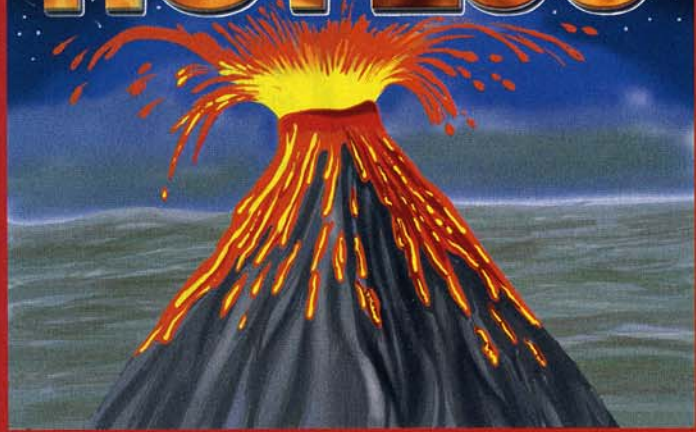


BusinessTN

HOT 100



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|------------------------|---------------|
| 1 Blast Off | Play - \$0.25 |
| 2 Steady Orbit | Play - \$1.00 |
| 3 Change of Trajectory | Play - \$1.50 |
| 4 Solar Flare | Play - \$2.00 |

Tim Williams



ILLUSTRATION BY TIM WILLIAMS



2007 FAST-GROWING COMPANIES

This summer, Knoxville-based PIPS Technology, a company incorporated in 2001 by owner, president and CEO Alan Sefton, was acquired by Illinois-based Federal Signal Corp., which trades on the New York Stock Exchange. The privately held developer and manufacturer of automatic license plate recognition (ALPR) systems had previously appeared on *BusinessTN's* Fast50 list of the fastest-growing companies in Tennessee. The purchase price? \$115 million.

This year, *BusinessTN* introduces the Hot100, an expanded revamp of the original Fast50. Eligible companies are still required to be Tennessee-based, employ at least five people and have revenues in excess of \$750,000. And, like PIPS, they must be companies with a bright future. However, this new list does more than just double the number of companies profiled. It also expands the criteria in an effort to include those more established companies whose growth is remarkable but who do not—cannot—keep pace with young startup companies rocketing to early success. Additional criteria includes employee growth, growth over a period of years and growth as compared to industry average.

The Hot100 also inescapably involves increased editorial judgment. *BusinessTN's* staff chose 33% of the companies on this list based on knowledge of the company's success and references from knowledgeable sources about area companies performing well. That change made it all the more difficult for applicants to make the list: the number of applications submitted reached an all-time high just as the percentage of submitting companies selected for the list hit an all-time low.

In sum, the inaugural Hot100 spotlights companies from industries as wide ranging as missile defense to barbecue. They are the companies enriching our local and regional economies, providing jobs and fueling the Volunteer State's entrepreneurial culture. The stories behind these businesses speak volumes about the value of free enterprise. They aren't a bad read, either.

To better and more quickly differentiate between the kinds of success placing each company on this list, we're adding the following designations:



Blast-Off! ▶ Young companies off to a fast start



Steady Orbit ▶ Companies now beyond the startup years that continue to grow at an above-average rate and that are laying the foundation for long-term sustainability



Change of Trajectory ▶ Companies which due to recent trends, events or business decisions have become especially hot in their niche



Solar Flare ▶ Large, firmly established companies experiencing a new growth or whose growth against the industry baseline is remarkable



20/20 Research
NASHVILLE
Jim Bryson ▶ Founder



Bryson is not getting to run the Volunteer State, but he sure knows how to run a company.

The recent Republican gubernatorial candidate runs one of the top-rated qualitative research firms, according to the Impulse Survey of Research Facilities. Founded in 1986 as a one-room focus group facility and consultancy, 20/20 Research now employs over 80 employees in three offices (Nashville, Charlotte, N.C., and Miami).

Access America Transport
CHATTANOOGA
Ted Alling ▶ Co-founder



This flatbed trucking, brokering and logistics company started by Alling and fellow Samford University graduate Barry Large in 2002 began as an outgrowth of Key James Brick, one of Tennessee's largest brick suppliers (owned by Large's father Jim). Today a nearly \$20 million company, its customer base is so diverse that Key represents a mere 3% of current traffic. The company is developing LTL and next-day small packaging services, which offer a higher rate of return.



Aeneas Communications
JACKSON
Jonathan V. Harlan ▶ Founder & CEO



Founded in 1995, Aeneas claims status as the first company to bring the Internet to rural Tennessee. Named for the hero of Virgil's *The Aeneid*, who survived the destruction of Troy to become the founder of Rome, the company lived up to its mythical namesake in 2003, when the company's home office was hit by the F-4 tornado that struck Jackson. Aeneas restored the bulk of its services within 72 hours.

