



Volume 19, No. 1

A Quarterly Publication of Independence Excavating, Inc.

Winter, 2006

# *Independence Excavating Celebrates 50 Years... A Tribute to Our Founders.*



Independence Excavating was founded in 1956 by our late father Sam and brother Don along with our loving mother Mary. The company had humble beginnings, digging house basements with a backhoe, bulldozer, and a single-axle truck. The market was the growing community of our hometown Independence, Ohio, and its surrounding suburbs. What has taken place from then until now is the result of the hard work ethic passed onto our family by our parents and Don. Our organization today, although much larger, maintains the original

core values of its humble beginnings. These values were adopted by our dedicated employees who without question are the company's greatest asset. As we look forward to the next 50 years, the generations to come will strive to maintain this legacy.

Independence Excavating invites our clients and friends to look back with us on our milestones in this special 50th Anniversary *Declaration of Independence* newsletter.



## President's Message

# The Tradition of Innovation Continues

Over the course of the past fifty years, my brothers and I have watched our once small residential excavation company blossom into one of the most respected trade specialty contractors in the mid-west. Our older brother Don's philosophy of innovation, coupled with our father's work ethic, has helped shape and guide our company's success.

Although we take great pride in the quality of our equipment, there are no doubts that it is our people that have allowed Independence Excavating to reach our 50th Anniversary. I know that our success is the result of the commitment and hard work of our employees. Anyone can purchase equipment and bid on projects, but our employees are responsible for our success and growth.

As we pass the torch to the next generation, I am proud to see that the traditions and values started 50 years ago live on today with our sons and daughters. I see the guidance that my brothers and our superb field managers have provided this next generation has taken root. Our ability to maintain over a \$100 million worth of projects in three different states at the same time is strong testimony that the future of this great organization is in good hands. Our brother Don would be proud to see the commitment to innovation lives on

at Independence Excavating. Today, our dozers and graders are outfitted with global positioning systems (GPS) that can determine grade depths to within a half-inch. We're using sophisticated computer software to not only estimate our jobs but communicate daily production from the field superintendents; helping us achieve our customers' requirements. The technology has enhanced, but not replaced, the commitment and spirit of our people.

Most of the DiGeronimo nephews and nieces started working at the company when they were just old enough to sweep the shop floors. Today, they help to manage the day-to-day operations of not only Independence Excavating, but the other DiGeronimo Companies as well.

In addition to our valued employees, we thank all of our professional consultants, union officials, equipment suppliers and vendors for making it possible to reach our 50th year in business. We will continue into the future upholding our impeccable reputation of honesty, integrity, and quality without compromise.

Arrivederci!

Vic

### Three Generations on Innovation:

- 1928 Our father Serafino (Sam) DiGeronimo comes to Cleveland from Rio Nero Sannitico, Italy at age 16
- 1940 Sam, age 28 starts, "Better Methods" Construction Company
- 1950 Sam changes company name to Sam DiGeronimo & Sons
- 1956 Brother Don, 20 years old, starts doing "side jobs" with loader and founds Independence Excavating
- 1958 Vic, Sr. joins company, at 18 years old
- 1960 Rich joins company, at 18 years old
- 1965 Bobby joins company at
- 1965 Don passes on to the Lord
- 1970 Cathy joins the company
- 1975 Tony joins the company
- 1977 Independence Recycling is formed
- 1985 First portable crusher purchased for Rickenbacker Air Base project in Columbus
- 1987 Vic, Jr. joins the company (son of Vic, Sr. and Lurlie)  
Nick joins the company (son of Rich and Johane)
- 1988 Precision Environmental formed and managed by Tony DiGeronimo and Tom Zuchowski  
Michael joins the company (son of Rich and Johane)
- 1989 Sam passes on to the Lord
- 1991 Don joins the company (son of Vic, Sr. and Lurlie)  
Independence Communications is formed
- 1993 Rick joins the company (son of Rich and Johane)
- 1996 Matt joins Independence Communications (son of Rich and Johane)  
Independence Recycling of Florida formed
- 1997 Rob joins the company (son of Bobby and Cindi)
- 1999 Flex-Tech Resources is formed
- 2001 Indy Equipment Rental and Sales is formed
- 2002 Donnie joins the company (son of Bobby and Cindi)
- 2003 Justin joins the company (son of Neil Fox and Cathy DiGeronimo-Fox)  
Lisa joins the company (daughter of Bobby and Cindi)  
ProCut is formed
- 2004 DiGeronimo Aggregates purchases the Haydite Plant in Independence  
Independence Excavating forms demolition and concrete companies
- 2006 Independence Excavating's 50th Anniversary







