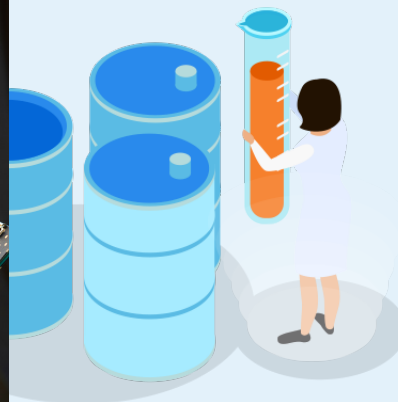




KIMHEC ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING (WBE)



Achieving Business Success While Helping Others Clean Up the Environment

Most communities say they want cleaner, safer water. Kim Cole is helping communities achieve that goal. In 2016, she started a specialty consulting firm for wastewater management. In only four years, KimHEC Environmental Consulting has grown from two to 20 active clients, primarily municipalities, who depend on the company's expertise and data analysis to monitor industrial wastewater.

"Most city wastewater treatment facilities are designed for sanitary contaminants as opposed to the wide range of toxins that industries discharge," said Cole. "We help municipalities identify pollutants of concern from their industries, determine danger levels, and develop a process to permit and monitor the hazards."

"It's not like it was back in the industrial revolution," said Cole. "Today industries care about the environment and work with municipalities. Sometimes they just don't know what kind of testing needs to be done or how to implement effective training."

While monitoring municipal wastewater systems is nothing new, KimHEC uses the latest tools in data analysis to take clients to the next level. Those tools make it easier for the communities to manage pretreatment programs, make data-driven decisions and follow Environmental Protection Agency guidelines.

The company has clients in Missouri, Illinois and Iowa. They hope to expand into other states where cities have a significant industrial base but are not large enough to warrant full-time staff. KimHEC has recently won new municipal contracts in Wentzville and O'Fallon, MO. Located in the St. Louis neighborhood known as

The Hill, the company now employs four people, including a second engineer and an employee with a law degree. They will be hiring a new computer engineer intern this spring.

Certification as a woman-owned business is a new tool Cole is using to help clients meet requirements for wastewater grants and low interest loans when needed. "Getting certified as a WBE was a great experience for me," said Cole. "The Business Diversity Development staff at St. Louis Lambert International Airport helped me work through the process to demonstrate my financial independence and show that I built this company on my own. Seeing it from their perspective helped me realize what I had accomplished and that empowered me to build the company."

Cole believes in cultivating sustainability whenever possible. She has chaired the City of Webster Groves' Sustainability Commission since 2014 and recently stepped down to help with the OneSTL regional sustainability organization. The company supports Engineers without Borders and has a long-term goal of sponsoring charging stations for electric cars for clients.

Cole has earned degrees from Purdue and Clemson but also credits her success to her family. She is one of six children, including a twin sister, that grew up in a hard-working family. She hopes to pass on those values of hard work to her children, Chase, Russ and Hadley.

Cole enjoys watching both her children and her clients grow and develop into strong independent advocates for the environment. At work, she is currently focusing on expanding computer analysis capabilities to give clients a fresh perspective on their data. This, she believes, is the best way to improve the environment and build more meaningful relationships between industries and municipalities.