## Intermodal Support Services Inc.

155 Intermodal Support Services

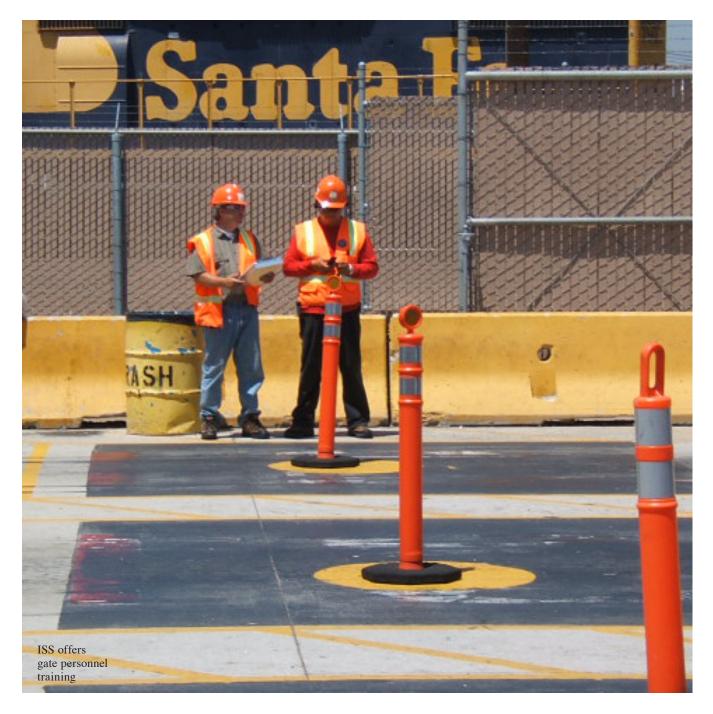


## Family values in the freight world

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# Intermodal Support Services, Inc: **Family values** in the *freight* world

VP Jenny Johnson says this multifaceted company's small size allows it to focus on and become personally invested in each of its customers Written by Militza Richard Produced by Michael Magno

In a world of big players, Intermodal Support Services, Inc. is proud to be a small company. Vice President of Operations Jenny Johnson says they like to think of themselves as "a boutique provider. We don't want to be the largest; we want to stay the size we are. We are proud that the owners of the company are easily accessible to our customers. Our size makes it possible to personally invest and really care."

Founded in 2000, ISS is an equipment management services company based in Jacksonville, FL, with regional offices in Chicago and Los Angeles. Operating both ISS and TransRail Solutions, Inc., a rail-based division, ISS offers services such as pre-lease inspections of equipment, inspector and gate personnel training, and maintenance and repair management. TransRail also offers clerical and administrative outsourcing services. They currently employ around 150 people and operate



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across the United States from Massachusetts ask my dad for money," she says, laughing. to California.

#### A family affair

truly a family business, started by Jenny's parents. Her mother, Pamela Johnson, is the CEO, her father, Marv Johnson, is the COO, and her brother Jeremy is the Equipment and Safety Director. The company is also a certified woman-owned business recognized by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) as a Diversified Business Enterprise (DBE).

While some might find working with their entire family unbearable, Jenny Johnson says it and join the family business. makes the business stronger.

a lot more done. There are no office politics and office hours are often extended to discussions over dinner," she says. Working together motivates them to keep the business up and running. "If we go out of business, it's not like I can go

#### Born into the industry

In fact, Jenny has been part of the industry Despite their cross-country scope, ISS is since she was a little girl. "I began attending the Atlanta Intermodal Expo meetings as a kid. When I was 8 or 10 years old, I was handing out pens at my dad's booth."

> After graduating from the University of Georgia, Johnson stayed in the area and obtained her first job at Norfolk Southern Railroad in Intermodal Operations. During the internet boom of the late 1990s, she moved to an internet banking company, before finally deciding to move to Florida

She began working with ISS in 2002, "At times it's very frustrating, but we can get and along with her mother launched TransRail Solutions, a branch of ISS that focuses on intermodal outsourcing services and most recently rail terminal operations. Johnson describes ISS as being similar to an insurance company in that they do not do repairs themselves. Rather, Vice President of Operations, Jenny Johnson

they protect the railroad's interests by making sure they are not being overcharged or billed really rewarding." for unneeded repairs.

According to Johnson, many of the railroads were experiencing increased maintenance and repair expenses. ISS put its inspection processes in place and immediately made quantifiable decreases in those expenses. Johnson says, "Since ISS was founded, we have saved our customers millions of dollars."

ISS is both reactive and proactive. They inspect equipment after it's damaged and before it's even taken out.

In 2008, Johnson began a three-year term on the IANA board of directors, in the supplier division. "I really enjoy it. I'm not the West Coast near the rail hubs. Johnson points out first woman, but I'm currently the only woman that some of them have been with the company and the youngest person on the board," she for quite a while. proudly says. Johnson is grateful that she is

"able to give back to the industry I love. It's

#### Trends in a falling economy

**ISS** operates

Massachusetts

from California to

Like much of the current economy, the freight industry is struggling. ISS is having to cut back just like everyone else. "As a family business the worst thing you can possibly do is anything you feel will not be a benefit to your employees. It's kind of heartbreaking. I hope it doesn't get much worse," says Johnson.

Employees are essential to ISS because they are a service-based company. The Johnson family often travels to visit its other locations. Most of their 150 employees are in Chicago and on the

Despite the falling economy, the company

does have plans for expansion, mainly in TransRail. Johnson mentions some exciting plans are in the works for training programs and equipment inspection, but will not reveal more, saying, "We don't want to tip our hand."

In addition, newly issued government safety standards requiring more inspections in the railyards are opening up a new market for ISS. With everyone in the industry hoping to win these new jobs, ISS must move quickly to establish a presence. The company has a strategy for obtaining some of this new market but, once again, Johnson does not want to reveal too much.

With these expansion options, ISS and TransRail hope to remain firm during the coming year. Their goal is to "stay strong, stay solid so we can continue to provide jobs for our employees and quality service to our customers," says Johnson. "If we grow, that's gravy."

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### **FACTS AT A GLANCE**

**COMPANY NAME:** Intermodal Support

**CEO:** Pamela Johnson

**OPERATIONS:** Intermodal Equipment

ESTABLISHED: 2000

**REVENUE:** \$11 Million

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