## Pioneers over the past 50 years



Bobby DiGeronimo

As we embark on our company's 50th year, I can't help but think back on so many great individuals who were there with my brother Don from the very beginning. It had to be so difficult in those days when Don, Vic, and Rich were trying to build a company without many resources. Our dad was the biggest asset, and he helped tremendously. However, when he was on the job, you did it his way or it was the highway! But, his help was priceless to my brothers.

One person all the DiGeronimo's hold in their heart is Orie Fontana. He was there from the beginning and did everything possible to make Independence Excavating successful. Whether he was operating a bulldozer or running the job from the ground, he just loved to go to work each day. I remember riding with him to a job along with crazy Bob Ezzo, who was making like Mario Andretti. Orie never put down a cigarette for the rest of the day.

## Independence Excavating - Fifty Years



Tony DiGeronimo

Since I have only worked in the company for 48 years, I cannot remember everything that went on in those early years. I congratulate my Dad and brothers for taking the first steps to start Independence Excavating. There is a motivational slogan encouraging marathon runners that reads, "The miracle is not that I finished. The miracle is that I had the courage to start."

As I look around the company now and marvel at all the resources and gadgets that we use to conduct business now, I like to think back to some that we used not all that long ago.

- My Dad bought some kind of copier way back in the late '60s that came in a plastic suitcase with ink cartridges that I suppose were the beginning of our 1,000 pages-per-minute digital color printer/copier/ fax machine that we use today.
- Carbon paper was the copy mechanism of choice that our one and only secretary, Marion, used in our corporate facility, measuring about 200 square feet, attached to my mom and dad's house.
- There was some big mechanical thing on her desk with a bunch of buttons and a hand crank that was always fun to play with. I suppose that got replaced by the calculator, and now the computer spreadsheet.
- Moving outside, I can remember the field force - Orie, Glenn, Hoagy, Leroy, Roger, Smitty, Corky, and Corny - coming in my backyard which was the storage yard, fuel depot, and maintenance facility all in one.
- There was the brick, vitrified pipe and fittings, sand pile (which doubled as my playground) and the special stored items in the old chicken coop. I was a little scared to go in there because of the critters that were running around, even though the chickens were long gone. I suppose this has now been replaced by the

multitude of acres we enjoy at Schaaf Road.

There are so many wonderful pioneers who worked so hard to make us successful. Some of those who come to mind are Val Petro, Mel Kurtz, Franklin Smith, Joe Savage, Jimmy Dean, John Stropki, Fred Shearer, Romeo Divencenzo, Tony Kotesovec, Rags Stallard, Dick Strebig, Smitty Cain, Bob Pokorny, Gus White, Joe Mauretic and Joe Banco—just to name a few.

Some of those great friends are now in heaven with my brother Don tending to Jesus' beautiful garden. They and countless others deserve our family's praise for paving the way to the great company we inherit today.

I know all of us will continue to build a company that they would be proud to say, "Look what we started."

multitude of acres we enjoy at Schaaf Road.

I also think of all the survey work we needed and the jobs waiting for Gene Krell, and later Barney, to calculate and pound stakes in the ground -- just to be knocked over to do it again. I remember how excited Barney was when we bought our Electronic Distance Meter (EDM) in 1984, and then our first Agtek grade control unit for the airport work in 1988. That was only 17 years ago, but all that was replaced in 2001 when we bought our first GPS staking and ground control for the Abram Creek Project. Now this technology is constantly changing and getting better almost every day.

I remember when our only estimator was Mark Kupresanin's dad, Mike. I know his favorite thing to do was removing quantities of dirt by drawing cross-sections and using a planimeter to calculate them. I'm so happy that I got to use that tool for a couple of years because I really appreciate what our computer technology can do in only a couple of hours that took us several days - some jobs, weeks - only to have a new plan devised that we'd start all over.

