



For Immediate Release

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WordSouth named to the Inc. 5000 list of nation's fastest-growing companies

RAINSVILLE, Alabama — Inc. magazine today announced that it has ranked WordSouth on its list of America's fastest-growing companies.

The magazine's annual Inc. 5000 list — which has included the likes of Microsoft, Dell, Domino's Pizza, Pandora, Timberland, LinkedIn, Yelp and Zillow over the years — is the most prestigious ranking of the nation's fast-growth businesses.

"We serve rural broadband providers and electric cooperatives, and for a company with such a narrow focus to make the Inc. 5000 list requires two key ingredients," said WordSouth co-founder Stephen V. Smith. "One is talented employees who are dedicated to our mission, and the other is progressive clients who trust us to help them improve life and expand opportunities in their communities. We are blessed with both."

WordSouth was founded on New Year's Day 1996 by Smith and his wife, Michele. They launched the company from their home, based on one small contract with an electric cooperative. Twenty-four years later, the couple sold the 30-employee agency to Oregon-based Pioneer Utility Resources.

"When we acquired WordSouth in July, we knew they were thriving by focusing on relationships and a full host of services for rural broadband providers and electric cooperatives," said Pioneer CEO Michael Shepard. "We plan to continue expanding

WordSouth’s impact on rural America as we combine our efforts as the leading communications group in the industries we serve.”

A complete listing of this year’s Inc. 5000 companies — including profiles and an interactive database that can be sorted by industry and geography — can be found at www.inc.com/inc5000.

Ranked No. 4198, WordSouth is one of 73 Alabama companies on the 2020 list, and one of 456 companies in the advertising and marketing category. Inc. 5000 qualification and ranking criteria are based on the past three years of sales.

“The companies on this year’s Inc. 5000 come from nearly every realm of business,” says Inc. editor-in-chief Scott Omelianuk. “From health and software to media and hospitality, the 2020 list proves that no matter the sector, incredible growth is based on the foundations of tenacity and opportunism.”

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About Inc. Magazine

Founded in 1979, Inc. is the only major brand dedicated exclusively to owners and managers of growing private companies, with the aim to deliver real solutions for today's innovative company builders. Total monthly audience reach for the brand has grown significantly from 2,000,000 in 2010 to over 25,000,000 today. In 1982, Inc. introduced the Inc. 500, which showcases the fastest-growing privately held companies in the United States. Twenty-five years later Inc. expanded the list to the Inc. 5000 to help readers get a deeper understanding of the entrepreneurial landscape.

About WordSouth

Based in Rainsville, Alabama, WordSouth serves electric and telecommunications companies from Texas to South Carolina, and from Florida to Minnesota. With more than 30 employees in five states, WordSouth has deep experience and understanding of the rural broadband industry, along with a history of service to community-based electric utilities. Through print and digital publications, as well as managed marketing programs, WordSouth helps broadband providers educate, inform and engage their communities in their broadband programs while helping all utilities tell their story, market their services and train their people. Learn more at WordSouth.com.