



## Munson celebrates 50th anniversary

Jeanne Wieland , Special to The Daily Reporter  
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When Bob Fetherston was hired by Munson Inc. in 1974, he was charged with selling the company's fencing and asphalt services.

Ten years later, he was one of three owners of the business, and today, he is leading the firm's 50th anniversary celebration. Munson Inc. is hosting an open house from 2 to 5 p.m. Friday at its headquarters in Glendale. Fetherston said anyone with questions about the open house can call 414-351-0800. Visitors to the open house will have a chance to see how the firm, which was started by James Munson in 1955, has changed from a fencing company to offering asphalt and concrete services as well.

Fetherston said the additions to the company's services were necessary to keep the business growing. Currently, 50 employees, including Fetherston's son, Rob, work for Munson Inc.

Fetherston said Munson does everything from major paving jobs for firms like W.H. Brady and Miller Brewing to smaller jobs such as individual tennis courts at residential homes. Munson Inc. is the only contractor in the area that does tennis courts from the ground up, Fetherston said.

And although the bulk of the work Munson does takes place in southeastern Wisconsin, crews do travel throughout the state to install tennis courts.

## Building on

Fetherston added concrete services to the firm's roster about five years ago, and since that time, there has been a lot to learn in the industry. For example, Munson Inc. just finished a student parking lot at the Milwaukee School of Engineering that was covered with porous concrete.

Fetherston said the pervious surface allows water to filter through the concrete to stone below that acts as a reservoir for the water. The water eventually seeps into the ground, but at a slower rate. This system prevents runoff and gives the water somewhere to go.

"This type of project is going to become emphasized in downtown areas," Fetherston said. "MMSD (Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District) doesn't want anyone to put any excess water into the sewer system."

In situations such as MSOE's, the school needed to add parking but did not have the space for the detention ponds that MMSD would require. Pervious pavement, although more costly than traditional concrete or asphalt, helps to resolve that issue.

Learning how to use this technology took time.

"We went to seminars and did a lot of homework and research," Fetherston said.

Munson Inc. also is using the newer stamped-concrete techniques for some larger jobs at Milwaukee Public Schools. Samples will be on display at the open house.

Even with this emphasis on concrete, the firm's original mission as a fencing company has not been lost. The fencing division currently is erecting about \$700,000 worth of fencing around We Energies' power plant in Oak Creek.

Finding employees willing to do the physical labor Munson requires has not been easy in recent years, Fetherston said.

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**Bob Fetherston  
 Munson Inc.**

"Our existing employees refer people, we place ads, talk to the unions, but it is still hard to find the right people," he said.

But, once those people are found, they find the work is steady at Munson Inc.

"We've got the philosophy that you take care of your customers -- give them more rather than less," Fetherston said. "If you do that, they refer you or come back for more work because they are happy with what you did for them."

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