



CEPHAS Industries (a minority-owned manufacturing and service business) was founded in 1995 by Morris and Chiroya Cephas. They began with a firewood business serving residential and commercial customers. The company remains under the management of Morris Cephas, President/CEO with its primary office located in Richmond, Virginia.

In its first year, the company attracted over 100 customers. In order to feed the firewood business, Morris decided to perform tree work and land clearing. There would be small structures on land clearing projects that required demolition to be performed, as well. Over time, CEPHAS became involved in larger commercial demolition projects, thus a new construction firm was formed, CEPHAS Contracting.

CEPHAS Industries has spun off the firewood business to focus on three major business divisions:

- Biomass, as a raw alternative fuel product
- Single-Stream Recycling Services and Waste Consultation
- Construction & Demolition & Debris Recycling – LEED Reporting and Commodity Trading of Recyclable Materials

Their customer base, according to the line of business, can include large utility companies, various sized businesses, contractors, schools, non-profit entities and commodity buyers. CEPHAS Industries is in a rapid growth stage. Each line of business will potentially stand on its own and become very lucrative and profitable. A major company in the waste industry has contracted with CEPHAS Industries to service its recyclable waste stream generating several thousand dollars per month. Other notable customers are the Richmond Coliseum, Cottrell Communications, Sneed's Nursery, and West Cary Group. They will exceed a million dollars in revenue in 2012 and continue to grow revenues at a 20 % annual rate for the next 5 years. Their strategic plan is to expand into 20 similar markets in the next 10 years.

Their service is unique because they service from the inside of the business. They also quantify recyclables collected and report the amounts back to the customer for their use. They have a competitive advantage because of their speed to market and their ability to collect, process, and measure recyclables. Currently, CEPHAS Industries is in the process of hiring additional personnel which could total as many as 100 new employees over the next five years.

CEPHAS Industries has a 90,000 square foot facility where it sorts, separates, and packages collected recyclables. They currently lease the facility and will need to add automated equipment to support their growth. The challenge will be funding this rapid growth and hiring the needed employees. Within the next two years, CEPHAS Industries will become one of Richmond's major small business success stories.

CEPHAS Industries has been a client of GRSBDC for over 8 years and has used SBDC counseling and resource referrals as the business grew. In 2011, GRSBDC created a Volunteer Advisory Board with experienced executives to assist CEPHAS Industries with its latest and most aggressive growth strategy.