

EQUIPMENT Leasing & Finance

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Meet the New ELFA Members

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Clarus Capital
Boston, Massachusetts

A de novo independent that began operations this past August, Clarus Capital provides capital solutions to finance tangible assets for non-investment-grade middle-market and large corporate borrowers. The company originates transactions to be held on its balance sheet using long-term committed capital from BharCap, a private investment firm investing in businesses across the financial services industry.

Steve O'Leary, CEO, says Clarus Capital's ability to underwrite leveraged credits is "a niche carved out by our management team over the past 10 years, and one we want to carry forward." Clarus executives previously worked together at NewStar Financial, a publicly-traded, middle-market direct-loan originator. "Steve built a very successful equipment-finance business for us at Newstar, which we later sold to a bank," explains Tim Conway, Clarus Chairman and Co-Founder. "When Steve and I saw the opportunity to re-establish the same platform in a non-regulated environment, we capitalized on it. We believe the market will be well served by a new, non-bank participant that is focused on non-investment grade credit."



Steve O'Leary

Chris Swanton, Managing Director and Head of Capital Markets, says Clarus is a generalist with a wide range of target industries and preferred equipment. "We can finance construction, Jones-Act marine, and material handling equipment, but we're also willing to finance IT, medical equipment and other softer assets," he observes, adding, "We're able to fund and hold larger transactions, up to \$30 million for the right credit."

Swanton says Clarus senior management prescreens any opportunity and then decides whether to offer a firm proposal. "The decision-makers look at the credit as well as the equipment and how it's being used to decide on a deal structure," he notes. "We try to move quickly but still give our customers and partners a proposal they can rely on."

O'Leary, Conway and Swanton believe the combination of skills, expertise and mission make Clarus Capital unique. "Our expertise lies in our people, who've underwritten leveraged credits and have solid experience on the equipment-finance side," says O'Leary. "The team has an extensive background in equipment leasing and an outstanding track record," adds Conway. "We'll be working with longstanding clients as well as new ones to provide competitive financing solutions. We're already closing transactions, and our pipeline is building steadily."

The company joined ELFA for the opportunity to create and renew relationships, to network with industry colleagues, and to participate in association conferences. "I've been involved with ELFA since the early 1990's, and Chris has been involved even longer," says O'Leary. "Membership is a wonderful way for us to keep up with industry issues and work with our colleagues to move forward."