

Dennis Electric Inc.

Over 60 Years of Hard Work and Strong Relationships

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Dennis Electric Inc. (DEI) was founded in 1930 by Memphis native R.M. Byrd, originally as Byrd Electric. In 1945, Charles H. Dennis Sr. purchased half the interest in the small electrical business. When R.M. passed away in 1950, Charles Sr. purchased his shares from R.M.'s wife.

Over the years, many things have changed at DEI. The business

has grown immensely and the reins have been passed to current generations. Today, Charles Sr.'s son, Charles Dennis Jr., owns the business with his five children, all of whom are involved in day-to-day operations.

"I followed in my father's footsteps," Charles Jr. explains. "When he was in the business, he was very involved. My father was





satisfied to have a business just so big that he could the pay bills for his family and he didn't try to be the biggest. I was more aggressive."

The lessons Charles Jr. learned from his father were deeply embed. "When I was about 12 years old, I decided to go to school to become an engineer and join the company," he says proudly. "I have an electrical engineering degree. I got married between sophomore and junior year, while going to school here in the city. I went to work, went to school, studied and that went on for six days a week. Somehow I always wound up with a lab class on Saturday. When I got to where I was going to graduate, I was so sick of school and contracting. I decided to work for Firestone, but after about nine months I realized it just wasn't for me. I came back to the family business and I have been here ever since."

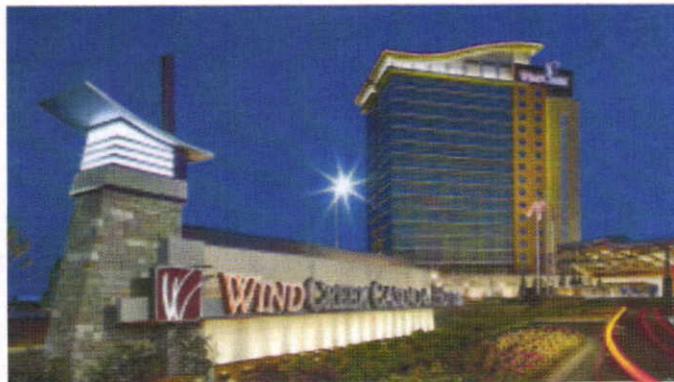
Making Connections

DEI is now primarily an electrical contractor for commercial and industrial clients. "I don't worry about competitors," Charles Jr. explains. "We have been around for a long time."

The home office is in Memphis, Tenn., with a branch in Rogers, Ark. Currently, the team also has a field office just outside of Montgomery, Ala., which Charles Jr. notes is nearly the same size as the company's headquarters.

The team works with nearly all types of commercial and industrial clients, with recent projects that include: hospitals, hotel, data centers, schools and correctional facilities, among others. DEI is qualified and capable of performing all types of electrical work, although Charles Jr. notes that he generally subcontracts out low-voltage aspects of a job, such as fire-alarm and intercom systems.

The company has been busy in recent years, having completed a number of major projects. The team of over 100 operates with licenses in several states, including Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas and Alabama; however, DEI has traveled as far as Colorado for a loyal customer's new facility. The company's projects range in size from small to very large.



One interesting project, according to Charles Jr., was completed in early 2013 when DEI tackled an electrical contract for a state penitentiary in Tennessee. The large and complex project took over two years to complete.

Managing a Changing Market

The team made it through the recession without any major damage. Changes in health care legislation have management concerned, but Charles Jr. has faith that things will work out one way or another. The more immediate challenge, he explains, is a shrinking labor pool.

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“We don’t work with just anybody,” he says. “In our immediate area, we have a very large job, as well as some mid-sized and smaller work. We have had a lot of trouble finding the labor. That drives our costs up. This was a sudden change and it blindsided us a little. All of a sudden, we can’t find quality, commercial electrical technicians for our team.”

While the labor shortage has hampered margins, Charles Jr. is not discouraged. “We try not to look too far ahead,” he notes. “We hope good business remains just over the next hill, but we don’t

have anything major planned out. We take it as it comes and we are always looking for opportunity without going outside of our capabilities. I don’t worry about it and I never have. I believe the Lord will put you in the right place at the right time, though He won’t do the work for you.”

Charles Jr. goes on to explain that the company has a good reputation in the mid-south and the industry. “Our price is reasonable and we will do it right and in a timely fashion,” he continues. “We don’t claim to be the least expensive, but our customers know we can do as good as, or better, than anyone else. We’re working overtime because we don’t have the people, which can get expensive, but our people understand it. They work, we work. We have customers who have turned to our service for 26 to 27 years that are big companies.”

For the foreseeable future, Charles Jr. and his team will keep going down a familiar road. Regardless of the shaky economy, the company maintains a focus on hard, quality work. The crew has an upcoming project that will bring challenges, but nothing DEI can’t handle. Dennis Electric Inc. will continue to deliver timely work that exceeds the expectations of customers. •

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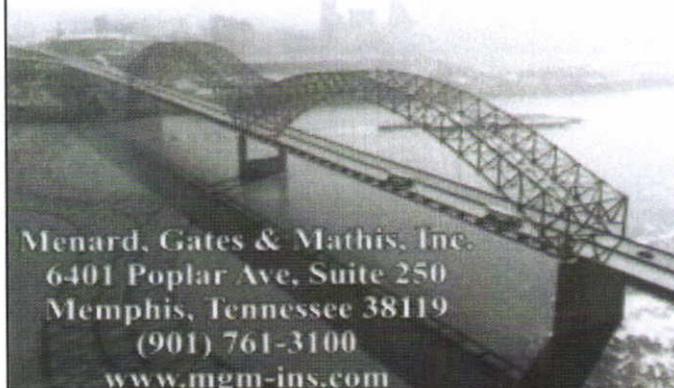
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