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**ELLIOTT DAVIS, LLC, AND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
HONOR SOUTH CAROLINA'S MOST SUCCESSFUL COMPANIES**

**Winners Announced in *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies*<sup>sm</sup> 2008 Competition**

**GREENVILLE, S.C., Nov. 13, 2008** – Elliott Davis, LLC, one of the largest accounting and business advisory firms in the Southeast, announced the winners of the *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies*<sup>sm</sup> 2008 program today at the South Carolina's Chamber of Commerce Annual Summit luncheon. Now in its seventh year, the annual award presentation was held at the Wild Dunes Resort near Charleston, S.C.

The 2008 winners – 2AM Group, an automotive manufacturer in Duncan; Mercom Corporation, an information technology company located in Pawleys Island; and Dutchman Global, a Florence-based construction company, show that with any set of market conditions, even those of an economic slowdown, some companies will emerge with strong growth.

As evidenced by the *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies*<sup>sm</sup> 2008 program winners, South Carolina businesses continue to grow in sectors such as information technology and manufacturing.

Construction companies benefit from both public works projects and stable, even growing housing markets: markets here had more conservative growth histories than some across the country experiencing a major "bust." For example, construction companies in the Charleston area may continue to benefit from a capital improvement program begun in 2006, as infrastructure catches up to the fast-growing area. Local and regional banks are growing, perhaps not as affected by the sub-prime issues that depress larger institutions.

All of these factors are expressed in this year's list of *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies*.

Otis Rawl, president and chief executive officer of program co-sponsor South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, thinks this success in the midst of somewhat troubling times is encouraging.

"It is so important to the growth of our state that we continue to have companies that persevere through all kinds of economic weather," Rawl said. "I'm proud to be a part of a program that celebrates such an outstanding group of entrepreneurs and business owners, who continue to rise to the top."

For the past seven years, Elliott Davis and the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce have named a list of 25 entities as *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies*, chosen for percentage increases in both gross revenue (or assets) and full-time employment over the previous fiscal year.

But as the landscape of South Carolina business evolves, so should the contest, according to Buster Kennedy, Elliott Davis marketing manager and director of the competition.

South Carolina's local companies continue to thrive, but the Palmetto State is also a top destination for national and even international corporations. With fledgling ventures, multi-million-dollar conglomerates and those in between, in the 2008 list the dollar revenue growth and number of jobs added, in addition to percentage growth, was considered. Elliott Davis determined the new method better compares small and large companies, and more accurately represents the diverse stories of South Carolina business.

"I'm thrilled to see this year's honorees come from multiple sectors; small companies and large," Kennedy said. "It says great things about the future of our economy that we have such growth in companies of the Midlands, Upstate and Coastal regions, and in companies of varying sizes."

To learn more about the methodology or to see a list of previous years' winners, visit [www.ElliottDavis.com](http://www.ElliottDavis.com) or contact Buster Kennedy at [fastest@elliottdavis.com](mailto:fastest@elliottdavis.com).

### Winner Distribution by Industry

Industry	Number	% of Total
Financial Services	1	2.27%
Technology	1	2.27%
Construction	2	4.55%
Manufacturing	2	4.55%
Distribution	3	6.82%
Staffing	4	9.09%
Professional Services	4	9.09%
Real Estate	8	18.18%
Retail	9	20.45%
Other	10	22.73%
Total	44	100.00%

### Leading Increases in Revenue

1. Mercom Corporation
2. Dutchman Global, Inc.
3. 2AM Group

### Leading Increases in Employment

1. 2AM Group
2. JH Global Services, Inc.
3. Mercom Corporation

### Profiles of South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies Top Three Winners

#### Winner

#### **2AM Group**

#### **Duncan, S.C.**

Automotive manufacturing

With only two years as a limited liability company\*, this Duncan start-up's growth is impressive. Company leaders believe success is a result of the breadth of knowledge and experience of its employees, and the contacts they bring.

"We constructed our company with highly qualified, skilled professionals with a passion for problem solving," said President and CEO Arthur Perry. "We have employees with years of experience in our clients' industries. We understand the opportunities and challenges of our customers and partners."

2AM Group is a technical service provider of logistics, manufacturing and quality solutions for the automotive, aerospace and marine industries, with customers throughout North America and Europe. The company's core services include project management, product launch and engineering services, helping customers test the quality of parts, and even warehousing parts until needed.

Growing from four employees to 180 was due in great part to word of mouth, according to Perry, and a potent blend of experience, performance and accountability. Technicians and experts heard about the company and flocked to it, he adds.

As for the company's culture, 2AM management remembers their associates aren't the only ones counting on the company to do well. "Management has always spoken about the importance of faith, family and customer satisfaction. These are the most important components of our company's philosophy and culture."

