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ARI Logistics ramps up local hauling business

BY LAUREN B. COOPER | STAFF

Birmingham's ARI Logistics said it finally found a place it can grow – and it expects to grow by seven times its current size over the next two years.

The third-party logistics company based in Birmingham recently leased 9,000 square feet at Century Park South and plans to fill it with more than 70 inside sales people and freight brokers over the next two years.

That's a long haul from the 10 employees the growing company had when it moved in March from Southside and the 17 it has locally just two months later. Nationwide, ARI Logistics has 28 employees.

Steve Monson, vice president and general manager, said ARI Logistics and its Hanceville-based parent Action Resources have found a niche that's fueled its growth by transporting specialty chemicals and hazardous waste and hauling heavy and oversized loads, which is work most trucking companies won't touch.

"We are not average and we are not vanilla," said Monson of the companies' philosophy of being able to haul anything from 100 pounds to 250,000 pounds.

ARI Logistics is a third-party logistics provider that does not own its own trucks but provides multiple transportation services all over the U.S. and Canada. It has offices in Tyler and Dallas, Texas, and has plans to open an office in Ontario, Calif., and the Chicago area this year.

Also in its Birmingham office is Action Dedicated, a small trucking firm that employs independent truck owners and operators.

Monson said ARI Logistics and parent company Action Resources are putting the finishing touches on a new company to be launched later this year. He declined to discuss details, but said it's an "industry changing" approach to transportation.

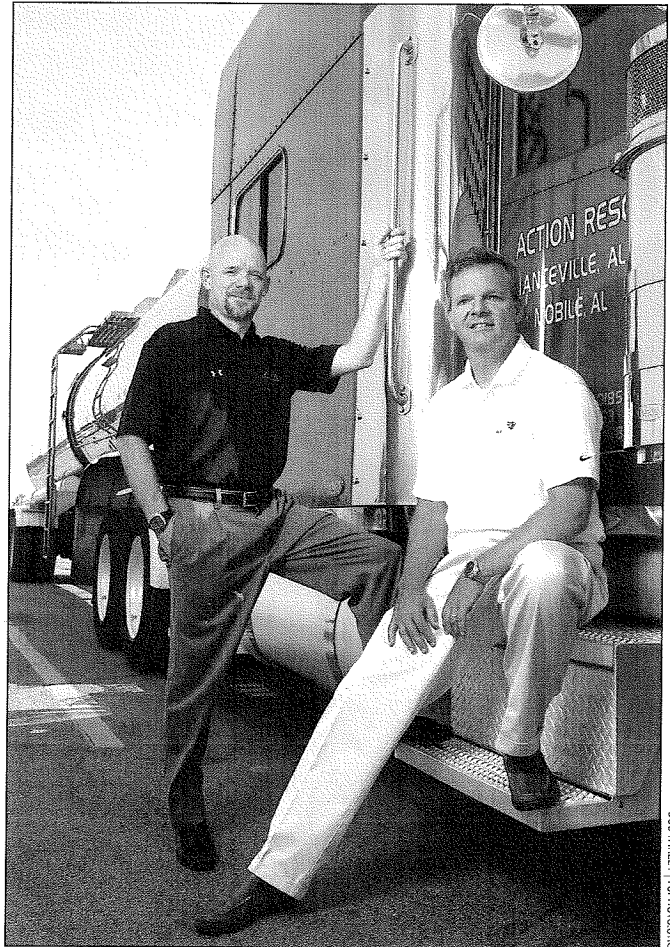
And the company's growth plan could get more aggressive, he said. It has the first right of refusal on the 7,000 square feet of space adjacent to its new office at 600 Century Park South.

In the last four years, Monson said Action Resources has grown from 90 trucks and \$20 million in revenue, to 300 trucks, 500 employees and a run rate of \$100 million in revenue.

Ford Boswell, spokesman for the Alabama Trucking Association, said most of Action Resources' growth can be attributed to two things: the arrival four years ago of CEO Dean Flint, an executive recruited from a large national trucking firm, and the effects of the recession on the trucking industry.

"For two or three years, at least since 2008, the trucking industry took it on the chin and that shook out a lot of the players," he said. "Action Resources is invested heavily. They picked the right CEO to lead them through an aggressive period."

Action Resources has found a niche in hauling chemicals and oversized loads, where little competition exists and certification and extensive training is required, Boswell said.



BOB HANLEY | RPHOTOGRAPH

Dean Flint, left, CEO of ARI Logistics, and Steve Monson, vice president and general manager, are planning major growth for the trucking firm in the next two years.

In addition to transporting specialty chemical and hazardous waste, Action Resources also owns Stone Trucking, a heavy and oversized hauling company, and Action Environmental, an environmental remediation and civil contracting company.

Both Monson and Boswell said current freight volumes are tight and the trucking industry as a whole is facing numerous challenges, including increased federal regulation, rising fuel prices and a diminishing supply of drivers and trucks that were sold overseas during the recession.

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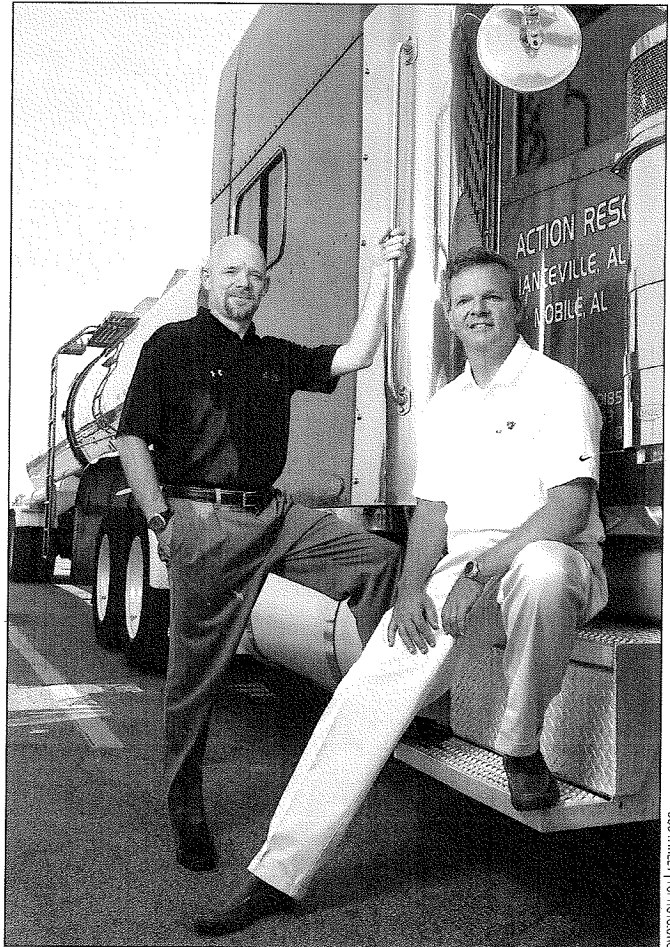
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BOB HAREL | RPH/OLO/DC

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