

From the Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/print-edition/2010/11/26/fast-50-diary-blue-sky-and-sunshine.html>

Fast 50 Diary: 'Blue sky and sunshine'

The Fast 50 Diary companies didn't disappoint in their first month under observation by the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal. The companies, five of the fastest-growing private firms in the Twin Cities, hired new executives, signed new business and set new records in recent weeks.

Premium content from Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal - by Jim Hammerand , Staff writer

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Rick Rambo was named Critical Care Services Inc.'s chief clinical officer and director of flight operations as of Nov. 1, after a nationwide search, CEO **Carter McComb** said.

Rambo, who started his career in the U.S. Air Force's Nurse Corps, comes from Addison, Texas-based [Omniflight Helicopters Inc.](#)

He'll work to improve safety and quality of care and identify opportunities for more efficient operations at Critical Care, which does business as Life Link III.

A month full of "blue sky and sunshine" led to a record number of October flights last month, McComb said.

Life Link crews flew 217 flights, nearly double the 114 flights flown in October 2009. The month's air business exceeded projections by 29.4 percent.

Ground transports also were up by about 26 percent over budget, giving the company a 15 percent surplus for the month.

Critical Care Services Inc. (No. 30)
CEO: Carter McComb
2009 Revenue: \$28.63 million (up \$5.76 million from 2008)
Web: lifelinkiii.com

BERG Professional Staffing hired a new sales manager, bringing the sales force to three employees, and also made two part-time hires. President **Jeremy Berg** said no more hires are planned before 2011.

October brought about a dozen temporary to permanent staffing conversions for banking, architecture and advertising clients, even with October 2009. Revenue for the month was \$181,000, up about \$3,000 from 2009.

Berg said 2010 has been "a lot of wait and see," with more qualified candidates than open positions. The holiday season is usually slow for business, but Berg's mortgage banking industry clients have said refinancing, appraisal and mortgage review work will call for more labor as soon as this month.

"There's going to be a lot of paperwork," Berg said. "We thought it was going to shift here in November, but that didn't take place as anticipated. ... We know of a lot of projects that are on the horizon in advance, it's just a question of when it all comes together."

BERG Professional Staffing (No. 7)
President: Jeremy Berg
2009 Revenue: \$2.83 million (up \$214,875 from 2008)
Web: bergstaffing.com

Two significant acquisitions seem to be on the horizon for Amcom Software Inc., CEO **Chris Heim** said. The Eden Prairie-based emergency communications software developer could close on the purchase of an undisclosed company before 2011 and a second in the first quarter, he said. Because neither deal has been finalized, Heim wouldn't offer more details.

"We'd be able to help these companies and they [offer solutions] that our customers have been asking for," he said.

The company also has hired 15 tech support, product strategy and sales employees in the three months ending with October, Heim said. Five are based in Minneapolis, three in

Australia and the balance in other U.S. and U.K. offices. Another 15 sales, tech support and developer positions need filling.

Delivered business for the fiscal year, which ends March 31, is up 14 percent from the same time last year, while bookings are up 45 percent in the same period. The firm has hit its annual booking goal and is on pace to meet or slightly exceed \$52.7 million in annual revenue.

Amcom Software Inc. (No. 13)
CEO: Chris Heim
2009 Revenue: \$46.1 million (up \$12.43 million from 2008)
Web: amcomsoftware.com

Black Design Inc. has hired a new executive, CEO **Tina Wilcox** said. **Robin Beddor's** first day as vice president of client services was Nov. 1. Beddor, a former Fallon account director and most recently principal at Bright Consulting, has experience with brands including Coca Cola, Northwest Airlines, Target, [BMW of North America](#) and Jennie-O Turkey Store.

"Her strategic skills are very well honed," Wilcox said.

Beddor will be the main point of contact for clients and allow Wilcox more time to develop new business and run the company.

Chief Financial Officer **Rena DeBates** called Beddor "extremely articulate," and said her diplomatic skills would serve her well in the new role.

"She's dealing with the clients and the hot buttons there, and internally motivating staff to get everything done," DeBates said.

Activity has slowed down at the firm as clients' holiday campaigns ramp up, but Wilcox said the company is optimistic after pitching to two well-known Minnesota companies and securing a project for a third. The agency is also considering hiring an additional creative professional.

Black Design Inc. (No. 16)
CEO: Tina Wilcox
2009 Revenue: \$3.56 million (up \$1.7 million from 2008)
Web: blackretail.us

Innovative Office Solutions CEO **Jennifer Smith** said October revenue grew 53 percent to \$2.8 million over the same month last year, which recorded \$1.8 million in revenue. The month saw strong sales as K-12 education projects, which accounted for about 40 percent of the month's business, wound down. Revenue for the month fell short of the company's \$3 million target, however, after a large furniture project for a manufacturing client was delayed to November.

Office-furniture sales in October grew to \$488,000 from \$350,000 in the same time last year. Strong furniture sales are an indicator of wider economic growth and bode well for the coming months, Smith said.

"It's been a nice steady stream this year in furniture and we have some really nice projects booked for November and December," she said, including a mortgage industry project for 150 work stations.

The company hired a full-time supply driver for the state government business route in St. Paul and Minneapolis to cut overtime and courier costs. The addition brings the company's driver fleet to seven.

Innovative Office Solutions (No. 38)
CEO: Jennifer Smith
2009 Revenue: \$19.9 million (up \$3.66 million from 2008)
Web: innovativeos.com

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