

FOCUS: PRIVATE COMPANIES

Stimulus plans light fire under Four Seasons

Government stimulus programs lately have boosted some companies' revenues. At Four Seasons Heating & Air Conditioning Inc., federal and state money has contributed to record sales.

Four Seasons enjoyed a 30% rise in revenue last year to \$78 million at a time when many rivals were struggling to stay afloat. Other companies have depended on new construction for much of their installation volume—a market that went comatose in 2009—but Four Seasons has shunned new homes as low-margin work not worth the trouble.

A year ago, the federal government drafted a \$1,500 tax credit for the purchase of any energy-efficient residential furnace or air conditioner. The state of Illinois followed up with rebates worth as much as \$850. Local utilities, including Peoples Energy Corp., have sweetened the pot with rebates, too.

"The tax credits have spurred a lot of people to buy," says David Musial, CEO of Chicago-based Four Seasons. "They've given our business a tremendous push in the past year."

Mr. Musial, 38, is eyeing expansion. He's opening a branch office in Schererville, Ind., and is in talks to acquire a rival with 40 employees in Kenosha, Wis. That's big by industry standards—the average heating and air-conditioning contractor has eight employees and less than \$1 million in annual sales. Four Seasons, founded in 1971 by Mr. Musial's father, has more than 500 employees.

Gary Murphy Jr., co-owner of Anytime Heating & Air Conditioning Inc. in Naperville, which has three dozen employees, believes that much of Four Seasons' success can be credited to its ad budget. "The company is so well-known in Cook County because it advertises everywhere there," Mr. Murphy says. "Our advertising is limited to the Yellow Pages and a banner ad on the Weather Channel. We can't compete with their marketing."

