Nobel laureate Anatole France wrote, "Some succeed because they are destined to, most succeed because they are determined to." This statement is key to understanding how JTV, Inc. of Saint Petersburg, Florida has built a two-person TV inspection and cleaning business into one of the most successful municipal sewer and storm contracting firms in the state.

Ten years ago, JTV, Inc. founder Joyce Taylor Velitschkoowski was a computer programmer in the building industry who had hit the glass ceiling. She was ready for a major career transition and during a lunch with her father she had an opportunity to view a pipeline television inspection being done and thought, "I could do that." Never one to jump blindly, she began a month long research project into the demographics of her region to determine how much competition existed and the extent of the area's requirements for this service.

After reviewing the results, Velitschkoowski realized that she could create a profitable enterprise and prepared a business plan to present to the local banks. She was politely refused since she had never been in business before, and no financial institution was willing to take the risk. Determined that this small set back would not stop this venture, she took a second mortgage on the family home and ran four credit cards to the max. Within six weeks, she and her family had built the company's first camera truck in her driveway. Before the truck was finished, JTV had its first county contract, which eventually developed into a million-foot contract over a four-year period.

Velitschkoowski was the first and only employee for a while. Ten years later, she still runs multiple rigs, a camera truck, a CCTV lining truck and handles all the manhole and point repairs. "I'm out in the field with the crew every single day. I'm very hands-on but it is a real joint effort." They now run 11 rigs, have 12 crew members, two office staff, a master mechanic and machine shop, as well as dedicated staff for maintenance and inventory. JTV built their client base with the municipalities initially from a strictly low bid situation, but that has changed. They are now a turn-key operation and through them, cities have one source for anything related to inspection and rehabilitation for sanitary and storm drain lines.

"The best thing we did was to go into rehabilitation and not just stay focused on cleaning and TV inspection. You can make a good living at it but you can't be successful by just offering one or two services, you have to have multiple services to really afford growth and expansion within a company," Velitschkoowski related.

Customer referral has been key to JTV's steady growth and expansion. They have gained a reputation for taking on the difficult. Velitschkoowski explained, "Something is going on inside a pipe that you don't see every day-like a metal shaft that's been driven in-you need to take extra precautions. If we don't have a piece of equipment for the rehab, we'll build something to make the repair. If someone tells a city it can't be done, they call us and we figure a way around it and complete the rehab successfully."

Another method for building business has been done through "piggy backing." Florida allows any open bid/municipal contract to be piggy-backed, meaning that any other municipality can take that contract, write it, copy it verbatim and use it in their own city because the prices have been set in an open bid. Using this marketing tool, JTV has been able to take one annual contract and develop it into over 35 other municipal city contracts.

With all of this business, additional equipment was needed to keep pace with the increased demand. The company had been building their own equipment for nine years. The team efforts and input of Joyce's computer knowledge, her husband's engineering background and technicians' mechanical ability produced some highly sophisticated equipment that had served the company well but it was time to look outside the group for their needs.

Velitschkoowski related, "The industry has reached a point now that you need to have more sophisticated equip-
JTV's ten tips for building a successful inspection and rehab business

1. Look for ways to use your equipment that are not typical. Find niches to put your equipment into use to expand market share.

2. Talk to people where you find them. Some of the best employees can be found in the most unlikely places.

3. Be honest, even if it means losing a little money. Base your recommendations on your client's needs, not your profit needs.

4. Do it right and don't cut corners. You can't hide anything for long.

5. Avoid financing. It is better to pay as you go and grow slowly.

6. Plan for the lean times. Don't overextend the company financially.

7. Control peak times. Don't overestimate the company's staff production capacity.

8. Reinvest profits and research those investments carefully.

9. If venturing into a new market, don't play at it or test it; enter it wholeheartedly and work at it vigorously.

10. Never give up!

and treated the same way sewage is. We saw a potential opportunity to increase the utilization of our inspection and rehab services for storm lines and we got ready for it.

She continued, "We've always had large diameter cameras, however with the new system, we now have a steerable tractor with a self-leveling device which enables us to televise pipes of the same tract for 24-inch up to 120-inch diameter pipes with the same camera, eliminating the need for multiple systems. Therefore, in these features, we are able to easily adapt the equipment for sewer contracts to storm contracts.

