

## Engineering success

Georgetown-based Envirosep has grown from a dream into an industry leader

BY JOANNA ARNSMEYER

**ENVIROSEP BEGAN** with Tim Tilley, founder and CEO, taking the biggest risk of his life.

“There comes a time in everyone’s life when they consider doing something on their own,” says Tilley. “Beginning Envirosep was mine.”

Envirosep started upstairs in Tilley’s house 28 years ago. Tilley had an engineering degree and industry experience and was ready to take the leap.

Envirosep is now a full-service engineering and manufacturing firm specializing in innovative modular fluid handling, heat transfer and energy recovery systems. The company is served by Santee Electric Cooperative.

In 1996, Envirosep began with a business plan to target textile companies by building wastewater reuse systems using membrane separation technology. That is where the company derived its name, Envirosep, which stands for environmental separations. But, with the downturn of the American textile industry, Envirosep needed a new business plan.

“When things fail, you start over and do anything to provide for your family. If someone asked me to sell them my step ladder, I would have,” says Tilley.

Envirosep started over with three employees and a rented building in Earls, South Carolina. They then moved to Georgetown in 2002 and planted new roots. Georgetown was where Tilley wanted the business to be because it kept the company local. Envirosep began focusing on fluid handling, heat transfer systems and any other related technology clients requested.

“In simple terms, fluid handling is pumping water around,” explains



Thomas “Rett” Cox, part of the ASME team, works on a stainless steel tank.

PHOTOS BY JOANNA ARNSMEYER



Barry Howard (left) was hired as Envirosep’s third employee by Tim Tilley (right). Today, Barry Howard Boulevard runs through the heart of Envirosep, named in honor of one of its most dedicated employees.

Tilley. “Heat transfer systems are the heating and cooling of industrial equipment and sometimes the heating and cooling of a building space.”

Tilley believes what sets Envirosep apart from other businesses in the industry is its expertise in building complex systems in modular form, which

he says is the “future of the industry.”

Envirosep’s projects range from small, standardized packaged pumping equipment to complex, custom modular systems. The field has minimal expertise, Tilley says, and Envirosep is one of the few companies in the world capable of producing the systems.





Founder and CEO Tim Tilley inspects one of the mechanical rooms being constructed by Envirosep.

## Envirosep Profile

- ▶ Founded in 1996 by Tim Tilley
- ▶ Established headquarters in Georgetown in 2002
- ▶ Full-service engineering and manufacturing firm that specializes in fluid handling and heat transfer system applications
- ▶ Expanded their headquarters in 2012 then added a 100,000 sq ft. 4-story manufacturing building in 2022.
- ▶ Currently has 250 employees (including subcontractors).

“We are able to build everything our customer needs in one location, then send it to them in modular form,” says Tilley. “Think of it as a furnished modular home. It gets shipped, bolted together, electricity is connected, and you are ready to go. It is the same thing, just on a more complex scale for our customers.”

Envirosep has completed many high-profile projects over the years. The company built modular equipment rooms for the tallest building in Brooklyn, at 1,000 feet, in Georgetown. The systems were then shipped in modules and put together on-site as crews put up the floors of the building.

The company also built a modular chilled water plant for Yankee Stadium. Envirosep shipped the plant in February 2024 so the stadium could have it in time for the Yankees’ regular season. The Los Angeles Clippers’ new arena, the Intuit Dome, will operate 100% carbon-free and be the only sports arena in the world built



David Baker, one of Envirosep’s welders, works on a base frame.

with 100% embodied carbon concrete. Envirosep helped make that possible by designing and building a modular central utility plant for the arena.

Envirosep also completed projects for the Los Angeles Raiders training facility and Eli Lilly and Company, the world’s largest pharmaceutical company by market value. Other major companies that Envirosep has worked with include Samsung, Toyota and Fiat Chrysler.

Beginning as a one-man operation, Envirosep now has over 250 employees (including subcontractors) and is still growing. A significant contributor to its growth in headcount is its expansion of facilities, which added 80,000 square feet in 2012 and a 100,000 square foot, four-story manufacturing building in 2022. The number of employees at Envirosep has tripled since 2018, when the second expansion began. Tilley attributes Envirosep’s success to the dedication of its employees.

“From a technical standpoint, every single employee we have is above average. Employees are the most important thing—and customers,” remarks Tilley.

Envirosep has obtained the U Stamp and the U2 Stamp from the ASME (American Society of Mechanical Engineers). These certifications ensure the company meets pressure vessel quality control system requirements. Envirosep is the only U stamp holder in northeast South Carolina and the only U2 Stamp

holder in the state. Tilley says this reflects the company’s high-quality workforce.

“We have to perform at high levels in order to receive these certifications,” he says. “We have engineers in almost every engineering discipline on staff, with 20 engineers.”

Envirosep is also on a mission to produce energy-efficient products that reduce energy consumption, lowering greenhouse gases and the carbon footprint. Envirosep has always focused on sustainability considerations and environmental factors.

Along with its business operations, Envirosep is dedicated to the local community. One significant contribution is its support of Horry Georgetown Technical College (HGTC). The company has been involved in the Advanced Manufacturing program, donated tools and supplies for students in the mechatronics program and has an apprentice program at HGTC. Tilley has also been on the HGTC Foundation Board since 2009 and plans to stay involved.

Tilley has held different positions in the community through the Economic Development Alliance, Georgetown Port Task Force, government affairs, and more.

Santee Electric Cooperative is proud to serve industries like Envirosep.

“The relationship between Santee Electric and Envirosep is outstanding,” says Tilley. SEC is a great partner to have in the community.”