

PBS goes back to the basics

COMPANY: PBS Engineering and Environmental.

CEO: Ron Petti.

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Ron Petti is already adjusting his strategy in light of the clouds on the economic horizon.

The president and CEO of PBS Engineering and Environmental says it's time for the Portland firm to more aggressively seek its bread-and-butter work: natural resource planning, geo-environmental work, devising health and safety measures at plants, and geotechnical and civil engineering.

PBS's rate of growth is declining, and it's time to simply pursue basic work and land the jobs. Pet projects — those that are a little more speculative — will need to wait.

Not that a period of slower growth is necessarily bad. Petti views 2008 as a "settling-out year," after 2007's major moves.

Last year, PBS opened a Boise, Idaho, office, obtained two buildings in the Lair Hill neighborhood to provide expansion room, and made a few more people partners — 11 owners altogether now.

PBS employs more than 150 people, about 100 of them locally.

It typically serves institutional clients with multiple locations, such as banks, schools, hospitals and universities. It also



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Ron Petti thinks it's time to get aggressive.

does a lot of work in the transportation arena and in the manufacturing industry.

PBS still has some work to do for itself. The two buildings it purchased are undergoing tenant improvements, and employees will start moving in this spring.

Together, the buildings will add 16,000 square feet of much-needed office space and a 35-space parking lot on Southwest Corbett Avenue.

PBS won't need all the space for itself yet. Petti said the firm has secured two tenants, including testing laboratory Labor of Oregon, which performs work for PBS.