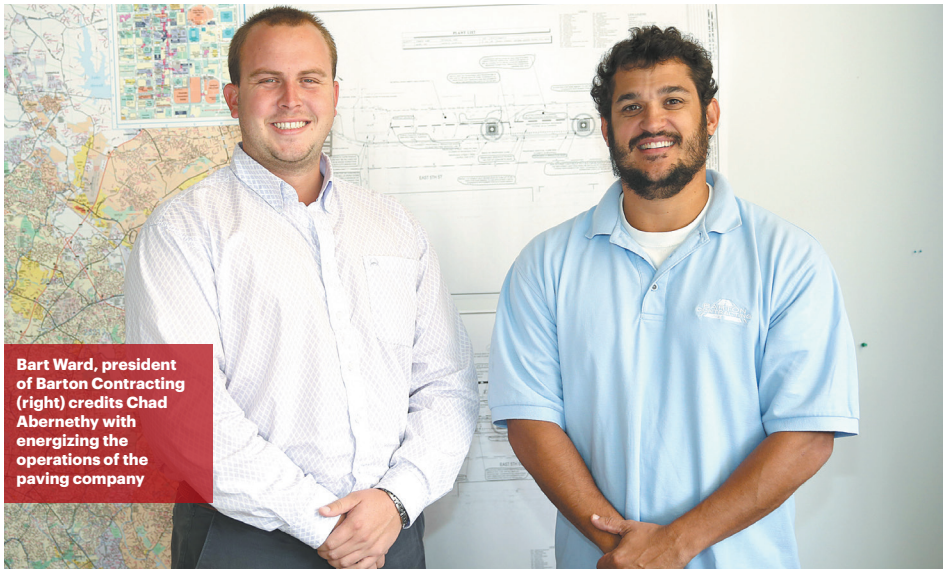


# CHARLOTTE BUSINESS JOURNAL

## #3 BARTON CONTRACTING CORP.

### INDUSTRY BACKGROUND PAVES WAY FOR CONTRACTOR



Bart Ward, president of Barton Contracting (right) credits Chad Abernethy with energizing the operations of the paving company

BY LAURA WILLIAMS-TRACY

When construction had come to a halt in the recession, Bart Ward started a paving business.

It was a risk, but not the biggest one he's taken in the five-year history of Barton Contracting Corp. His belief that an ethical and hard-working paving contractor could find business has been rewarded.

The asphalt, concrete, sealcoating, striping and signage company has grown 217% over the past three years. To grow that fast, Ward had to overcome barriers to entering the paving market, and that meant a big bank loan to buy equipment.

"We took a \$100,000 loan on a Tuesday, and by Thursday we had \$522 left in the bank," Ward says of the company's start in 2010. The funds were used to buy an asphalt paver, a roller and a tack wagon. Ward says suppliers that he'd known after a decade in the industry offered favorable payment terms that allowed him to manage cash flow.

"It was a huge leap of faith because of the economy, but I always wanted to start my own business," he says.

From there, the business took off. From August, when Ward bought the equipment, until December, Barton Contracting won \$3 million in new work.

"We were worried about the equipment sitting around," he recalls. "Amazingly, that crew has not sat in three and a half years on a good-weather day."

Another stroke of good luck for the fledgling business, Ward says, was meeting and hiring Chad Abernethy. As vice president at the company, Abernethy runs field operations, managing jobs and employees, while Ward focuses on administration and sales.

"He has been the hardest-working man in the business and is brilliant when it comes to building this stuff," Ward says. "It's not just my entrepreneurship. It's his hard work and intelligence. When the two of us got together, that's when we became a force."

Barton Contracting's largest clients are homebuilders, property managers and general contractors developing neighborhoods in the Charlotte region, paving roads in subdivisions. Among the bigger jobs is Antiquity, a master-planned community in Cornelius that will eventually include 1,000 homes. Barton Contracting's largest clients include M/I Homes, D.R. Horton, Kodiak Constructors and Southside Constructors.

Since its start, Barton Contracting has grown to 60 employees and a fleet of more than 20 pavers, dump trucks and excavators.

## BART WARD, PRESIDENT



**How did you get into the paving business?** I majored in business operations with a concentration in information systems at UNC Wilmington. I didn't visualize starting a paving company. Out of college, I was a recruiter in the civil engineering and asphalt industry. I eventually went to work for Rea Construction. They put me under their wing and taught me everything I know about the business.

**Were you always entrepreneurial?** Other than selling things on eBay, no. I felt if we built an asphalt company with integrity we'd set ourselves apart. I watched a lot of things go on in our business, and we have a lot of rough characters in the paving business.

**How is paving evolving?** You are never going to get away from basic asphalt paving. The recycled aspect of asphalt will play a bigger role as time goes on and paving becomes more environmentally friendly with reclamation of existing asphalt paving.

**What's the origin of the company name?** My middle name is Barton. It's my father's name and my son's name. It's about a sixth-generation family name.

