

CRBJ STAFF

Publisher
Matt Winters
mwinters@crbizjournal.com

Editor
Jonathan Williams
editor@crbizjournal.com

Office Coordinator
Sarah Smith
ssmith@eomediagroup.com

Group Publisher
Kari Borgen
kborgen@dailyastorian.com

Advertising Director
Sarah Silver
ssilver@dailyastorian.com

Layout/Design
Matthew Vann

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CONTACT CRBJ

Submit news:
editor@crbizjournal.com

Website:
CoastRiverBusinessJournal.com

Coast River Business Journal
205 Bolstad Ave. E. Suite 2, P.O. Box 427
Long Beach, WA 98631
Phone 800-643-3703

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ABBHEY McDONALD

Longview-based Entek Corp. has purchased P&L Johnson in Astoria. From left, Rodd Steuart, Keith Landwehr, Dale Johnson, Paul Radu, Robert Fresh and Don Pilger.

P&L Johnson sold to Longview-based company

Recent deal combines resources, services

By **ABBHEY McDONALD**
Coast River Business Journal

When Paul Radu founded P&L in 1980, it was essentially a one man, one truck operation based in Astoria.

Since then, the heating and cooling company has expanded to over 20 employees who serve most of the North Coast.

Radu joined forces with Dale Johnson in 1991. It helped make what became P&L Johnson the operation it is today.

Late last year, the pair sold the business to Entek Corp. to combine both companies' resources and services.

"It's been a long time. I've seen a lot of changes, seen people come and go," Radu said. "The biggest thing about Dale's and my age is that all these people that you serviced and knew and socialized with over the years are now gone or retired and there's a new generation coming in."

Retirement is on the horizon for both Radu and Johnson, but they aren't saying goodbye yet. The pair is overseeing the merger with the Longview-based company and preparing for succession.

"We felt it was the right fit and we've known these people for 30 years. We've associated with them all that time and they have the same local feel that we do," Radu said.

Radu said they will spend the next few years gradually stepping back and choosing people within the company to take his and Johnson's place. He said P&L Johnson will be keeping its name and employees.

"Really, nothing's going to change in that regard other than we're going to be a little bit stronger with Entek behind us," he said.

Rodd Steuart, the CEO of Entek, said he's happy with the deal.

"These guys have done a phenomenal job building a company and serving the community," Steuart said. "So it's just awesome to us to be part of good companies with good people."

The business hopes to continue recruiting talent from the community, and will continue to participate in the Associated Builders and Contractors apprenticeship program.

"I think our No. 1 priority was to our teammates and employees and their families," Radu said. "We just have more financial backing behind us now because we're bigger, and it's just the right thing to do for everybody involved."