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MAKING IT

Keeping America safe

African American-owned IT services provider is positioned for defense

Catastrophes like the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center make IT consulting companies like Annapolis Junction, Maryland-based Scientific & Engineering Solutions (SES) a necessity in this new and unpredictably violent world.

"Our country wants to believe it's safe, but the truth is it's hard to fight mice—people who scurry, hide, and live in shadows. Unfortunately, it takes tragedies to get us focused on priorities as a country and to help us recognize what an incredible defense organization we have," said Reginald Daniel, the company's 42-year-old founder, president, and CEO, during an interview two hours after the attacks.

In 1996, Daniel started SES with personal savings of \$100,000 and four employees. From his basement, he began providing IT services to the Department of Defense (DOD), and was awarded a contract with the naval research laboratory Data General Corp. Daniels has years of IT experience, in jobs ranging from sales to programming, plus he served four years in the U.S. Air Force.

By the end of the first year, SES had been awarded \$12 million in IT maintenance, consulting, and virtual reality consulting contracts from four different organizations within the DOD, and earned \$1.4 million in revenue. "I expertly leveraged past contacts, my understanding of the government's needs, and my company's IT acumen in the early



JEREMY GREEN

Defense contracts keep Reginald Daniel's firm strong.

days—when it's most critical—and it paid off big," said Daniel.

Last year, SES had 110 employees and earned \$16.8 million in revenue. Revenues are expected to be \$20 million this year (with a staff of 140), and \$30 million by year-end 2002. A big source of the growth is a \$2 billion, 10-year outsourcing contract recently awarded by the DOD to the Eagle Alliance. The Alliance, a joint venture of Computer Sciences Corp. and Northrop Grumman with a variety of subcontractors, includes 64 minority vendors that will receive more than 10% of the

DOD contract. SES will assist with the overall programming, operation and modernization of IT systems. The contract will allow SES to expand its current 10,000-square-foot facility and increase its workforce by 100 employees.

In addition to growing his company, Daniel founded AIMES (Assimilate Into Mainstream Society Economically), an urban youth mentoring program created to help young people identify with the American dream.

Not surprisingly, this year Daniel was designated Ernst & Young's IT Consulting Entrepreneur of the Year from Maryland, and the National Black Chamber of Commerce named him Entrepreneur of the Year. Part of his success lies in the fact that his goal was to "grow large fast," hiring people and developing the alliances necessary to make that happen. Daniel's foremost personal priority is to serve God, which, he says, helps him to be a good employer. And he can contribute much of his success to the fact that he practices a simple philosophy: "An entrepreneur's No. 1 priority should be employees and customers. If you treat them with the high level of compassion that you'd expect, you should have no problem being successful."

—Michelle Buckley

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