

Kitsap Payroll Services

Headquarters: Poulsbo, WA
Company Established: 1994
Employees: 4 full & part time
Primary Business: Payroll Services

After several years working for a major telecommunications provider, Jim Craswell, returned to his hometown, Poulsbo, Washington to start a business. He had seen the small business market begin to grow and observed many people leaving the corporate world in big cities and moving to smaller towns to live and work. His years of work with customers at the telephone company led him to start a firm to support small business payroll needs.

Kitsap Payroll Services began in 1994 in the basement of his family farmhouse in rural Kitsap County. Services include a variety of payroll functions and employer tax assistance. When the firm first started, he installed a second line for faxing. Soon he had three lines and, as his business grew, he needed greater bandwidth so he invested in ISDN. Once DSL became available, he switched to it. DSL meets his current business needs for web applications, computer networking, fax, voice, and data transmission.

Jim now has three employees, all working from the farmhouse. Although Kitsap Payroll Services provides services on par with the ADPs of the world, he has told his staff he can not compete with the big guys when it comes to wages and benefits. He can however, offer "family flexible" hours that many big corporations either can't or won't. This has allowed him to tap into an abundant supply of skilled bookkeepers that have left the structured urban workforce for family reasons.

"Half of our 175 customers are located in Kitsap County but many are located throughout the state, country, and even the world." Each evening Craswell receives time punch data uploads from time clocks around the state, and as far away as Hawaii. His clients and his staff have real time access to employee paid hours and expenses, all accessible over the internet. The Assisted Living Home industry is a primary market niche for his time keeping services. Direct deposit is also an increasingly optimal service, and Craswell points to a particular client mission agency that has 50 missionaries located all over the world. The missionaries can now walk out of the "bush" to a shopping mall, in a country like the Philippines, and withdraw their funds from an ATM machine on payday.

"Because our company has been built around small business needs, we can be flexible and customers feel like we are their own personal payroll staff", says Craswell. The relationships he has with clients have paid off as the company's growth has been strictly word of mouth and through 3rd party referrals such as CPA firms.

Craswell believes that the west coast is a few years behind the national trend of outsourcing payroll services. As the Northwest catches up with this trend, Kitsap Payroll services expects to see continued growth. At some point, the company will move to commercial space in the town of Poulsbo. Zoning and commercial land restrictions have driven up the cost of real estate in the area and may be a challenge when he is ready to expand. If that is the case, Jim is up for the challenge and committed to continuing to live and work in a place that provides quality of life for his family and those he employees.

Contact Information:

Jim Craswell, CEO
26436 Big Valley Road NE
Poulsbo, WA 98370
360.779.4494
jim@kitsappayroll.com