

# A3L Federal Works celebrates 7th year of operation, plans to double employee base this summer

by John Mark Shaver FAIRMONT NEWS EDITOR Apr 11, 2021 0 3 min to read



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A3L Federal Works Business and Finance Manager Hollie Reeves, seated, and A3L President and CEO Roya Maher discuss an ongoing IT project. Staff photo by John Mark Shaver



FAIRMONT, W.Va. (WV News) — Fairmont-based IT company A3L Federal Works just celebrated its seven-year anniversary earlier this year, and company founder Roya Maher said she has big plans for her small business in the future.

Maher’s company offers technical support to its customers, “98%” of which she says are federal contractors or agencies. These include the United States Department of Defense’s Automated Biometrics Identification System and the Defense Logistics Agency.

Maher said that A3L Federal Works is involved in software development and testing, biometrics, cybersecurity, procurement analysis, data analytics and more, all of which are used, she said, to protect national security.

“The most important thing is supporting meaningful contracts for our national security,” Maher said. “We have NOAA cybersecurity, and we have DoD ABIS. They’re all for protecting our citizens and protecting our warfighters. We are supporting a meaningful cause, and I’m honored to be providing jobs for our local community and revive the IT jobs here and retain our smart graduating engineers so they can have good, high-paying jobs and not leave West Virginia.”



Maher started her company in 2014, but her journey through the world of engineering began long before that. Maher emigrated from Tehran, Iran, in 1978 during the Iranian Revolution, when she was just 14 years old.

After attending Cornell University and attaining her master's degree in engineering, she worked with General Motors for several years before taking some time off to raise her family.

In the 2000s, she returned to work, including time spent with Northrop Grumman, where she was working when she decided to start A3L Federal Works at the age of 49.

"It has been a wonderful ride," Maher said. "We are constantly growing. I give back to the community, and I love what I'm doing. ... I raised my four kids, and now this is my fifth child."

When Maher first started the company, she was its only employee, but over the years, her employee base has grown to 20 people, two of whom work remotely in San Antonio.

However, thanks to an "award" that Maher said isn't able to be discussed quite yet, A3L Federal Works' is set to double the number of its employees, if not more, this summer.

"There's a great sense of achievement, but it's all because of hard work and having an amazing team," Maher said. "My employees all work hard. It's just a great accomplishment, and I'm not done yet."

While her business is set to grow, Maher said she has no intention of leaving West Virginia. Given the nature of IT work and software development, A3L can practically be run from anywhere, but Maher would rather be in the Mountain State, which she's called home since 1991, than anywhere else.

"I just fell in love with this state," Maher said. "(I love) the culture and the people and the beauty and the nature. It's not crazy. I have family all over the world. ... Whenever I leave (to visit them), it's so peaceful when I get back. I love this state, and I want to give back. ..."

"Most of the contracts that we go after can be done remotely, which is great. That means I can have people who are here. Sometimes it's challenging because you can't find too many graduates who are specifically in the field you're looking for, but I've been lucky so far. I've been lucky and I'm grateful."

Because of her commitment to West Virginia and its residents, Maher said she has become a big supporter of STEM initiatives throughout the state, and she hopes that more students will see the benefits of certain kinds of work and choose to stick around after they graduate.

"I help build the pipeline," Maher said. "I do a lot of sponsorship. I get involved with a lot of STEM-related activities with high school kids and middle school kids. Because of COVID, it has kind of slowed down because everything was in person, but it creates a pipeline so that these kids who are in high school and middle school get excited about STEM and then, hopefully, they'll go to one of our great schools in West Virginia, graduate and then I can hire them."



In fact, while the COVID-19 pandemic forced everyone to make changes, A3L Federal Works wasn't much affected on a work standpoint, but Maher said the virus still brought along its challenges.

"The impact it had was uncertainty," Maher said. "A lot of our pipeline opportunities were pushed aside because the government could not make any decisions, so I didn't meet my goal for revenue for 2020. It's not that I lost money, but I lost opportunities. ... But, I was lucky that the current employees kept going. They kept working. Meanwhile, I was able to hire more employees because we got contracts."

Now, though, Maher and A3L Federal Works are rebounding, and she hopes that, over the next several years, she can expand her company even more and see it flourish like she knows it can.

She is, however, wary of letting the company get too big.

"I don't want to go and become a 900-employee company," Maher said. "My goal is to have around 200 or 300 employees with satellite offices in Maryland and the D.C. area, because that's where all of our work is. All of our customers are there. We're even looking into Huntsville, Alabama, because they have a lot of agencies and, apparently, a shortage of qualified small businesses that are in IT. ...

"I love my company and I want to grow it. I want to give more opportunities to the people of West Virginia and other people, too, but my focus is to keep the talent here and bring more IT work here."

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