

## FOCUS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

## Bethlehem environmental firm helps clients conserve

By RUTH HEIL

Special for Lehigh Valley Business

If an ounce of prevention truly is worth a pound of cure, it makes good business sense to prevent risk from weighing down profit. Such was the logic when EMS Environmental Inc. added Green Business Solutions to its services.

Cleaning up the environment after it's been degraded is very expensive. So, too, is the consumption of natural resources, including energy.

In response to the market in 2007, EMS president Allan Blanchard wanted to add renewable energy to the advisory services of his nearly 20-year-old business. While researching the idea, he began talking with the Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Association, a local nonprofit formerly known for its annual Pennsylvania Renewable Energy and Sustainable Living Festival that was held in Kempton each September.

Intrigued, MAREA board member Phil Jones eventually became EMS' vice president, and he

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directs the resulting GBS division.

Expanded beyond Blanchard's original idea, GBS now puts to use the diagnostic, design and implementation skill-set of its engineers to proactively study, optimize and save its clients from costly and impactful resource overuse.

GBS does help companies generate their own power if needed, but, as Jones said, "It's cheaper to conserve energy than it is to create energy."

With today's rapid change in efficiency technology, GBS' expertise is crucial to those who want to know about lighting upgrades, refrigeration upgrades, water-use reduction, etc.

And since the installation of modern equipment does not guarantee results, GBS helps its clients capitalize on investments by bringing improved methods and processes into the design.

As the GBS website states, "The most important step in reducing your energy costs is to understand how that energy is being consumed."

Each business is therefore studied to gain an understanding of its operation as well as the related risk associated with its environmen-



Vice president and Green Business Solutions director Phil Jones (right) and Allan Blanchard, EMS Environmental president (center), work with a client on the lighting-control portion of an energy-saving upgrade project.

tal impact. Then technology and method are combined to reduce consumption to such an extent that – between future savings and available incentives – the payback for the study and implementation is typically within a few years.

Otherwise, Jones said, "The study is free."

The firm serves businesses that are large enough to have some impact on the environment yet small enough not to have staff dedicated to the topic. Often, a business will reach out to GBS because of government regulations or escalating energy costs.

The goal is for improvements to also have the side effect of a better-operating business. For instance, when a local ski slope automated its snow-making process, it found it could start

### GREEN BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

- ▶ **What:** A division of EMS Environmental Inc., Green Business Solutions helps clients reduce energy costs and environmental exposure and get incentives before they're gone.
- ▶ **Location:** Bethlehem, with additional locations in Durham, N.C., and Syracuse, N.Y.
- ▶ **Number of employees:** Five in Bethlehem division; 30 companywide.
- ▶ **Website:** [www.emsenv.com](http://www.emsenv.com).

the snow guns almost the instant conditions were right, enabling it to cover the slopes earlier, expand the season and thus improve client satisfaction and profit.

Whereas Jones may have his heart in environmental safeguards, Blanchard understands the

complexity of protecting profit.

As a result, "Everything we do looks at 'What is the cost benefit?'" Jones said.

By working together, the two have found a coincidence between making money and protecting the environment, one ounce at a time.

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