

Small Business of the month



Sometimes Change is Good

Back row (from left to right) Hunter Rodriquez, Thomas Carpenter and Keith Fremin.

Front row (from left to right) Tia Rodriquez (holding Sophia), Lyn Doshier, Sue Guy, Jennifer Round and Rocky Fremin.

There's a round wooden dining table back in the Fremins' break room where the business began in 2002 and, later, where the decision to change the company's business model was made. Fremin's Contractor Services, a provider of commercial and facility maintenance, repairs and improvements, is the Mobile Area Chamber's Small Business of the Month.

After four years in business serving primarily residential customers, the husband-and-wife team of President Rocky Fremin and Vice President Keith Fremin made a pivotal choice to focus on commercial customers.

Their timing helped the company weather the recession, said the Chamber's Director of Small Business Danette Richards. "The economy really started shutting down in 2008, so the Fremins were ahead of the curve."

While the Semmes-based company maintained a few of its local residential customers, Fremin's Contractor Services focuses on commercial accounts. The company prides itself on 24/7 service and offers same-day emergency service. Rocky herself answers most of the after-hours calls. "We have an answering service, but I try to never use it," she said.

Among the company's national customers are Gap, Rite-Aid, Leslie's Swimming Pool Supply and Mortgage Team 1. The company also has contracts with restaurants, grocery stores, office and apartment buildings, a number of small businesses and more. "You might say we're better known nationally than right here at home," Rocky said.

With six office staff members and a team of 300 highly skilled craftsmen and subcontractors, Fremin's operates in 21

states — as far north as Maine, west to Arkansas and east to the Carolinas.

The Fremin's team handles projects from replacing ceiling tiles to roof and drywall repairs to boarding up windows for hurricanes. "We take on any job. It doesn't matter how large or small," said Rocky, who feels the smaller jobs help build relationships with their customers.

Prior to starting this business, Rocky owned several other ventures, including a consignment shop and a telephone repair business. Keith has always been in the repair and improvement business and said he is still happiest in the field.

Rocky had a vision for his skills and a business that would sustain them. "It's a lot of hard work," she said. "We try to go above and beyond, stay dedicated to communication with our customers, and make a fair profit."

Go to mobilechamber.com/award.asp to submit a Small Business of the Month nomination, or contact Danette Richards at 431-8652 or d Richards@mobilechamber.com.