

PRIMESOUTH, INC.

THIRD-PARTY OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE COMPANY BUILDS BUSINESS MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

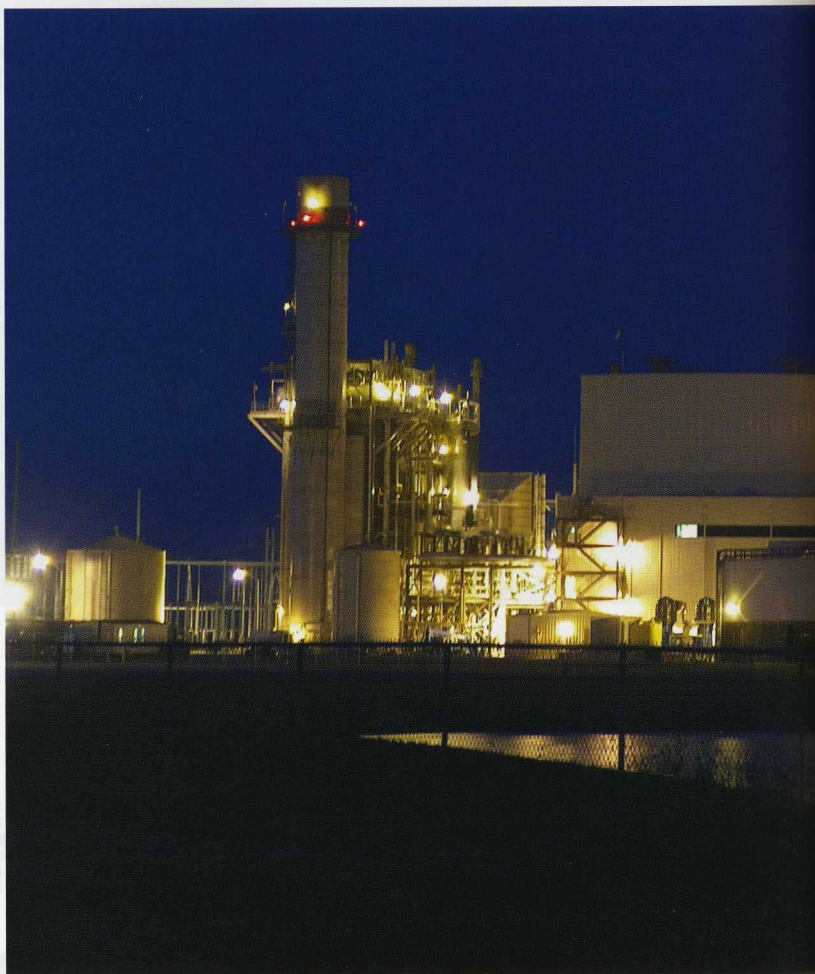
by Christopher Cussat

IN A CONSTANTLY EXPANDING AND UNCERTAIN global economy, the most successful businesses will be those that can adapt and grow to meet the future challenges of an ever-changing commercial arena. Primesouth, Inc. is one such company that is looking ahead with specific plans to diversify itself—adding services while simultaneously strengthening its quality infrastructure and emphasis on customer relations, which have made it a highly regarded, consistent, and trusted corporation.

In order for a company to productively adopt a new operating strategy and meet industry challenges, a dedicated, knowledgeable, and progressive leader must show the way. Dean Bain, president of Primesouth, is a former naval officer who fits that description perfectly.

In the 1980s, Primesouth was part of South Carolina Electric and Gas Construction and the SCANA Organization—primarily orchestrating industrial and commercial construction. In 1990, Bain came on board and the company began to focus on power operations throughout that decade. Primesouth was sold to Dilling Mechanical Contractors, Inc. in 2007, and today it also focuses on management for biofuels and other energy plants. Bain explains, “We basically provide third party operating and maintenance [O&M] services for power, ethanol, biodiesel and other industrial plants—and in that regard, we provide all the people, take care of all the management and operating procedures, and run the plants completely.”

Typically, Primesouth customers are comprised of independent power producers and co-op plants that do not have



The Dell Power Plant, a 580-MW natural-gas-fired plant completed in 2007, Dell, AR.

their own operating group. Bain notes that many of the independent producers that were booming during the late 1980s and early 1990s have since faded. This change in the market and de-evolution of the industry have encouraged Primesouth to proactively modify its business model.

Bain highlights one such innovation, “We’re expanding into new areas and have

implemented a sister company called Primesouth Trade Services (PTS).” According to him, there is a worldwide shortage of welders, pipefitters, millwrights, etc. and through PTS, Primesouth is taking the lead to educate new generations of these professionals. “We are building a training facility, developing a curriculum, and subsequently will place our graduates in the construction and



maintenance industries.”

With fewer independent power producers in the market, there are fewer contracts to go around and, as a result, there is more competition. This is another reason why Primesouth is pushing itself into innovative areas like skill set education, and initiating a strategically organized and expanded maintenance service. Bain explains, “We have started a Rapid

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Dean Bain, President

Response Team, which is basically a maintenance team that can quickly respond to serious problems that power and other industrial facilities may encounter.”

The only thing that Bain is more excited about than Primesouth’s new business plans is the company’s dedication to quality, safety, and its customers. “What truly gives us a competitive edge and sets us apart are providing the absolutely best product and customer service. I’ve been doing this for almost 20 years and I have never in that time had an unhappy client—and that’s not easy!” He continues, “We are very good at what we do, and I think the most important thing about our company is that we not only preach quality, we actually provide it.”

Bain also believes that the key to Primesouth’s success directly lies in hiring the right people, treating them well, and affording them with a decent quality of life. “We’ve been highly successful at that—our employees are very happy with the company, their jobs, and with what we do for them.” He concludes, “I’ve learned over my entire life that you should treat people with whom you work the same way you would like to be treated. I think that’s definitely one of the most important lessons of business—a manager is only as good as the people who work for you.” *EQ*



Dean Bain, president of Primesouth.

PRIMESOUTH, INC. AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:

COLUMBIA, SC

AREA OF SPECIALTY:

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR POWER, ETHANOL, BIODIESEL, AND OTHER INDUSTRIAL PLANTS

ANNUAL SALES:

\$20 MILLION+

EMPLOYEES:

80