H. Lee Murphy

CRAIN'S LIST CHICAGO'S LARGEST PRIVATELY HELD COMPANIES

Company/headquarters	Phone/Website	Top executive	2009 revenue (millions); % change from 2008	Full-time local employees; worldwide	Type of business
236 CHICAGO HEIGHTS STEEL ¹⁴ Chicago Heights	(708) 756-5619 www.chs.com	Bradley Corral President	\$91.0 -9.0%	250 250	Steel manufacturer
237 CHICAGO MEAT AUTHORITY INC.; Chicago	(800) 383-3811 www.chicagomeat.com	Jordan M. Dorfman President	\$90.0 NC	325 325	Meat processor
237 COMPACT INDUSTRIES INC. St. Charles	(630) 513-9600 www.compactind.com	Dale Veronica Brown Chairman, CEO	\$90.0 NC	94 94	Contract manufacturer and co-packer of dry foods
237 GEORGE S. MAY INTERNATIONAL CO.; Park Ridge	(847) 825-8806 www.georgesmay.com	Kerry C. Jacobs President	\$90.0 -4.3%	400 760	Management consulting
237 HOLLY HUNT ENTERPRISES INC. Chicago	(312) 661-1900 www.hollyhunt.com	Holly A. Hunt CEO	\$90.0 -23.1%	139 198	Designer, manufacturer and distributor of interior furnishings
237  TCA HOLDINGS LLC Chicago	(773) 463-1234 www.tcaholdings.com	Steven L. Schwartz President, CEO	\$90.0 4.7%	1,200 2,400	Owner and manager of tennis and fitness clubs
237 WOZNAK INDUSTRIES INC. Oakbrook Terrace	(630) 954-3400 www.woznakiindustries.com	Michael R. Wozniak President	\$90.0 -40.0%	90 240	Manufacturer of forged, stamped, fabricated and machined metal components
237 BELGRAVIA GROUP LTD. Chicago	(312) 751-2777 www.belgraviagroup.com	Alan D. Lev President, CEO	\$90.0 -60.7%	26 26	Homebuilder, mortgages, sales
244 EPSTEIN Chicago	(312) 454-9100 www.epsteinglobal.com	John R. Patelaki, James J. Jirsa Michael Damore, Managing directors	\$89.9 -13.7%	137 211	Architecture, engineering, construction, interior design, graphic design
245 NATIONAL VAN LINES INC. ¹⁴ Broadview	(708) 450-2900 www.nationalvanlines.com	Maureen Beal Chairman, president, CEO	\$89.4 3.6%	119 121	Moving company
246 EVANS FOOD GROUP LTD. Chicago	(773) 254-7400 www.evansfood.com	Alejandro Silva CEO	\$87.7 7.5%	80 226	Snack-food manufacturer
247 FLORSTAR SALES INC. ¹ Romeoville	(815) 836-2800 www.florstar.com	F. Wade Cassidy CEO	\$87.0 -13.0%	115 171	Wholesale distributor of floor coverings; provider of logistical services
247 SAYERS40 INC. Vernon Hills	(847) 391-4040 www.sayers.com	Gale E. Sayers Chairman, CEO	\$87.0 -5.4%	40 78	Information-technology products and services
247 SUPERIOR GRAPHITE CO. Chicago	(312) 559-2999 www.superiorgraphite.com	Edward O. Carney President, CEO	\$87.0 -33.2%	89 277	Graphite and carbon manufacturer
250 WALTER E. SMITHE FURNITURE INC.; Itasca	(630) 285-8000 www.smithe.com	Walter E. Smithe III President	\$85.3 12.0%	425 425	Furniture retailer
251 L&D GROUP INC. Montgomery	(630) 892-8941 www.lyonworkspace.com	R. Peter Washington Chairman, CEO	\$85.0 -15.8%	102 486	Manufacturer and distributor of workplace equipment
252 INITIATE SYSTEMS INC. Chicago	(312) 759-5030 www.initiatesystems.com	Bill Conroy President, CEO	\$84.0 12.9%	100 300	Provider of data-management software
252 RADIO FLYER INC. Chicago	(773) 797-9105 www.radioflyer.com	Robert Pasin President, CEO	\$84.0 -12.5%	56 107	Manufacturer of wagons, tricycles, scooters and other toys
254 RICHCO INC. Morton Grove	(773) 539-4060 www.richco-inc.com	Samantha Richardson Chairman	\$83.0 2.4%	145 485	Manufacturer of plastic fasteners and components
255 UPTOWN MOTORS INC. Chicago	(773) 794-7100 www.marinoqjd.com	Gregory A. Marino President	\$82.0 22.6%	175 175	Auto dealership
256 MICRODYNAMICS GROUP Naperville	(630) 527-8400 www.microdgm.com	Thomas F. Harter Sr. Chairman, president, CEO	\$81.9 7.4%	140 170	Billing and statement processing, mailing and electronic presentation
257 GOLD EAGLE CO. ¹ Chicago	(773) 376-4400 www.goldeagle.com	Marc Blackman President, CEO	\$80.0 1.2%	165 165	Manufacturer and marketer of automotive chemicals and additives
257 MACHINERY SYSTEMS INC. Schaumburg	(847) 882-8085 www.machsyst.com	Ronald J. Mager Chairman, president, CEO	\$80.0 -33.3%	34 67	Distributor of machine tools, cutting tools and factory floor software
259 PRG PARKING MANAGEMENT LLC; Chicago	(312) 753-1700 www.theparkingspot.com	Martin H. Nesbitt President, CEO	\$79.6 -7.5%	21 950	Parking lot ownership and management
260 MARKETING WERKS INC. Chicago	(312) 228-0800 www.marketingwerks.com	Julia Guide, Scott Moller Managing partners	\$78.4 23.7%	130 147	Advertising and marketing
261  FOUR SEASONS HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING INC.; Bedford Park	(773) 577-2709 www.fourseasons-chicago.com	David Musial CEO	\$78.2 29.0%	610 610	Residential heating and air-conditioning contractor
262 UNIVERSAL SCRAP METALS INC. Chicago	(312) 666-0011 www.universalscrap.com	Philip L. Zeid President	\$77.9 18.0%	60 60	Scrap-metal recycling
263 O'HARE AUTO GROUP Des Plaines	(847) 297-5700 www.ohareautogroup.com	Kevin Mize President, CEO	\$77.7 -11.0%	130 130	Auto dealership
264 NELSEN STEEL CO. L.P. Franklin Park	(847) 671-9700 www.nelsensteel.com	C. Davis Nelsen II Chairman, president, CEO	\$75.9 -42.9%	60 67	Manufacturer of cold-finished bar steels
265 H. W. LOCHNER INC. ¹⁴ Chicago	(312) 372-7346 www.hwlochner.com	Harry W. Lochner Jr. Chairman	\$75.7 7.3%	83 430	Engineering consultant
266  CENTRO Chicago	(312) 397-3330 www.centro.net	Shawn Riegsecker President	\$75.6* -8.0%	100 100	Technology and media services
267 LOEBER MOTORS INC. Lincolnwood	(847) 675-1000 www.loebermotors.com	Michael Loeber President	\$75.2 -27.7%	126 126	Auto dealership
268 CHARLES INDUSTRIES LTD. Rolling Meadows	(847) 806-6300 www.charlesindustries.com	Joseph T. Charles Sr. President	\$75.0 -4.5%	90 450	Manufacturer of telecommunications, marine and industrial electrical products

* Acquired by Armonk, N.Y.-based IBM Corp. in March.