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Terry Kelleher (left), Dave Helmrich and Joe Kelleher operate Material Safety Data Sheets in Hammond. The company computerizes hazardous material data information for businesses.

Emergency assistance

Hammond firm helps businesses computerize material safety data

By LAURA PAUL
Correspondent

HAMMOND — Material Safety Data Sheets in Hammond has led other businesses in the country in turning obsolete paper files into electronic files to make it easier to access critical data in case of fires, spills or emergencies.

Started five years ago in Munster by Terry Kelleher, the company was also the first to become tenants in the old NIPSCO

building on Russell Street as part of the city of Hammond's downtown high-tech district.

Joe Kelleher of Munster, sales director for MSDS Kelleher, Helmrich & Associates Inc., landed several major accounts, including Walt Disney World and Air Canada, through trade shows and Internet leads.

"It's real exciting, the way business has been going," said Kelleher, who works with his father, Terry, company presi-

dent. "Working with some of the clients has been exciting. We put together material safety data sheet management software systems. A lot of times, as with these two companies, they have thousands of files that need to be managed."

He said the staff can do all the scanning and indexing. Kelleher does most of his work from his Hammond office, although he does fly to other parts of the country for major clients.

"Every customer is different," he said.

"Some customers, we provide them the tools to do the work themselves, sometimes we take over complete management of their data bases. We will do the work for them."

The company has 10 employees, but hires temporary staffers for larger accounts.

Terry Kelleher has been in the hardware/software business for years and

Please see EMERGENCY, Page E7

FROM PAGE ONE

EMERGENCY

Continued from Page E1

developed maintenance management software before starting MSDS.

"Everybody always had an archive, but not our electric data base," Terry Kelleher said.

"We took it and scanned it into image format so everything is electronic and able to be accessed. We were the first ones in the coun-

try to do that."

Kelleher said all companies — whether health care or manufacturing — are required by law to keep material data safety sheets to keep track of hazardous materials and products in the buildings.

Before business owners would put the information in three-ring binders and cross their fingers they could find the needed sheets.

"We are expanding our business all the time," Kelleher said. "We are working on a safety net project for the fire department in Hammond. Right now the fire department has a fire box in front of com-

About the business

Material Safety Data Sheets is located at 219 Russell St., Suite A, in Hammond. For information, call (800) 274-4995 or visit the company's Web site at www.olmsds.com.

panies, but what happens if you can't get to the information or the information is outdated?"

Kelleher said the new computerized data based system would allow emergency crews to access the critical data via computer before even arriving at the scene

so firefighters would know what kind of hazardous materials they might be confronting.

Joe Kelleher said he is pleased with the infrastructure provided by the city of Hammond, with fiber optics planned and power back-up generators to assure MSDS can keep in business seven days a week.

"I think technology moves so rapidly," Kelleher said. "It's one of our biggest tasks to keep up with, cutting edge tools — software and hardware. We will be able to use the infrastructure the city of Hammond has put together."