

Already, the company has two dozen clients, including federal agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service, financial institutions and small businesses.

The social enterprise bit is pretty straightforward: SecureRMS provides jobs for those with disabilities, provides a needed service and earns money.

The business provides a revenue stream that helps offset Waban's costs of providing services to disabled children and adults at a time when support from government agencies is shrinking, said Waban Executive Director Neal Meltzer.

The profit is useful and welcome, but it isn't the primary motivation.

"If we wanted to make money, we would have automated the production line," Meltzer said. The reality is that the employees Waban can provide to SecureRMS would have a difficult time getting a job in any economy, he said.

Enter SecureRMS, where currently four disabled adults work part-time removing plastic tabs and metal clips and other contaminants and sorting white paper from colored paper prior to it being fed into a hopper and shredded to a size that is twice as small as industry standards.

By the end of the year, said Meltzer, the company plans to provide employment for eight disabled adults and continue adding workers in the ensuing years. As well as workers who must have the stamina to stand for long periods at the production line, the company also plans to provide work in a different area of the facility for more severely handicapped individuals who can work at their own pace.

Meltzer said the project has been in development for three years and is affiliated with two national organizations, one of which is the Secure Document Alliance. Formed in 2005, SDA, based in Salt Lake City, Utah, is made up of non-profit agencies with the same goal as SecureRMS: to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

"We're a group of non-profits like Waban," said SDA Member Services Coordinator Kia Bradford. "Our Primary goal is to get national business for the smaller companies so they can compete."

SDA currently has 79 member companies across the country engaged in document destruction, said Bradford. While the smaller companies get contracts, from local companies, the SDA helps secure contracts from national corporations for entities like SecureRMS.

On a recent weekday, the Journal Tribune visited SecureRMS. But visitors don't just open the door and walk inside; one must be let in. That is just one among many security features in place so customers know that confidential document destruction really is confidential. Once let in, visitors must sign in.

The facility contains video surveillance and a number of other security features, including security around the outside perimeter.

When documents are collected from customers, there's a chain of custody that is carefully followed to guarantee proper handling, said Meltzer. Personnel undergo seven-year background checks and collection trucks are GPS-monitored. "If the truck is moving too fast, we get an e-mail; and if it is off route, we get e-mail," said Meltzer.

Specific procedures are followed when documents are collected and when they're brought into the facility for shredding. The trucks are weighed. There are bar codes on the special bins customers use to deposit records that are to be picked up for destruction.

The SecureRMS facility is under the watchful eye of Mark Levasseur, retired after 20 years in government intelligence. He's head of security as well as production manager.

As the company ramps up to full production, right now, he's the guy who does everything, including sending the documents through the shredder. Meltzer said the goal for the first year of operation is to shred 1.2 million pounds of paper.

The shredded bales, at 1,200 pounds each, are picked up by Georgia-Pacific, which in turn uses the material to manufacture recycled paper, completing the cycle.

The customer receives a certificate guaranteeing their confidential material has been destroyed and they earn a "green" certificate once 17,000 pounds of material has been destroyed – which, Meltzer pointed out, is 20 trees. Meltzer said as the company grows, it will offer "community shredding days," for local residents.

It's all part of that social enterprise and fulfills Waban's social mission, he said: Providing a quality service and providing jobs.