

Atlantic Industrial scaling new heights in scaffolding



NICHOLAS GRINER | STAFF

CEO Pete Vrettakos and President Steven Sisney are eyeing expansion.

TIM HYLAND | CONTRIBUTOR

When Pete Vrettakos left his job as a foreman with a Baltimore scaffolding company back in 1980, he had no plans on staying in the business.

Then he got a phone call that helped him change his mind.

"It wasn't a growth-oriented company, and I was looking for something better," said Vrettakos, who was just 26 years old at the time. "I never really thought I would stay in scaffolding. It was just something I knew how to do. But within a week after I left, I got a call from a [former client] who said they were looking for a contractor to give leads to."

Vrettakos may not have been crazy about scaffolding, but he knew an opportunity when he saw it. He took up the offer, founded a company he called Atlantic Rigging Corpo-

ration and very quickly got to work. Soon after, he was working his first job — the vice president's residence at the U.S. Naval Observatory.

He later tackled the iconic cement silos of Baltimore's Lehigh-Portland Cement and, by year's end, had won what must have been considered one of the plum contracts of the scaffolding world: Setting up the rigging for President Reagan's inauguration.

"We immediately starting getting leads for high-profile jobs," Vrettakos recalled. "They were sending them fast and furious. It took right off."

That growth hasn't ever really stopped. Today, the company that was Atlantic Rigging is now Atlantic Industrial Inc., a Columbia-based industrial services firm, with subsidiaries in Chicago and Texas. Last year the company posted revenue of \$137 million.

It was a significant jump from the \$57.4 million earned the year before, and was good enough to rank Atlantic No. 5 on the BBJ's List of fastest-growing private companies.

"The overall market is very strong," said company President Steven Sisney. "And we see that being maintained over the next several years."

Not surprisingly, Atlantic has changed quite a bit since 1980, when Vrettakos found himself juggling pretty much all facets of the business. The company, partly owned by Baltimore's Sterling Capital Partners, now has 1,650 employees, including 75 in Baltimore.

And though scaffolding remains its expertise, Atlantic offers a variety of complementary services that have helped it blossom.

"It's a 'bundled service' concept that we developed in response to our customers' expectations," Vrettakos said. "We do insulation, fireproofing, general labor. It's all very synergistic — most of these services have to be performed on scaffolding anyway."

Along with this new expertise, too, has come a new client base.

Atlantic has turned away from its traditional targets — government buildings and other regional jobs — and is now focused mainly on the massive, and lucrative, petrol-chemical sector. Top clients include Chevron, Mar-

THE SCOOP ON Atlantic Industrial Inc.

Location: Columbia

CEO: Pete Vrettakos

Industry: Specialty contracting

2006 revenue: \$137 million

athon Oil and Constellation Energy, as Atlantic leverages its unique expertise to handle jobs that very few other companies can.

"In our market space, we're one of the three major players that compete for the large petrol-chemical [clients]," Sisney added. "We're competing

on our speed, our safety, our service."

So far, that philosophy has paid off — and more growth is predicted. Vrettakos said the company is eyeing expansion, with both the West Coast and Canada as likely targets.

TIM HYLAND is a contributing writer in Philadelphia.

