

# AMERICAN BUILDERS QUARTERLY

FALL 2009

## Building For Education

### **PONIKVAR**

Finding stability in education market

### **EMC2**

Creating green schools

### **DIVISION ONE**

Fast-tacking school renovation during summer months

### **NALLS**

Focusing on scientific research centers and labs

### **LKA**

Designing schools to help students grow



# TMP ARCHITECTURE

Using design to enhance student learning



*Siblings Dan Morgan and Laurie Morgan Bender strive for excellence in being environmentally friendly and always providing high-quality service at a reasonable price.*

## MORGAN & SON EARTHMOVING, INC.

Striving for excellence in the earthmoving business

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

AS THE CO-OWNER OF A FAMILY-OWNED business, Dan Morgan certainly was aware that the odds were not in his favor.

Family-owned companies account for about 60 percent of the nation's employment, according to researchers at Kennesaw State University in Georgia, and only 30 percent of these family businesses will survive into the second generation.

Morgan's business is defying those odds. Now in its fourth generation, the company is not only surviving, but thriving.

"It's tough owning a family business," says Morgan. "But we're here to stay and we're in it for the long run. While there are days when things go wrong, more often than not, there are days when things go right and you couldn't imagine doing anything else."

Morgan, along with his sister, Laurie

Morgan Bender, is co-owner of Morgan & Son Earthmoving Inc., a Washington-state based company started by their father and grandfather in 1957.

The idea for the company actually dates much earlier than that. In 1923, August Thisius, their great-grandfather, began a logging mill in the Yakima area. When John Morgan, their grandfather, and August's son-in-law, bought a Gas 30 Caterpillar and an old road grader, the company's history of road construction was forged. Soon after, John purchased a D-4 Cat, owning the first dozer tractor in the Yakima Valley.

By 1944, John had an International truck, D-6 Cat, a D-7 Cat, a ripper, a scraper, and an old road grader. In 1957, J.P. Morgan, John's son, (Dan and Laurie's father), became a part of the partnership. Father and son formed a legal partnership and Morgan & Son Earthmoving, Inc. was officially formed. John

provided the equipment and J.P. leveled the land for farmers.

In 1969, J.P. bought out his father and the company started building roads for Boise Cascade. The company's reputation began to blossom, and they soon found themselves owning a small fleet of equipment, and working on every mountain in the Kittitas Valley, the Yakima Valley, and from Sunnyside to Wenatchee.

Since that time, Morgan & Son continued to expand its expertise and skill. J.P. and his wife, Helen, owned the company until April 1, 2006, when their children, Dan and Laurie, officially took ownership.

Today the company is mainly focused on road construction, road maintenance, and any kind of earthmoving. The company has adapted and changed with the times.

"We consider ourselves a green company," says Dan. "We have always been involved in the original green industry, the timber industry, and we are now also involved in construction and maintenance for wind farms, solar projects, and a wide variety of wildlife habitat, as well as fish passage projects. Almost all of the projects that we are involved in now are either mitigation to

### AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:  
ELLENSBURG, WA

AREA OF SPECIALTY:  
ROAD CONSTRUCTION  
AND MAINTENANCE

FOUNDED:  
1957

EMPLOYEES:  
6



Morgan & Son Earthmoving doing road maintenance work at the Wild Horse Wind and Solar Facility near Ellensburg, WA.

correct inappropriate practices from the past or to preserve the environment for the future.”

While Dan and Laurie are now managing the business, they still seek their parents’ advice from time to time.

“Because my dad has been in the business forever, he has taught me more than you can ever learn from a book or in school,” he says. “Even though our parents retired three years ago, they’re still around to bounce ideas off of, get

“Almost all of the projects that we are involved in now are either mitigation to correct inappropriate practices from the past or to preserve the environment for the future.” Dan Morgan, President

advice from, and share things with. After running the company for 50 years, they know a great deal. It’s nice to have that there to go to.”

From their parents, the Morgan siblings learned that the best way to stand out in a competitive marketplace is through integrity and pride in your workmanship. “We have been able to develop an excellent track record in making sure the customer is satisfied, getting them what they want, and doing it for a fair price,” he says.

With the economy slowing down the construction industry, Dan is still focused on the company’s strategy of slow

and steady growth. “Although the economy is down and the bids are low this year, you have to know where to draw the line,” he says. “We still want to grow, but the best strategy is to grow slow. I have seen too many companies come in, grow too fast, and then they are gone. Slow, steady growth is better so you don’t get in too deep.”

While Dan admits that it is difficult right now with the current economic times, he remains confident. “I am not too worried because there is still a lot of work out there,” he says. “The economy has always been cyclical. We have been there before and pulled out of it. It will get better.” ABQ

### SERVICES

- Wind Farm Road and Site Maintenance
- Road Construction
- Road Maintenance
- Grading
- Land Clearing
- Pipe Installation
- Erosion Control
- Gabions
- Dust Palliative
- Land Leveling
- Fish Passages
- Habitat Conservation

Other Excavation, Conservation, and Earthmoving Projects.



MORGAN & SON EARTHMOVING, INC., founded in 1957 is a family owned and operated business skilled in a variety of earthmoving services.



WE STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE BY BEING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY AND BY ALWAYS PROVIDING A HIGH QUALITY SERVICE AT A REASONABLE PRICE.

### CONTACT US

#### PHONE

Office: (509) 925-9720  
Cell: (509) 929-5555  
Fax: (509) 933-2826

#### MAIL

Morgan & Son Earthmoving, Inc.  
PO Box 999  
Ellensburg, WA 98926

