

OAKLEAF

Founded in 1995

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PETER FAULK

Overlooking the banks of the Connecticut River in East Hartford sits OAKLEAF, a company whose mirrored glass exterior reflects the city itself. Founded in 1995 by East Hartford native Jim Barnes, OAKLEAF is a shining example of how resiliency and determination can lead to growth and achievement. While OAKLEAF is the only company in the nation offering a complete suite of closed-loop, sustainable solutions for waste logistics, the company's humble background is a true testament to Hartford's spirit of perseverance and progression.

While working as a manager for a small regional trash hauler, Barnes began calling on property management companies to sell trash services to their national accounts. While doing this he began to notice the business model being used by major companies was fundamentally flawed. The model provided little long-term value to customers and the standard fee-based model offered very few options for companies looking for recycling and green solutions. So more than a decade ago, OAKLEAF began as a small start-up company operating out of a small outbuilding on the grounds of a horse stable. As the city of Hartford grew, so did the organization and its commitment to being a business leader and beacon in the waste and recycling industry.

OAKLEAF has grown from a single company into

a multifaceted enterprise consisting of five subsidiaries. OAKLEAF and its companies are headquartered across the United States and Canada and include WasteLess Environmental Services, International Environmental Management, Valet Waste and Greenleaf Compaction. The organization has become the leading authority in providing revolutionary waste and recycling solutions for a broad base of multi-location retail, restaurant, hotel, manufacturing, property management and mall clients. As the most rapidly growing waste logistics and resource optimization company in the nation, OAKLEAF employs more than 450 people in its East Hartford based headquarters and provides service to more than 100,000 locations through its nationwide network of over 4,800 certified haulers. Perhaps the greatest testament to OAKLEAF's growth is its client list, which has grown to include a portfolio of globally recognized and respected names.

OAKLEAF has long partnered with industry leaders to provide waste solutions that bring balance to the environment and the bottom line. This allows companies' waste streams to be evaluated, processed and placed back on the market as a sellable commodity. This commitment to sustainable solutions is coupled with plans to continue providing aggressive and forward-thinking solutions for decreasing companies' environmental impact. Most impressive is the reach of these

Above: The OAKLEAF offices located in East Hartford.

initiatives, which impact the communities of all OAKLEAF clients. Today, countless organizations of all sizes have reduced expenses and their carbon footprint as a result of this visionary approach.

This was all accomplished by building on the dream of the company's founder to create an asset-light business model that relied heavily on people and technology. While the reflective glass building with the large OAKLEAF logo is an easily recognized symbol to residents of Hartford County, the company has flourished not by touting name recognition, but rather by working behind the scenes to build partnerships that better businesses and the environment. Using proprietary technology and sophisticated analytics, OAKLEAF deliv-

ers much more than waste stream solutions. The architecture of systems OAKLEAF uses places it at the leading edge of technology, successfully processing more than two million transactions a month and handling tens of thousands of phone calls from customers coast to coast and in Canada, as well as monitoring ever-changing legislation and regulatory mandates that affect their clients throughout North America. This dedication to technological advancement earned OAKLEAF top honors from Microsoft, the world's leading global technologies company.

OAKLEAF's foundation is built both on the strength of its technology and the people behind it. "From the executive officers to the customer service team, we all work together to make OAKLEAF a success," Barnes said. "This company is only as good as its people and I am proud to say we have the best people. They work tirelessly for the good of our customers and our community." The hard work of OAKLEAF's team is recognized in the many successes realized by the company. Included among these are recapitalizations delivering record-breaking returns, more than a dozen acquisitions, and recognition by industry leading organizations including multiple honors from Inc. magazine.

Since its inception, OAKLEAF has been deeply



PETER GLASS

At left: Perry Moss, Senior Vice President of Client Services (left) and Jim Barnes, Founder and President (right) bring leadership, vision and world-class innovation to OAKLEAF.

Below: Frank Wilk, Senior Vice President and CIO assures OAKLEAF's technology infrastructure strategically aligns with the demands and vision of this high growth company.

involved in working to better the Hartford community. The company has been recognized numerous times by Initiatives for a Competitive Inner City for its hiring and professional development of local talent. OAKLEAF repeatedly adds jobs to the local work force, often accounting for a sizeable percentage of Connecticut's new jobs. The company's exceptionally asset-light model is proof that the organization genuinely believes its greatest asset is its people.



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