Flick are currently building Indian Lake Village, a mixed-use project bordered by nearby Old Hickory Lake. The company's expansion into Williamson County is projected to contribute a significant percentage of growth to the company over the next year. In addition, business relocations to Nashville bode well for this home builder/remodeler.



Flexial
COOKEVILLE
Richard Larsen ▶ President

Manufacturer Flexial's metallic bellows components are in the International Space Station, the world's deepest oil wells and most U.S. electrical power distribution stations. It's developing the first implant mechanism to derive energy from human muscle to drive a heart pump. Currently, the company is engineering components for the new Ares I rocket that will replace the space shuttle and for the Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle that will carry astronauts to the ISS, the moon and Mars. It will have controls in the Mars Rover.

Formall
ANDERSONVILLE
Gerd Krohn ▶ Owner & CEO

The plastic products maker (kayak seats, golf cart paths) has since Krohn's 1993 purchase grown from a 35-employee, \$4 million company to an approximately \$45 million company with over 230 employees. A contractor for Florida-based Portable On Demand or PODS units, Krohn co-invented that company's new foldable storage units, which collapse for long distance hauling, capturing a long-term contract with PODS to manufacture the devices.



Gene Burton & Associates
FRANKLIN
Suzan Logan ▶ President & CEO

Most of America's 5,000 hospitals were built in the 1960s and 70s and are worn out. The oldest and largest medical equipment and technology planning firm in the United States, Gene Burton & Associates serves health care facilities, architects and contractors on health care construction projects. Founded in 1988 with personal funds from founder Gene D. Burton, the company has planned the medical equip-

ment and/or the technology/communications infrastructure for more than 700 health care construction projects across the country.



Global Industrial Components
WOODBURY
Gerald Toledo ▶ Founder

After 25 years of sales and operations experience in the standard and specialty fasteners industry, Toledo started GIC in 1994 out of his garage as a small fastener business. Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) certified, Toledo is today one of Tennessee's largest distributors of specialty components to the automotive, health care, lawn and garden, marine and energy industries. Products also include castings, gaskets and filters and oils and lubricants. Toledo is a tireless advocate for MBE business growth.

Griffin Technologies
FRANKLIN
Paul Griffin ▶ Founder

Former electrical engineer Griffin started his company 15 years ago making adapters for Apple Macintosh computers, making them work on PCs, bringing his electronic know-how, distinctive design sense and innovative approach to the Macintosh community. Today, his company is one of the largest makers of peripheral products for all things Mac, including iPod. A global player in the development of world-class electronics and accessories for PC, gaming, audio, video and iPod, Griffin's name is synonymous with ingenious technological design in his industry.



Healthcare Performance Partners
NASHVILLE
Charles Hagood ▶ Principal

Founded in 2004 by the founders of The ACCESS Group (TAG), HPP took flight after Hagood began applying the concepts and services TAG had provided to the manufacturing industry to health care, helping health care organizations remove waste and inefficiencies via lean health care consulting (the application of Toyota Production System and Six Sigma services) to over 40 hospitals, clinics and large medical practices nationwide. Now the company is bringing on affiliate companies in Canada and Denmark.



HometownQuotes
FRANKLIN
Hunter Ingram ▶ CEO

Launched in 2003 by two former insurance agents intent on helping consumers comparison shop for insurance and give insurance agents opportunities to expand their businesses, the company has to date assisted more than 700,000 consumers. The online insurance-led generation industry is growing more popular as consumers increasingly turn to the Internet to quickly compare local insurance quotes and make purchases. HometownQuotes also forms strategic alliances with large insurance agencies and national insurance carriers.

IdleAire Technologies
KNOXVILLE
Michael Crabtree ▶ President, CEO & chairman

Founder A.C. Wilson's patented technologies includes external systems that deliver to a truck cab heat, air, even Internet, cable television and other creature comforts through a window console—without the noise, fumes, vibration, wear and tear of an idling rig (and saving fuel). Available at 8,200 parking spaces in 33 states, there is still plenty of room to grow, given federal rules requiring idling. The company's 1,500 investors are on the verge of an IPO.



Infrastructure Corporation of America
BRENTWOOD
Howard H. (Butch) Eley ▶ CEO

State road budgets are tight. State and federal gas taxes aren't keeping up. The federal transportation budget has been slashed. States including Tennessee are pushing toll roads as options. ICA pioneered outsourced management of highways, bridges and transportation asset management. Just seven years old and with over 200 employees working in four states (though not Tennessee), the company recently inked a five-year deal with North Carolina to maintain the interstates around Charlotte.



J.E. Crain & Son
NASHVILLE
Lewis Rankin ▶ CEO

Middle Tennessee is booming and this general contractor for commercial, industrial and insti-