

*Helping Businesses Start, Grow and Succeed*

# News Release



## Small Business Development Center at UCF

March 7, 2013

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Hal Thayer, Communications Director, SBDC at UCF, 407.420.4850 or [hthayer@bus.ucf.edu](mailto:hthayer@bus.ucf.edu)

## **SBDC at UCF's PTAC Helps Morris and Associates Gain Government Certification and Win Contracts**

### *SBDC's Procurement Technical Assistance Center Makes the Difference*

**Orlando, FL** – Morris and Associates CEO Ellen Yarckin had a problem. She had built a terrific company that was a great candidate for doing government contract work. She knew the contracts were out there. And the only barrier standing in the way of winning more of them was a certification to help her compete better for those contracts. But she wasn't being approved for that government certification.

Morris and Associates, Inc. is a Lake County, Florida woman-owned business specializing in cost effective infrastructure rehabilitation. Led by Yarckin, the company provides cost effective, non-invasive solutions for repairing and cleaning leaky water and sewage systems. The company restores existing water system infrastructure elements to new, watertight, corrosion resistant conditions, and provides clean groundwater and thus helps to protect the environment.

The company's client list is comprised of municipalities, government agencies and large commercial enterprises. Morris and Associates crews have completed projects in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, North and South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. And the client list keeps growing. Ellen Yarckin became the majority owner of the company and took the helm in 2011 after deciding to follow her life-long passion of protecting the environment by helping ensure the availability of clean water for the community-at-large. Larry Morris, an expert in utilities and general construction, had founded the company in 2003. From day one, it was clear to Yarckin that the company's growth potential was significant.

As CEO, the challenge for Yarckin was to determine the best ways to realize that growth potential. When she learned that government agencies sponsor Woman-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) programs that help woman entrepreneurs compete for contracting opportunities, she got to work submitting certification applications. She submitted her first application to Orange County in Florida but she was disappointed and disillusioned to learn that her certification application had not been approved. So she decided to appeal the decision. But before she did, Yarckin sought assistance from the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) in the Small Business Development Center at the University of Central Florida (SBDC at UCF).

PTAC's Derek Hudson met with Yarckin and assisted her in developing a strategy that would help guarantee certification approval. No stranger to government language and processes, Hudson, a former Navy Supply Corps Officer and consultant on State of Florida projects totaling more than \$700 million, reviewed each of the areas of concern expressed by the county's certification review board and helped Yarckin methodically address each issue in writing. He also coached her regarding how to present her case at an upcoming review board meeting at which she would actually make an appeal presentation to board members. Ellen Yarckin walked in prepared, polished and with confidence and gained

unanimous board approval. Morris and Associates is now a certified woman- owned small business with several municipal governments as well as a certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) with the State of Florida.

"Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me to go over my WBE applications," CEO Yarckin wrote to Mr. Hudson and the Procurement Technical Assistance Center. "You answered all of my questions and took the time I needed to master the process. I appreciate all your help and guidance in contract negotiations. You have helped me change the way I approach and prepare for a business meeting and, because of your help, I landed additional contracts."

Almost immediately after receiving assistance from PTAC, Morris and Associates revenues increased by 15 percent. Overall company growth for the year 2012 is over 100%. Also, since following Hudson's guidance, Yarckin has applied for and received her DBE (Disadvantaged Business Enterprise) certification with the Florida Department of Transportation and her SBA (Small Business Administration) WOSB (Woman-Owned Small Business) certification with the federal government.

When asked about her experience with the SBDC at UCF's PTAC, Yarckin said, "The SBDC is an amazing resource that we are very lucky to have in Central Florida. It is comprised of a group of successful people who have decided to give back to community. It is worthwhile to check out this resource to get advice on all aspects of business. And best of all – it is free!"

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With its main office in the National Entrepreneur Center (formerly the Disney Entrepreneur Center) now located at the Fashion Square Mall in Orlando, the Small Business Development Center at the University of Central Florida (SBDC at UCF) is part of the UCF College of Business Administration and the Florida Small Business Development Center Network, providing business seminars and no-cost, one-on-one business consultation to small business owners. The SBDC at UCF serves an eight-county area that includes Brevard, Flagler, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia counties and maintains seven satellite service centers. In 2011, the SBDC at UCF helped entrepreneurs create or retain 1,517 jobs, win contract awards worth \$28.9 million, acquire \$17.7 million in capital formation, and increase sales by \$51.9 million. The SBDC at UCF is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

SBDC at UCF | 3201 E. Colonial Drive | Orlando, FL 32801 | p 407.420.4850 | f 407.420.4862  
[sbdc@bus.ucf.edu](mailto:sbdc@bus.ucf.edu) | [www.sbdcorlando.com](http://www.sbdcorlando.com)

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