

Business of the Year winner J.F. Electric truly cares about area, others around them

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
February 8 2017 11:40 PM



EDWARDSVILLE - A company with a long and storied history in **Edwardsville** was presented the **Business of the Year Award** at the city's annual economic breakfast Tuesday morning.

Edwardsville Mayor Hal Patton said it was an honor to present the Business of the Year Award to J.F. Electric.

“This group works extremely hard to be great individuals,” Patton told the audience at the Edwardsville Breakfast. They care about others around them and that is a recipe for success they have achieved locally and nationwide. Today, J.F. Electric employs over 245 people in Edwardsville plus 775 others nationwide.

“The business supports many other local businesses and prefers to do business in the community. They are always active in the community. You can often catch them volunteering and donating to the community. J.F. Electric continues to grow and strives to invest in the Edwardsville area.”

J.F. Electric President Greg Fowler was not able to attend the function, so the company’s **vice president Jonathan Fowler** accepted the prestigious award.

“The company (J.F. Electric) has made a conscious effort to get involved in the local community from sponsoring local events, donating funds to the city and more,” Jonathan Fowler said. “We want to set precedents for other businesses to follow. Edwardsville is a greater place because of the support of businesses here and the support and community involvement works for everyone.

“I truly believe there has never been such a great time to work and live in the city. As a lifelong Edwardsville resident, I have seen opportunities for the area to grow and the community flourish. We are working on a lot of new projects in Edwardsville and you will see many more coming. One is Donco Electric right next to J.F. Electric in the Gateway Commerce Center. We will continue to do our part to bring businesses to the city of Edwardsville and we are hoping others will follow.”

J.F. Electric has a storied history. Here is historical info provided by the company:

There's a strong connection between J.F. Electric and the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. At the time, St. Louis served as a jumping off point for westward expansion. The Louisiana Purchase Exposition, also known as the 1904 World's Fair, was part of a building boom in St. Louis that attracted people from across the globe - including James Fowler, who was born and raised in Pennsylvania and, after completing eighth grade, became a plumber.

Sometime around 1903, twenty-year-old James left home and relocated to St. Louis, lured by the many work opportunities in the plumbing industry as a result of the World's Fair.

Business was good and St. Louis became the new home for James, who lived and worked in the Tower Grove area in south St. Louis. In 1925, James purchased a 1924 Dodge Screenside Truck and started The Fowler Company, a plumbing contracting business. That truck provided the mobility to better serve a growing customer base and also worked as a mobile advertisement.

James had three sons that worked in the family business with him - Fenton, Charles and Fred. During the Depression in 1937, Charles Fowler, Greg's grandfather, moved from St. Louis to Centralia, Illinois, and opened a branch office to pursue better work opportunities in the oil and railroad business. His proximity to Scott Air Force Base in Belleville, Illinois, helped get his business off the ground with a lot of contract work coming from the military personnel living on site. Due to his success, his brothers joined him and James eventually closed the St. Louis office and retired in Centralia to be near his family.

Through the years, The Fowler Company expanded their family business to include Plumbing, Heating, Air Conditioning, Sheet Metal and Electrical Construction Services. In 1969, due to the downturn in the oil and railroad business and business in general in Southern Illinois, Charles's son James (Jim) Fowler, (who is current owner Greg's father), purchased the electrical division of The Fowler Company and started what is now known as J.F. Electric located in Edwardsville, Illinois.

Shortly after leaving Centralia, Jim's father, Charles, retired and moved to Islamorada, Florida. His brothers closed The Fowler Company soon thereafter.

Since 1969, J.F. Electric has grown to be one of the Top 100 Privately Owned Businesses in the St. Louis Metro East Area. Under the leadership of Greg Fowler, J.F. Electric's 2015 Revenues exceeded \$180 million, which was an increase of over 25 percent in revenues from the prior year.

Today, J.F. Electric is a commercial, industrial and utility electrical contractor providing construction, maintenance and engineering services in the electrical industry. The company prides itself on creating connections with and for the customers they serve, as well as many partners on a variety of projects. The company works hard to deliver value from concept through completion and are proud of the tradition of excellence forged over four generations.

About J.F. Electric

J.F. Electric is an electrical contractor that's in the business of creating connections - providing engineering expertise, backed up by construction and installation know-how in a diverse range of service offerings - from utilities and commercial projects to industrial and telecommunications customers.

Economic Impact

With the continued growth of the company, J.F. Electric creates more job opportunities which brings more people into the community.

Currently J.F. Electric employs over 245 people in the Edwardsville area and total of 775 employees nationwide.

J.F. Electric supports many local businesses and prefers to do business here in the community opposed to outsourcing.

Community Enhancement

J.F. Electric makes donations to many local charities, school districts, and various community organizations.

Recently, the company made a large donation to the City of Edwardsville for A Better Place to Play.

J.F. Electric strives to let its presence be known in the community by showing support at many local events and helping out the best it can.

Future Focus

The company will continue to make capital investments and positively impact the economic health of the Edwardsville/Glen Carbon community.

J.F. Electric intends to continue to grow and invest in the equipment and resources needed to construct and manage large projects both locally and nationwide. Not only is the company planning to expand geographically but also into new areas of work and expertise. J.F. Electric strives to create new job opportunities for the community as the company grows.