Success in the high-tech arena.

C.H. Fenstermaker & Associates, a surveying and engineering company whose development of computer information systems has helped it expand from a largely energy industry clientele to a wider range of government and private businesses, had 1990 revenues of $5.25 million, a 20 percent jump from 1989, earning the company 86th place on the 1990 Acadiana Top 100.

Those are robust numbers for a company of Fenstermaker's size, and represent how successfully the company has diversified from a business base that was about 85 percent energy-related five years ago to about 50 percent oil and gas today. The company is profitable and in the position to make continual investments in the technology that keeps it on the leading edge of its field.

So what does company chief William H. Fenstermaker feel is one of the best measures of the company's success? "We've been fortunate enough to keep all our people," Fenstermaker says. "In the bad times we didn't have to lay anybody off, and I'm as proud of that as anything."

If there were no layoffs, one reason is that the company found something for everyone to do—by developing new computer-based mapping techniques that have not only enhanced the firm's ability to serve its energy clients, but opened new markets as well. Fenstermaker's computer programs attach intelligence to maps, developing a geographic information technology that is attractive to municipalities, the U.S. Air Force, and similar clients. For example, the company has developed an emergency energy plan for the state of Louisiana.

Because installing and servicing such technology often involves licensing of products that the company has already developed, much of the revenue thus obtained can fall directly to the bottom line—important in the high-tech arena, where the...
Fenstermaker's applications as enhancement to their own products' abilities. For instance, Fenstermaker is an IBM Business

stations from firms which see the bright economic future for South Louisiana but cautions that no one should forget the business lessons learned during the down years. "All the tough times aren't over, and we still have to be responsible," he says. "Let's make sure we have the cash before we leap out and do something. We have to be just as careful as we were three or four years ago."

The success of Fenstermaker & Associates is enjoying also illustrates that there are bright opportunities for well-managed and well-focused small companies. The company is in several joint ventures with larger technology companies and is supplied with emerging hardware and work