Florida most of the old storm water pipes installed are corroded cast iron. Due to a certain salt level in the ground water, the metal is eaten away. Rehab is roughly 50% the cost of conventional trenching and replacement.

Another issue in this region is that the storm line runs into many houses. A municipality's expenses would not only include replacing the line, but also the liability of being able to get a trench box inside a 15'x10'x8' area without destroying someone's property or dwelling in the process.

The same inspection and rehab processes JTV has been successfully marketing and implementing for cities and sewers systems could also be applied to the storm systems. They began marketing it to cities and successfully converted sewer contracts into storm contracts.

Although the core focus of JTV's business for the past five years has been cleaning and TV inspection, during the last five years they have also witnessed a shift in rehabilitation. They began to see the proclaimed probability of rehabilitation becoming more widespread in the next two to three years because of current EPA mandates. The decision to enter the rehab market would again prove profitable and continue to hold prosperity for excellent future growth.

"Municipalities are being required to rehabilitate their systems to address those structures that have been left dormant or nearly dormant for over 40 years. They are showing the signs of wear and tear and age. The future of this industry is wide open for rehabilitation in all forms: manhole, mainline, storm, but I believe that the prime focus for the next five years will be lateral rehab," Velitschkowski explained.

The lateral rehab market has been something the company entered slowly and it will take to fruition by the end of the year. They have just been awarded a large contract for a multiple lateral rehabilitation project. To complete the project, JTV plans to modify another compatible camera system to their existing mainline camera to create a launching device in order to do all the work from the manhole.

The addition to the videolocate pipe survey reporting software system improved production levels within JTV's multiple TV inspection department. "Even though it is basically the same information contained in the handwritten conventional reports, the new software generated reports with the classification, and the codes make it so much more professional that it isn't even an option not to have..."
the software anymore," Veltschowski said.

With the software, Veltschowski and her crew are able to create a database for their customers along with a printed bound report, set up in subsections of the sewer system to be used as a quick reference guide.

JTV plans to add an additional service for their clients by implementing an additional software module for their existing program that will archive and index prior survey footage and reports onto CD-ROM. This service will help clients cut expenses in archival organization, storage and eliminate the possibility of survey tape degradation, and generate an additional source of income.

With a staff of 15 and more growth planned, Veltschowski has taken a unique approach to finding and keeping good people. JTV has an apprenticeship program in place, which offers anyone from any industry, or just out of school, the opportunity to learn trenchless technology. The only requirements for acceptance being a clean driving record, passing a drug test, and a willingness to learn.

Veltschowski related, "We've found great people in unlikely places. We don't limit our staff choices to people from the industry, we prefer to go outside and mold them and teach them quality skills. Should they choose to leave, that's okay, they'll leave with an ability to go anywhere in the country and earn a great living."

All of the field crew members are multi-task. Veltschowski believes in everyone being able to jump in and do anyone's job. By cross-training and being multi-task, the crew is more efficient and can handle staff shortages effectively and reduce down time.

Veltschowski and JTV have been able to survive peak and lean times equally well due to a practice of re-investment and planning. "Don't overextend the capacity of the company or the number of contracts you have at one time so that quality suffers," Veltschowski stated. "Quality over quality has never been an option for us."

As they realize profits, the bulk of it goes back into building the business. Veltschowski related, "It's tempting to take the perks out that come with owning a successful company, but I know the economy is fickle and by reinvesting, rather than financing and overspending, we extend the life and stability of the organization."

In fact, their re-investment plans include the retrofit of the second of their inspection vehicles with a Poweprint camera system and a third inspection vehicle retrofit to include another camera system and grouting capabilities.

Veltschowski has been amazed at the recognition she has received in her community and has wondered if it's because she's a woman in construction or because her story is truly the "Great American Dream" of building something out of nothing into a multi-million dollar enterprise. Her sheer determination and willpower to succeed are highly visible. She shares her "secret of success," a philosophy and way of thinking that she has held fast from the beginning of this endeavor.

"Never give up. If they tell you no, think about it, dream about it, and figure out a solution. There is very little that is impossible."