

MIKE MOORE & SONS CONSTRUCTION LIMITED

By Craig Lawrence



Left: Notable projects include the award winning Lake Superior Provincial Park Interpretive Media Visitor Centre.

Below: One of Mike Moore & Sons' current projects, The Praxair T1800 Oxygen Plant.



AS THE NAME SUGGESTS, Mike Moore & Sons Construction Ltd. is a family business. However, the family members in this business are probably not who you would expect. Mike has two sons, but neither of them are involved in the business. So why the name? Mike explains, "When I incorporated my company name, 'Mike Moore Construction' was already taken, so I had to add '& Sons'." Nevertheless, there is a family member involved in the business – Mike's wife Fern, the company controller.

Mike credits the success of the company to its reputation for fairness, honesty, integrity and quality work done in a timely fashion.

Married for just over four years, Mike and Fern find that being spouses, as well as co-workers, leads to a pretty full schedule. "We generally work 12 to 14 hours per day, all day Saturday, and 4 or 5 hours on Sunday. Once we finally get home we usually discuss the day's events, new ideas, methods, forms, etc., and put them on our laptop. Then we e-mail them to the office and deal with them the next day. There's really no such thing as a vacation," says Mike. "In our spare time, we write the company's monthly newsletter."

The company got its start in 1989 when the construction company he was working for declared bankruptcy. Mike decided to head out on his own, borrowed \$50,000.00 and managed to entice several of his co-workers to join him – and they've remained with Mike to

this day. Dwayne Phillips, Ken Coventry and Wayne Seibt are his Superintendents, while Ken Stitt is his Project Manager. From limited beginnings – "(The company) essentially started from an office in my basement" – Mike Moore & Sons has become one of the largest non-union general contractors in the Sault Ste. Marie area, and is rapidly becoming a player in the rugged and competitive Northern Ontario market.

Mike credits the success of the company to its reputation for fairness, honesty, integrity and quality work done in a timely fashion. Mike is a Gold Seal Certified Estimator and Ken Stitt is Gold Seal Certified in Project Management. Obviously, this has resulted in a great deal of client satisfaction, but Mike's concern is not limited to that side of the business. Mike ensures that subtrades are also treat-

ed fairly. "Subtrades get hammered by other generals," says Mike. "We want them to think of our company as a 'breath of fresh air'." By treating owners, suppliers, and the subtrades fairly, Mike hopes that the company provides a finished project of which everyone can be proud, while making it an enjoyable and prosperous experience – for all.

The other significant factor in the company's success is the employees. Teamwork and communication are very important, and Mike strives to develop a strong relationship with all the people in his company. "Our employees are important and deserve recognition. We try to make this an enjoyable place to work," says Mike. Besides a monthly employee newsletter, the company has an active social committee that organizes several employee activities throughout the year. These include an annual golf tournament, a dinner cruise, a curling bonspiel, and an event oriented to employees' families. "Fern and I also host a summer yard party, and a Christmas party at our home," says Mike.

Another point of pride for Mike is his company's dedication and attention to safety issues. "We've gone above and beyond what is required in terms of safety. It's our number one priority both on and off our job sites." This has been acknowledged several times by the OGCA with the Zero Accident Frequency awards from 1990 to 1997 and 1999 to 2003. They also have a full time Safety Director (Ken James) and have been members of the OGCA/WSIB Safety Group since its inception in the year 2000. The extent of Mike's concern for safety was demonstrated recently after a visit to the company's website. "I noticed that the worker on the site's header was walking a steel beam," he says. "He may have been tied off, but this was still a pretty dangerous situation." A quick call to the site administrator fixed the problem – by putting the worker in a manlift.

Notable projects for the company have included: the GP Flakeboard Plant in Sault Ste. Marie; the OSBBC Plant in Barwick; extensive interior renovations to the main branch of Scotiabank in Sault Ste. Marie; several projects for Algoma University College including the Student Residence Buildings 1 & 3, Library Renovations, the George Leach Fitness Centre and Classroom Renovations; the award winning Lake Superior

Provincial Park Interpretive Media Visitor Centre; GoodLife Fitness Club Renovations in Sault Ste. Marie; Renovation to the Radiology Department, Lab and MRI Suite at the General Hospital (including over 30 other renovation projects); Phase One Foundations for the 377-bed F. J. Davey Home Long Term Care Facility; 22-bed Long Term Care Facility for Blind River Hospital; five Tim Horton's Stores in Sault Ste. Marie; and Boston's Ltd. new design-build GM Dealership.

Mike Moore & Sons is the local Steelway Building Systems pre-engineered steel building dealer and has received many "District Performance Awards for Northern Ontario." They do their own building erection and Mike, Dwayne and Ken pride themselves in the fact that they have one of the best and safest erection crews in Northern Ontario. The company has supplied and erected almost one million square feet of pre-engineered steel buildings.

With the recent hiring of another Secretary and a Project Manager, the company will be expanding and will soon have over 3,200 square feet of modern office space. They also have over 3,400 square feet of shop area, a far cry from the one room, basement office in 1989!

Current projects include the Information & Communications Technology Building at Algoma University; the Flakeboard Melamine Plant; GoodLife Fitness Club Renovations in North Bay and the Praxair T1800 Oxygen Plant in Copper Cliff, Ontario. The company continues to have many repeat clients.

Mike's Five Year Business Plan (including Risk Management) is to increase the company's annual volume to a total of almost \$20 million. This will be a tall order for a company that relies on projects in the Northern Ontario Region. Mike says that the company must expand its local operations to the North and East of Sault Ste. Marie in order to make his plan feasible. Mike is investigating the Southern Ontario market as well. He incorporated a company in the State of Michigan, but it has yet to become active.

After 15 years in business, Mike Moore & Sons Construction Ltd. continues to strive for client satisfaction while maintaining their focus on honesty, fairness, and integrity. With this dedication to these principles, it's a safe bet that Mike's desire to be "the best of the best" is well within reach.

