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- [Tuesday, Jun. 22, 2010](#)
- [Monday, Jun. 21, 2010](#)
- [Friday, Jun. 18, 2010](#)
- [Thursday, Jun. 17, 2010](#)
- [Wednesday, Jun. 16, 2010](#)

[« Back](#)

Go to date:

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- [Monday, Jun. 21, 2010](#)
- [Friday, Jun. 18, 2010](#)
- [Thursday, Jun. 17, 2010](#)
- [Wednesday, Jun. 16, 2010](#)
- [Tuesday, Jun. 15, 2010](#)

[« Back](#) | [Forward »](#)

Go to date:

Search Records:

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- [Tuesday, Jun. 22, 2010](#)
- [Monday, Jun. 21, 2010](#)
- [Sunday, Jun. 20, 2010](#)
- [Saturday, Jun. 19, 2010](#)
- [Friday, Jun. 18, 2010](#)

[« Back](#)

Go to date:

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VOL. 125 | NO. 120 | Tuesday, June 22, 2010

RedRover Emerges From Incubator

MARIA BURNHAM | Special to Daily News

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About six months ago the team at RedRover noticed quarters were getting a little cramped. The sales and marketing company is one of about 26 percolating in the business incubator EmergeMemphis.

And although RedRover hadn't yet been there the three to five years typical for companies in the program, its phenomenal business growth and expanding staff made managing partner [Lori Turner](#) began thinking it might be time to move into their own space. "We just felt it was time to have our own footprint — our own space," Turner said.

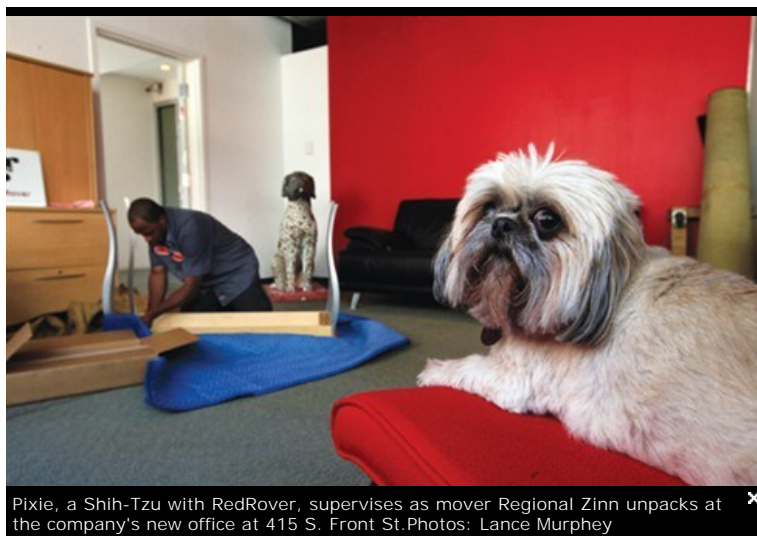
And beginning last Friday, they do. The four-person team moved into the company's permanent location at [415 S. Front St.](#), Suite 121.

The company has seen 250 percent growth over the last two years, Turner said. She attributes that to the company's combination of marketing and sales services, and to the EmergeMemphis program.

The Emerge program has provided a fantastic support system, Turner said. In addition to providing office space, EmergeMemphis has given her access to clients, helped developed business and recruiting strategies and assisted with financials.



Managing partner Lori Turner, left, Trish McLaughlin, Beverly Mattingly and Mike Skelton of The RedRover Co. unpack boxes at their new office at 415 S. Front St. after moving out of the EmergeMemphis business incubator at 516 Tennessee St. on Friday.
Photo: Lance Murphey



Pixie, a Shih-Tzu with RedRover, supervises as mover Regional Zinn unpacks at the company's new office at 415 S. Front St. Photos: Lance Murphey

"The length of stay depends on how fast you get through that initial rapid growth phase when you need the support," said Turner, whose company has been in EmergeMemphis for two and half years. "We got there faster than we anticipated."

Turner's drive and passion were what initially impressed Gwin Scott when he first met with her about joining EmergeMemphis.

"Lori is the true face and force of RedRover, and I see their momentum and

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PROPERTY SALES	54	122	7,891
MORTGAGES	68	187	10,898
FORECLOSURE NOTICES	0	38	5,914
BUILDING PERMITS	0	182	19,347
BANKRUPTCIES	63	120	9,114
BUSINESS LICENSES	14	27	2,670
UTILITY CONNECTIONS	124	246	12,686
MARRIAGE LICENSES	0	37	2,553

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results truly snowballing over the next several years,” said Scott, president of the nonprofit incubator.

Turner started RedRover about four years ago in Bartlett with Julie Lunn. Both women came from a corporate background and noticed there was often a disconnect between what the marketing department was promoting and what the sales department was actually doing.

“We saw the need to bring the two together,” Turner said.

RedRover concentrates on improving the productivity of a client’s sales force with customized sales training and coaching, and using traditional and guerrilla strategies to increase the return on the client’s marketing investment.

When Lunn decided to move to Nashville, Turner decided to move the Memphis operation into EmergeMemphis. Lunn continues as a managing partner with the firm and as a one-woman Nashville office, but the bulk of the operation is centered in Memphis. The firm is about to add a fifth person to the office and then plans to add another two in the fall. In the next three to five years, the firm hopes to have a staff of 10 to 12, Turner said.

“The idea is to hire in teams of two,” Turner said. “A new sales training coach and a marketing person who will work side-by-side on accounts. ”

Some accounts skew more toward the marketing side and others toward the sales training side, but usually all their clients have the need for both, she said.

[Michael Folk](#) has used both at his company Parasol Awnings, though he relies on RedRover most heavily for sales management and training.

“They’ve been great,” said Folk, who has been using RedRover for four years. “They’ve been really good for us. They’ve helped us increase our sales. ”

He has used them for continuing sales training, a total overhaul of Parasol’s marketing plan, and now as an outsourced sales manager.

“From start to finish, the whole spectrum of sales, starting with marketing, they’ve helped us with at some point over the last four years,” Folk said.

A lot of the companies RedRover works with are growing businesses and they may not have room in their budget to hire chief marketing officers or sales executives, said Trish McLaughlin, a member of the RedRover team.

“We can provide that service for them,” she said. The MED Foundation started out using RedRover for project work, but when the fundraising arm of The Regional Medical Center at Memphis decided it needed to ramp up its marketing, it turned to RedRover on a more full-time basis.

“I am amazed at the amount of work they are able to get done with the few people they have,” said [Tammie Ritchey](#), executive director of The MED Foundation. “I never feel like we are competing with other clients for their time. We feel like we are their only client. ”

Among the work RedRover had done for Ritchey and her team: it redesigned the foundation’s website and created a campaign to bring viewers to it called the 5000 Touches campaign. (Instead of bringing just 5,000 new visitors, it brought 11,000.) It planned out the Zero to 60 fundraiser with [Morgan Freeman](#).

But one of RedRover’s most important roles has been helping the foundation get the message out to donors about what it does and where the money it raises goes, Ritchey said.

“With what RedRover was able to develop for us, we’ve been able to keep relationships and even forge new relationships in a difficult PR time for The MED,” Ritchey said.

Though Turner is excited about what the future holds for the company in their new space, she said they were going to miss their old home.

“We’re going to miss this space and the entrepreneurial spirit that moves through the hallways here,” Turner said.



