

## Reading Electric Still Shining After 50 Years

**A**fter working in the corporate world in a variety of marketing and accounting positions for more than 16 years, Richard Bashore realized that he preferred the small business atmosphere, and in 1980 Bashore purchased Reading Electric.

Founded in 1956, Reading Electric has grown from about 17 employees to 50 employees, and in 2005 Bashore's son joined the company. Reading Electric's services include repairing electric motors, compressors, generators and welders. It also provides electrical and mechanical field service work, electrical construction and preventive maintenance services.

When Bashore first purchased Reading Electric the majority of customers were steel foundries. Foundries were considered the cornerstone of Reading Electric during its first 40 years of operation, but have decreased to only five percent of the industry. To offset this loss, Reading Electric began to focus on power quality and power reliability. It is also shifting from an industrial to a commercial focus, targeting new markets, such as homeland security. With more focus on commercial clients, Reading Electric has redirected their marketing efforts to emergency power. It is focusing on its UPS systems (Un-Interruptible Power Systems), which is a battery back up system.

Lisa Clark, a Kutztown SBDC government marketing specialist, aided Reading Electric in identifying government markets. Clark assisted the company in conducting in-depth government market research on product purchases. In addition to providing Reading Electric with daily email notifications about government bids, Clark guided the company's application for a General Services Administration (GSA) Federal Supply Schedule. The GSA contracts with companies to provide products and services to the federal government. Although the process of applying for a schedule may take several months and involves in-depth market and contract research, companies who are awarded a GSA schedule are pre-qualified to work with a number of federal agencies and can increase their market substantially. Schedule contracts have a duration of five years, which may be extended to 20 years.

Bashore was nominated for an Entrepreneurial Achievement Award, presented by Clark at the 2006 Kutztown SBDC Success Celebration.

For more information on Reading Electric please visit [www.readingelectric.com](http://www.readingelectric.com). The General Services Administration has detailed information on Federal Supply Schedules at [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov), and the Kutztown Small Business Development Center can be contacted at 866-4-KUSBDC.