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 R E P R I N T

Fastest growing privately held firms in the Baltimore area¹

Ranked by revenue growth from 2005-2006

Prior rank	Name Address Phone / Internet	2006/2005 revenues/ % change	Employees local/total	Owner(s)	Chairman/ president/ CEO	Type of business
n/a	1 TX2 Systems Inc. 810 Landmark Drive, Suite 128, Glen Burnie 21061 410-787-1920 / www.tx2systems.com	\$750,000/ \$50,000/ 1,400%	10/ 14	Juan Tosoni	Juan Tosoni/ Juan Tosoni/ Juan Tosoni	software for managing mergers, acquisitions and divestitures
8	2 Optimal Solutions Group LLC 3225 Ellerslie Ave., E303, Baltimore 21218 443-451-7060 / optimalsolutionsgroup.com	\$4.2 million/ \$1.2 million/ 250%	8/ 44	Mark Turner, Tracye Turner	Tracye Turner/ Mark Turner/ Mark Turner	public policy research
n/a	3 Bay Technologies Consulting Group Inc. 201 Defense Hwy., Ste. 202, Annapolis 21401 410-224-2595 / www.btcg.net	\$1.7 million/ \$616,000/ 175.97%	4/ 30	Catherine Rice, George Sellner	n/a/ George Sellner/ Catherine Rice	management and implementation of IT programs
n/a	4 Studio 921 Salon & Medi Day Spa 921 E. Fort Ave., Suite 108, Baltimore 21230 410-783-7727 / www.studio921spa.com	\$1.5 million/ \$600,000/ 150%	36/ 36	Judy Sulisufaj Kelly, Colleen Smith	n/a/ n/a/ n/a	upscale salon and medi day spa
n/a	5 Atlantic Industrial Inc. 10440 Little Patuxent Parkway, Columbia 21044 410-799-0304 / www.atlantici.com	\$137 million/ \$57.4 million/ 138.68%	75/ 1,650	Sterling Capital Partners LP, Pete Vrettakos	Pete Vrettakos/ Steven Sisney/ Pete Vrettakos	specialty contractor, scaffolding, insulation, surface protection
n/a	6 EStructors Inc. 6660 Santa Barbara Road, Ste. 25, Elkridge 21075 410-379-3098 / www.eshred.com	\$1.2 million/ \$563,000/ 113.14%	30/ 37	Julie B. Keough, Mike Keough	n/a/ Michael Keough/ Julie B. Keough	destruction services for documents, computers/electronics
n/a	7 Clovis 7070 Samuel Morse Dr., Ste. 140, Columbia 21046 410-953-6940 / www.clovisgroup.com	\$10.5 million/ \$5.3 million/ 98.11%	15/ 42	Greg Diamond, Rick Levine	n/a/ Greg Diamond/ Greg Diamond	executive search and staffing firm
n/a	8 PA & Associates Inc. 1810A York Road, Suite 320, Lutherville 21093 410-560-6147 / www.paaa.com	\$1.8 million/ \$980,000/ 83.67%	5/ 9	Juliette S. Phelps	n/a/ n/a/ Juliette S. Phelps	logistics management and cost-reduction consulting
4	9 Beacon Associates Inc. 900A S. Main St., Suite 102, Bel Air 21014 410-638-7279 / www.beaconassociates.net	\$2.9 million/ \$1.6 million/ 81.25%	25/ 57	Carol Koffinke	Carol Koffinke/ Carol Koffinke/ Carol Koffinke	management and technology consulting
n/a	10 Education Affiliates 5024 Campbell Blvd., Baltimore 21236 410-633-2929 / n/a	\$78.4 million/ \$43.5 million/ 80.23%	200/ 1,150	JLL Partners	Paul Levy/ Duncan M. Anderson/ Duncan M. Anderson	for-profit post- secondary education
n/a	11 Design & Integration Inc. 1001 Rectory Lane, Baltimore 21211 410-467-2815 / www.designandintegration.com	\$3.6 million/ \$2 million/ 80%	14/ 14	Jake Rivera	n/a/ Jake Rivera/ n/a	audiovisual contractor, installation, sales, design, service, rental
n/a	12 Purgistics LLC 1100 Wicomico St., Suite 319, Baltimore 21215 410-244-3001 / www.purgistics.com	\$1.15 million/ \$646,159/ 77.97%	8/ 8	Reuven Goodman	n/a/ Reuven Goodman/ n/a	office cubicles, furniture, seating, telecom services
24	13 Mid-Atlantic Health Care 1922 Greenspring Drive, Suite 3, Timonium 21093 410-308-2300 / n/a	\$31.25 million/ \$18.25 million/ 71.23%	120/ 500	Scott Rifkin, Howard Friner, Scott Potter	n/a/ Scott Rifkin/ Scott Rifkin	own/manage skilled rehabilitation facilities in Md. and Del.
3	14 DLA Piper US LLP 6225 Smith Ave., Baltimore 21209 410-580-3000 / www.dlapiper.com	\$1.8 billion/ \$1.05 billion/ 71.43%	481/ 8,077	partnership	Sen. George J. Mitchell/ Paul A. Tiburzi/ Francis B. Burch Jr. ²	law firm
