

Chesapeake Marine wins Office Pride franchise fee giveaway

- By Sandra J. Pennecke | sandra.pennecke@insidebiz.com | Nov 10, 2017



Marine Roberto Rodriguez was one of three winners of the Office Pride Commercial Cleaning Services franchise fee giveaway.

Roberto Rodriguez said he was 90 percent excited and 10 percent scared when he submitted his application for Office Pride Commercial Cleaning Services' franchise fee giveaway.

When the Chesapeake man learned he was one of the winners rewarded with the waiver of the initial \$35,000 franchise fee, he immediately became 90 percent scared and 10 percent excited.

The 41-year-old Marine major will retire in July after 20 years of service.

Originally from Houston, Rodriguez has been busy trying to figure out the next step in his life's journey.

His military career as an infantry officer included leading more than 40 Marines and 760 foreign soldiers conducting NATO operations.

"I had the opportunity to lead a training team as camp commander in the Republic of Georgia. That was an amazing experience for me and made me believe in myself that I could do something like this," Rodriguez said. "I had been looking to transition to the private sector to work in anything from operation management to logistic management to transportation management."

He started to apply for jobs and also had a nagging desire to start his own business, but couldn't narrow down exactly what he wanted to do.

Rodriguez attended a career fair in October at the Virginia Beach Convention Center and that's where he first heard of Office Pride.

Local franchisees Valerie and Todd Jones were at the fair and told Rodriguez they were looking for an operations manager. The couple did a mini-interview with Rodriguez and then had him visit their Virginia Beach office for a more detailed interview.

Rodriguez said he got an understanding of what the Florida-based company does, the services it provides and its mission and values.

The Joneses told Rodriguez he'd be better off starting his own franchise and mentioned the company's Veteran's Day franchise fee giveaway.

The contest was open to all active duty service members and honorably discharged veterans. It started Aug. 18 and concluded Oct. 20.

Rodriguez filled out his application, wrote the required essay, completed a personal financial statement and submitted a personality assessment all on the final day of the competition.

Then the call came from the corporate office to tell him he was one of three winners selected by a panel of judges out of more than 500 applicants.

"I never thought I'd win. I was completely floored when it became reality," Rodriguez said.

He immediately called his wife, Nanuka, who was home caring for their two sons, Samuel, 19 months, and Jacob, 2 months. "This was an opportunity not just for me, but for my family and the future of our children," he said.

Next, Rodriguez will meet with the Joneses, who will be his mentors, apply for financing, register for training and begin the process to start his Office Pride business.

He is leaning toward Norfolk for his market territory.

"It feels very good to know I have the team of Office Pride behind me, they want me to be successful and will help me," Rodriguez said.