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Top 110 Specialty Contractors

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Humble beginnings

FabArc Steel grows into one of South's largest steel fabricators

By Angelle Bergeron



FabArc Steel Supply Inc. has grown to include two manufacturing plants with a total fabricating and inventory area of more than 700,000 sq. ft.

When friends Gene Heathcock, David Pugh and Cary Lewis first opened their Oxford, Ala., fabrication company in 1979, they set up shop beneath the vinyl cover of a swimming pool, said Tony Pugh, vice president of business development.

"I was 12 years old and my dad was one of the original founders," Pugh said.

From those humble beginnings, FabArc Steel Supply Inc. has grown to include two manufacturing plants with a total fabricating and inventory area of more than 700,000 sq. ft., a work force of more than 280 highly skilled employees and an annual production in excess of 40,000 tons.

Although the company's home base remains in Oxford, its service area has expanded across the United States. FabArc handles a variety of projects,

from shopping centers to large industrial complexes.

Although two of the founders, Pugh and Lewis, have since retired, Heathcock serves as the company president and maintains the close-knit, familial integrity that made FabArc a success.

State-of-the-art technology ensures the highest quality in production, but "it's our FabArc family of dedicated people who make it happen," Pugh said. "We take great pride in our work and our reputation is our greatest asset. We've always maintained attention to our customers. We're very service-oriented, so we do a lot of repeat business.

FabArc has grown into one of the larger health care structural steel builders in the region, if not the country.

"It's a niche we have," Pugh said. "We follow and perform work for four or five main contractors who work all over the country."

Truss fabrication represents a significant portion of FabArc's work. The company added its west plant about six years ago, affording the capacity to handle member lifts in excess of 40 tons.

"That makes it unique because we're set up to do projects most can't do," Pugh said. About four years ago, FabArc manufactured the roof trusses on the Houston Rocket Arena, which is now called the Toyota Center. "The trusses were in excess of 30 feet deep and extremely large," Pugh said.

Trying to stay one step ahead of the technology curve, FabArc maintains the latest in fabrication equipment. However, the biggest challenge in today's market is

material availability - trying to keep customers supplied on time despite tremendous lead times, Pugh said.

Although steel prices are expected to escalate during the latter part of this year, it won't affect FabArc's business much. FabArc's financial strength and excellent credit rating enable the contractor to purchase raw materials from the most competitive sources.

"People will still want steel," Pugh said. "It just makes it a bit more challenging for us to try and produce it cheaper and keep pace with market demands. We're just trying to do better for less money."

Whether fabricating materials for retail stores, shopping centers, bridges, hospitals, schools or small office buildings, FabArc is the right company for the job, Pugh said.

"We do what we say we are going to do," he added. "When we sell a job, we set a schedule and perform according to that. Contractors learn to trust us and seek us out for tougher, more demanding jobs." <<



Gene Heathcock, president of FabArc Steel Supply Inc., Oxford, Ala.

Top Specialty Contractors

Rank*	Company	CEO/Owner Principal(s)	Year Est.	Regional Revenue Total Revenue	Specialty Category
1	F. L. Crane & Sons Inc. 508 South Spring St. Fulton, MS 38843 (662) 862-2172/ FAX (662) 862-2649	Johnny Crane CEO	1947	\$100.3M/\$116M	Wall/Ceiling: 100.0%
2	Yates Technical Group 2000 McCullogh Blvd. Tupelo, MS 38801 (662) 680-6102/ FAX (662) 841-2338	Daniel D. Steele President	2003	\$97.7M/\$157M	Electrical: 93.6% Mechanical: 6.4%
3	Excel Group Inc. 17747 Airline Hwy. Prairieville, LA 70769 (225) 677-8700/ FAX(225) 677-8761	David E. Roberts CEO	1983	\$90M/\$90M	Electrical: 50.0% Mechanical: 50.0%
4	Industrial Specialty Contractors LLC 20480 Highland Rd. Baton Rouge, LA 70817 (225) 756-8001/ FAX (225) 756-7559	Edward L. Rispono CEO	1989	\$88M/\$101M	Electrical: 100.0%
5	FabArc Steel Supply Inc. 111 Meadow Lane Oxford, AL 36203 (256) 831-8770/ FAX (256) 831-8776	Gene Heathcock President	1979	\$75.5M/\$75.5M	Steel Erec: 100.0%
6	Bernhard Mechanical Contractors Inc. P.O. Box 62690 Lafayette, LA 70596 (337) 232-9680/ FAX (337) 232-8386	Kenneth W. Bernhard President	1919	\$71.2M/\$71.2M	Mechanical: 100.0%
7	MMR Group Inc. 15961 Airline Hwy. Baton Rouge, LA 70817 (225) 756-5090/ FAX (225) 753-7012	James Rutland CEO	1985	\$69.1M/\$161M	Electrical: 100.0%
8	Nashville Machine Co. Inc. P.O. Box 101603 Nashville, TN 37224-1603 (615) 244-2030/ FAX (615) 259-2926	Donald B. Orr President	1887	\$59.1M/\$59.1M	Mechanical: 73.9% Other: 26.1%
9	Enterprise Electric LLC 7100 Cockrill Bend Blvd. Nashville, TN 37209 (615) 350-7270/ FAX (615) 350-7242	James C. Seabury III CEO	2003	\$57.5M/\$58.6M	Electrical: 100.0%
10	Multi-Craft Contractors Inc. P.O. Box 1760 Springdale, AR 72765 (479) 751-4330/ FAX (479) 751-4399	Rick Barrows President	1972	\$55.8M/\$55.8M	Electrical: 28.3% Mechanical: 71.7%
11	The Bayou Companies LLC 5200 Curtis Lane New Iberia, LA 70560 (337) 369-3761/ FAX (337) 365-9747	Jerry Shea Jr. Managing Partner	1942	\$52.5M/\$52.5M	Other: 100.0%
12	Basic Industries Inc. 15981 Airline Hwy. Baton Rouge, LA 70817 (225) 752-4333/ FAX (225) 756-7666	Dean Bordelon President	1977	\$50.8M/\$110M	Painting/Coating: 3.2% Other: 96.8%
13	The Newtron Group Inc. 8183 W. El Cajon Dr. Baton Rouge, LA 70815 (225) 927-8921/ FAX (225) 906-1052	Newton B. Thomas CEO	1973	\$46M/\$132M	Electrical: 100.0%
14	Rose Integrated Services 126 Hwy. 51 South Covington, TN 38019 (901) 476-9600/ FAX (901) 476-5612	Paul Rose President	1953	\$39M/\$39M	Concrete: 6.4% Excav/Found: 35.9% Steel Erec: 12.8% Other: 44.9%

* based on regional revenue