2AM Group has capitalized on the burgeoning automotive industry in the Upstate. Since BMW Manufacturing recently announced the company will expand in South Carolina to the tune of 500 jobs and a \$750 million investment, and as other companies in the industry move to the area, 2AM Group's prospects for future expansion are surely promising.

**First Runner Up**  
**Mercom Corporation**  
**Pawleys Island, S.C.**  
Information technology

For commercial or government information technology infrastructure, one of the go-to companies of 2007 was Mercom Corporation.

A privately-held company headquartered on the coast, Mercom provides a full range of networking solutions to its customers.

Mercom was founded in 2000 by siblings Stella Mercado Colwell and Larry Mercado, two information technology veterans who sought a variety of industry certifications to stand out in the market.

Today, Mercom employees are certified Microsoft partners, CISCO Systems certified and are versed in COMPTIA. BICSI, a respected industry organization for telecommunications installers, offers a certification program that Mercom installers have completed. And more than one half of the company's staff has achieved the required level of government security clearance, making Mercom a top choice for government agencies.

In short, the company has both the benefit of the founders' 20 years of industry contacts and the seal of approval of many well-respected training programs in the industry.

**Second Runner Up**  
**Dutchman Global, Inc.**  
**Florence, S.C.**  
Construction

Dutchman Global, Inc. exports earthmoving equipment across the globe. The recipient of the U.S. Department of Commerce's Export Achievement in 2007, the company has experienced strong growth in exports to the Middle East, especially the United Arab Emirates amidst that federation's booming construction climate. The company continues to expand sales in other regions across the world.

Dutchman was founded in 2005 by Dan Vander Meer, a former managing director for a Caterpillar, Inc. dealer, and his wife, Robyn. Using his numerous industry contacts and training programs offered by various government programs, he and his team have quickly built a thriving export business.

The Vander Meers use a combination of old-fashioned business travel and the newest Internet marketing techniques to gain customers. Dan Vander Meer visits all of the regions with which the company does business regularly; the company is listed on equipment websites in a variety of languages, generating eight million hits to Dutchman's website in two years. Whether brokering deals with manufacturers for customers or refurbishing used equipment, Dutchman Global meets the needs of customers in construction sites from Moscow to Dubai.

## **The Other Top Companies**

4.

### **First National Bank of the South Spartanburg, S.C.**

Financial institution

First National Bank of the South believes that building a strong customer base follows their mission to provide excellent service, a variety of financial products, flexible terms and competitive rates. Founded in 1999 by thirteen of Spartanburg's local business leaders, the bank has quickly built a strong presence in South Carolina, with branches in Spartanburg, Greenville, Rock Hill, Charleston, and soon, Lexington. A three-year old small business loan arm, First National Business Capital, and a recent merger with First Carolina Bank have contributed to the financial organization's sustained growth.

5.

### **Human Technologies, Inc. Greenville, S.C.**

Human resources

Human Technologies, Inc. is a multi-faceted human resource advisory firm providing professional recruiting, industrial staffing, human resource consulting, logistics and warehouse management services. The company's diverse suite of services includes recruiting and placement, as well as consulting services. Human Technologies' clients can outsource a variety of HR services to the company, and rely on the company to find and train new employees. The Greenville-based company finds accountability and customized services make for happy clients and a track record of growth.

6.

### **THS Constructors, Inc. Greenville, S.C.**

Construction

THS Constructors, Inc. is a design/build, general contracting company serving the industrial, institutional, commercial development and healthcare industries. The company promises high value, high performance construction and project management services. THS Constructors' principal partners believe trust and value are their most important assets, and that delivering on time and on budget are important tools for building success. Granted a contractor's license in Virginia in late 2007, the company continues to pursue projects across the Southeast.

7.

### **Chancel Builders, Inc. Myrtle Beach, S.C.**

Construction

A contractor for new single-family housing, Chancel Builders, Inc. has a diverse project list including detached houses, town homes and row homes, as well as condominiums and commercial buildings. The company believes in creating a positive bond with the community they serve, supporting such nonprofit organizations as the Conway Medical Center and Habitat for Humanity.

8.

**JH Global Services, Inc.**

**Greenville, S.C.**

Import and wholesale

JH Global Services, Inc. has capitalized on America's growing love of golf, with a thriving import business catering to patrons of the sport. Golf shops and golf cart dealers across the country count JH Global a top supplier of carts, equipment and other accessories. By providing a link between U.S. companies and suppliers in China, the company promises its American customers lower costs, high quality products and reliable product delivery.

9.

