



TEE&E TRUCKING, INC. (MBE/DBE)



Thomas L. Nellums, Sr. realized at an early age that it was going to take more than hard work to achieve success.

He had to stay focused and rely on his faith while overcoming obstacles. Thinking back to when he was just seven years old, Nellums recalls, “I always loved trucks, and that’s what I wanted for Christmas. I used to get in trouble for walking three blocks from my house to a trucking company just to watch the big trucks roll in at the end of the day.”

After graduating from high school in 1975, Nellums pursued his dream job. He wasn’t just watching the trucks roll in, he imagined himself driving a dump truck one day. How exciting for a young man considering the average weight of a dump truck is just over 26,000 pounds. The skills to operate these heavy-duty trucks require accuracy for loading and unloading, parking, driving city streets and highways, special licensing, medical tests, and certification as a professional truck driver.

Being an experienced truck driver is crucial in the dump truck industry. His on-the-job training allowed him to excel. In 1985, he realized he had what it took to start his own company. However, access to capital presented a challenge. Several lending companies denied his loan applications. Not deterred, Nellums continued to make his dream a reality. As he states, “I kept saving and finally, I was able to get an SBA loan.”

Nellums used the loan to buy his first dump truck. Today, he owns 30 trucks. As Nellums describes, “We haul raw materials and debris from demolished buildings with the dump trucks and we haul steel for commercial projects with my tractor trailers.” His company, Tee&E Trucking, Inc. is currently

under contract to haul debris from sewers that are being built and from an underground low voltage cable project in the city and county.

Serving as an MBE, the company hauled broken concrete on several runway improvement projects at the Airport. The company performed Airport contract work for 25 consecutive years. “The work we did makes me proud, and I am honored to be recognized for my success because we have been out there doing a good job for many years,” claims Nellums.

Nellums has been in the trucking industry for over four decades. His company is celebrating 36 years in business and continues to thrive. He plans to add to his fleet of trucks, but he says that finding drivers is a challenge. He points out, “The students graduating today cannot drive manual transmissions, they have to be automatic. So, I have purchased four automatics and I am looking for more.”

He credits his family with helping him run the business. Thomas Nellums, Jr., a recent college graduate, helps manage the company’s 13 employees, a nephew maintains the trucks, and two brothers have worked for the company for 30 years.

Nellums’ entrepreneurial spirit reaches far beyond Tee&E Trucking. He is chairman of the board for MOKAN, the St. Louis-based construction contractors organization dedicated to helping minorities enter and maintain jobs in construction. He has served as board chair for 11 years and has helped nearly a dozen companies get started.

Yaphett El-Amin, Executive Director of MOKAN states, “Tee represents the true essence of a soldier, wrapped in a minority contractor’s uniform. He helped us purchase our first building and mentors students in our apprenticeship program. We are blessed to have him as part of our organization.”