

U.S. Small Business Administration, South Florida District: Loan programs. www.sba.gov or 305-536-5521.

Small Business Development Center: Florida Atlantic University, www.fausbdc.com or 800-801-6520.

Broward Alliance: County's official public/private partnership for economic development. Assistance with relocation and expansion to Broward. www.browardalliance.org or 954-524-3113.

Broward County Library/Bank of America Small Business Resource Center: Main Library, 100 S. Andrews Ave., 954-357-7439.

SCORE: Counselors to America's small business, www.score.org. Offices: Boca Raton, 561-981-5180; Fort Lauderdale, 954-356-7263; Hollywood, 954-966-8415; West Palm Beach, 561-833-1672.

Enterprise Development Corp.: Works with companies on matters such as strategic planning, edc-tech.org or 561-620-8494.

The Florida Venture Forum: A networking group that identifies sources of capital and assists in business plan writing. www.flvencap.org or 813-335-8116.

Odeon Group (Small Business Administration Intermediary): Offers class on how to get an SBA loan and start a business, 10 a.m. Wednesdays, Miami, 305-681-9600.

Florida First Capital: Private nonprofit that offers the SBA's 504 loan program, ffcc.com or 888-320-5504.

WEB SITES

www.sba.gov/advo: SBA's Office of Advocacy, a voice for small business and source of small-business statistics.

www.sunbiz.org: Florida's Division of Corporations Site, offers information on doing business in Florida.

www.eflorida.com: Enterprise Florida, about and from the public-private partnership that is the principal economic development organization in the state.

www.business.gov: U.S. Business Adviser, federal government information.

ushcc.com: U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, promotes Hispanic-owned businesses.

www.irs.gov/businesses/small/index.html: IRS small business site, tax forms, tax information on starting a business, guidance on selecting the proper business structure. The above resources might charge fees for some services.

Small Business

Profile

He's built a solid business

Accounting firm geared to contractors

BY ROBYN A. FRIEDMAN
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

When Rich Shavell was a young boy, he liked to build things with blocks. Today, he helps his clients build much larger structures.

Shavell runs **Shavell & Co. PA**, a Boca Raton accounting firm that specializes in representing contractors and others in the real estate industry. His clients include developers, general contractors, manufacturers and distributors, for which he provides a full range of accounting services.

One might say that Shavell was born to be an accountant. His family was rife with certified public accountants, and he knew early on that accounting would be his likely career path. What Shavell didn't know, however, was that he would ultimately become one of the nation's foremost experts on accounting for the construction and real estate industries.

After graduating from Drexel University with a degree in accounting, the Philadelphia native and certified public accountant began his career at what was then one of the Big 8 accounting firms. He stayed there through four tax seasons, before ending up at a regional firm in the Philadelphia area for 11 years. It was there that Shavell began representing contractors and developers and discovered his love for the industry.

"I've always had an interest in real estate and an appreciation for what these people do," said Shavell, 44. "I like being involved in an industry that drives the economy, has a huge impact, is very creative and produces such amazing things."

After relocating to South



ESTABLISHED: Rich Shavell is considered one of the nation's foremost experts on accounting for the construction and real estate industries. **Staff photo/Nicholas R. Von Staden**

Florida in 1999, Shavell became director of construction and real estate services for a 50-person accounting firm. But it didn't take long before he left to open his own firm.

"It was time to take a leap and do the things for which I had been trained — to run a consulting and accounting practice," he said.

Shavell & Co. opened in

2002 with two part-time employees and Shavell. Now the firm has seven full-timers, and Shavell is about to double the size of his office to 2,000 square feet.

Much of the firm's growth is due to Shavell's reputation. He actively participates in three construction associations, Associated Builders and Contractors, the Construction Financial Management Association and the American Society of Professional Estimators, and spends about 15 percent of his time working on their behalf.

Shavell has testified before Congress and the IRS on proposed tax laws affecting the construction industry. He has also designed courses that were approved by the Construction Industry Licensing Board as continuing education courses for Florida contractors.

"Rich is very well-versed in tax law, especially when it comes to contractors," said Lowell Knaus, vice president of Mello Concrete Service Inc. in Miami, a client of Shavell's for five years.

Knaus said that Shavell discovered an excise tax deduction for Mello's equipment that allowed the firm to save about \$6,000 in taxes. The firm's prior accountant was not aware of the deduction.

"Rich has a lot of insight that other CPAs don't have because he specializes in the field," Knaus said.

Ironically, despite his knowledge of the industry, Shavell has done few real estate projects on his own. "I'm constantly asked by clients to get involved in deals," he said. "But you really have to do it with a full level of commitment because otherwise you don't necessarily know what you're buying. I guess I'm just a conservative investor."

Robyn A. Friedman is a freelance writer. She can be reached at RAFriedman@att.net.

SHAVELL & CO. PA

Business: An accounting firm specializing in the construction and real estate industries

Where: 7700 Congress Ave., Suite 3105, Boca Raton

Owner: Richard R. Shavell

Established: 2002

Employees: 7

Advice: "Stay focused on what you do best. We see small business owners try to expand, whether geographically or in a different line of business, and sometimes they lose focus on what they do best. The toughest thing is for guys to accept what they do and don't do best."