**M33 Integrated Solutions**

**Greenville, S.C.**

Information technology

M33 Integrated Solutions is a pioneer of an online Transportation Management System, TMS, which manages the complex tasks of supply chain coordination. With innovative "co-management philosophy," M33 project managers work closely with customers' in-house specialists to manage information and develop new procedures when needed. M33's staff takes pride in keeping up with the latest trends in transportation management, attending national conferences on the subject and providing the latest data to customers in a managed newsletter. M33 ranked 17<sup>th</sup> on the list of *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies* last year, and continued growth has landed the company on the list once again.

10.

**Arnold Construction**

**Columbia, S.C.**

Construction

Arnold Construction is a family business that traces its roots back to 1906, and current patriarch Norman Arnold's grandfather. A part of the Arnold family of companies, the general contractor firm specializes in commercial construction, from design to build. The firm covets client satisfaction and maintains strong client relationships in the tradition of a family business. Integrity, character and tradition are the company's core values; a history of consistency and booming growth in Columbia helped fuel both long-term success and recent growth. The Arnold family has built a strong presence in the Columbia community that extends beyond the company's Vista condos; the University of South Carolina School of Public Health even bears the family name.

11.

**CommunitySouth Financial Corporation**

**Easley, S.C.**

Financial institution

An Upstate banking corporation with a recent history of strong growth, CommunitySouth Financial Corporation lands at number eleven for the second year in a row. A consumer banking business serves with branches across the Upstate, and full-service investment, insurance and mortgage arms round out CommunitySouth's offerings to South Carolina residents and businesses. CommunitySouth Bank states their competitive difference lies in a commitment to customer service. The bank pledges customer phone calls will be answered by a "live person," and each branch offers a refreshment center with freshly baked cookies, coffee and soft drinks for its customers.

12.

**Acumen I.T.**

**Greenville, S.C.**

Information technology

Acumen is certified a Microsoft Gold Partner, the top level in the software giant's measure of competency with its technologies. The company offers Microsoft Dynamics as a specialty, and installs, tests and manages these information systems for business clients. An official Avaya Business Partner, small and medium business clients rely on the company for managed IT services and phone integration. The company's business plan of providing Fortune 500-quality integrated solutions at affordable, fixed prices has made it one of *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies*.

13.

**Springdale Outdoor**

**Columbia, S.C.**

Landscaping

Springdale Outdoor has operated in the Columbia area since 1955, creating high-end landscaping designs for commercial and residential applications. Services include landscaping, hardscaping, irrigation, site work, drainage and maintenance. Named "Outstanding Landscaping Contractor of the Year" by the South Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association, the company's positive professional reputation is as carefully cultivated as its financial growth.

14.

**International Public Works, LLC**

**Mount Pleasant, S.C.**

Construction

Charleston-based International Public Works, LLC (IPW) has completed construction projects ranging from \$3,000 renovations to \$5 million public projects. The company's public and private clients take advantage of design, geotechnical consultation, renovation and new construction expertise, and even operations and maintenance services. While the projects are often expansive, IPW leadership proudly proclaims theirs a small business. Using the most reliable sub-contractors, along with a commitment to supporting local, small businesses as those contractors, is an approach IPW has implemented successfully. The six-year-old company is one of the fastest-growing construction companies in the Carolinas, and one of the youngest such companies on this list.

15.

**TIC Properties, LLC**

**Greenville, S.C.**

Real estate investment

TIC Properties, LLC, (Tenant-In-Common) is a nationally recognized real estate investment firm based in Greenville. The company specializes in 1031 Like Kind Exchanges, real estate transactions by which investors trade properties rather than sell and buy them, for maximum profit and tax benefit. TIC Properties acquired more than 675 million dollars in assets representing more than 4.6 million square feet nationwide. The company specializes in single and multi-tenant industrial, retail and office spaces, and multi-family residential properties, and is regarded in the industry as a pioneer and leader in this niche real estate environment.

16.

**Computer Software Innovations, Inc.**

**Easley, S.C.**

Information technology

Computer Software Innovations, Inc. found a niche in the public sector, providing computer equipment to government offices and building interactive classrooms for public schools and nonprofit organizations. Through a healthy mix of acquisitions and organic growth, the company increased its revenues and footprint during the past few years. Now, public institutions across the Southeast benefit from this Easley company's integrated tools and software.

17.

**DeVita & Associates**

**Greenville, S.C.**

Engineering consulting

DeVita & Associates is a diverse firm with experts in mechanical, electrical, plumbing and structural engineering. Headquartered in Greenville, DeVita has adhered to core values of integrity, accountability, professionalism and delighting clients since the firm was founded in 1984. The company has grown through steady hiring, and recently opened a satellite office in Richmond, Va. Ranked number 23 in *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies* competition this time last year, DeVita is clearly still going strong.

18.

