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THREE QUESTIONS

Rhea N. Bernard

Firm's president puts energy into redevelopment

Barry Skoultchi has always thought of himself as a self starter, a leader and entrepreneur.

That passion has been even more evident since he took over ownership of the Whitman Companies.

Based in East Brunswick, Whitman is a leading environmental and engineering management company. As president of Whitman, Skoultchi said part of his responsibility is to present the mission, the values and goals of the company and have the various factions buy into that. Even though Whitman includes multiple engineering disciplines, they work together well and operate as a team, he said.

To see an environmentally contaminated property go from basically a pile of rubble to a new, productive redevelopment makes Skoultchi feel like they've done something good for the state and for the public.

The Skillman resident said he also is passionate about reducing dependence on foreign sources of energy. Being involved in renewable-energy projects allows him to back up that passion with action and not just words.

Skoultchi spoke to The Star Ledger about environmental and engineering management.

Q. What's new in the state in the field of renewable

energy?

A. New Jersey is one of the top states in the nation as far as incentives go for renewable-energy projects. Right now, the renewable-energy market is driven predominantly by the states. In New Jersey, we have Solar Renewable Energy Credits, which are critical to the financial viability of solar renewable-energy systems. We also have a mandate from the state's board of public utilities that a certain percentage of energy used by the state come from clean sources like solar energy.

Without the state's input and guidance, the economic incentive to pursue renewable-energy projects isn't there; in most cases, without the incentives, these projects would not work financially.

Q. What new markets are you entering?

A. We have been focusing for some time on renewable energy. As a company, we've opted to approach emerging technologies in a different way. We're not just focused on the engineering aspects. We've invested in a new company, Pro-Tech Energy Solutions, to provide true turnkey services, allowing us to develop financial modeling, design systems, and build, maintain and monitor those systems for both public and private commercial facilities. Energy efficiency and renewable energy are the

wave of the future, and where we see the most growth for our company going forward, at least in the short term. Renewable energy and energy efficiency are the cornerstone of my firm's three- to five-year visioning plan.

Q. What was your dream job as a child?

A. I wanted to be an architect. I still have my old Lego sets, which my 7-year-old now plays with at home. I loved building things out of Legos. I enjoy history, too, which is part of the reason why I love baseball. I just appreciate things that are old and established. I like older architecture, as opposed to the new designs. Sometimes we get to go through old factories, and I find myself marveling at the way they were built. There's so much history to it. I've always enjoyed that.

Please submit suggestions for "Three Questions" to rbernard@njlns.com.



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