

Now Alexander is breaking ground as Bureau of Engraving's CEO

Lynne Alexander, the new CEO at the Bureau of Engraving Inc., is doing her part to put the Great Recession behind us and also break new cultural ground at the Minneapolis printing company and commercial art school. The Northeast Side company, informally known as the Bureau, recently took delivery of a \$6 million, 73-inch press that required seven semitrailer trucks to deliver. And in recent weeks the Bureau has added nine people to its workforce of nearly 130. Management has budgeted a 12 percent increase in revenue in 2010 from \$25 million last year.

"We were down about 15 percent in 2009," Alexander said last week. "But we managed to stay profitable [through aggressive expense management and attrition]. We've had our ups and downs, but we had confidence in the future.

"The first two months of this year were the best we've had in a long time."

To be sure, the records go back a long way. The company was founded in 1896 and owned a century ago by Alexander's great-grandfather, John Colgate Buckbee. The 68-

year-old Alexander may be in her rookie year as CEO, but she is a veteran business executive and has served on the company's board for nearly three decades. She succeeds longtime CEO Tom Stuart, who will continue as president of the Art Instruction School, a subsidiary that trains commercial artists.

"Lynne's knowledge of the printing and retail business gives her a unique understanding of the printing, point-of-purchase signage and related services most needed by the Bureau's customers," Stuart said. "Her appointment also is a clear statement of our commitment to promotion of women and minorities."

Alexander also chairs the board, most of whose members are women. And she is credited over the years with hiring practices that have led women and minorities to approach 50 percent of the company workforce, in an industry dominated by white male managers.

Alexander also noted the firm's diverse workforce can be an advantage when bidding on government contracts or those of large corporations, such as Microsoft, which demand diversity among its vendors.

To that end, the Bureau is pursuing certification as a female-owned and managed

vendor through the Women's Business Enterprise Council.

"The printing industry is very male-dominated," said Alexander. "Applying for the certification is part of our growth strategy, and it opens the door to large corporations and diversity programs."

The Bureau is among the 10 largest of several thousand Minnesota printers, a group that ranges from big firms such as Bolger and Ambassador to hundreds of ma-and-pa outfits. Nationally, the 32,000-printer industry is losing about 1,000 firms a year through consolidation as small outfits are unable to invest to keep up with technology. Industry revenue is expected to grow by only 1 or 2 percent this year.

The Bureau provides point-of-purchase signs, digital and offset printing, packaging and labels, and marketing services to big retailers and others.

Alexander spent 27 years working for Dayton's in store management and operations, owned two Great Clips franchises, and also ran a consulting business until last fall that did graphic design for small and midsized businesses.

Twenty years ago she was one of the first female members of the Rotary Club of Richfield; she has raised more than a half million bucks through Rotary and the Richfield United Methodist Church Foundation, whose programs include mentoring and assistance to disadvantaged kids in the Richfield schools.

Charles Schulz, the late cartoonist, was a student and instructor at the Bureau's art institute more than 50 years ago, and several of his "Peanuts" characters were based on students and employees. Schulz also endowed a couple of annual scholarships at the art school.

Faegre governance

Leslie Fields, an expert in real estate law, is the first black partner to be named to the management committee of Minneapolis-based Faegre & Benson. She joins Kathlyn Noecker, an employment lawyer, as one of two female additions to the committee that governs the 475 Faegre lawyers who toil from offices in Minnesota, Colorado, Iowa, London and Shanghai.

Veteran corporate lawyer Andrew Humphrey, also a former Wayzata mayor and community volunteer, was named chair of the firm's

StarTribune.com



nine-member management committee this month.

Neal St. Anthony • 612-673-7144 •
nstanthony@startribune.com