

ROBINSON BROTHERS CONSTRUCTION INC.

Independent utility contracting in the Northwest

Produced by Shaun Emery and Written by Tom Faunce

For more than 52 years, Robinson Brothers Construction Inc. (RBC) has been a full-service provider of utilities construction to the electrical, communications and renewable energy industries. Headquartered in Vancouver, Washington, RBC manages offices in Colorado, Oregon and Idaho. The company maintains a management team with extensive experience on challenging projects in remote areas. Working throughout the Western United States, RBC provides quality turnkey solutions with a high degree of customer service, while maintaining a safe work environment for its employees and the general public.

Founded by Bud Robinson in 1964, RBC focused primarily on communication network installations for its first four decades in business. The company has been involved in the deployment of fiber optic networks across the country for some of the nation's largest communication companies and has installed more than 4,000 miles of fiber-optic cable.

RBC provides underground electrical distribution installation services to private and public electric utilities. By utilizing multiple methods, including

open trenching, plowing and directional boring, RBC can install systems in either manhole and conduit, or direct buried architecture. "Our team understands the challenges presented in developing underground infrastructures," says Mike Rakoz, president of RBC. "RBC is equipped with the proper knowledge and tools to fulfill your project specifications."

Expanding the market

In 2005, RBC was purchased by Rakoz and Craig Sorenson with Merle Sorenson joining the company in

2008. The company then entered into the renewable energy sector and has since installed the MV collection and supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems on wind generation projects producing more than 1,141 megawatts. These projects have been located throughout the United States, and have included terminal connections to more than 696 wind turbine generators (WTGs).

For the niche market in which RBC operates, the company has gained an advantage by remaining independent.





VERSATILE, DEPENDABLE, AND HIGH-PERFORMING



Ditch Witch® JT25 Ditch Witch® FX60 Ditch Witch® RT120 QUAD



**DITCH WITCH
NORTHWEST**
A PAPER COMPANY

NEW ■ USED ■ RENTAL ■ SERVICE

We're Papé— here to keep you moving, whether you're on the farm, or building infrastructure, office buildings, and homes, or digging line, installing pipe, or looking for better ways of handling and warehousing. It's a **PROMISE** we've kept for four generations and intend to keep for generations to come.

CONTACT US:
Steve Jergentz, General Manager
Ditch Witch Northwest, Portland, OR
503-737-2805 ■ sjergentz@ditchwitchnw.com
Visit us at www.ditchwitchnw.com for more information.

“Compared to a lot of the conglomerates out there, we are able to remain flexible in how we move and operate,” says Rakoz. “This also allows the client the ability to deal directly with the owners of the company.” RBC has established relationships with repeat clients, which has generated a personal aspect to doing business with the company.

Numerous projects with which RBC is involved often stretch over hundreds of miles. The company is currently working on a project in central Washington that is approximately 200 miles long. This job will traverse contrasting soil types and ground conditions.

Success through experience

While most of the construction industry felt the repercussions when the economic downturn hit, RBC was able to maintain a steady workflow, primarily due to its reputation for quality, safety and customer service. Working in the private sector, the company is able to maintain a strong estimating format by streamlining opportunities into individual departments, which allows it to be monitored at a higher level.

“Before, our customers would deal with individual project managers and we’ve changed that to bring it into the company itself,” says Rakoz. “We have a person in charge of delegating the bids. Many of our customers are private companies but are publicly traded, so you have to prequalify to even bid on those jobs. We’ve really worked to diversify our business and broaden our footprint, which has established a lot of opportunities over the last 10 years.”

Rakoz began his career in 1988 with Sorenson Construction. In 1990 he seized an opportunity to get involved with a startup company based in Seattle that installed telecommunications infrastructure. With this company, Rakoz managed a general construction and maintenance contract with Verizon for two years. Later while still with the company, Rakoz joined two other partners to form Fiber Flow, a cable placing contractor that was one of the first in the nation to utilize the new technology of installing cable by using the air-driven method. After major success in growing these companies, Rakoz utilized his knowledge and experience to partner with Sorenson and acquired RBC. As president of the company, Rakoz says he still makes every effort to get out in the field on the jobsite. “I still love getting out there and getting dirty,” he says. “It brings me back to my roots.”

Rakoz is an entrepreneur at heart. The fact that so many people rely on his company to be successful in order to make a living is the driving force for him every day. “We set new goals for the company every quarter,” says Rakoz. “Fortunately we have the management and staff to achieve every one of those goals.”

With its strong customer base and level of quality, Robinson Brothers Construction Inc. will remain a leader as an independent utility contractor. •

