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Tim Berry (right), co-owner of Sierra Telephone Systems, works with employees Doug Culp (left) and Eric Holby at Raley's in northwest Reno.

## Small suits Sierra Telephone Systems

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Sierra Telephone Systems Inc. has proved its staying power. Now, one of the oldest privately owned telecommunications companies in the area is celebrating its 20th anniversary.

The Reno-based company's success, despite the presence of larger, corporate providers in Northern Nevada, can be attributed to personalized customer service and quality products, said co-owner Tim Berry.

As the only Toshiba telephone systems distributor in Northern Nevada, Sierra Telephone has carved out a niche in a competitive market.

### Business & technology

"We have a customer-oriented approach, so if someone calls for help, they don't get shuffled around," said Doug Culp, service/sales manager. "We are their point of contact."

The hands-on approach is important to Berry.

"I have a title that makes me sound important, but I will get out there," said Berry. "Everyone here does. I will go to their location if that's what it takes and that's what makes us stand apart."

Berry and co-owner Greg Schuster are veterans in the local

### AT A GLANCE

**COMPANY:** Sierra Telephone Systems Inc.

**FOUNDED:** 1985

**HEADQUARTERS:** Reno

**LOCATION:** 3570 Barron Way, No. A

**PHONE:** (775) 747-1111

**WEB SITE:**

[www.sierratelephonesystems.com](http://www.sierratelephonesystems.com)

telecommunications industry. Bell Corp. employed both until the company was broken up in 1984. The following year, Sierra Telephone Systems was born as a full-service telephone systems and network cabling company.

During the past 20 years, Berry said the industry has changed significantly and his company has changed with it.

"Twenty years ago, we programmed phones using wire diagrams," he said. "Now we use laptop computers and can program systems remotely."

Besides offering phone systems, Sierra Telephone can install auto attendant/voice mail external paging systems, fiber optics and computer-telephone integration.

The company also offers finance leasing and rental programs. The mission, according to the company's Web site, is to be a one-stop shop for

SEE SMALL ON 3E

## Small/Size can be advantageous

From IE business phone systems and computer networking.

Culp said the most recent, exciting service is Voice over Internet protocol, which is done by a computer system as opposed to a phone system.

Also available is a system that incorporates a centralized auto attendant that is accessible to employees at different locations.

Although the company has four employees, Sierra Telephone Systems has shown it can play with the big boys. Some of its projects include the Amazon.com distribution center in Fernley and the new Nevada JobConnect center on Prater Way in Sparks.

Jim Dunnivant, center manager of JobConnect, said he is glad the center chose Sierra Telephone.

"They had provided service for

NevadaWorks," said Dunnivant. "Since they had such good service, they were chosen to do this site as well."

Dunnivant said the building used to be a vehicle warehouse. Sierra Telephone was responsible for installing a 100-extension phone system and computer network for the 16,500-square-foot building.

"Doug is the guy that was here on the ground level," he said. "Anytime I called, he would walk me through the problem. I would have to give them five stars."

Sierra Telephone's size can work to its advantage when attracting business, said Craig W. Rauchle, chief operating officer and co-CEO for Inter-Tel Inc. of Reno, a public telecommunications company.

"There's certainly a place for them in the market," Rauchle

said. "Many smaller companies and smaller enterprises offer a personalized type of service that is appealing to many."

The market trend, Rauchle said, is leaning towards outsourcing telecommunications services that can provide more services.

"We see the pendulum swinging toward bigger companies that can bear many more services and group it all together so there is one point of contact," he said.

The fact that Sierra Telephone Systems is a smaller, local company that can still provide multiple, state-of-the-art telecommunications services gives customers the best of both worlds.

"We are driven by the Toshiba products we represent and our customers to meet the challenges of the 21st century," Tim Berry said.