The whole project management concept has only existed in our company the past 25 years. The concept of formally trained construction managers in our industry was pretty new in the late '70s. Even then, engineers filled the role mainly on the heavy highway side of the business, and tradesmen ascended through the ranks in the building business. Now we have 20 project managers working just in our company; some jobs requiring 3 or 4 who, in turn, interact with thousands of others working in the industry in all disciplines.

There are so many other differences as to how we used to do things - some funny, some stupid, and some pretty good for the times - but the important thing, and the basis for what we do, has been the same forever: A FAIR DAY'S WORK FOR A FAIR DAY'S PAY.

That is what we get from our employees, and that is what we give to our customers. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this great story for most of my 48 years in the business.

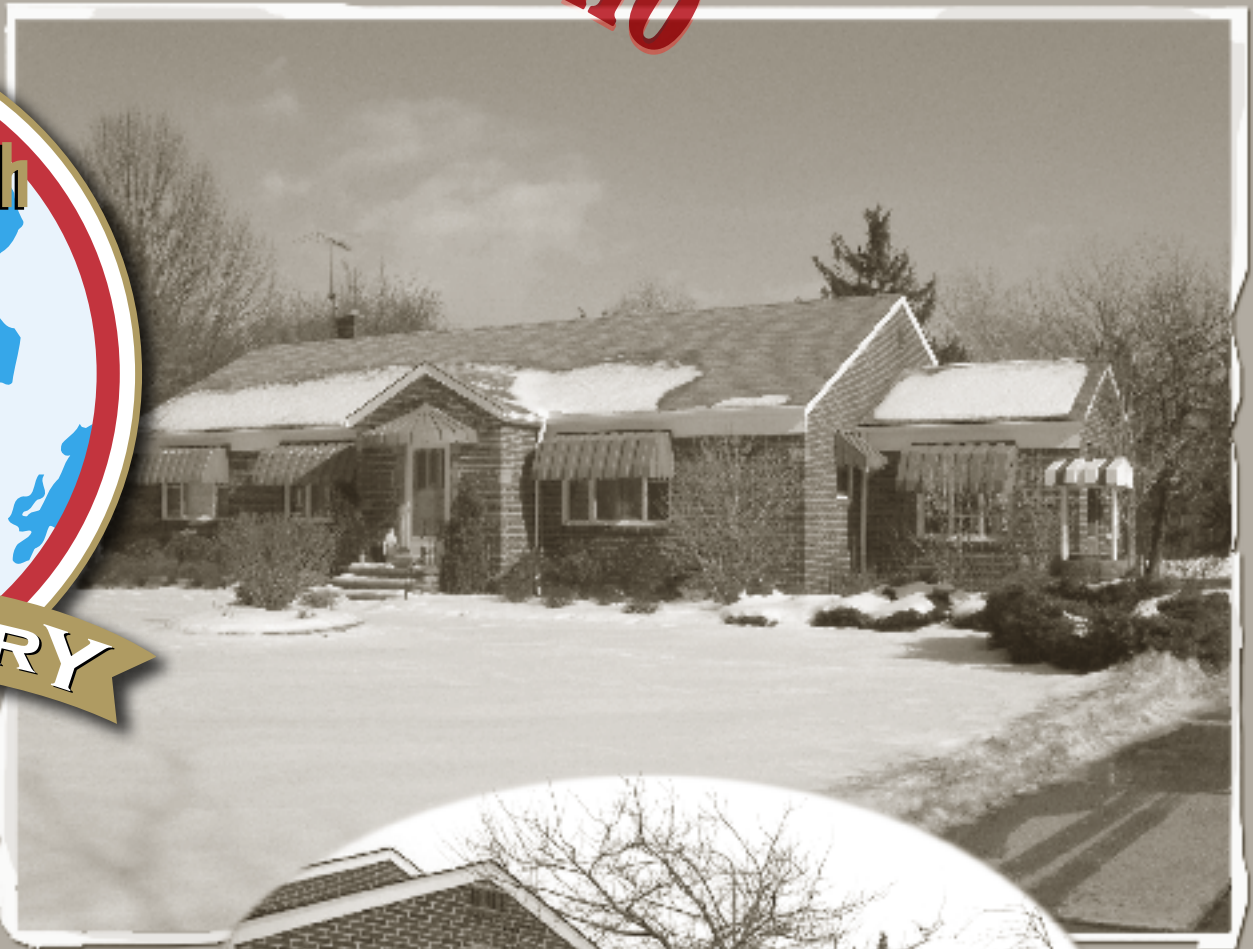
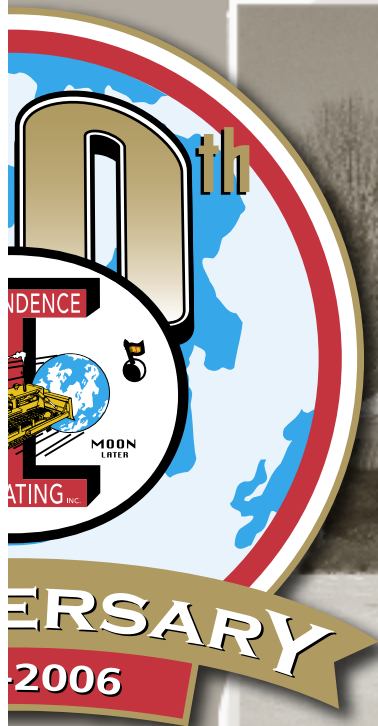
Our beginning...In