**Find Great People International**

**Greenville, S.C.**

Human resources

Find Great People International connects IT, accounting/finance and office support candidates to South Carolina companies through branches in Columbia and Greenville. The company's international recruiting efforts also extend into the healthcare, retail and manufacturing sectors. Find Great People experienced a steady growth spurt since a rebranding effort in 2002, expanding in both number of clients served and the sectors in which these clients operate. Contented and motivated employees may be another secret to success: the company has been named one of the *Best Places to Work in South Carolina* in previous years, a measure of worker satisfaction and quality of benefits.

19.

**CoastalStates Bank**

**Hilton Head Island, S.C.**

Financial

The third local bank to make *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies* this year, CoastalStates Bank caters to Lowcountry residents. Like the others on the list, local doesn't mean behind-the-times: CoastalStates Bank stays competitive with a full range of online banking services, debit and credit cards. Four branches and other offices in the area provide what the bank characterizes as convenient service with a personal touch. This year marks the bank's third consecutive appearance on the *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies* list.

20.

**AFL Telecommunications**

**Spartanburg, S.C.**

Manufacturing

In the fiber optics world, AFL Telecommunications can handle it from start to finish. The company manufactures fiber optic equipment for high speed communications, plans and installs the systems, and manages future upgrades. The company even offers maintenance and operations services. AFL recognizes that a creative culture fosters the innovation to keep the company competitive, but also thinks customer service, integrity and accountability are critical to maintain a steady customer base. An ever-increasing suite of services and strategic acquisitions have helped the company grow over the past few years, joining the other information technology stars in *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies*.

21.

**VC3**

**Columbia, S.C.**

Information technology

A comparative veteran in the IT sector, Columbia's VC3 has worked for clients in the public, nonprofit and private sectors as a technology partner since 1994. The company attributes its long-term success to building strong partnerships with long-standing clients. From security audits and VOIP installation to full-service networking design, VC3 seeks a balance between implementing the latest and greatest technology and a commitment to secure reliable service for customers. Specialties include large-scale web portals and information organization for e-Government, and management software for teachers and staff in K-12 schools.

22.

**Southeastern Equipment and Supply, Inc.**

**West Columbia, S.C.**

Industrial equipment

This cleaning equipment supplier ships from its Columbia location to nearly all 50 states and Canada. Southeastern Equipment and Supply, Inc. offers factory authorized service, and company leadership has more than 100 years of combined experience in equipment service. Its roots go back to the mid 1960s, when Leroy "Roy" Martin founded a janitorial supply and chemical manufacturing company in South Carolina to serve the needs of large contractors. Today second and third generation Martins head the operation, fostering a family culture of accountability and honesty that have made the company an enduring success.

23.

**Yeargin Potter Shackelford Construction**

**Greenville, S.C.**

Construction

Like several other successful construction firms on the *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies* list, Yeargin Potter Shackelford Construction practices a design/build approach; teams of professionals in architecture, engineering and construction collaborate as one firm. The business model, according to the company, produces faster results at lower costs to customers. Though the company was founded a few years ago, the separate firms that merged to Yeargin Potter Shackelford had more than 125 years in construction history. With solid history on one hand and the vigor of a fresh merger on the other, this construction company has created impressive growth during the past two fiscal years.

24.

**Metalworx, Inc.**

**Summerville, S.C.**

Manufacturing

In 1997, two metalworking professionals incorporated Metalworx, Inc. By 2007, the company had grown to more than 30 employees; employees that worked under some of the best conditions in the industry, according to Metalworx principles. The company incorporates new manufacturing techniques and technology to reach the top of their field. Metalworx's dual commitment to providing quality work to customers and helping employees succeed and grow has landed the company on *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies* list for the second year in a row.

25.

**Customer Effective**

**Greenville, S.C.**

Information technology

With more than 200 installations to its credit, Customer Effective is a leader in Microsoft Dynamics CRM software for "customer relationship management." Clients rely on the company's experts to personalize and install the complex software suite, and manage such features as marketing, sales and customer follow-up. As Microsoft Dynamics management is Customer Effective's sole focus, the company relies upon expertise, flexibility and market demand for business success.

**Sidebar: Criteria for *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies***

*South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies* 2008 entries were accepted between February and May 2008. Participation was open to public and private non-governmental entities representing any business or industry sector, provided they met the following criteria: (a) headquartered in South Carolina; (b) in operation for at least two full fiscal years; and (c) reported revenues of at least \$3 million (\$50 million in assets for financial institutions) in the most recent reported year.

**Sidebar: Ranking Methodology**

*South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies* 2008 rankings were determined by using information submitted for the two most recently completed fiscal years at the time of nomination. Rankings were based on a weighted equation factoring in growth in revenues or assets and with increases in employment. Submittals were compiled, evaluated for completeness and ranked by the programs methodology. Elliott Davis tabulated the *South Carolina's Fastest-Growing Companies* 2008 list based solely on responses received.