



CONTACT: Dave Wiegand, Principal
301/607-4180
9607 Doctor Perry Road
Suite 102
Ijamsville, MD 21754
www.specializedengineering.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOCAL FIRM SHARES WEALTH, OWNERSHIP THROUGH ESOP

Ijamsville, MD – July 7, 2005 – Specialized Engineering has officially begun converting to an employee-owned company through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). It is just one of 153 companies in Maryland and only 564 companies in the greater DC/MD/VA/WV region with an ESOP. There are approximately 13,000 ESOP's in place in the United States, accounting for 8% of the private sector workforce.

Many companies opt to sell stock to an ESOP when the current owner moves toward retirement. For the principals of Specialized Engineering, the motivation was a little different. "We want to retain our current employees," states Dave Wiegand, company co-founder, "and we want to attract the best and brightest that our industry has to offer. Doing so is good for our company, our staff and our clients." He continues, "Specialized Engineering has an incredible team. The ESOP allows our employees to achieve ownership of the company over a long period of time. As prospective owners, we're engaging them in our future and ideally, each employee will now be thinking like an owner." As part of the plan, employees will take on leadership and committee roles to help them grow in their understanding of the intricacies of owning and running the business.

According to the ESOP Association (www.esopassociation.org), nearly two-thirds of their members state that the ESOP has helped to increase productivity and more than 80% report

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they have outperformed major stock indices in recent years. Wiegand expects that this will be the case with Specialized Engineering. “We’ve grown 20% per year since our inception in 1992 and the average tenure of our management staff is 13 years. The ESOP will help to ensure that this trend continues and even improves.”

In a twist only Specialized Engineering employees could appreciate, the plan was officially kicked off on Groundhog Day 2005. The groundhog is the unofficial mascot of the company which provides engineering consulting services in the areas of construction quality control, geotechnical and forensic engineering, and environmental consulting. Specialized Engineering’s employee participation in the plan is automatic and begins after the first year. In addition to the ESOP, employees can continue to participate in the company’s 401(k) (in which the company matches 4 percent) as an additional benefit.

“Our biggest challenge is being able to communicate the value of this plan to our team members who are not involved in management,” says Wiegand. David Schultz, another principal of the firm, agrees. “Our younger employees with the most to gain from the program are the least likely to consider the long term value of the investment in an employee owned company. We need to communicate the long term advantages, both financial and business.” Cathy Guzauskas, company controller and an ESOP trustee, adds, “This is a wonderful opportunity to build equity, become more involved in our financial future and to be more self-directed. We’re now working for ourselves and the better we’re able to communicate this to all levels, the higher the return for all of us will be.”

Specialized Engineering (www.specializedengineering.com) was established in 1992 and has over 80 employees. The company has offices in Maryland and West Virginia and serves the greater Washington/Baltimore region and beyond.

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ESOP facts from the ESOP Association: ESOP companies are more likely to continue operating as independent companies ■ Research shows that ESOP companies pay better benefits ■ Research shows ESOP companies have twice the retirement income ■ Research shows ESOP companies pay higher wages