THE LIST

THE FAST 50

RANKED BY AVERAGE REVENUE GROWTH FROM 2012 TO 2014



Rank	Business name/prior rank Website	Address Phone	Revenue growth 2012-14	No. of employees	Business description	Top executive(s)	Chief financial officer	Year founded locally
1	<b>InfoSense Inc.</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> infosenseinc.com	1800 Camden Rd., #107-204 Charlotte, NC 28203 877-747-3245	464.91%	6	Sewer system acoustic inspection technology	George Selembo	Alex Churchill	2007
2	<b>Tresata</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> tresata.com	222 S. Church St., #430M Charlotte, NC 28202 980-224-3005	275.04%	30	Big data analytics	Abhishek Mehta	Mark Connolly	2011
3	<b>Barton Contracting Corp.</b> bartoncontracting.com	1310 S. Tryon St., #106 Charlotte, NC 28203 704-910-4264	217.07%	60	Concretel asphalt; sealcoating; striping and signage; stamped asphalt	Bart Ward	Paul Van Wie	2010
4	<b>Crescent Communities</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> crescentcommunities.com	227 W. Trade St., #1000 Charlotte, NC 28202 980-321-6000	179.2%	153	Commercial real estate developer	Todd Mansfield; Brian Natwick; Brian Leary	Kevin Lambert	1963
5	<b>Strategic Management Decisions (SMD)</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> smdhr.com	13016 Eastfield Rd., #200-226 Huntersville, NC 28078 404-808-4730	158.86%	7	Human resource management and analytics software	Shane Douthitt	Shane Douthitt	2008
6	<b>Xoom Energy LLC</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> xoomenergy.com	11208 Statesville Rd., #200 Huntersville, NC 28078 888-997-8979	141%	135	Electricity and natural gas service	Thomas Urly	David Vail	2011
7	<b>CDI Southeast</b> <sup>①</sup> cdillc.com	1111 Metropolitan Ave., #1070 Charlotte, NC 28204 704-716-0010	128.66%	30	Technology infrastructure services	Dave Brown	Dave Brown	2010
8	<b>Darton Group Consulting LLC</b> <sup>①</sup> dartongroup.com	1300 S. Mint St., #350 Charlotte, NC 28203 704-525-9378	110.77%	35	Finance, accounting and project management consulting	Rochelle Rivas	NA	2008
9	<b>DC74</b> <sup>②</sup> dc74.com	3101 International Airport Dr., #400 Charlotte, NC 28208 704-405-8636	96.79%	23	Owner and operator of data centers	Tareq Amin	Cindy Gartz	2008
10	<b>Corporate Armor</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> corporatearmor.com	13739 Steele Creek Rd., #201 Charlotte, NC 28273 877-449-0458	92.58%	15	Data security and data storage	Thomas Schiffers	Gaynor Patterson	2011
11	<b>Lakeside Project Solutions LLC</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> lakesideps.com	405 N. Pilot Knob Rd. Denver, NC 28037 704-483-3739	84.85%	43	Facility maintenance and general contracting	Becky Loranger	NA	2009
12	<b>SignUpGenius</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> signupgenius.com	13777 Ballantyne Corporate Pl., #500 Charlotte, NC 28277 704-329-9530	84.09%	19	Online sign ups	Dan Rutledge	Angel Rutledge	2008
13	<b>McIlveen Family Law Firm</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> mcilveenfamilylaw.com	174 S. South St., #301 Gastonia, NC 28052 704-865-9011	81.23%	21	Law firm	Angela McIlveen; Sean McIlveen	Angela McIlveen	2011
14	<b>Search Solution Group</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> searchsolutiongroup.com	2201 South Blvd., #300 Charlotte, NC 28203 704-332-8702	78.98%	19	Executive search	Jeremy Gnozzo	NA	2002
15	<b>Costner Law Office PLLC</b> <sup>③</sup> costnerlaw.com	10150 Mallard Creek Rd., #106 Charlotte, NC 28262 980-219-7637	75.45%	60	Law firm	Josh Costner	Jennifer Barnes	2009
16	<b>RBC Utilities Inc.</b> <sup>④</sup> rbcutilitiesinc.com	4381 Charlotte Hwy., #101 Lake Wylie, SC 29710 704-622-8003	73.24%	68	Utility contractor	Bill Cummings	Bill Cummings	2009
17	<b>Command Partners</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> commandpartners.com	310 Arlington Ave., #304 Charlotte, NC 28203 704-910-5727	68.73%	17	Marketing and advertising	Roy Morejon	NA	2011
18	<b>Tattoo Projects</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> tattooprojects.com	508 W. 5th St., #225 Charlotte, NC 28202 704-900-7150	66.82%	16	Advertising and marketing agency	Rudy Banny; Buffy Kelly	Laura McDonald	2006
19	<b>Impact Financial Systems Inc.</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> ifsautomation.com	721 Jetton St., #300 Davidson, NC 28036 704-894-9331	66.48%	32	Financial-services technology	Tim Parsons	Jeff Deming	2002
20	<b>Skookum</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> skookum.com	201 S. Tryon St., 15th Fl. Charlotte, NC 28202 704-930-7444	59.43%	53	Software development	James Hartsell; Don Post; Michael Scully	James Hartsell	2005
21	<b>CCS Construction Staffing</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> staffccs.com	6712 Old Pineville Rd. Charlotte, NC 28217 704-561-0053	56.28%	35	Staffing	Matt Telmanik	Matt Telmanik	2008
22	<b>AvidXchange Inc.</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> avidxchange.com	1111 Metropolitan Ave., #650 Charlotte, NC 28204 800-560-9305	55.96%	420	Accounts payable software	Michael Praeger	Karen Bertaux	2000
23	<b>Intelligent Buildings LLC</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> intelligentbuildings.com	6201 Fairview Rd., #310 Charlotte, NC 28210 704-759-2700	55.73%	30	Planning and implementation management of building projects	Rob Murchison; Tom Shircliff	Rob Murchison	2004
24	<b>MetroTech Automotive</b> <sup>⑦</sup> metrotechauto.com	2101 Wilkinson Blvd. Charlotte, NC 28208 704-525-3600	55.44%	500	Automotive detail services	Steve Kessel	Steve Kessel	1987
25	<b>Movement Mortgage</b> <sup>Ⓢ</sup> movement.com	11405 N. Community House Dr., #200 Charlotte, NC 28277 704-297-4029	54.73%	2,246	Mortgage bank	Casey Crawford	Laura Bowles	2008