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## Space — the final frontier

Florida dealer designs water treatment system for the International Space Station.



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*By Morgan Lyle*

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How's this for a service call – from Indian Harbour Beach, Fla. to Kodiak Island, Alaska?

When your business is high-tech water treatment, you go where the work is. Advanced Water Engineering Inc. designs and installs water treatment systems for use in electronics manufacturing, housing developments, and defense and aerospace plants across the country.

And besides, Kodiak Island isn't the most distant place you'll find Advanced Water Engineering's work. A system designed by the company is part of the International Space Station, orbiting 240 miles above earth.

Less than 15 percent of the company's annual sales occur within 100 miles of its headquarters, said company President and founder Dave Silverman. More than two-thirds of its business comes from outside Florida.



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*Dave Silverman stands near a commercial RO system his company installed.*

But whether the job is the space station, the Kodiak Island Missile Launch Complex, the Kennedy Space Center or the Happy Octopus Car Wash (both in Cape Canaveral, FL, 15 miles from AWE's headquarters), the company treasures its reputation for doing high-quality work. Silverman said



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treasures its reputation for doing high quality work, Silverman said.

The Greenville, SC native and Georgia Tech graduate used to be on "the other side of the desk." It was while working in the field of water purification and wastewater treatment that he realized how much business there could be for a vendor of high-quality commercial water systems.

If you're going to work 80 hours a week, you might as well be doing it for yourself," said Silverman, who studied chemical engineering at Georgia Tech.

He formed Advanced Water in 1986. Today, the company has a staff of 18, five full-time, and includes four subsidiary businesses that handle specific functions.

While Advanced Water is willing to travel for the right job, it's company policy is not to take on projects so big that they overwhelm the business and leave current customers feeling neglected. Repeat business and referrals are important to AWE; attentive customers service is the best way to get them.

"We won't take a project over \$1 million," Silverman said. "At \$1 million and over, we would be diverting too much of our resources away from our current customers."

Recycling wastewater for commercial and industrial customers is among the company's most popular products. It can save huge sums of money for manufacturing businesses that consume vast amounts of water.

AWE designed a system for Silverman's former employer Advanced Circuitries that reduced water usage from 7 million gallons per month to 2.5 million. Each day, about a million gallons of contaminated wastewater are cleansed of heavy metals and restored to electronics-grade, deionized water on a system installed by AWE, Silverman said.

The company's location, near the famous point on Florida's Atlantic coast where the space program has developed, is a good place to do business, Silverman said.

In addition to the valuable prestige of having worked for the space center at Cape Canaveral itself, AWE benefits from being so close to many high-tech NASA subcontractors. Each is a potential customer.

"Florida's a wonderful place to work," he said. "People need quality and don't mind paying a reasonable fee for it."

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