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## The handoff

With Olson General Contractors preparing to close, competitor Construction Results absorbing clients



Bob Olson, left, is retiring this spring – and that will be the end of Olson General Contractors, a company that's been in existence since 1909. But his clients won't be left in the lurch; Olson's portfolio will be absorbed by Construction Results, run by President Mark Snyder, right.

BY BRIAN JOHNSON  
Staff Writer

It's not an unusual concern: With retirement approaching, Bob Olson wants to make sure he isn't leaving longtime clients in a state of limbo.

It's Olson's solution to the problem that makes him unusual. When he walks away from his business this spring, Olson is will simply hand off a decades-old portfolio of client data to a former competitor.

Olson, 64, owns Olson General Contractors, a New Hope-based firm that specializes in small to midsize industrial projects. When the firm closes this year — after precisely 100 years in business — Plymouth-based Construction Results Corp. will essentially take over where Olson Construction left off.

Construction Results will take ownership of and preserve and

maintain customer records, plans and files from Olson General Contractors' projects. The goal is to maintain a seamless flow of service for Olson's clients, according to officials from both companies.

they are taken care of."

From Construction Results' perspective, the transaction strengthens its position in the industrial and manufacturing sectors, according to Mark Snyder, president of the com-

pany. "I felt comfortable we could continue to help our clients and help their clients, help us grow, and help Bob feel good about his retirement."

Olson said no money changed hands in the transaction, but he will receive a commission from work generated by his past clients.

Through the years, Olson has worked with clients such as Scherer Brothers Lumber, Cirrus Design Corp. and Ultra Machining Co. Olson also did numerous school and church projects and miscellaneous commercial and industrial work.

This spring, Olson General Contracting will finish up a couple of projects before closing shop and handing the baton to Construction Results.

The companies didn't have a history of working together on projects. In fact, they sometimes competed against each other.

But Snyder said a mutual acquaintance started the conversation between the two firms, and the result was an agreement that is unusual in the construction industry. Olson said one of his employees interviewed with Construction Results, and that got the ball rolling.

Olson and Snyder agree that it's an unusual arrangement.

"Usually when companies go out of business, they hand it off to someone inside the company who is an up-and-comer or a son or daughter," Snyder said. Other companies simply "fade away into the sunset, or there are financial issues and they have to close the door immediately."

Olson said that he was unsuccessful in his efforts to sell the business and that he didn't

Olson, started the company in 1909. Originally a block manufacturer, the company evolved into a general contracting firm. Most of its work was in the Twin Cities area.

Bob Olson said he began working for the company as a summer employee at the age of 14, and by age 25, he was in charge. By 2007, Olson had 18 employees and \$8 million in annual revenue.

As construction slowed dramatically in 2008, the firm saw

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— Mark Snyder, president, Construction Results

those numbers dip to four employees and \$4 million in revenue.

"I had planned on retiring in a couple of years. With the economy going like it is, and the industry like it is, I decided now is the time," he said.

Snyder is optimistic about the future of Construction Results, which has a client portfolio that includes CenterPoint Energy, Macy's, General Mills, Dunn Bros. Coffee and Bethel University.

A professional engineer, Snyder founded the company in 1999. Its services include new construction, renovation, remodeling, demolition, concrete and carpentry.

Snyder says he currently does \$10 million to \$12 million of work per year, about double what he did five years ago. Inc. magazine has recognized the company as one of the "5,000 Fastest-Growing Private Companies in America."

His current work ranges from a private school project in Plymouth to a building repair for the Salvation Army in downtown Minneapolis.

"Things are slow, but they are not dead," Snyder said. "There is work out there. Many clients are making more efficient use of the space they already have."

Olson said the last couple of years have been tough, but he has few regrets.

"The industry has always been up and down," he said. "But it's been a good ride."

### Olson General Contractors

**Headquarters:** New Hope

**Founded:** 1909

**Clients:** Scherer Brothers Lumber, Cirrus Design Corp., and Ultra Machining Co.

### Construction Results Corp.

**Headquarters:** Plymouth

**Founded:** 1999

**Clients:** CenterPoint Energy, Macy's, General Mills, Dunn Bros. Coffee, Bethel University

"They are taking over our customer base, basically. ... At least 65 to 70 percent of our work was repeat business," Olson said. "You get to know them and you are the guy they call. We wanted to make sure

pany. Construction Results also hired two longtime Olson employees, project managers Ed Sorgatz and Terry Lind.

"I thought it would be a good fit," Snyder said. "Olson has a good reputation; so do we. We

have anyone to pass it onto. His children chose different career paths, and a former employee who was interested in carrying on the business ended up starting his own firm.

Olson's grandfather, Gust