

# CONSTRUCTION COMPANY CHANGES EMPHASIS

Oklahoma City – Richard Mize  
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Oklahoma City-based G&G Construction Co. inc., in business for 56 years has hung out a new shingles with a new name reflecting a broader business emphasis.

The new name is Gardner Construction Group. The company, headed by co-founder Justin Gardner, chief executive and Richard Tanenbaum chief operating officer, is expanding into competitive-bid work from its established forte of doing development and construction work for hire.

“For a half century now, our company has been recognized mainly for providing specialized commercial construction services for a client base consisting mainly of owner-occupants,” said Gardner, who co-founded the predecessor company with his father I.H. Gardner in 1947. “Over the past 40-some-odd years, we have been a little company and all of a sudden we grew like Topsy. We’ve developed millions of square feet of real estate over the past few years.”

Gardner Construction has developed and built \$41 million worth of buildings in the past 18 months and built more than 3 million square feet of space in the past several years, Tanenbaum said.

In addition to pursuing bid work, Gardner Construction Group now offers “everything from land acquisition and construction management to design build and commercial leasing operations for a much more diverse range of clients,” Gardner said.

The move was a surprise to many in the state construction industry, said Dick Anderson, executive director of the Associated and General Contractors of Oklahoma Building Chapter.

“They’ve been typical developers for number of years. But they have been quite the entrepreneurs. They unlike many developers have their own construction company,” Anderson said Friday from the chapter’s Tulsa office.

The breadth of services offered by Gardner Construction Group – site selection, land acquisition and industrial warehouse-office, retail and most recently, residential development and construction – will make the reorganized company competitive on several levels, Anderson said.

“There’s always room for a viable player. Their reputation in the market place is such they’ll be alright,” he said.

One area where Gardner Construction Group has no plans to compete is public works projects, Tanenbaum said.

With so much of Oklahoma City’s construction business gearing toward work on Maps for Kids – the \$700 million school capital improvement and revitalization project – the timing was right for Gardner Construction Group to take up any slack created in the private sector Tanenbaum said.

Anderson agreed that the shift in construction attention and resources has created opportunities for Gardner. He struggled to name companies that are now direct

competitors and peers of Gardner. It depends on the kind of project he said. Gardner Construction is a "typical design-builder – with money in his pocket."

"Design-build" refers to a system where a property owner hires a firm or construction team based on qualifications or price rather than based on sealed bids. Design-build teams design and build the project under one contract. Gardner Construction also offers construction management services. That approach to construction has an owner hiring an architect and contractor on their qualifications under separate contracts; all work together to design and build the project.

"Our goal at Gardner Construction Group is to provide the same quality construction and array of financial options to the broader commercial development market," Tanenbaum said. "We believe with our design –build experience and financial options, we can help new clients realize construction objectives where before they may have considered them out of their reach."

Corporations now occupying space developed by Gardner include Federal Express, Trane Co., ARINC Inc, L3 Communications' Link Simulation and Training, and Manco Inc. Manco is part of a cluster of warehouse distribution centers at Interstate 35 and Hefner Road that were so successful they "blew the socks off the marketplace,"

Gardner's current projects include the third phase of Reno Circle, a retail-office showroom development on Hudiburg Circle between West Reno Avenue and Interstate 40; Liberty Business Park, a defense oriented business park under development on Air Depot Boulevard near Tinker Air Force Base; and Liberty Trails, a planned entry level residential neighborhood on Sooner Road at Interstate 240.

Looking into the future clouded by war and a weak economy Gardner said he feels confident that his revamped company will continue to see success.

"It's never going to be like Dallas and it's never going to be like Houston," he said. "It's good, stable growth. We've had good stable growth in Oklahoma City for 20 years because we started at the bottom in the 80's."