Independence Town Hall built in 1886.



# dependence, Ohio



*First office and construction yard at residence, Brecksville Road.*



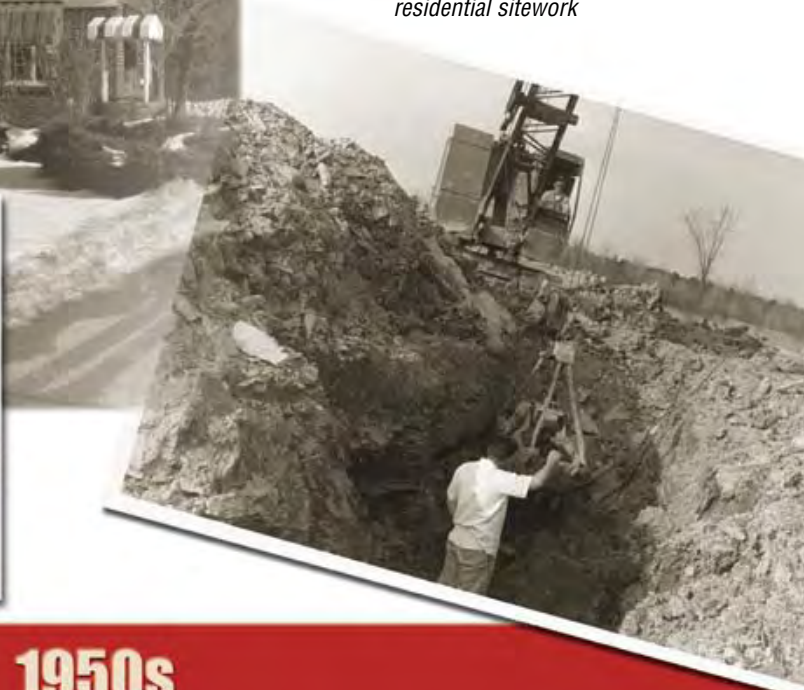


## Setting innovation into motion for 50 years

Over the past 50 years we have become a diversified construction company employing a workforce of 400 and maintaining a fleet of over 300 pieces of major equipment. Our diversification allows us to perform heavy/highway, industrial, major site projects, demolition, concrete recycling, and crushing.



*First office and construction yard at residence, Brecksville Road.*



*In the beginning...  
house basements and  
residential sitework*

1950s

1956





Don DiGeronimo Memorial  
Independence Kiwanis Project, Elmwood Park.

**1969**-Man landed on the moon. Don DiGeronimo said "We're moving the earth now, we'll be moving the moon later." Thus creating our slogan "Earth Now, Moon Later."



**1972**-The Justice Center:  
The era of major projects in  
downtown Cleveland begins. →

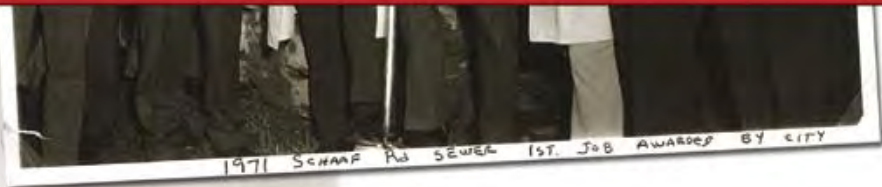


Earth now, Moon later.

