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## **Company of the Month: 61 years and a bright future The Congress Companies is still growing**

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The Congress Companies' work philosophy and ethic comes from a history of entrepreneurship and industry. Its roots in the construction industry lie in the restaurant and hotel business. Partnering early on with hotelier Howard Johnson, who recognized kindred entrepreneurial spirits in Peter and Paul Nicholson, the Nicholson brothers built The Congress Companies from a small general contracting business to a construction firm that went on to build over 200 Howard Johnson, Ground Round, and Red Coach Grille Restaurants and 80 Howard Johnson hotels starting in the early 1950s.

Meanwhile, Peter Nicholson's son, William, followed his father's path, working his way up through his family's company as a laborer, a carpenter, and a foreman. He also climbed the administrative ladder, from estimator to project manager.

In 1987, the company that had developed into a boutique construction firm was moving into a new niche within the health care and senior living markets at the same time that the Nicholson brothers decided to reduce their roles in the company. William Nicholson, as testament to his industrial lineage, purchased The Congress Companies from his father and uncle and took over as CEO.

It was a natural progression for Congress when it integrated its experience in hotel construction with the development of a new product: Assisted living and independent living communities for seniors.

The assisted and independent living communities worked as an alternative to traditional nursing homes, which are not always suitable for every senior. With Americans living longer and wishing to remain independent, these communities provide peace of mind for both residents and families by allowing residents to maximize their independence while receiving supervision and assistance with daily living as needed.

With the construction of the Golden Pond Assisted Living Residence in Hopkinton, Mass. in 1995, Congress began its integral role in satisfying the increasing need for assisted living, which was a very new industry at the time.

On a more recent senior living project, The Residence at Riverbend in Ipswich, Mass., Congress worked with its client, LCB Senior Living, LLC, to increase their contribution to the local community. The project's development includes a donation to the Ipswich Watershed Association of two plus acres of riverfront property and the creation of a permanent easement to allow public vehicular access to the Ipswich River. Additional open space land was placed under a permanent conservation restriction.

William Nicholson helped The Congress Companies distinguish itself in these marketsâ€”building health care facilities, multi-family residences, and senior housing communitiesâ€”through its approach to delivering what clients need and want. The fact that Congress' consultative approach requires rigorous planning and attention to detail, is not rhetoric. Before a shovel ever breaks

ground, The Congress Companies establishes a rapport with its clients. It establishes a connection by adhering to one simple principle: looking someone in the eye and listening to his or her needs. That's how The Congress Companies has built a reputation of 60 plus years experience in the construction industry. That's how Congress is able to help develop strategy for the best construction outcomes, how it obviates issues, and, above all, how its understanding of a client's vision can make it Congress' own as it executes its clients' projects.

If you need any indicator of the success of Congress' approach, nothing speaks louder than its repeat business. Congress currently provides construction management services and serves as general contractor for the expansion project at Golden Pond. The project includes a four-story, 36,000 s/f addition to the original Golden Pond building that will include 41 assisted living beds in 30 residential units.

Partnering with LCB Senior Living, LLC, of Norwood, Mass., Congress will also provide construction management services and serve as general contractor on two new assisted living projects - The Residences at Riverbend in Ipswich, Mass., a \$13 million, 73,674 s/f, 83-bed assisted living community, and The Residence at South Windsor Farms, a \$13.7 million, 66,000 s/f, three-story, assisted living community in South Windsor, Conn.

Congress' commitment to its consultative approach, to listening to its clients' needs and vision is what has made the company so well regarded in the surety, banking, and the development and construction communities. As a solid and reliable company with formidable construction, design and development, and management capacity, Congress will undoubtedly continue its legacy into a future as rich as its history.

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