

Nashville Business Journal

**Best in
Business
Awards**

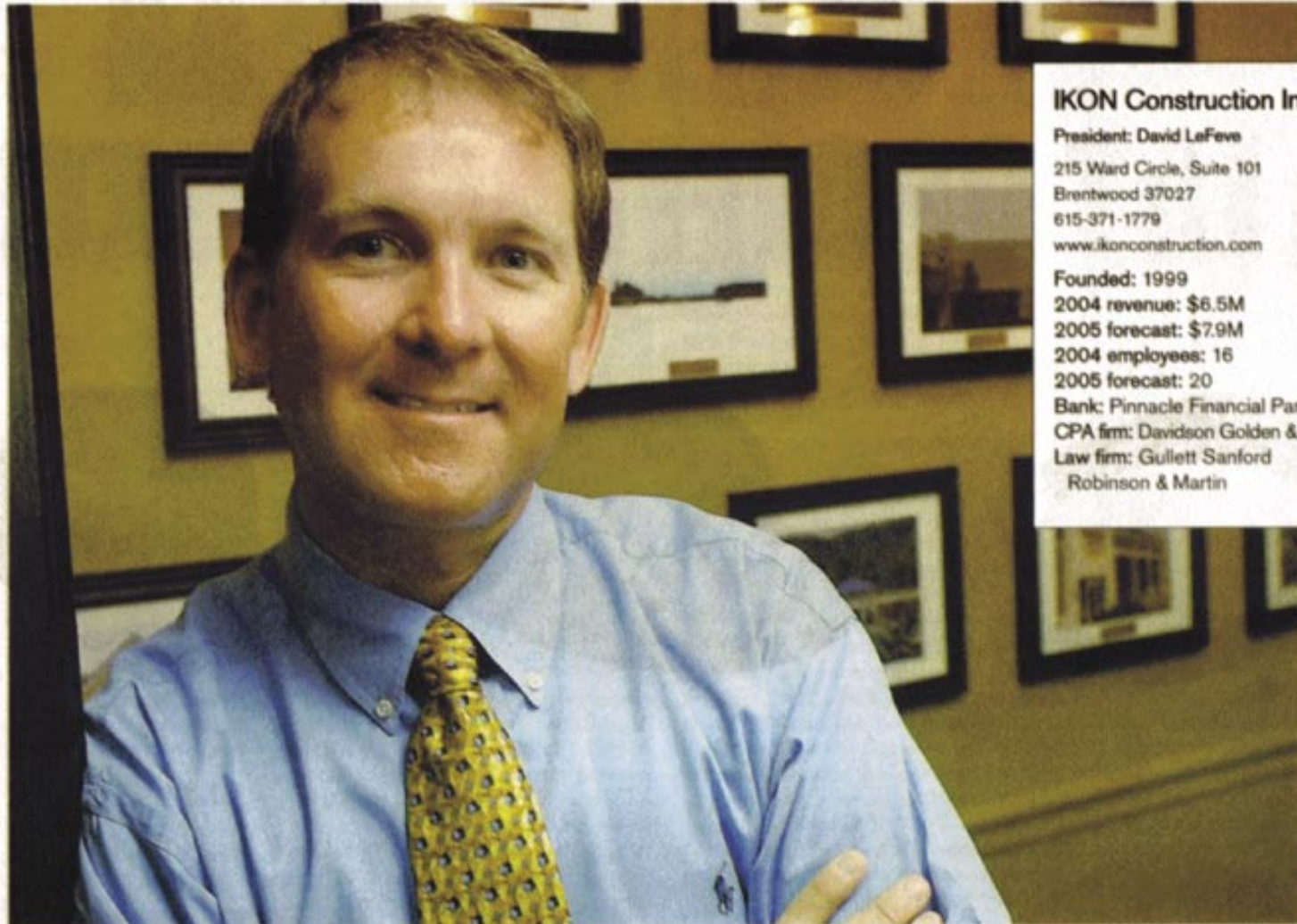
2005

Presented by



BRIDGESTONE
AMERICAS

1 to 25 Employees Winner



IKON Construction Inc.

President: David LeFeve

215 Ward Circle, Suite 101

Brentwood 37027

615-371-1779

www.ikonconstruction.com

Founded: 1999

2004 revenue: \$6.5M

2005 forecast: \$7.9M

2004 employees: 16

2005 forecast: 20

Bank: Pinnacle Financial Partners

CPA firm: Davidson Golden & Lundy

Law firm: Gullett Sanford

Robinson & Martin

David LeFeve's IKON Construction Inc. found a way to manage the renovation of Action Nissan without disrupting daily operations.

Recipe for success yields growth in unlikely climate

BY BRIAN FORRESTER
NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

IKON's team-oriented work environment has helped revenues almost triple in two and a half years. The company's 16 employees have bought into founder David LeFevé's vision, which has led them to a variety of projects around the region.

LeFevé began the firm in October 1999 after selling a 40 percent interest in another Nashville-based construction company. The general contractor-turned-entrepreneur tapped 20 years of industry experience and some of his personal assets during IKON's early days.

Over time, the company's projects have increased in size and complexity. Recently, IKON renovated 28,000 square feet at Renal Care Group Inc.'s Nashville headquarters. The project included expanding the health care provider's 24-hour computer and data center.

The firm also was the general con-

tractor for the renovation of the Springfield Plaza Shopping Center. That project included modifying five facades into an appearance similar to the French Quarter in New Orleans.

But LeFevé says renovating the Action Nissan off Nolensville Road was his type of project. During the 10-month renovation, IKON managed the project's different phases while limiting the ongoing construction's impact on the auto dealership's daily operations.

"It was a very, very challenging job," LeFevé says. "There were times when large sections were off this building and you were in the showroom looking up at blue sky."

In its first year, IKON worked on projects totaling about \$1 million. Now, that number is near \$7 million and LeFevé says IKON is tracking its five-year business plan. Keeping overhead manageable has been key, he adds, but he does plan to hire a project manager, two superintendents and an

**'(Employees)
buy into the vision
of the company.'**

**Barbara Peterson
NewMark Homes**

office manager this year.

IKON has "exceptionally high employee morale," says Barbara Petersen, NewMark Homes design center manager and a judge for the small-company category. "They buy into the vision of the company."

Creating that corporate culture has been one of LeFevé's largest challenges. IKON's leaders look to hire employees and accept projects that fit the company's focus. They avoid chas-

ing any project, and the same is true for its approach with potential employees.

IKON services and customer satisfaction have been equally significant for revenue growth during a time when labor rates and material costs have increased, sometimes dramatically.

"Companies that focus on safety and on taking care of their employees are the most successful," LeFevé says. "We focus hard on keeping our customers satisfied, paying subcontractors on time and giving good quality jobs. Doing those has helped our name."

The evidence is in IKON's project pipeline. At any given time, the company is working on up to 12 projects and has another 15 out to bid. If growth continues at its current rate, LeFevé plans on becoming his own client: He hopes to build an office building for IKON in three years.

cforrester@bizjournals.com ■ 615-248-2222, ext. 115

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