



Meet Bob Baron: Founder, President and CEO of the Baron Group of Companies

My whole life has been a learning experience and meteorology has been the culmination rather than the initiation of my careers. While we have developed a half dozen companies heavily involved in many aspects of weather, it was not my initial intent when first launching Baron Services.

First Jobs

From the earliest I can remember, I was involved in generating a revenue stream; selling lemonade to construction workers in our neighborhood, followed by paper routes, sacking groceries, and then as a junior in high school, becoming a disc jockey. Dad wanted a “professional” so I started college in Pre-Med, but I had found a passion in broadcasting and entered radio fulltime following that freshman year. I eventually worked my way through college, graduating from the University of Tennessee College of Business School of Journalism.

First Weather Job

After 20 years, I transitioned to TV in the mid 70’s filling in as weathercaster when needed, my only formal training, FAA advanced weather courses taken as a pilot. All of a sudden I had a new passion. I took enough local and correspondence courses to qualify (barely) for professional AMS membership and along the way earned the Broadcast TV Seal of Approval. My second career as a Chief Meteorologist spanned 20 incredibly rewarding years.

New Beginnings

November 15, 1989 brought a life changing experience, an F-4 tornado and 23 fatalities. As Chief Met, I thought we had weather tools but it turned out all we had from weather vendors were weather “gadgets”. Baron Services was incorporated 2 months later with a commitment to development of true severe weather tools and a focus on real time site specific weather data. Over the past two decades, through development of storm-tracking, weather radar, value added data, and wireless distribution including XM, we have maintained that focus.



Figure 1. Bob Baron receives recognition during the ribbon cutting ceremony for Baron Services’ building expansion in April 2008.

What Drives Me On

I love technology, going beyond the envelope. When I started, we drew weather symbols on wall maps with grease pencils. What incredible changes in 30 years. Right now our folks and the NWS folks are developing brand new processes for an exciting new radar enhancement called “dual polarity”. We’ll roll this out over the next few years. The Baron Tornado Index, a



real time integration of individual storm analysis and Rapid Update Cycle modeled nearby environment, has been introduced to critical acclaim.

We’ve just introduced a specialized weather data stream for automobiles over XM.

Figure 2. Bob Baron in Baron Services’ state-of-the-art weather operations center.

And our new true 3-D and live everything system, OMNI is showing us things we’ve never seen before. All of this is “tip of the iceberg”.

What would you say about entering private sector?

Meteorology covers such a diverse spectrum that there is a need for a wide range of skills. In our company alone, we have forecasters, scientists developing models, meteorological software and data developers, met tech support, broadcast meteorologists, and meteorological engineering. Focus on what interests you most. Give it your all, and the income will follow. In my estimation, the private sector is where all the action is.