**1960s**

**1970s**

19







First permanent crushing operation – Warner Road



Cleveland Clinic



TRW Headquarters



1980s



Gateway







Great Lakes Science Center



Rock and Roll Hall of Fame & Museum



Cleveland Hopkins Int'l. Airport Abram Creek project receives OCA Move Ohio Award



Jacobs Field

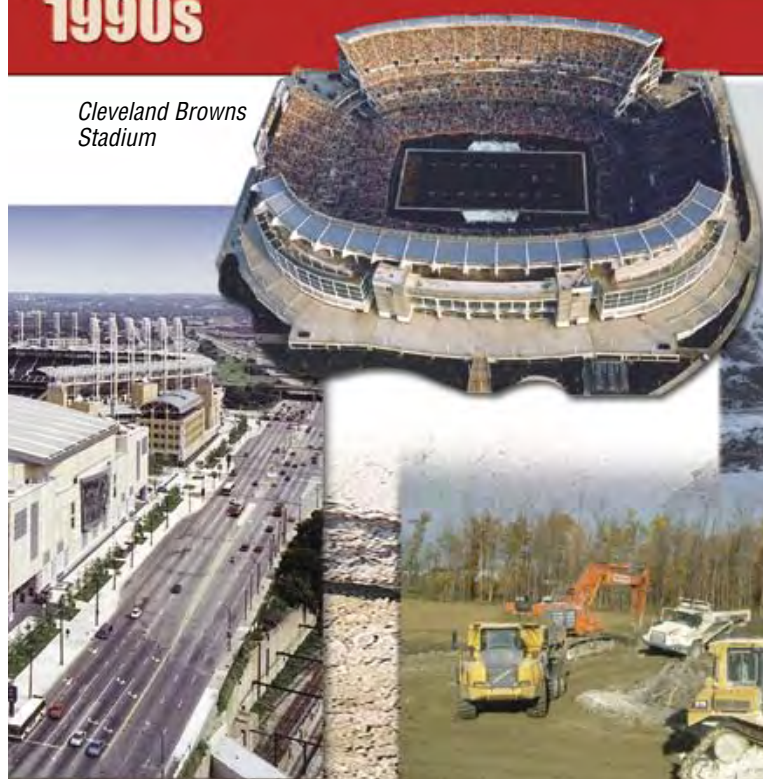
Tower City Center



1990s

2000s

Cleveland Browns Stadium



2006



C-5 Hanger and Apron – Martinsburg, West Virginia

Presque Isle Downs - Erie, PA





# WHAT A DIFFERENCE 50 YEARS MAKE!

## RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES WITH EQUIPMENT INNOVATION

*Then...* Ford F-700 single-axle truck - 160 horsepower, 22,000 lbs.

*Now...* Cat 775D haul truck - 683 horsepower, 224,000 lbs.

*Then...* American 597 cable backhoe - 1c.y., 114 horsepower, 62,000 lbs.

*Now...* Komatsu PC1250 hydraulic excavator - 9 c.y., 651 horsepower, 250,000 lbs.

*Then...* Allis Chalmers HD-6 bulldozer - 4 cyl., 54 horsepower, 13,400 lbs.

*Now...* Cat D10R bulldozer - 12 cyl., 570 horsepower, 150,000 lbs.











*The DiGeronimo family. Front row (from left to right): Tony - Operations Manager, Bobby - Secretary, Vic Sr. - President, Rich - Executive Vice President  
Middle row: Matt, Nick, Mike, Vic Jr. Top row: Rick, Don, Donnie and Rob*

## With Appreciation...

The commitment to excellence that the DiGeronimo family adheres to is a tribute to the people who make up this company. It takes a great deal of dedication from our employees to maintain a constant level of pride, development, and growth.

The success and growth of Independence Excavating is also attributed to the quality of the clients who have supported us over the past 50 years. We could not have achieved such success without

your support. We sincerely thank each and every one of you, not only for your business, but most importantly your loyalty and your friendship.

As we look to the next 50 years, our vision is clear. We will continue to maintain high standards of excellence while appreciating your confidence and your support.

*Rich DiGeronimo*

