

SERVING THE GREATER TRIAD AREA

THE BUSINESS JOURNAL



SouthData Inc.

MOUNT AIRY — SouthData Inc. has learned that success comes from being bold enough to try new things and savvy enough to recognize which ones make sense long term.

#32 SouthData is in the billings and communications business, and its most-reliable industries have been health care, governmental work and homeowners associations.

"We try to find those places where we can add value, usually by solving a problem or removing pain for a client," says John Springthorpe III, SouthData's president.

A knack for innovation has helped. SouthData generated buzz with health insurers by creating all-encompassing booklets that cover policyholder topics such as prescriptions, doctors, and other procedures, replacing a system of issuing pamphlets for each.

Truth be told, the company also has had several ideas that didn't fully pan out. Two years ago it targeted the auction industry, but pared back after realizing the fragmented nature of the business would bar it from reaching a desired scale.

"I still hope we continue to look for new things," Springthorpe says.

SouthData continues to develop online offerings, including software introduced in the last year that allows clients to archive bills. Though expected to grow in popularity, it remains a small part of the business.

Southdata makes its fourth consecutive appearance in the Fast 50, placing at No.

SOUTHDATA INC.

Description: Document processing, creation and fulfillment

Address: 201 Technology Lane, Mount Airy 27030

Phone: (800) 549-4722

Web site: www.southdata.com

2007 revenues: Undisclosed

Founded: 1985

No. of Triad employees: 69

No. of total employees: 69

Offices in Triad: One (Mount Airy)

Offices outside Triad: None

Top executive: John Springthorpe III, president

32. Revenues were up 15 percent last year versus 2006, which was off from the 20 percent annual growth the company has experienced in recent years, Springthorpe says.

Still, he admits, "it is hard to argue about the overall results."

Revenue should be flat or up slightly this year, due largely to a drop off in real estate business, forcing SouthData to trim costs. More often than not it has chosen against filling vacant positions until business revs back up.

Again, innovation has served SouthData well. Last winter, it formed a "green team" to develop environmentally friendly practices. By reducing overhead lighting, SouthData cut its monthly electric bill by \$2,000 despite rising rates.

"It wasn't intended as a cost-cutting measure," Springthorpe says. "We've had been working around the edges, but now we're taking a much more aggressive approach to conservation."



Springthorpe