

JHL Constructors retires the ‘hire and fire’ mentality

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Kathleen Lavine / Denver Business Journal

JHL Constructors ranked No. 4 among large companies for the Denver Business Journal's 2016 Best Places to Work award. JHL Constructors hold a subcontractors barbecue at a recent project in Arvada.

The construction industry has long been known for its hire-and-fire mentality — hiring people when there’s a lot of work during strong economies, and firing people when work drops off in downturns. But JHL Constructors believes the best way to serve customers is to cultivate long-term employees to stay at the company no matter what’s happening economically.

“We focus on developing a path where people want to work here until they retire,” said Ben Steller, JHL’s longtime president. “We’re constantly driving employees to better each other. ... We provide teams with what they need to succeed. We help them not to fail because their success is our success.”

JHL CEO John Hachmeister started the construction services business in 1987, and the company has become a specialist in projects ranging from small interior renovations and tenant improvements to large, ground-up construction projects.

The company works on structures from apartments and senior living facilities to health care and office space, but is particularly known for school projects. “Seventy percent of our workload is schools,” Steller said.

Recent education jobs include the \$51 million expansion of the Stargate Charter School campus, including a high school, in Thornton and updating the Boulder Valley School District’s historic Whittier International School.

Company values include being true partners with all stakeholders of a project, providing top-quality workmanship, completing projects on time, dealing fairly and honestly with clients, and being professional.

The Centennial-based construction contractor employs some 65 people and is 100 percent employee-owned. JHL calls its staff “a dynamic group of overachievers, driving each other’s success [and] capitalizing on each other’s strengths.”

From the start, Hachmeister wanted a family- and community-oriented work culture with long-term workers, and that culture “remains ever constant and stronger than ever,” according to the company. Employees regularly get together for tailgate parties and team events benefiting charities such as the Denver Rescue Mission.

“There’s a family feel here,” said Steller. “Everybody is approachable. Everyone’s opinion is valued. We try to make sure everybody feels they’re truly part of the company.”

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JHL Constructors Inc.

Top local executive: John Hachmeister, founder and CEO

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