not bring in a change agent because of declining business due to the lingering recession that began in December 2007. It was just opposite. JLMI needed help coping with its continued rapid expansion.

"Our growth has been steady and calculated," G. LaVern Jackson, President and CEO, noted. The firm has posted increases in revenue every year since its founding in 2000, but lately that growth has been accelerating. Revenues have more than doubled since 2007.

JLMI has grown to more than 60 employees managing logistics contracts in seven states and Puerto Rico. But the firm faces a large number of competitors in the logistics field and with only a limited amount of federal funding for contract awards.

"We wanted to make sure we could do what we said we could do" for its clients, which are largely military contracts, Ms. Jackson, a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel, said. "And, we know that language."

JLMI brought in the outside business resource to evaluate its effectiveness. That led to a re-design of its business processes. Costs were streamlined to stay competitive by combining administrative tasks and eliminating excess positions.

The firm has demonstrated innovative solutions for its clients, such as developing a strategy to provide adequate classrooms for training at Army installations worldwide for PM GCSS-Army. JLMI has developed a concept to use mobile training vans to ensure suitable learning space in remote sites or mobilization centers.

One key to the firm's success is an alliance with Northrop Grumman Corporation, which began in 2001 and has culminated in a DoD Mentor Protégé Agreement between them. The major defense contractor is a leader in advanced technology solutions and lifecycle support services for command, control, communication, computer, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) functions.

Northrop Grumman provided strategic planning improvement training sessions to enable JLMI to enhance its employees' decision making and problem solving skills.

The alliance has been mutually beneficial and professionally rewarding for JLMI, Ms. Jackson said. Her firm frequently seeks partnerships with other businesses to "form the best team to satisfy the requirements of the contracts we bid on."

"Logistics is logistics is logistics," Ms. Jackson pointed out, so the company continues to seek corporate and state and local government contracts.

The Resilience Award considers the full range of business practices for its finalists, not just growth. Those factors include corporate citizenship, location, resilience, and organization and environmental sustainability.

JLMI's nomination, which was supported by the Hopewell-Prince George Chamber of Commerce, demonstrated the firm's commitment to community participation through a variety of actions by its foundation and employees. For example, JLMI teamed with Virginia State University to develop VSU's logistics curriculum.

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Background on the Resilience Awards:

The 12 finalists are located in cities and counties which present a variety of economic challenges that many business owners would be unable to overcome: high unemployment, high poverty, lack of access to larger markets, unreliable internet access and the public perception of a local lack of sophistication.

But instead of moving their businesses to more accommodating places, the Tayloe Murphy Resilience Awards' finalists are committed to their home communities. They serve as leadership to business associations, spearhead revitalization initiatives, travel to their clients' home turf when necessary and have built businesses that support their communities. They capitalize on the things that make their hometowns great places to live and do business – and have overcome the odds.

"Their growth rates are substantial and impressive," according to Gregory B. Fairchild, Executive Director of the Tayloe Murphy Center and Associate Professor of Business Administration at Darden, said, "with an average annual profit growth rate of 188.77% and employment growth rate of 54.33% from 2005 through 2008." More than 100 entrepreneurial businesses from 45 counties applied for this year's award. Five winners will be chosen from the 12 finalists. The winners will be announced September 1st.

For more information about Joint Logistics Managers Inc., contact LaVern Jackson at (804) 733-0933 or on the web at www.jlmiva.com.

For more information about the Resilience Awards, email: arden_exed@arden.virginia.edu.