



Los Alamos National Laboratory Programs Help Española Company Become Regional Job Creator

By Carole Rutten, Acting Director of LANL's Community Programs Office

When Eric and Celina Quintana started their residential and commercial cleaning service in 1994, their goal was to dominate the janitorial services market in Northern New Mexico. Two decades later, Performance Maintenance Inc. provides janitorial equipment and supplies to Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) and sells environmentally certified cleaning products nationwide.

PMI is poised to introduce its own bio-based cleaning products in July, when it hosts a grand opening for its new 10,000-square-foot retail warehouse and distribution center in Española.

One part of the company's growth was securing a five-year, \$660,000 contract with the laboratory eight years ago — a contract that has since been renewed, Eric Quintana said.



PMI LANL small business contract signing

To improve his chances of getting that pivotal deal, Quintana schooled himself in the government procurement process at classes and workshops offered by the laboratory's Small Business Program Office, the Regional Development Corporation (RDC) and the New Mexico Small Business Development Center at Northern New Mexico College. The RDC provided business expansion assistance funded by an investment by Los Alamos National Security, LLC — the company that manages the laboratory.

The Small Business Program Office is part of the laboratory's Acquisition Services Management Division. Its training sessions aim to give small businesses a shot at competing for the service contracts that keep things running smoothly at the world-famous research center. A related goal is to support the regional economy by buying products and services from local companies, especially those run by people from traditionally disadvantaged groups.

“They were really trying to help (area) businesses, and I had a small business in Northern New Mexico,” Quintana said.

At the workshops, Quintana said he learned to pitch his products and services in a different way — not so much to tell the client what PMI offered but rather to ask what the client needed and orient to that. He also learned to keep his ear to the ground and develop relationships at the Small Business Program Office so he would know immediately when contracts were available.

“When I was young, I thought it was automatic (to get contracts) because I lived in the area,” Quintana said. “But the procurement people didn’t know me.”

Now PMI is known throughout New Mexico, in part thanks to the recognition it has received for its contribution to job creation (the company now employs 58 people) in northern New Mexico. It was recognized as one of 20 high-growth companies in the inaugural Northern New Mexico 20/20 Campaign in 2012 and won a Sustainable New Mexico Award from Albuquerque Business First and the New Mexico Green Chamber of Commerce in 2013.

PMI’s renown is likely to broaden this summer when it introduces its in-house plant-based cleaner to its existing environmentally certified product line. The cleaner will be sold in refillable containers to further reduce waste.

“We’re taking it to a place where we can stop expanding” and focus on being a full-service cleaning and building maintenance company serving Northern New Mexico, Quintana said.

Businesses interested in learning more about procurement opportunities with the laboratory should register with the System for Award Management, the federal government’s primary supplier database. They should email their completed Supplier Information Form to Los Alamos’ Small Business Program Office at business@lanl.gov and attach their company capability statement.

To learn about Los Alamos National Laboratory’s Community Programs Office initiatives in economic and workforce development, visit www.lanl.gov/community-environment/community-commitment/index.php.

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