

Article from Trucking Infrastructure Completing 50 contracts without default in waste management and business.

Written by Andrew Santa Lucia



Mark Dunning Industries (MDI) has been in business since 1980 when it was founded by President J. Mark Dunning.

“MDI maintains its corporate headquarters in Dothan, Ala.,” says Corporate Controller Brad Dunning, son of Mark. “Initially the company focused on janitorial, food service, grounds maintenance and refuse contracts.”

Since those early years, the company has shifted its focus to integrated solid waste management, as well as refuse and recycling contracts through federal, municipal and commercial endeavors.



Utilizing its experience into a clear vision of transportation within the waste and recycling infrastructures, MDI is representative of emergent sustainable businesses.

“MDI’s core competency is its award winning services to the Federal Government,” says Dunning. “Over the past 33 years, MDI has successfully completed over 50 contracts without default.”

MDI currently performs refuse and recycling collection on nine Department of Defense

and Department of Homeland Security Installations in eight states across the United States. The company also focuses on residential collection contracts through municipalities and counties - collecting residential garbage from approximately 18,000 customers in Southeast Alabama and the Central Virginia area. The company's regional influence is palpable and it has three commercial sales centers in Dothan, Ala.; Phoenix City, Ala.; and Prince George, Va.

"From these sales centers we service our customers refuse and recycling needs from mom-and-pop shops to apartment complexes, from restaurants such as Outback's and Waffle House's to big box department stores such as Lowe's and Belk's," says Dunning.

MDI's ability to scale up and down makes its services some of the most versatile in the industry sector.

"Recycling and sustainability are integral to our mission, particularly when considering mandates issued by both states and the Federal Government over the last decade," Dunning says. "MDI strives to be a catalyst in these areas and we have consistently met and exceeded all directed recycling goals on all of our active Department of Defense contracts."



By combining the solid waste collection and the diversion of recyclables from the landfill, the company's expertise is

continuously meeting the needs and goals of the Department of Defense (DoD) and other Federal Agencies in its efforts toward achieving sustainability through resource management. Over the last five years, the company has cultivated the abilities to divert 40 percent to 50 percent of waste out of local landfills on five active integrated solid waste management contracts. The DoD has set goals of 55 percent by 2015 and 60 percent in 2018 and MDI plans on surpassing those goals before the deadline. The company stresses the need to educate and promote the importance of the reduce, reuse, recycle philosophy.

"We strive to be the best in service with an affordable price all awhile protecting the environment," says Dunning.

As part of its recycling education program, MDI informs the customer of the importance of reducing as many materials as possible in order to carry out the teir mission, reusing materials as often as possible, and recycling all items that would

otherwise be discarded in a landfill. Additionally, MDI partners with as many local programs as possible to help donate items before they are landfilled, achieving its position on sustainability.

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In terms of its business philosophy, Dunning says MDI really stresses the importance of service to its customers.

“We require our employees and managers to be proactive in their approach to our customers by always anticipating issues that could arise during service,” Dunning says. “This really creates a value to our service because it shows that we really strive to get the job done efficiently and correctly.”

Dunning sees the company’s business model is much more customer friendly than others. Commitment to this dedication is another quality that sets MDI apart from other servicers and transporters in the waste and recycling industry.

“Some of the larger waste companies have lost their edge when it comes to customer service, i.e. customer call centers that may put you off days at a time, sales representatives not coming by on a regular basis, etc,” he says. “Our customers pride themselves on knowing whom they are speaking with when they need service and know that the job will get done in a timely professional manner.”



MDI has approximately 130 employees, 150 trucks with 75 of those being big trucks, i.e. Front Load Truck, Roll-Off Truck and Rear Loader Truck. It is actively expanding its operation to places like: Dale County, Ala. for residential customers; Fort Riley, Kan. for the United States Army; and integrated solid waste management contractor for the United States Navy at the Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla. The work environment is as sustainable to its growth as is its approach to working with waste.

“MDI has a very easy-going, friendly atmosphere and most of our key managers are long time employees of the company, with several being over 20 and 25 years with the company,” Dunning says.

Mark Dunning has an open door mentality to meeting with the employees and managers, and he is always willing to go the extra distance to help out any of his employees at a moment's notice—a mentality that will carry the company into the future. MDI foresees its continued growth in the federal, municipal and commercial marketplace.

“Maybe one day, [we will] get back into the landfill business as well,” says Dunning.

There is no doubt that regardless of the venture, MDI's approach to sustainability will be a guiding force in both its business and methods.