

Leffel, Otis & Warwick, P.S.

Accounting Firm

Davenport, Washington

www.levfelotisarwick.com



Leffel, Otis & Warwick is an accounting business with four full-time and four part-time offices, located in and around the small farming communities of Davenport, Wilbur, Odessa and Ritzville. Since the firm's offices are widely dispersed, the technology they use to communicate and collaborate is vitally important. They installed a Virtual Private Network (VPN) at each of their four primary locations, and those VPNs communicate using a single Internet Service Provider (ISP). This results in a significant cost savings. It also allows the firm to meet the needs of a sophisticated community that expects reliable Internet access, as

approximately 85% of the tax returns they process are filed electronically. Leffel, Otis & Warwick is on the verge of another business improvement. They are preparing to install a fiber network, which will create a more powerful and transparent connection between locations. Jim Leffel, one of five company partners and the son of one of the founders, is looking forward to the upgrade. He says, "A fiber network will allow us to really streamline our process. What we have now is essentially four separate networks with the data stored in four locations and it's a bit cumbersome."

Jim and his partners have a solid understanding of the unique needs of rural areas because they all grew up in or around the communities they serve. The decision to build their multi-site company in Eastern Washington area wasn't just a business move; for Jim it was a deliberate decision to come home. He explains it this way, "My wife and I have a house out of town and we have a six minute commute at the most. The day it took me an hour and a half to go ten miles in Seattle was just about the end of it for me." Jim has learned that succeeding in a rural economy requires preparation and creative thinking. His advice for new rural entrepreneurs is to build a good team and create a good business plan. He believes it's important to know going in whether your business plan will work in a rural environment and what tools you'll need to make it work. Jim loves the rural lifestyle and has been able to replace commute time with quality community involvement. He says, "Life in a rural community is what you make of it. You have to be committed to getting involved and becoming a part of the community."

Over the years, the company has specialized in meeting not only the accounting needs but also overall business planning for many of their agricultural clients. A long list of these current customers view Leffel, Otis & Warwick as their personal financial services staff. While that customer base remains their primary business focus, Leffel, Otis & Warwick is poised to deliver these services to a wide variety of businesses across the state. Jim says, "The immediate future is fiber. It will give us the ability to manage more work more efficiently and that means growth." The combination of solid experience, cutting-edge technology and a new, larger office in Ritzville makes the firm a perfect fit for small and mid-sized companies that want to outsource financial service functions.

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Partner, Leffel, Otis & Warwick, P.S.