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GOVPARTS ACHIEVES MILESTONES WHILE MENTORING SMALL BUSINESSES IN DEFENSE CONTRACT MANUFACTURING



GovParts owners James L. Jackson (left) and Chad M. Ross pose with a CNC mill machine located at their Ley Road headquarters in Fort Wayne.

Fort Wayne, Ind.—Fort Wayne business GovParts, LLC has achieved milestones to help solidify its position as a top defense contract manufacturer and broker. In June, GovParts became HUBZone Certified, thereby increasing opportunities for government contracts. Earlier this year, GovParts also became Higher Quality Certified by the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) in recognition of its dedication to continuously improve business processes, a plus for doing business with the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA).

HUBZone status is awarded by the U.S. Small Business Administration to select companies located in historically-underutilized business zones. Each year, at least three percent of federal contract dollars are awarded to HUBZone-certified companies, which are encouraged to maintain 35 percent employment of HUBZone residents. GovParts is one of only 30 HUBZone-certified companies in the State of Indiana.

GovParts' designation as a "higher-quality manufacturer" by the DCMA ranks the firm in the Top 5 percent of defense contractors due to the number of contracts successfully completed, along with audit compliance with government standards, quality of work provided and on-time delivery of completed contract products. The Higher-Level Contract Quality Requirements clause requires GovParts to implement one or more of the documented quality systems that meet the applicable standards cited in the contract and increases the local firm's chances of winning future DLA contracts.

PARTNERING WITH LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS

But in the eyes of GovParts owners Chad M. Ross and James L. Jackson, perhaps the firm's biggest accomplishment is its partnerships with small area businesses to complete government contracts. The firm works with 20 small local companies on a regular basis, and has partnered with up to 70 area companies overall, most of them located in northern Indiana and within 15 miles of their shop.

"We specialize in making it easy for a small standard company to do government contracts," said Ross. GovParts helps the small businesses get registered with the System for Award Management (SAM) of the U.S. Government, and "we

handle all the details compliance, which takes the scare factor away from the smaller firms who want to do government contract work.”

Examples of the types of firms GovParts partners with include machine shops and sheet metal vendors. Ross and Jackson identify the types of work each partnering manufacturer specializes in, then search for and bid on government contracts that call for components in their specialty area. GovParts often coordinates with several small manufacturers working on various aspects of the same contract. GovParts staff will assemble all the components into the finished product, package the items after assembly, and ensure that the finished products meet quality standards and pass government inspections.

Large- and small-quantity contracts that GovParts has completed in partnership with local manufacturers include custom tools and hardware, weaponry-related items and custom kits for the military, along with sewing center items such as custom lanyards, vests, and straps. Many of the contracts are very unique and require multiple custom components that GovParts assembles into the finished product.

Ross and Jackson see their various partnerships with local manufacturers as a win-win situation for all involved. Not only have these partnerships contributed to GovParts’ success, but “What we do allows our subcontractors to be more competitive as well, because we are willing to work with the sub in different aspects of the contracts. For example, we will handle finishes and at times we will handle providing the material to help share the upfront cost,” making it more profitable for them, according to Jackson.

NEW LOCATION WITH EXPANDED CAPABILITIES

GovParts, LLC was founded in 2017 with Ross and Jackson as owners and sole employees. In January 2019, the firm moved from a 700-square-foot office on East State Boulevard to a 4,000-square-foot office, warehouse and manufacturing facility at 513 Ley Road in Fort Wayne. GovParts currently has two employees, in addition to the owners, and soon will be looking for additional part-time workers and a skilled machinist in order to keep up with increasing business.

The firm’s spacious new headquarters contains offices and a secure room with all the new security and cybersecurity features required by the DLA; a warehouse and manufacturing area with various machinery, including a CNC lathe and mill, supporting manual equipment, commercial sewing machines and an assembly area; and a finish room for packaging and shipping. A new delivery truck handles all the pick-up and delivery of parts and finished products.

GovParts has been awarded more than 1,500 government contracts over the past two years, and sales for 2020 are expected to exceed \$2.5 million, nearly twice those of 2019. For more information, visit www.GovPartsLLC.com. The owners are clients of the Northeast Indiana Small Business Development Center; visit www.ISBDC.org for more information on the agency’s small business services.