

# Mother Earth's dream teams

## CE News presents the 2008 *Environmental Business Journal*/ CE News Best Environmental Service Firms to Work For

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**A**s human consciousness of the world's dwindling natural resources rises, a fleet of environmental services firms have sprouted to meet the challenge. Providing energy conservation, planning, management, government compliance services, and more, these firms not only offer their employees the benefits and training opportunities it takes to succeed in today's competitive engineering market, but also the honorable task of preserving Mother Earth for the next generation.

New for 2008 is the *Environmental Business Journal* (EBJ)/**CE News** Best Environmental Service Firms to Work For. As a business newsletter written for the environmental industry and published by ZweigWhite, *EBJ* ([www.ebuser.com](http://www.ebuser.com)) provides competitive strategies, new business opportunities, and up-to-date market trends and data to its readers. Together, *EBJ* and **CE News** gave birth to a new program, modeled after the Best Civil and Structural Engineering Firms to Work For, to celebrate today's outstanding environmental services firms.

### The participants

In total, 47 firms participated in the first annual Best Environmental Service Firms to Work For. The Top 20 firms were established between 1973 and 2005 and range in size from 17 to 1,175 employees. Headquartered throughout the United States, 48 percent of the firms are located along the East Coast, 32 percent in the Western region of the country, and 24 percent in the Midwest. Sixty-four percent of the Top 20 firms practice environmental/consulting engineering specialties,



while 36 percent provide environmental remediation/industrial services.

### Overall ranking

**First place** — Fountain Valley, Calif.-based **Pacific Advanced Civil Engineering, Inc.** (PACE) was established in 1987 to provide stormwater, recreational, and environmental water management and design services to its clients. Known for creating an employee-centered workplace, PACE "exhibits a good deal of creativity and flexibility in their firm," according to Judge John Doehring, senior vice president at Chicago-based ZweigWhite. Representative of this are the firm's Town Hall Meeting program, Intranet blogging, telecommuting option, and crazy interoffice projects, including the recent design of a man-made surfable wave by one project team.

"PACE has done a tremendous job in creating a work environment

Each year, all employees of top-ranked PACE travel to a location outside of the office for a day of teambuilding and fun! The last teambuilding event featured a geocaching challenge using GPS tracking devices to guide staff to different locations around a large park.

that motivates and energizes its staff," agreed Judge Barbara H. Irwin, principal at Herndon, Va.-based HR Advisors Group, LLC. "As the employees said of their managers in their corporate survey responses, 'they walk the talk.'"

Performance management and employee training and development are firm strengths as well. Programs include bi-annual employee management reviews and staff goal-setting, in addition to a traditional, annual performance review program. The firm's corporate training and development initiative, PEARL, focuses on employee development in areas of

## Top 20 & Honorable Mention Environmental Service Firms

Rank	Firm	Headquarters	Employees	Website
1	PACE (Pacific Advanced Civil Eng.)	Fountain Valley CA	74	www.pacewater.com
2	GeoSyntec Consultants, Inc.	Atlanta GA	541	www.geosyntec.com
3	Aarcher, Inc.	Annapolis MD	32	www.aarcherinc.com
4	PRIZIM Inc.	Gaithersburg MD	17	www.prizim-inc.com
5	Tighe & Bond	Westfield MA	191	www.tighebond.com
6	Larry Walker Associates	Davis CA	42	www.lwa.com
7	Environmental Science Associates (ESA)	San Francisco CA	235	www.esassoc.com
8	Barr Engineering Company	Minneapolis MN	407	www.barr.com
9	The Forrester Group	Springfield MO	28	www.forrestergroup.com
10	Zephyr Environmental Consulting	Austin TX	56	www.zephyrenv.com
11	Limno-Tech Inc.	Ann Arbor MI	62	www.limno.com
12	Environmental Liability Management (ELM)	Princeton NJ	48	www.elmnc.com
13	Golder Associates, Inc.	Atlanta GA	1,175	www.golder.com
14	Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.	Hartford CT	28	www.fhiplan.com
15	DUDEK	Encinitas CA	217	www.dudek.com
16	Natural Resource Group, LLC	Minneapolis MN	177	www.nrg-llc.com
17	HSA Engineers & Scientists	Tampa FL	235	www.hsa-env.com
18	Haley & Aldrich, Inc.	Boston MA	439	www.haleyaldrich.com
19	Watermark Environmental, Inc.	Lowell MA	34	www.watermarkenv.com
20	Cornerstone Environmental Group, LLC	Bollingbrook IL	86	www.cornerstoneeg.com

Rank	Firm	Headquarters	Employees	Website
HM	Benchmark Environmental Engineering & Science, PLLC	Buffalo NY	15	www.benchmarkees.com
HM	Brown and Caldwell	Walnut Creek CA	1,575	www.browncaldwell.com
HM	EM-Assist, Inc.	Folsom CA	105	www.em-assist.com
HM	Environ	Arlington VA	1,113	www.environcorp.com
HM	The Whitman Companies	East Brunswick NJ	47	www.whitmanco.com
HM	Trinity Consultants	Dallas TX	285	www.trinityconsultants.com

technical excellence, leadership, and laboratory training services.

Benefits include a nine-hole putting course in the office and a "Life Plan" reimbursement for health club membership, aerobics, weight management, and other wellness-related programs.

**Second place** — **GeoSyntec Consultants, Inc.**, Atlanta, offers environmental studies and cleanup, infrastructure engineering, and design and natural resources assessment and restoration services. Established in 1983, the firm enjoys a low volunteer turnover rate of 8 percent, testifying to its employee satisfaction.

"Geosyntec provides an outstanding employee benefits package and bonus program," said Judge Tim Cooper, senior vice president, employee benefits at Atlanta-based Beecher Carlson. "Employee comments consistently applaud the company culture, company

leadership, and great benefits."

According to Judge Stephen Giannotti, president, North Hampton, N.H.-based The Woodland Group, LLC, these benefits include a bonus payout program and a significant investment in both corporate IT and training and development courses, like the firm's annual peer-to-peer technical conference that focuses on the organization's major practices, while encouraging staff interaction and networking.

Employees also report that corporate values including "honesty, integrity, and true professionalism" have a significant impact on the corporate culture.

"It is clear that the organization has created a climate that embraces these values and continues to ensure that they are exhibited in their daily work with employees and their interactions and work with clients," said Irwin.

**Third place** — Established in 1997, Annapolis, Md.-based **Aarcher, Inc.**, provides compliance assistance, conservation, and planning, as well as prevention and sustainability services, to its clients.

According to Doehring, Aarcher offers its employees an "exceptional benefits package," noting the firm's 360 management feedback program and its "aggressive commitment to training and education." Through Aarcher's subsidiary firm, the Aarcher Institute of Environmental Training, employees have access to continuing education courses on a variety of technical and industry-related topics.

"The firm also trains the employees in critical thinking," said Irwin. "They are encouraged to question and debate any environmental technical or regulatory matter with anyone in the company." ■