n/a	15 Respira Medical Inc. 2505 Lord Baltimore Drive, A-B, Baltimore 21244 443-200-0055 / www.respiramedical.com	\$5.35 million/ \$3.2 million/ 67.19%	40/ 40	Y Maria Welch, John C. Welch	n/a/ John C. Welch/ Y. Maria Welch	home respiratory and medical equipment sales, rentals, supplies
n/a	16 Kimball Construction Co. Inc. 9615 Philadelphia Road, Baltimore 21237 410-574-0800 / www.kimball.com	\$21.2 million/ \$13.2 million/ 60.61%	60/ 60	Lewis S. Kimball Jr., Stephen T. Kimball	n/a/ Lewis S. Kimball Jr./ n/a	general contracting
5	17 CR Dynamics & Associates Inc. 7 E. Redwood St. Suite 600, Baltimore 21202 410-347-5600 / www.crdynamics.com	\$258,390/ \$163,715/ 57.83%	10/ 20	Charles Ramos	Charles Ramos/ Charles Ramos/ Charles Ramos	CRM, call center, contact center
n/a	18 Imre Communications LLC 305 Washington Ave., Towson 21204 410-821-8220 / www.imrecommunications.com	\$9.9 million/ \$6.5 million/ 52.31%	37/ 53	David Imre, Mark Eber, Cathy Austin	n/a/ David Imre/ n/a	communications, strategic marketing, PR
n/a	19 Vision Technology Services 1968 Greenspring Dr., Ste. 507, Phoenix 21093 410-560-1444 / www.vistechs.com	\$15.5 million/ \$10.3 million/ 50.49%	155/ 160	M. Scott Cerasoli, Robert Troska	n/a/ M. Scott Cerasoli/ M. Scott Cerasoli	IT services, staff augmentation and project-based work
n/a	20 Best Western Hotel and Conference Center 5625 O'Donnell St., Baltimore 21224 410-633-9500 / www.bestwestern.com	\$6.3 million/ \$4.2 million/ 50%	130/ 130	Northstar Plaza Management	King Patel/ Dan Patel/ Anil Patel	hotel, conference facility, musical dinner theater
34	21 Structural Group 7455 New Ridge Road, Suite T, Hanover 21076 410-850-7000 / www.structural.net	\$318.7 million/ \$213 million/ 49.62%	280/ 1,740	Peter Emmons, Scott Greenhaus	Peter Emmons/ Scott Greenhaus/ Peter Emmons	build, repair, protect, strengthen and reinforce structures
n/a	22 Barcoding Inc. 2220 Boston St., Baltimore 21231 410-385-8532 / www.barcoding.com	\$34 million/ \$23 million/ 47.83%	55/ 60	Jay Steinmetz	Jay Steinmetz/ Jay Steinmetz/ Jay Steinmetz	bar code and RFID solutions
11	22 Group Insurance Solutions Inc. 401 Washington Ave., 6th Floor, Baltimore 21204 410-828-6290 / www.getgisi.com	\$3.4 million/ \$2.3 million/ 47.83%	24/ 32	Jonathan W. Anders	Jonathan W. Anders/ Jonathan W. Anders/ Jonathan W. Anders	plan management, consulting, employee benefit design
1	22 Rooftop Communications LLC 3500 Boston St., Suite 435, Baltimore 21224 410-342-7500 / rooftopcommunications.com	\$13.6 million/ \$9.2 million/ 47.83%	15/ 15	Barbara Brotman Kaylor, Bill Harper	Barbara B. Kaylor ³ / Barbara B. Kaylor ³ / Barbara B. Kaylor ³	advertising, public relations, interactive, branding
n/a	25 A Salon by Debbie Corp. 118 Shawan Road, Suite P, Hunt Valley 21030 410-771-0200 / www.asalonbydebbie.com	\$7.7 million/ \$5.25 million/ 46.67%	250/ 250	Debbie Nazeirod	Debbie Nazeirod/ Debbie Nazeirod/ Debbie Nazeirod	spa and salon

NOTE: More than 900 firms were contacted for this List but some either did not disclose ranking information or did not respond by deadline.

¹ Privately held firms either headquartered or having a strong presence in the Baltimore area. To qualify, a company had to have a minimum of \$100,000 in 2006 revenues, and must have been in business for at least two full years.

² And Lee I. Miller and Nigel Knowles, firm joint CEOs.

³ And Bill Harper.

⁴ And Suzanne C. Thompson.

⁵ And Michael Quade.

⁶ And Chris Schein, Ross McCausland, Scott Robison, Rolf Haarstad and David Hunter.

Compiled by: Carolyn Proctor-Hanson and Ryan Sharrow.

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SOURCE: The individual companies and public records provided the information for this List.

The *Business Journal* takes the companies at their word.
 dtd=did not disclose n/a=not applicable n/av=not available