



**Kamal Shahid, president of KS Engineers, based in Newark, has grown the company from a two-person firm to 191 employees, and had \$25.5 million in revenue in 2011.**

DUSTIN MARRA

## Understanding the lay of the land

KS Engineers' Newark know-how is helping the firm stand out

BY KEN TARBOUS

**K**amal Shahid arrived from Bangladesh in 1983 ready to capitalize on his skills as a civil engineer and realize his goal of success built on hard work and perseverance.

Today, his 20-year-old engineering, survey and construction management company, Newark-based **KS Engineers P.C.**, has grown from its roots as a two-person firm to 191 employees, including about 50 licensed engineers and surveyors, and more than 80 professionals with engineering degrees, bringing in an estimated \$25.5 million in revenue in 2011. The company has set a goal of growing to 300 people over the next two to three years.

"It's basically the American Dream that you come here from a Third World country, you stay focused, you do what your parents have always taught you — to do the right thing and do good for yourself," said Shahid, 51, president. "I really think that nowhere in the world could you do what you can do here in this country."

Approximately 75 percent of KSE's work

is in the government sector, mostly for state and local governments, with the rest of its projects done for private colleges, developers and other companies, said Shahid, who became a U.S. citizen in 1987. Over its 20-year history, the firm has worked on more than 1,200 projects, including the Newark light-rail line and reconstruction of the Route 9 bridge parallel to the Garden State Parkway's Driscoll Bridge.

In 1991, armed with a master's in engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology, in Hoboken, Shahid started KSE with a partner, opening a single office in New York. The company grew, moving its headquarters to Newark in 1994 and expanding into more markets in the past several years: Philadelphia, in 2006; Utica, N.Y., in 2008; and last year, Mount Laurel. Revenue has grown quickly over the past five years, as well — from \$12.3 million, in 2006, to an estimated \$25.5 million last year.

"We did not want to stay small. We wanted to diversify," Shahid said. "We just don't do work for two or three agencies or clients. At any given time we probably have at least 90 to 100 different clients that we are working for."

One of those clients picked KSE as much for its talent as its understanding of the local market. In 2010, **The Parking Spot**, a Chicago-based owner and operator of off-airport parking facilities in major U.S. markets, hired KSE to work on the design and permitting process, and construction management, for three lots near Newark Liberty International Airport and one lot near JFK International airport the client had recently purchased.

"We needed to do pretty dramatic up-

BY THE NUMBERS	
Corporate revenue	
■ 2011:	\$25.5 million (estimated)
■ 2010:	\$25.1 million
■ 2009:	\$21.9 million
■ 2008:	\$18.6 million
■ 2007:	\$12.9 million
■ 2006:	\$12.3 million

*Source: KS Engineers P.C.*

grades on all of those properties to reposition them as premium facilities. When we went to tackle the properties, we went looking for a firm that knew the civil engineering business, that knew the parking business and knew their way around Newark and the approval process in Newark," said **John Lyons**, vice president of development for The Parking Spot. "I have found the firm to be exceptionally client-focused. Obviously, they're managing their business; sometimes with other engineering firms, that can put us at odds. They always default to doing what's best for the customer."

Shahid said he is proud of those types of assignments that impact people's daily lives, citing as an example the company's work on the state Department of Transportation's \$80 million Route 18 extension project in Piscataway.

"I've seen firsthand that people's lives have changed — the way they commute, the way they use the roads — and I've heard a lot of good things about that project from people at Rutgers and in Piscataway," Shahid said. "That changed the whole landscape. We feel extremely good about it."

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### AT A GLANCE

#### KS Engineers P.C.

- **HEADQUARTERS:** 494 Broad St., 4th Floor  
Newark, 07102  
(973) 623-2999
- **MANAGEMENT:** Kamal Shahid, president
- **EMPLOYEES:** 191
- **PERFORMANCE:** Revenue has risen from \$12.3 million, in 2006, to \$25.1 million, in 2010 — and an estimated \$25.5 million in 2011.