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Inland aims to double revenue

Latest acquisition, expansion drive growth

By [Tom Henderson](#)

Detroit-based **Inland L.L.C.** has bought **DeBusk Industrial Services Co.** as part of a strategy to double its revenue to at least \$160 million by the end of the year, and to diversify both geographically and from a reliance on the auto industry.

The company plans to make three other acquisitions this year and plans to open offices soon in Atlanta and Kentucky.

But Inland President and CEO Jeffrey Stark said the company will continue to be based in Detroit as it expands.

"We're very much entrenched in the city of Detroit. There's no moving for us. We have faith in the city," Stark said.

Inland L.L.C. is a holding company for Detroit-based **Inland Waters Pollution Control Inc.**, DeBusk and Ohio-based **PMS Industrial Services**. Both Inlands are headquartered Downriver on Schaefer, just off I-75. Inland Waters does industrial cleaning and maintenance for manufacturing clients; sewer cleaning and maintenance for the city of Detroit; removal of underground storage tanks; and site cleanup at plant and landfill closures.

Inland L.L.C.'s expansion plans are part of a growth strategy initiated by **Strength Capital Partners L.L.C.**, a Birmingham-based private-equity company that bought an 80 percent interest in Inland Waters from Anthony Soave in July 2005.

Strength Capital bought PMS last November and financed the acquisition of DeBusk, a Texas-based firm that does industrial cleaning and maintenance for the oil industry, which closed on March 22.

James Wiggington, chairman of both Inland L.L.C. and Inland Waters, declined to disclose the DeBusk sale price

Wiggington said he hoped to close on a deal to buy a company that has cleaning contracts in the steel industry in two months and on two other acquisitions soon after.

He said DeBusk had revenue of about \$25 million last year and should increase that to at least \$30 million this year. Its management team, including founder and President Andrew DeBusk, will remain in place.

DeBusk has nine offices, in Texas, Louisiana, Illinois and Tennessee, boosting Inland's locations to 26. Inland added about 225 employees for a total of about 850, of whom about 350 are in Michigan, according to Stark.

Stark said the purchase takes the share of auto-related revenue for Inland from about 35 percent to less than 25 percent.

"We're trying to diversify our business mix. Auto is still important. It's a big market for us, but we're trying to diversify business segments and diversify geographically."

Inland Waters reported revenue in 2006 of \$81.8 million. PMS had revenue of about \$20 million. Wiggington said he expects Inland L.L.C. revenue this year, as a result of organic growth and acquisitions, to be between \$160 million and \$200 million.

Roderick Rickman, CEO and president of another Detroit-based industrial cleanup and maintenance company, **MPS Group Inc.**, said Inland's model of diversifying both into nonauto segments and Southern states is one that makes

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sense to him, too.

"As you look at the auto industry, it's expected to make 16 million autos this year, but a lot of that won't be here. You've heard about the book *Who Moved My Cheese?* Well, our cheese moved. Would that mean looking South? Yes, sir," said Rickman, who said his company, too, would remain headquartered in Detroit.

He said the company has locations in Ohio and Illinois and is looking to expand into Mexico and Canada in addition to Southern states, but that nothing is imminent. "We're looking to diversify geographically. Other markets make sense, but our primary focus has been and will continue to be automotive-based," he said.

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